Gunnerside village stands on the north side of Swaledale, where the deep ravine of Gunnerside Gill flows into the main Swale valley. This has long been a bridging point on the tributary stream while the periodic threat of flooding probably explains why the present structure spanning the Gill is of no great age. The main road up the valley from Reeth drops down to the bridge, and then turns south along the west bank of the Gill to cross the Swale and follow the south side of the valley up to Muker, whilst a minor road to Ivelet continues along the north side of the valley.

The Gill divides Gunnerside village into two more or less equal parts. On the east the houses lining the road expand into a scatter around a sloping green above the road, before narrowing down to a tight neck just before the bridge, around the King’s Head Inn. West of the bridge there is a scatter of development along and to the south of the Ivelet road, whilst the Methodist Chapel sits on the west of the main road. A big chapel (in Swaledale only Reeth has one of comparable size), it is built on a town rather than a village scale and plan, with twin stairs from the entrance lobby and galleries all round. It stands in the centre of an extensive graveyard with memorials going back into the 18th century.

The buildings of the village are very typical of the dale. The odd mullioned window and chamfered door surround betray a handful of older properties going back to the later 17th and early 18th century (Croft House being the most significant). Many more date to the 19th century, when the prosperity brought by lead mining shows itself in architectural refinements such as cut sandstone door surrounds, quoins and kneelers. Spensley House is a good example, and the King’s Head another.

Gunnerside smithy

The usual 20th-century remodellings and the conversion of even the smallest farm buildings into holiday cottages are apparent, especially in the western part of the village which contains the modern school. There were two older church-based schools on the east side of the Gill: a Methodist one lost to a 20th-century fire (although the attractive school master’s house survives), and a suitably-Gothic Anglican one - now ‘Gunnarsgill Hall’- looking across the stream to the old mill buildings. The latter’s Welsh slate roof, in contrast to the local vernacular use of flagstones everywhere around, emphasises its status as representing the Established Church in a largely nonconformist community.

There is a small village square to the north-west of the bridge, where the Literary Institute of 1877 faces a working smithy that, in tribute to the changing times, now doubles up as a museum.

For a detailed discussion of the lead mining industry in the Dales see the essay titled ‘Lead mining’ in the Themes/Industry section of the website www.outofoblivion.org.uk. The area around Gunnerside also contains important archaeological remains. Type ‘Gunnerside’ in the Keyword Search box of the Out of Oblivion website and follow the links.
2. GUNNERSIDE SMITHY
The main smithy building is two-storey with a single-storey addition that now houses a small exhibition about the history of the blacksmith in the community. The smithy is datable to the early 19th century through its use of coursed rubble walling, high eaves and large windows with thin stone lintels and sills. The smithy has a domestic appearance from the front, with a rare survival of 16-pane sash windows on the ground floor and casements above. The main smithy door is interesting in that it has been used to test horn burns for sheep and various other iron marks for mining companies and individuals. Several day books survive from the 19th century, written by the Calverts whose descendant, Stephen Calvert still runs the smithy. In the 19th century, the two hearths burned coal carted down from Tan Hill and William Gill pits at the top of Arkengarthdale. As well as shoeing horses the day books show that the smith could turn his hand to almost anything, from repairing a child’s minnow net to making tools for stonemasons. The Calverts also owned a small piece of land on which they kept a cow and a horse. The present smith still farms part-time.

1. SPENSLEY HOUSE
A good-quality two-storey three-bay house with raised quoins and a moulded eaves cornice carried out round a downpipe. The rear elevation has a good stair window with Gothic glazing bars. Despite the status of the house (which the list description dates to about 1820 - it also details some apparently-contemporary internal features), it could not entirely escape local vernacular influence, seen in the rows of through stones in its west end. The name of the house is neatly carved on one of the quoins at its south-east angle. Hidden within the front garden, surrounded by a tall buttressed wall, is an ornamental ‘garden house’ probably contemporary with the house. Both structures are separately listed.

3. GUNNARSGILL HALL
Built in 1845 as a Church of England school which closed in 1886. The Hall is constructed of coursed square stone with a Welsh slate roof (unusual in the area). The single-storey schoolroom forms a cross-wing at the south end, and has a porch with a trefoiled arch at its west end, and trefoiled and shoulder-arched windows. The adjacent Master’s House, with rather less Gothic detail, forms an L-plan range to the north.

4. KING’S HEAD PUBLIC HOUSE
This building has quoins, moulded kneelers, and bands to the ground floor window sills and at first floor level. The windows, now plate-glass sashes, have stone surrounds. Both end walls have the odd feature of a small window with a larger one immediately alongside, both apparently original. The rear of the house has the usual series of later outshuts and standing at the north-east corner of the block is a K6 telephone box. Both public house and telephone box are listed Grade II.

5. CROFT HOUSE
This is a five-bay house, its front rendered, the original extent of which is defined by its raised quoins. The list description (which is inaccurate) gives a date of 1720. The entrance doorway is in the second bay, and has a bolection-moulded surround, whilst the windows have simpler architraves, and now hold plate-glass sashes. The fifth bay has a narrow fire window on each floor, now blocked, with imitation sash frames painted on.

6. METHODIST CHAPEL
This is a substantial chapel of 1866, built on standard ‘town chapel’ lines. It is built of coursed and squared stone, with ashlar rusticated quoins and dressings, with a gabled three-bay front to the road on the east behind old railings and gates (both chapel and the gate and railings are listed separately at Grade II).

The openings - a central doorway with a paired window above - have round-arched ashlar surrounds with impost and keystones. There is a band at the level of the sills of the upper windows, and a pedimented gable enclosing a tablet inscribed ‘Wesleyan Methodist Chapel ERECTED 1866’ and a circular vent. The gable is capped by spiked ball finials. The side elevations are plainer, with three square-headed windows below and three round-arched ones above, with ashlar alternating-block surrounds while the rear gable is rendered, and a lower two-storey block contains the vestry and the organ loft.

The entrance leads into a lobby with two doorways into the body of the chapel and two to stairs into the gallery, which has a panelled front and is carried on cast-iron columns. The seating at ground level has been replaced, but the old benches remain in the gallery which is continued behind the dais in front of a large segmental -headed arch framing the organ with the painted text ‘Worship the King the Lord of Hosts’ around it. The dais has a balustraded top and a central pendant semi-octagonal reading desk.
This leaflet and others in the series were produced by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority as part of the Private Spaces Public Places project. This European Union funded project was undertaken during 2003-5 in selected villages in the Richmondshire area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The project's aim was to enable communities to take a more active role in the management and enhancement of the historic character of their villages, and to promote a common outlook on their future development. An Historic Environment Consultancy firm was appointed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to complete character appraisal documents in consultation with each community. The documents include an appraisal of the historic character of the village, and form the basis for the development of an agreed action plan targeting specific enhancement projects. Electronic versions of the village character appraisal documents, along with a copy of this leaflet are available on www.yorkshiredales.org.uk from the Understanding/Historic Environment page.

**PARTICIPATING VILLAGES**

**WARD: Aysgarth:**
- Carperby
- West Burton
- Thornton Rust
- Aysgarth
- Thoralby
- Newbiggin

**WARD: Bolton Manor:**
- Castle Bolton
- West Witton

**WARD: Grinton and Upper Swaledale:**
- Muker
- Gunnerside
- Low Row
- Keld
- Grinton

**WARD: Hawes and High Abbotside:**
- Gayle
- Burtersett
- Sedbusk
- Hardraw

**PROJECT PART-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**
**Architrave**
A characteristic moulded surround to a doorway or window typical of the 18th century.

**Ashlar**
Good quality cut stone with a smoothly-tooled surface.

**Bands**
Horizontal ashlar courses standing proud of the wall face; if moulded or chamfered it would be termed a ‘string course’.

**Bay**
Elevations can usually be divided into a series of bays on the basis of their architectural features - a bay might contain one window on each floor level. If referring to a timber-framed building, or a roof structure, the bay would be the section between each pair of posts, or between each tie-beam and set of principal rafters.

**Bolection-moulding**
A characteristic broad convex moulding of the late 17th or early 18th century.

**Chamfered door surround**
A chamfer or bevel (usually of 45 degrees) to the edge of the opening.

**Impost**
The block at the head of the jamb of an opening from which the head or arch springs.

**Keystone**
A keystone is the central stone of the head of an opening, usually but not always arched. It is sometimes emphasised by its face standing proud of the others, and is usually wedge-shaped.

**Kneelers**
The overhanging shaped stones at each end of the coping of a gable, very typical of the late 17th and 18th centuries.

**Moulded eaves cornice**

**Mullioned window**
A window divided into a series of lights by vertical stone mullions.

**Outshut**
The rear part of a building, often an addition, usually lower than the main body of the structure, where the roof slope is continued down to a lower level than at the front.

**Pedimented gable**
A gable in which the top section forms a full triangle in that the moulding of the coping (i.e. upper edges) is continued horizontally (as a string course) across its base.

**Quoins**
Large corner stone located at the right angle of two external walls, the finish of which may differ from the main wall.

**Rusticated quoins**
Quoins, usually of ashlar, in which the edges of the individual blocks are bevelled or chamfered. Typical of good-quality Classical buildings of the 17th century onwards.

**Shoulder-arched windows**
A shoulder-arched opening has a shaped heads formed in effect by a corbel at the head of each jamb.

**String course**
A horizontal projecting course in a wall, usually either moulded or chamfered.

**Through stones**
A typical feature of vernacular building in the Dales, in which large roughly-shaped slabs, laid horizontally in the wall (and serving to bond the walling) extend through its full thickness and project a little from the wall face as well.

**Trefoiled arch**
Arch cut to the form of a trefoil, i.e. with three lobes.