

The origins of the village:

Bolsterstone is a small Pennine village whose history reaches back into antiquity. There are two or three theories as to the origin of the name Bolsterstone, one being that it was the "ton", Anglo-Saxon for "dwelling", of "Balder". This is possibly a corruption of the name "Walder" since a Saxon Chief of that name lived and was buried in the vicinity; his cairn, Walder's Low, can be seen on a hill top 1,009 ft above sea level S.E. of the village. The alternative theory is based on the presence of the two huge stones which Canon Wilson transferred from the village green to the Churchyard, and which were thought to be the "Bolster" stones of a medieval torture instrument used for the execution of criminals. However, Canon Wilson writes in some detail concerning these stones in the Terrier dated 27th June 1900, and gives them a quite different significance. He suggests that judging by their shape one could have been Balder's Altar, and the other, upper stone, could have been the horizontal member of a stone trabeate structure such as Druid worshippers erected at Stonehenge. He adds that the upper stone, which has a cross carved on it, was known in 1750 to have six cross carvings visible. He assumes that this was done deliberately to Christianise what had formerly been an object used in heathen worship. A 19th Century local historian, Wallace Charlesworth put forward a different opinion regarding these stones. He stated that they were formerly used to collect water for baptismal purposes, and were originally located at Unsliven Bridge.