



# YORKSHIRE VERNACULAR BUILDINGS STUDY GROUP

Website: <http://www.yvbsg.org.uk/>

Newsheet No 33

July 2003

## YVBSG Events For Your Diary

### Recording Day in Starbotton, Upper Wharfedale

Saturday 19 July 2003

Depending on when you receive this Newsheet, there might still be time to join a recording team in Starbotton! If you're interested please contact David Cook asap.

### Recording Work using Digital Technology

Saturday 16 August 2003

That title is quite misleading because digital technology is only one aspect of what the day is about. The theme of the day is measuring and drawing buildings that aren't regular; those that have more than four corners, those in which the angles at the corners are all different and in which the sides are neither parallel nor straight. That's the sort of thing. If you have a desperate urge to go round measuring twin lime kilns then you'll be interested.

The most sophisticated bit of kit you'll be asked to play with is a camera tripod! Otherwise the technology is no more advanced than a five metre surveyors' staff, steel and fibreglass tape measures, black and white chalk and, possibly, a three inch nail. Did someone mention a laser level? Mmmm, well; a laser level will be involved but as it's easier to use than the black and white chalk it doesn't really count as technology does it? Worry about the tripod instead.

So what about the digits? A big part of the day is about measuring and it would appear from the above that the digits are superfluous when it comes to measuring. Indeed, they stay that way until the drawing up begins.



When you've taken the trouble to measure up a building this carefully, the lack of sophistication inherent in scale rules, school compasses and blunt HBs starts to become apparent, just a bit! CAD software is very accurate; it draws at full size and the line it creates has no thickness: it's great for drawing irregular shapes. The computer is also able to draw on multiple layers (imagine each layer as an individual sheet of tracing film) and to rotate the contents of any one layer while leaving all the rest alone. This offers an excellent way of fitting those irregular shapes together. That's the way to do it; it really is.

That's the gist of it. If you are interested write or telephone before 28 July to: Don McLellan, Croft Mount, Silsden Road, Bradley, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 9EB, tel 01535 631326.

### Next Newsheet

Many thanks indeed to everybody who contributed to this newsheet. Please send items for the September newsheet to the editor by the end of August 2003.

Members will find *Yorkshire Buildings* 2003 enclosed with this newsheet. I hope you enjoy it; further copies are available at £4 plus 75p p&p from Lorraine Moor. Please do think about contributing to next year's edition – the deadline is the end of 2003. Incidentally, two members living at the same address automatically each receive a copy of the Group's publications; if you would prefer to receive just one copy, please tell Lorraine Moor or let us know on your next membership renewal form.

### Conference Review Day

Sunday 28 September 2003

A review of the buildings recorded in Scarborough during the annual conference in May. To be held in the upper room of the Harbour Bar, Sandside, Scarborough. Start 1.30pm, finish about 4pm. A lot of 'upper cruck-like' structures have been discovered – come along and see the evidence. Reports will be given on the surviving timber framed buildings in the town. Documentary research carried out by the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society's 'house detectives' will be presented. There will also be a report on the Grade 1 listed Richard III house with its variety of architectural features, which include a possible gas-making plant in the cellar! All welcome, even if you didn't attend the conference. If you'd like lunch, come along at 12.30pm. Details will be confirmed in the next newsheet.

### Next Committee Meeting

Sunday 9 November 2003

If you'd like to bring any matter to the attention of the Committee, please contact David Crook.

### Annual Day School

Saturday 20 March 2004

On the theme of vernacular buildings and estate villages. Venue to be announced.

### Annual Recording Conference

Friday 14 to Sunday 16 May 2004

To be based in Malton, North Yorkshire.

### Thank you!

Thanks go to David Cant for leading a most enjoyable walk in and around Heptonstall in June (and also for arranging perfect weather on the day!).

# Aspects of the Stone and Slate Industries in the Lake Counties

Having quickly read the last Newsheet I noticed a mention of a day school, or, if you prefer, study day, at Lancaster University's Centre for North-West Regional Studies on 14 June. Knowing little about this area, *Aspects of the Stone and Slate Industries in the Lake Counties*, I phoned them at the last minute, and was delighted to find they still had room, and received a detailed fax giving directions. Lorraine Moor quite wisely suggests checking that an event is still running; another useful tip is to find out in advance exactly in which building on a considerably-sized campus the event is taking place! Unfortunately I failed to do this, and due to a breakdown in communication, nobody else on the campus knew either, including Reception. So I arrived very late and somewhat 'ratty'. The staff were very patient whilst I bit their heads off! Perhaps it was the excellent air-conditioned, very comfortable, lecture room that cooled me down. This serves to remind people to check everything first, and not to leave it to the last minute as I often do!

Unfortunately I missed most of what had been a very well-received lecture on the 'Geological History of the Building Stones of the Lake Counties'. A rapid succession of slides highlighted the tremendous range of stone and slate that was used, down to just one building, the church at Tebay, being unique in the fact that the stone used in its construction is used nowhere else.

The study day was very well spaced out, allowing plenty of time for questions and a general chat over coffee and biscuits whilst enjoying many of the considerable number of titles that the CNWRS has produced, all at very reasonable prices. This unique unit (telephone 01524 593770, website <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/cnwrs/>) is quite a gem, and I very strongly advise you to get hold of a copy of their booklist.

The following talk, 'Public Quarries in the Lake Counties', was a true *tour de force*, worth the day alone: a little-studied area on 'common rights' and its impact on the social and economic history of the area. Public resources common rights include coal seams, arable commons pasture, water and stone. Most research that has been completed is southern-based but in fact two-thirds of common land in the UK was held in the seven northern counties. Parliamentary enclosure awards are a primary resource; also the excellent 1990 article by Jane Humphries in the *Journal of Economic History*, which examined

the value to communities of these rights, and the battle for control of who exactly could access them. A fascinating piece of original work, which explained just how materials (stone, slate etc) were gained to provide homes and the very means of existence for the common man, and how the coming of enclosure affected this pattern and his economic welfare.

No lunch was provided, but in any case there was no need as the campus had various outlets from a Spar shop (remember those?) to an in-house 'The Venue' that provided an excellent range of snacks at very reasonable prices, brought to you by friendly helpful staff. Lunch time passed so quickly that one hardly had the time to study the impressive local industrial history society's display. The notorious 'graveyard shift' lecture (the one after lunchtime) proved to be a well-balanced and detailed study on the 'Social and Economic Impact of Slate Quarrying in the Lake Counties'. The slides showed previous visits to various sites with no hard hats (those were the golden days of no risk assessments!). An interesting conclusion was that the vast growth in production of various forms of slate occurred with the rise in the UK's population during the nineteenth century, which led to a demand for quantities of cheap lightweight roofing products. Surprisingly the contribution of Lakeland slate to this vast total was very minor; in fact it was mostly locally used in the north-west, being much



heavier than Welsh slate, and the green hues having a unique local contribution to the various vernacular constructions.

The final presentation paid homage to the new publication *Limestone Industries of the Yorkshire Dales* by David Johnson. This work will in time be seen as a standard textbook on the subject. A slightly crammed Powerpoint presentation, which the speaker freely admitted was his first, gave a very clear short history on the use of lime throughout the ages, and the various chemical forms such as quicklime (with equations!). He then focused on the talk's topic, 'Lime Burning and Lime Kilns in the Lake Counties'. The slides gave useful descriptions of these familiar structures that we see in fields from simple pits to quite complex kilns, and how the subsequent coming of canals in the late eighteenth century expanded the use of this agricultural soil 'sweetener'. Studies of census returns showed how people worked the industry and were also involved in the dual economy of farming from time to time. One of the main periods of expansion was during the Napoleonic wars, the producers cashing in on increased grain prices. Compared to the previous talk, this subject is fortunate in having many forms of records available for study, perhaps the best documented example being that of the Kendal Fell Trust. Many slate operations simply came and went with few surviving records, making research difficult due to the paucity of available material.

Each speaker gave out an abstract and a very detailed reading list, in all making this study day an excellent value-for-money event at £15. But the final words must go to the staff who made it such a smooth and well-attended event – thank you!

Adrian Bailey

## The Yorkshire Journal

The *Yorkshire Journal* is a quarterly magazine which specialises in the historical and cultural landscape of the county. The *Journal* has recently been acquired by Dalesman Publishing after ten years with Smith Settle of Otley.

As editor, I am keen to extend our range of subject interests and broaden our stable of contributors. As such, I would be interested to hear from any members of the YVBSG who may have suitable articles for our magazine, either by post or email. If any such members would like to see a sample back issue of the *Journal*, I can send them one; or please contact me if you need any further information.

Mark Whitley, Editor, *Yorkshire Journal*, Dalesman Publishing Co Ltd, Stable Courtyard, Broughton Hall, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 3AZ, tel 01756 701381, email [journal@dalesman.co.uk](mailto:journal@dalesman.co.uk), website <http://www.dalesman.co.uk>

[However, if you're thinking about writing articles, don't forget that contributions to our own journal, *Yorkshire Buildings*, are also welcome! Lorraine]

## Other events and courses of possible interest ...

Some of these events are publicised a long time in advance, so it's worth checking that they are still running before you go!

### Homes, Houses and Gardens of Lancashire and Yorkshire

Monday 21 to Friday 25 July 2003

A course looking at the history of some houses and families in the two counties. Visits include Shibden Hall, Halifax and Leighton Hall, Lancaster. Tutor: William Tyler. Fee £225. To be held at Alston Hall, Alston Lane, Longridge, Preston PR3 3BP, tel 01772 784661, website <http://www.alstonhall.u-net.com>.

### Bolton-by-Bowland Walk

Sunday 27 July 2003

A 1½ hour ramble led by Jo Clark through the historic landscape around the picturesque village of Bolton-by-Bowland, formerly in Yorkshire. Meet 2pm at parish church of St Peter and Paul. Please book via Lancashire County Archaeology Service on 01772 533404.

### Wycoller Walk

Sunday 3 August 2003

A walk led by John Darlington around historic Wycoller, close to the Yorkshire/Lancashire border. Includes a tour of the 16th century hall, the subject

of recent new research and survey. Participants will explore the story of Wycoller Aisled Barn (three distinct buildings rolled into one) and the evidence for the earlier economy of the area based upon medieval cattle ranching (vaccaries). Meet 2pm at car park, Trawden Road. Please book via Lancashire County Archaeology Service on 01772 533404.

### The Archaeology of Yorkshire

Saturday 6 September 2003

A day at Tempest Anderson Hall, York, organised by CBA Yorkshire to mark the publication of *The Archaeology of Yorkshire: A Review at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Details from T G Manby, 43 Meadow Drive, Market Weighton, York, YO43 3QG, tel 01430 873147.

### Heritage Open Days

Friday 12 to Monday 15 September 2003

Free access to interesting properties that are either not usually open, or would normally charge a fee. Details on website <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk> or see publicity in local press and Tourist Information Centres.

### Mapping Yorkshire's Past

Saturday 18 October 2003

To mark the publication of the new *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire*, a one-day conference is being organised by PLACE, in conjunction with the Yorkshire Philosophical Society and the Royal Geographical Society. The day will feature presentations from the editors of the different sections, and will be held in Tempest Anderson Hall, York, from 9.45am to 5pm. Conference fee £20, or £25 including lunch. Cheques (payable to Yorkshire Philosophical Society) should be sent to The Clerk, Yorkshire Philosophical Society, The Lodge, Museum Gardens, York YO1 7DR. The Atlas will be available for purchase at the conference, and will be in bookshops from October.

## Reused stonework

In September, a request for information relating to my dissertation was included in the Newsheet. I'd like to thank all those who assisted me in my endeavour.

*Elissa Zacher*

## The half-timbered house

The last Newsheet identified that the University of Manchester was holding a day school on 15 May on 'The Half-Timbered House' so, not being very knowledgeable on the subject (despite having attended the University of Leeds Summer School in 2002 led by Barry Harrison), I enrolled.

This course had apparently been planned as a two-day event for the previous year but failed to attract enough students, and would originally have consisted of one day in the lecture theatre and one day of visiting sites. Being rescheduled as a one-day event, visits were no longer included, but not being a Lancastrian I did not regard this as a great loss! My usual complaint about day schools, irrespective of the provider, is the lack of adequate handouts; I do not regard the ability to take shorthand and draw sketches at lightning speed as a prime requirement for course participants.

Prior knowledge of the subject was neither required nor expected; the lectures started at square one. The earliest timber-framed house was, it is assumed, a North American-style tepee, and via the Bronze Age (Grimspound)



and Iron Age (Glastonbury) we ended the first session with Christchurch Castle, Hampshire.

In the second session we took a more in-depth look at a half-timbered house, Smithill Hall, owned by the Radcliffe family for 150 years from 1335.

Session three and we got down to the basics of cruck roof construction and the intricacies of jointing timber. Scarf joint – bridled, scissors joint, under squinted abutments, tusk tenon with key – you name it and I should be able to show you what is involved!

Having built 'our house' we then considered roofs and walls, from thatch to stone flags, and cladding ranging from plaster to mathematical tiles.

Session five went back to details: roofs including gable, hip and catslide; braces including concave, convex and ogee. The choices were many and varied.

After the theory came photographs of the real thing, and not just in Lancashire. With the exception of the north-east, most counties had some half-timbered buildings of note, now in various states of preservation. A second batch of slides followed, this time of agricultural buildings, and, as might be expected, tithe barns were well represented.

The day drew to a close when the lecturer, Derek de Maine, apologised that there were some handouts he had not distributed, but if we wanted copies we could help ourselves. Being a Yorkshireman, I obviously wanted my pound of flesh and added to the day's collection another four sheets of A3 and two sheets of A4. What did I say earlier about most day schools not providing sufficient handouts? This was one exception to the norm. I returned from Manchester with a total of 101 sheets of paper, in addition to those notes I took – almost enough to produce my own book on the subject. This was certainly a day (and money) well spent.

*Ken Boothroyd*

# The Great Rebuilding of Grassington

Back in 1995, it was mentioned that the main activity of the Upper Wharfedale Field Society Vernacular Buildings Group for some time to come would be to identify and record 'new' stone houses built by the Grassington Freeholders in the early 17th/18th century.

Recent work of the Upper Wharfedale group contributes to what might be known of this aspect of Grassington's past and present. Surveys made by the group and various collected papers are being collated and, together with a report researched and written by John Wright, will be a source of information and interpretation of developments in Grassington relating to and arising from the period of 'The Great Rebuilding'. This is a précis of an article which precedes the completion of the report.

## The Great Rebuilding

From a study of the archaeology and history of England we can read about the evolution of village dwellings: from the stone hut circles of the stone age, the timber huts and halls of the Dark Ages, the medieval long-house with man living cheek by jowl with the animals to the basic single-storey, timber-framed houses with walls of mud and stud or wattle and daub. None of those buildings was durable and they rapidly became what are best described as hovels. But today's visitors to the smaller towns and villages of England cannot help noticing the large proportion of buildings that date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made of good, durable materials. These are still in use, suggesting that at this time the peasant farmers and husbandmen were re-housed in a 'style that their forebears could never have dreamed about'. In his excellent book *The Villages of England* (Thames and Hudson 1992), Richard Muir reminds us that this change which

took place during the period 1570-1640, named and identified by Professor W G Hoskins as 'The Great Rebuilding', was based on widespread aspirations for self-improvement and had its roots in the increased prosperity of the period.

Richard Muir graphically remarks that new dwellings 'erupted like mushrooms in the autumn mists' and, in 1550, contemporary observers noted that it was becoming apparent that 'our buildings that we have here in England of late days, (are) far more excessive than at any time before'.

In the West Riding, based on the evidence of date stones only, from 1600 to 1649, 208 new buildings were built; from 1650 to 1699, 299 new buildings were built; and from 1700 to 1750, 188 new buildings were built. Total: 695.

Like today, some people built unsuitable styles and in 1589 an Act was passed in an attempt to regulate the building standards: the requirements of this Act made it mandatory for new cottages to stand in at least 4 acres and for only one family to be in occupation! House building was a costly affair which consumed many years of savings. In 1670 the cost of building a two storey stone house was about £60, the equivalent of four years' earnings of a skilled man. Nevertheless this remarkable boom in building, *The Great Rebuilding*, was not confined to the builders of large country houses: it was felt throughout society. The yeomen and the husbandmen were remodelling or building new houses at the same time as the Lord in the Hall. The end of the Wars of the Roses meant that it was no longer necessary to build houses that were primarily defensive in character. The great feudal 'tenants in chief' were becoming courtiers tied to the Crown by a mutual self interest,

coupled with a change in relationships with the peasants on their estates, as direct farming of the demesne was becoming less significant and the Lords' income becoming largely determined by rents. This led inevitably to some lands being sold to the tenants, who were not content to remain living in the hovels that were in most cases only marginally better than the beast's house. As soon as they had recovered from the buying of their land they took steps to better their domestic comfort by improving the sanitation, more light, better heating and rooms that provided a more private way of life – inevitably these rebuilt houses became status symbols. The great majority of these houses were built on existing sites and involved the renewal of old buildings rather than an original construction. The dissolution of the monasteries made a great number of potential building sites available: in addition to the monasteries themselves, there were large numbers of monastic manors, granges and other buildings. Most monastic buildings were used as quarries for ready dressed building stone.

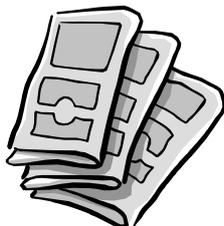
Architects hardly existed in the 16th century. It was the Master Freemason and the Master Carpenter who designed and built the houses, but changing social conditions resulted in changes of design which became influenced by Renaissance ideas of decorative detail originating in Italy and France. This change in design had little effect on the houses built by the yeomen and husbandmen; but where the Lord retained a Hall and/or Manor house in the villages, these were often re-styled in the new fashion.

Today in almost every region of England there are fine examples of Tudor or early Stuart houses and Grassington caught the 're-building' fever too, along with the rest of the country; a look at the vernacular buildings in the area shows that most of them were built in the 17th century and a closer look shows that they were improved in the late 17th to early 18th centuries.

John Wright

## WYAS information leaflets

The West Yorkshire Archaeology Service Advisory Service publishes a series of information leaflets on 'Historic Houses of West Yorkshire'. Leaflets currently available include Bolling Hall, Bradford; Cliffe Castle, Keighley; Oakwell Hall, Bradford; Shibden Hall, Halifax; The Manor House, Ilkley; and also several churches. The leaflets are being made available in pdf format on the WYAS website (<http://www.arch.wyjs.org.uk/AdvSrv/ADVsrv.htm>) or



can be obtained free of charge from WYAS Advisory Service, County Sites and Monuments Record, Registry of Deeds, Newstead Road, Wakefield WF1 2DE, tel 01924 306797.

## House recording

Is anyone interested in helping to record an interesting house in Beverley, perhaps in August? If so, please contact Malcolm Birdsall on 01943 830460.

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