



# YORKSHIRE VERNACULAR BUILDINGS STUDY GROUP

[www.yvbsg.org.uk](http://www.yvbsg.org.uk)  
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Newsheet No 101

December 2020

Dear Member,

I am pleased to report that we are still here and learning to adapt to these difficult times, having held two Zoom committee meetings since I last reported back to you. Welcome to our 101st Newsheet.

Last time I mentioned our recording weekend planned for mid-May 2021 with the intention of recording some interesting regional barns and farm buildings, but I'm sad to say that this might not go ahead as planned, as here we are again in another Tier 3 lockdown. This imposes restrictions on travel especially if, like me, you are self-isolating, causing difficulties in reconnaissance and securing buildings to record. We hope that we may be able to hold a recording event later in the year as restrictions relax following the intended mass immunisation programme, and its hopeful success in reducing the R number.

Another victim of this pandemic is our March day school that clearly cannot go ahead. However, we have decided to replace this by holding a monthly Zoom Talk, on the third Thursday of the month starting at 7.30pm, a live event when a single speaker will give an illustrated talk on a contrasting range of subjects and buildings. We have a number of speakers who have already agreed to give such a Zoom talk, but we are seeking more volunteers from our membership as we have such a wide range of expertise within the members of the Group. So if you think you could offer us a short talk please do get in touch with our Secretary Mary Cook (contact details on last page). There is a thirst for such events in the wider vernacular architecture community as demonstrated by the interest in recent online events such as the one held on Calverley Old Hall by the Landmark Trust.

I hope that you will still be willing to support us by renewing your member-

ship in the New Year. In the past we listened to you all; you told us that it is no longer convenient to pay by cheque, especially when you don't even have a cheque book anymore and do most of your shopping online or by credit transfer on your mobile using a banking app; further details of how to do this can be found overleaf.

I know some of you have been staying in cottages rented out by various organisations, while you were able to travel, getting about to see and even stay in vernacular buildings. Our long-time member and friend Malcolm Birdsall has agreed to give us a talk about the vernacular buildings of the Kilnsey area of the Yorkshire Dales, having spent a week recently staying in the former chapel to Kilnsey Hall – a fascinating and superb-looking manor house that would stop most of our members in their tracks if they suddenly came across it! Why not write in to our Newsheet Editor, Lorraine Moor, and give us a short piece with a couple of photos describing what you have been up to and where you have stayed or visited that may be of interest to our wider community?

The few occasions I have travelled more than five miles in the last few months have taken me to Calderdale to view properties for sale, but the property market in that area is red-hot and some properties are sold within a week with dozens of people viewing. It won't surprise you to learn that some of the houses I looked at were seventeenth century houses with delightful details, but mostly now gone!

So it leaves me to simply wish you all a Happy Christmas and that you do your best to make it a good one with your limited family members and a few friends. Take care and keep safe as best you can and I hope to see you again in the New Year.

*Peter Thornborrow, Chair*



Field House, Sowerby – already sold!

## Third Thursday Talks

As it is unlikely that we will be able to meet physically for events in the foreseeable future, we are instead offering a series of monthly online talks which you can attend from the comfort of your fireside. These will normally take place by Zoom at 7.30pm on the third Thursday of the month and there will be the opportunity for questions after each talk. The talks are open to all (including non-members) and are free of charge.

The first two talks are listed below; details of further talks will be circulated by email and published on the website. Please book by following the link from [www.yvbsg.org.uk](http://www.yvbsg.org.uk), which will take you to the Eventbrite booking page. Joining instructions will be sent by email before each talk.

- **Ships timbers ahoy! Ways to convince it's not part of the Armada** by David Cant. Thursday 21 January 2021 at 7.30pm.
- **A farmer-miner landscape: cowhouses and the practice of smallholdings in Castle Bolton (lower Wensleydale)** by Hannah Kingsbury. Thursday 18 February 2021 at 7.30pm.

## YVBSG Reports Digital Archive Project update

I'm very pleased to report that the team responsible for scanning and editing the YVBSG reports (those reports in easily accessible collections) has now completed the task. All the files in pdf format are now available in the YVBSG Report Archive on the Box system. These can be viewed and downloaded via the link on the 'building reports online' page of the Members' Area of [www.yvbsg.org.uk](http://www.yvbsg.org.uk).

Out of the 1,900 reports produced since about 1974 (when the Group was the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Vernacular Buildings Study Group), there are only about 30 reports which we have not yet been able to get hold of, to scan. We hope that most of these will be obtained over the coming months, and will be added to the digital archive.

Much of interest has come to light during the project, hidden to a great extent by the archive's relative inaccessibility over all these years. This ranges from material worthy of in-depth study, to the incidental for those who have a quirky interest. There's something for everyone.

At one extreme of the range, a weighty example is the body of reports produced by the Tees and Greta section of the Group running from about 1976 to 1993. This section produced over 160 reports on buildings in Teesdale, mainly clustered around Barnard Castle. Much of this material did not make it into Harrison and Hutton's *Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire & Cleveland*, and is worthy of further study.

Of more quirky interest I noted, whilst scanning the reports, quite a few buildings you would not expect to find in the archive. These included York Minster and some dog kennels near Otley. I hope to write more on the Archive's oddities, later.

We now turn to ways to get more value from this incredible, and now more accessible, resource ...

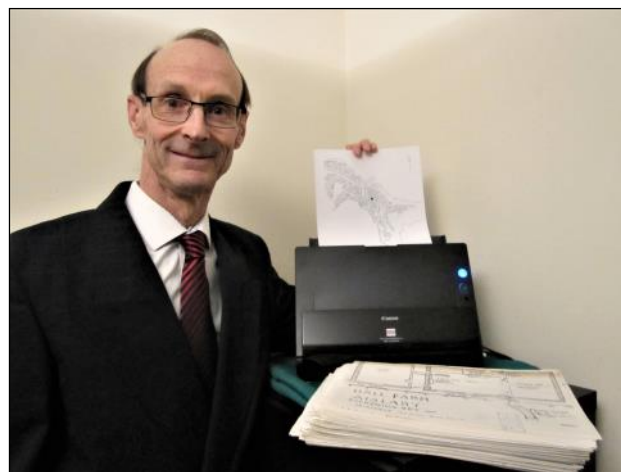
A small team has plotted the position of every building recorded by the Group on a map. The plan is to make it

available as a web page to members to offer a geographical picture of the distribution of the recording work. This will be a benefit in planning walkabouts and publications, such as village/town profiles for example, or gaps to fill by future recording. More details will follow in a later Newsheet.

Software can be used to index the entire collection of 1,900 pdf documents on a PC. Roughly calculated at an average of 1,000 words per report this amounts to nearly two million words. A keyword search of the index takes a few seconds. The search results can be used in research, for example to get a list of buildings with re-used crucks, or with datestones. There is a long list of features for which we can search that will return meaningful and useful results.

Footnote: Just in case you are wondering, the Group didn't measure and draw York Minster in its entirety! The report (YVBSG 1638) was on the Mason's Loft floor and was done by Arnold Pacey and Alison Armstrong in 2001.

*David Cook, YVBSG Archivist*



The Archivist with his marvellous scanning machine!

## Membership renewal

Membership fees for the coming calendar year become due on 1 January 2021. Renewal payment (£12) can be by cheque payable to YVBSG, or by using direct bank transfer (BACS). Whichever method you use, please also post or email your completed renewal slip (making sure that you've ticked all the boxes to show your preferences) to the Membership Secretary, Pat Leggett, at the address shown.

For BACS transfer these are the details you require:

Sort code: 09-01-56

Account number: 52840000

Please use your surname for reference.

Do note that the password to the Members' Area of the website will change in January and you'll receive the new details when you renew your membership for 2021. The Members' Area provides access to around 1,900 building reports and 150 articles from back issues of *Yorkshire Buildings* up to 2017 as well as information sheets and other handouts.

We gently remind you that in line with our Privacy Statement which came into effect with the introduction of GDPR in 2018, membership may be terminated if you do not renew within three months from 1 January each year.

## News by email – please sign up!

In the interests of sustainability, cost and time, from now onwards we will send out a link to the online version of the Newsheet rather than posting out printed copies to members. The online version is in pdf format which you can print easily on A4 paper if you wish. However, if you are unable to read the Newsheet online please let us know on your membership renewal slip and we will continue to post a copy to you.

As circumstances change quickly in these times, and events are increasingly arranged or changed at short notice, we will also send by email notices of forthcoming YVBSG events, such as the monthly online talks, and information about events organised by other groups.

Please select the appropriate option on the membership renewal slip to ensure that you receive this up-to-date information from the Group by email (and remember to check your email spam folder regularly!). Details of events will also be published on the YVBSG website.

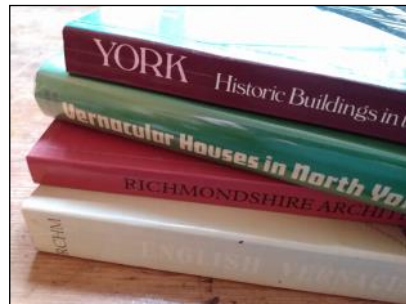
## Yorkshire Buildings

As always, but particularly now when we have no events to report on, articles for the journal would be welcome. Please contact Tony Robinson on [editor@yvbsg.org.uk](mailto:editor@yvbsg.org.uk).

## Treat yourself for Christmas!

Having recently moved and 'down-sized' I find now find that I have less room for many of my reference books and am shedding (with great reluctance) a large number of them on a range of topics. The following are the ones to do with vernacular buildings and if anyone is interested in any of them please do get in touch with me, John Buglass, on either 07903 867160 or by email via [www.jbasarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.jbasarchaeology.co.uk).

- Harrison, B and Hutton, B, 1984, *Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire and Cleveland*. 1st ed, Dust jacket £50 inc p&p.
- Hatcher, J, 1990, *Richmondshire Architecture*. 1st ed dust jacket £50 inc p&p.
- Mercer, E, 1979, *English Vernacular Houses*. RCHME paperback £45 inc p&p.
- RCHME, 1981, *York Historic Buildings in the Central Area*. 1st ed, paperback £12 inc p&p.
- RCHME, 1989, *Houses of the North York Moors. A Selective Inventory*. 1st ed Paperback £50 inc p&p.
- Smith, FR, 1935, *The Historical Architecture of Britain*. 1st ed £10 inc p&p.
- *Medieval Archaeology* volume XVII 1973 (for "Timber framed houses in the Vale of York") £7 inc p&p.



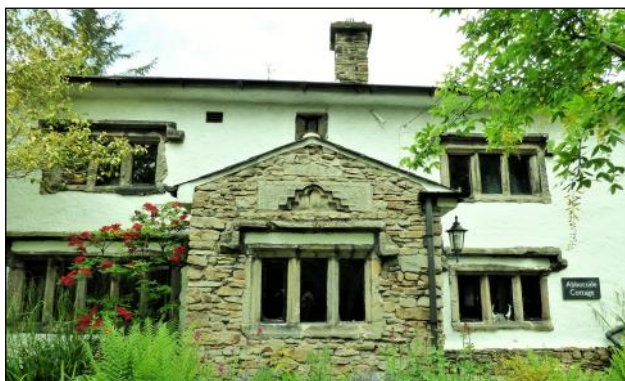
## New listings for 2020

Thirty-three new sites in Yorkshire have been listed by Historic England in 2020. These include several sites in Elsecar and also Cruck Barn at Newby Cote, Clapham (list entry number 1466272), which probably dates from the sixteenth century and uses ash for its crucks rather than the more usual oak; it was surveyed by Alison Armstrong and David Johnson. More news at [historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/yorkshire/](http://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/yorkshire/).

## A relocated doorhead?

These two photos are of Abbotside Cottage, Poulton-le-Fylde, near Blackpool. The dated doorhead of 1695 and mullion windows were brought here in the 1960s or earlier, possibly from a ruinous farmhouse in the area to the north and west of Hawes. I would like to know more, but unfortunately cannot return to Little Poulton yet!

*Kevin Illingworth*



## Gemstones from the archive

Over the past weeks I have been wordprocessing some old reports as part of the YVBSG Reports Digital Archive project. It made me think that the language we use in more recent reports has become more technical in overall appearance, compared to the poetic words that appear in early versions. Some examples are given below ...

In a report from 1979 the writer asks "Why was this demolished? Surely an unnecessary and imprudent thing to do."

In 1982 a report says that "it is possible that John ... was partly responsible for the bonification of the Hall".

During a survey in 1983 it was noted that "The windows in the lower storey are below those in the upper storey".

Did someone get stuck whilst recording in 1984? "After a short distance this passage ends in a cupboard".

Also recorded is that "The nature of the original roof is somewhat of an imponderable" and that "the evacuation of rainwater from the valley between the gables would, however, present a problem."

And finally, what becomes of a flue you no longer use? According to a 1983 report, it becomes superfluous ...

*Gunhild Wilcock*

## From your armchair ...

Many organisations are now offering online talks and conferences, many of which are free of charge. Keep an eye on the Online Occupations page of the YVBSG website for some suggestions of events, together with links to videos and recordings of events which might also be of interest.

- *Houses and the Hearth Tax in Britain*. The VAG annual winter conference, including a talk on East Riding houses and the Hearth Tax by Dr David Neave. [www.vag.org.uk](http://www.vag.org.uk).
- *Who put the hall in Old Town Hall?* An online talk by David Cant to Halifax Antiquarian Society, 19 January 2021 at 7.30pm. [www.halifaxhistory.org.uk](http://www.halifaxhistory.org.uk).
- *Who built Hebden Bridge?* An online talk by Michael Peel to Hebden Bridge Local History Society, Wednesday 10 February 2021, £3 visitors. [www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk](http://www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk).

## Was it a chapel?

Was it a chapel or was it not, or do we not know? That is the question asked by Malcolm and Pam Birdsall who recently spent a few days in the Dales, staying at 'The Old Chapel' adjacent to Kilnsey Old Hall, Upper Wharfedale.

The building, shown in Malcolm's drawing below, was previously used as a stable with hayloft over from about 1800 onwards. Remains of an earlier (perhaps medieval) building still exist at low level, raised and remodelled in the seventeenth century with a steep roofline suggesting that the building could have been heather-thatched.

During an archaeological survey carried out in 2003, an outline of a blocked arched window was discovered on an internal wall which might be indicative of high-status use, possibly religious – hence the folklore that it was a chapel.

We hope that Malcolm will reveal more about this and other buildings in Kilnsey, Grassington and Appletreewick in a talk to the YVBSG at some point.



## Friendless no longer!

The Friends of Friendless Churches have newly adopted the church of St Helen's at Barmby on the Marsh in the East Riding, and are embarking on an extensive programme of repair. The church has a medieval nave, Georgian porches and brick tower, and Victorian chancel, and there is a suggestion that the nave originated as a tithe barn! Further information about the church and volunteering with the organisation at [friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk](http://friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk).

## #MuseumfromHome

The Ryedale Folk Museum is publishing more material online on its website, including a feature on Stang End cottage with a photograph of raising the crucks. Browse through the #MuseumFromHome web pages at [ryedalefolkmuseum.co.uk](http://ryedalefolkmuseum.co.uk).

## Cat steps

Calderdale Local Studies Library recently published an interesting blog about 'cat steps', which seems to be a local term for stone steps or setts on a steep hill that provide a short cut from one place to another. The Library would welcome further information about this feature; the article can be found at [calderdalelocalstudies.wordpress.com/2020/11/24/in-search-of-cat-steps](http://calderdalelocalstudies.wordpress.com/2020/11/24/in-search-of-cat-steps).

## North Yorkshire's most bizarre listed building?



*Yafforth, Myers Lane: Bellframe with bell, approximately 3 metres to S. of Ladyfield Farmhouse. GVII.*

Described as 'Bellframe with bell. Dated 1810. Cast and wrought iron. Tall frame with decorative ironwork to mid and top rails and finial. Large bell hung from top tail has ringing chain attached to clapper. Included for group value.'

How strange that group value justifies listing. Usually, group value applies to a group of buildings which individually would fall short of listable quality, but as a group would qualify. But where's the group value here, of a bell in a farmhouse garden, surrounded by farmland?

Anyone come across anything as bizarre as this?

Tony Robinson

## News from North Craven

The North Craven Heritage Trust has created a new online archive of arch-headed single-light windows (go to [northcravenheritage.org.uk](http://northcravenheritage.org.uk) and follow the 'Archives' link). In the 'Windows' gallery are about seventy photos of sixty buildings in North Craven and a few Lancashire ones. Some are fire windows, others light the stairs or closets. The Trust asks "Why are there so many 17th-century, yeoman style houses in North Craven with one small arch-topped window, where all the other windows on the building are rectilinear?" If anyone has an answer to this, please contact the Trust!

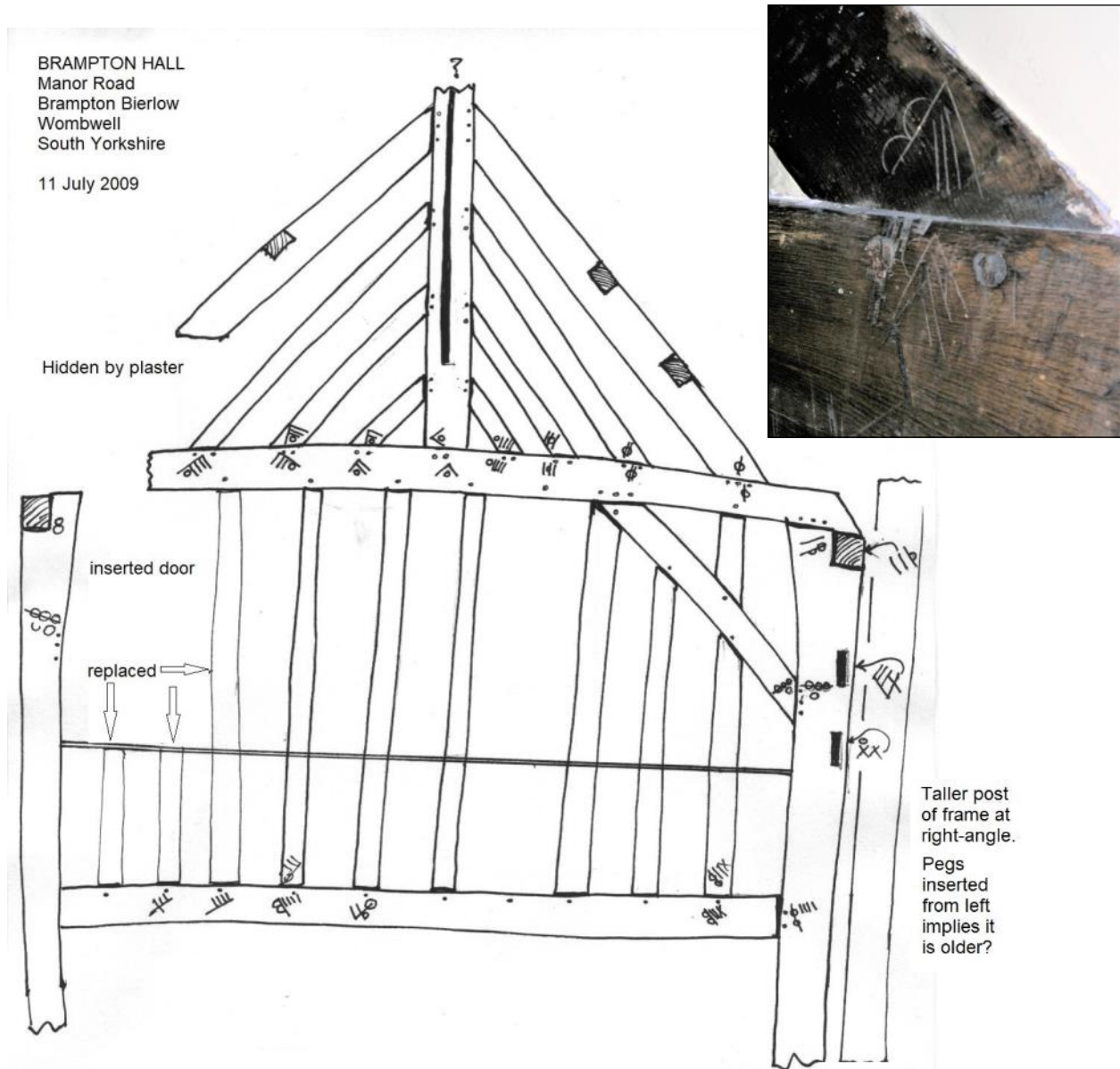
Another project planned by the NCHT is to identify the people represented by initials on dated doorheads in the area. Further details can be found in their July 2020 newsletter available on [northcravenheritage.org.uk](http://northcravenheritage.org.uk).

The Trust has also published a greetings card featuring nine handsome Yorkshire doorheads; contact them for details of availability.



## Some unusual carpenters' marks

Whilst doing some sorting out recently, David Cant found his drawing of Brampton Hall at Brampton Bierlow in South Yorkshire, visited during a YVBSG trip in 2009. This former pub, now a private dwelling, features unusual carpenters' marks on exposed trusses. The building is also illustrated in Peter Ryder's *Medieval Buildings of Yorkshire*, p138.



## Publications

*The Vernacular/Polite Interface in Cumbria's Historic Buildings*. Occasional Paper Number Two, published by the Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group (September 2020). An interesting collection of papers given at a study day held in 2019, comprising 'Vernacular and Polite: Reflections on a shifting frontier' by Adam Menuge; 'Polite and Vernacular Architecture: Cumbria and Northumbria compared' by Adrian Green; 'Tenure and the loss of the vernacular to the polite' by Peter Messenger; and 'Gaythorne Hall: the arrival of the Renaissance in Cumbria' by Paul Lewis. Copies are in limited supply at £5 each including postage; contact secretary@cvgb.co.uk.

*Internet Sites for Local Historians: a directory* edited by Alan G Crosby. The 5th edition published in November 2020 features over a thousand websites, making it a useful resource for the local historian. Available from British Association for Local History bookshop, www.balh.org.uk, at £10 plus p&p.

*Timothy Hutton (1779-1863) of Clifton Castle and Marske-in-Swaledale: The life and times of a North Yorkshire Gentleman* by Jane Hatcher. Based on diaries kept by Timothy Hutton for almost half a century and a wealth of other documentary sources. Contains references to Timothy improving the farmhouses on his brother's Marske estate. Available at £17.50 from Castle Hill Bookshop in Richmond, www.castlehillbookshop.co.uk.

*Settle: a historic market town* by David S Johnson. £5 from bookshops and other outlets in and around the Yorkshire Dales, or online from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (www.ydmt.org/shop) or the Yorkshire Dales National Park (retail.yorkshiredales.org.uk).

*Brick: a Social History* by Carolynne Haynes. How are bricks made? What are they made of? Who made them and how have they changed through time? The author answers these questions and reveals the surprising social history of bricks in Britain. £19 or less.

## Developments at Calverley Old Hall

The Landmark Trust are making progress with plans to restore and find a sustainable use for the Calverley Old Hall complex at Calverley, near Leeds ([www.landmarktrust.org.uk/search-and-book/properties/calverley-old-hall-5219](http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/search-and-book/properties/calverley-old-hall-5219)). The National Lottery Heritage Fund has now committed initial support for Calverley Old Hall, with funding to guide the project towards a major grant application. Over the coming months the project team will develop plans and designs for the site, working closely with their architect and archaeologist. The seventeenth century lodging block has offered holiday accommodation for many years, but it is now intended to restore the rest of the building (which includes a fourteenth century solar block, a fifteenth century great hall and chapel, and an early sixteenth century parlour block), much of which has fallen into disrepair over time.

The team hopes to begin holding activities and training sessions on site during 2021, to involve the local and wider community as the project develops. A full 3D scan of the buildings has already been completed, with a video being made to capture the process. This video will eventually be publicly available on the web. If you'd like to hear more, send an email message to [Calverley@landmarktrust.org.uk](mailto:Calverley@landmarktrust.org.uk) to sign up to e-news about the project.

Not many of us are lucky enough to stumble upon a hitherto unknown hammer beam roof! The chapel roof structure at Calverley was first discovered and exposed by YVBSG member Jack Sugden in 1977, and his superb drawing of the hammer beam is reproduced below. Jack recalls that:

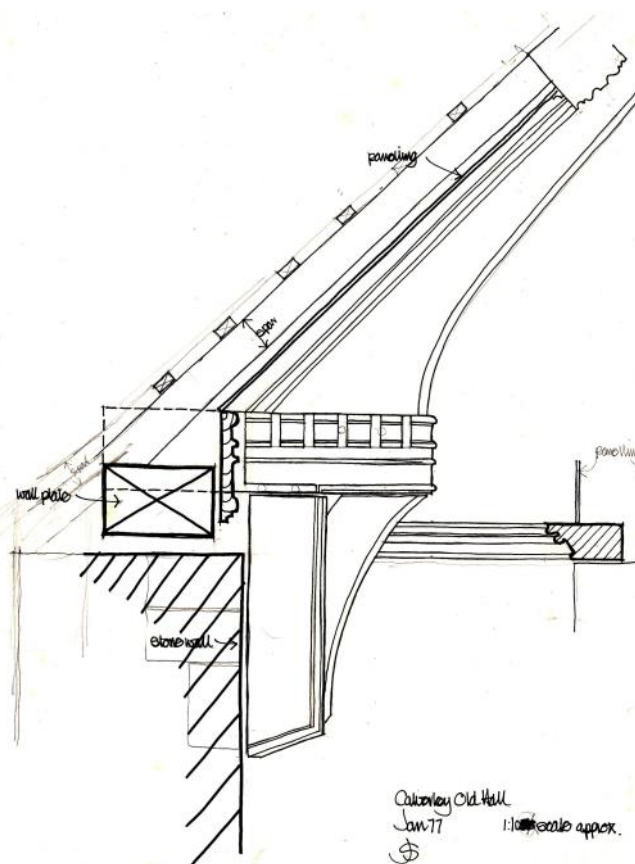
"It was truly exciting back in '77 to come across Calverley Hall. I knew the building well having driven past it many times, but my first visit was via an instruction from the Estate Co to look into the mundane job of installing a bathroom in the cottage adjoining the 'chapel' (which has since been demolished). I went up the stairs and saw a doorway cut through what I could see was a mediaeval window leading into a small room which had been panelled all the way round, but with hardboard with some strange arrangements at the eaves, and after a little bit of light demolition work I exposed one of the hammer beams! Now that was exciting. I kept hold of the keys and afterwards spent many happy hours with my young son stripping all the panelling off to expose the wonderful roof you see now.

"I was involved with the YAS mediaeval recording group at the time but this find was way above the sort of domestic buildings I was used to. I was doing a bit of research in the YAS library with one of my sketches of the hammer beams on the desk in front of me, when it was noticed in passing by David Michelmore, one of the County Archaeologists at the time. He immediately recognised the brattishing around the hammer beam and was fascinated to learn where it was from – he knew Calverley Hall but even he had never before recognised its significance.

"The Estate Co gave me access to the building and I then started to record as much of it as I could – there were several different tenants living in the overall building but they were usually happy to accommodate me crawling around and poking around in their attics (you will know how it is).

"Anyway in my spare time I had got to a fairly advanced recording stage when the Hall was transferred to the Landmark Trust who instructed a specialist architectural practice in York to handle what was obviously a very important building."

Subsequently our chair, Peter Thornborrow, also had some involvement with the building whilst working for Ferry & Mennim, the architects who prepared plans for restoring Calverley and creating a residential let.



### Next committee meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held by Zoom on Monday 1 February 2021. If you'd like to raise any matters, or have ideas for future events, please contact the Secretary, Mary Cook.

### Next Newsheet

The next Newsheet will be in February 2021 – please send any contributions to the editor by 31 January 2021. Short articles on buildings or features would be welcome, as well as details of publications or events of interest to other members.

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