



# YORKSHIRE VERNACULAR BUILDINGS STUDY GROUP

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Newsheet No 100

September 2020

Dear Member,

Since my last letter to the membership we have all had to endure various difficulties and long periods of isolation, perhaps especially our retired members. As someone who never used Facebook before I have enjoyed the daily posts from various interest groups including 'Historic churches uk' that posts up to five different churches each day with dozens of photos, a site I commend you to join. Today's post (27 August 2020) showed a wonderful atmospheric photo of Canterbury Cathedral's crypt – the notes stating that it 'has the largest Romanesque crypt in Europe. Built around 1100. It survived the fires and rebuilds upstairs.'

Recently David Cook visited me in Barnsley while Mary met up with a college friend at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. We discussed our future recording conference booked for next year considering alternatives to house recording. We think that we

would be safer recording barns with large open interiors and other farm buildings without putting householders or our members at risk, so we intend to hold our Doncaster event on 14 to 16 May 2021, though we might spread our net wider for suitable buildings to include the adjacent South Yorkshire districts.

David updated me about the hundreds of building reports that he and Mary have been scanning (see his separate report on the back page) and we hope that the greater accessibility of these will encourage you, our members, to check them out and perhaps to prepare a study paper on groups of buildings. Those reports that have been digitised are now being plotted on a Google map of Yorkshire, revealing interesting clusters, including a group of seventeen barns in Coverdale; opportunities for study abound in our existing records and we will need to fill our next *Yorkshire Buildings!*

Our next committee meeting is in October; it will be our first Zoom meeting. Keep safe and keep well.

*Peter Thornborrow, Chair*



A Doncaster barn. Photos: South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

## Calling for articles ...

2020 has been a difficult year, as lockdown and social distancing has made building recording an impossible task and all our events have been cancelled. As a consequence, *Yorkshire Buildings* 49 (the next but one issue) promises to be an especially thin one. We are appealing to our members who may have incomplete notes, photographs or drawings of buildings which they never quite got round to finishing to submit them for possible publication. Complete articles would also be appreciated, of course – all contributions gratefully received. Please post or email submissions to Tony Robinson, 5 Neile Close, Romanby, Northallerton DL7 8NN, email [editor@yvbsg.org.uk](mailto:editor@yvbsg.org.uk). *Yorkshire Buildings* 48 (2019) has now been published and is currently being distributed to members; we apologise for the delay this year due to Covid-19.

As always, shorter or more informal items would also be welcome for the Newsheet. Is there a particular feature or building that intrigues or mystifies you? Are you working on a particular project which might be of interest to others? Please send items to Lorraine Moor, [newsheet@yvbsg.org.uk](mailto:newsheet@yvbsg.org.uk). All being well, the next Newsheet will be in November 2020 – please send any contributions by 31 October 2020.

## Newsheet No 100!

As you may have noticed, we've reached the 100th edition of our Newsheet. The first-ever issue appeared twenty-seven years ago in August 1993. Amongst other things, it contained a notice about a proposed training event on recording buildings, a warning about a forthcoming increase in subs from £2 to £5, and a reminder about the Group's 21st anniversary celebration taking place that September. The entire back catalogue of Newsheets is available for browsing on the YVBSG website.

## Next committee meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held by Zoom on Saturday 10 October 2020. If you'd like to raise any matters, or have ideas for future events, please contact the Secretary, Mary Cook.

## List of members

The List of Members for 2020 is now available on the Members' Area of the website, containing details for all those members who have agreed to be included.

## Such handsome houses ...

A couple of years ago, members spent a day exploring Rotherham's 'Little Cotswolds' area, where one of the villages visited was Brampton-en-le-Morthen.

Yorkshire Buildings editor Tony Robinson subsequently discovered the following extract from Osbert Sitwell's autobiographical book *The Scarlet Tree* (1946), pages 164-5, looking back to the author's childhood around 1900.

The Sitwell seat was Renishaw Hall in north-east Derbyshire, but the family once had extensive estates in this part of Yorkshire. The 'finest mansion' referred to is probably the Manor House, where we saw the outside and rear, now divided into cottages.



Manor Farm Cottages

*"Brampton-en-le-Morthen resembled no village in Derbyshire. It consisted of a single L-shaped street of substantial stone houses, some bearing escutcheons over the doorways. Though situate in the middle of a highly industrialised country, the majority of these buildings dated back to the years just preceding the Civil Wars, and the difficulties of reaching the place kept it singularly unspoiled. It was curious, too, that a small rustic community should reside in such handsome houses; squires' houses, one would have said, yet they stood above a high pavement in the street, or hung above it with an over-sailing storey, carried on great beams. (The finest of these old mansions, incidentally, bore the coat of arms of the family of Bradshaw, the regicide). But everything was on an unusual scale here, even the barns seemed stone temples, so proud they were in fabric and proportion, so lofty their huge doors ..."*

## Handing down the skills

It was reported in the local press during the summer that Phoebe Tegetmeier has joined a handful of female thatchers after signing up to be an apprentice to her father, William. In the last year they have undertaken five projects together, replacing straw roofs in Yorkshire and Northumberland. They are now re-thatching Oak House, Farndale, which William last worked on twenty-five years ago; the job will take a month to complete. William has spent forty years as a thatcher and some members may recall his entertaining talks at YVBSG events in the past. There are now only about 800 master thatchers still working in the UK.

## Email from the YVBSG

Thank you to all those members who have already agreed to accept email messages from the Group. As access to printing and other services is now more limited than previously, we took the decision to circulate a link to the Newsheet by email where possible this time, rather than sending out printed copies. If you've received a paper copy it's because you're not on our email list. In these days of events increasingly moving online it would be helpful if we could contact members electronically, so if you'd like to be added to the list and receive our email communications, please contact the Membership Secretary, Pat Leggett.

## The buildings at Crag Farm, Cookridge



In the ancient parish of Adel, on the north-west fringes of Leeds, is a converted farm. Nothing unusual in that, except this conversion has made the fascinating buildings more accessible. It is also home to a charity providing support to homeless or needy young people. Our Group also has connections, although we only found out last year, following the death of our long-standing active member John Woods.

John's family generously donated some of his extensive library to the Group. In the collection we found some booklets about the history of Adel, including one on this farm. We also found that John and his wife Shona had been active supporters of Caring for Life, the charity which runs this farm. The booklet, *A Farm in a Yorkshire Parish* by Don Cole, was published in 1995. It is a thoroughly researched study with

both documentary and structural evidence used to portray a fascinating picture of the development of a typical farmstead.

The study was informed by a survey of the house made in preparation by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments for the *Rural Houses of West Yorkshire* book. This more or less coincided with the purchase of Crag Farm buildings and some of the land by the founder of the charity, Peter Parkinson. The RCHME study had already highlighted the surviving fragments of sixteenth-century origins in the house. Later work identified the importance of the aisled barn and other building - there are now three listed structures here. In 2012 a survey by the West Yorkshire Archaeology Service had timbers in the barn dated to the 1550s

We decided to continue the family's support by donating the proceeds from the sale of the books to the charity. The farmstead has changed radically over the last forty years, which you can see for yourself. The farm welcomes visitors and has an extensive plant centre, shop and the restaurant is in the sixteenth century barn. The site has limited opening at the time of writing and the website gives details - [www.craghousefarm.com](http://www.craghousefarm.com).

*Gunhild Wilcock and David Cant*



## Manor House for sale!

*Opportunity to acquire a picturesque family home ...*

What springs to mind when you read these words? They occur as a familiar theme in estate agents' promotions, usually adding a few thousand to the price of this 'desirable property'. But what exactly is a manor house? How do vernacular buildings, and they usually are, acquire this distinction? What do you know about your local manor house? Or are there several in your area?

A quick search using the interweb gave a variety of possibilities in our area. Following the links led to a nineteenth century pub outside Bradford, a nursing home (requiring improvement) outside Halifax and a Spa (temporarily closed) also near Bradford. From the images the latter looked eighteenth century but could be on the site of an earlier building?



Manor House Spa, Birkenshaw

This image was taken by Stephen Armstrong in 2018 and is from [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk), which is a very useful site for buildings, landscapes and features. It is a listed building so the description was useful in confirming eighteenth century with nineteenth century additions. See

[historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/](http://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)

But not really what I had in mind for a manor house.

So I tried a different tack. What was a manor, which gave its name to the house? Luckily there were several definitions but the one from

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manor\\_house](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manor_house)

also gave a bit of the history. So I needed to find out about feudal land ownership and the changes that'd taken place.

A good explanation can be found here, but you need a bit of time to work through it:

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/manors-further-research/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/manors-further-research/)

These are good too:

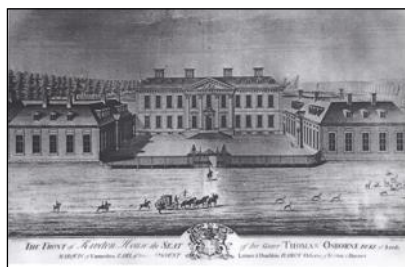
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/manorial/introduction.aspx](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/manorial/introduction.aspx)

[www.buildinghistory.org/manors.shtml](http://www.buildinghistory.org/manors.shtml)

But neither will give you easy access to the question 'which old manor do I live in?'. Probably the best place to start is with your local archive/record office/library or your local history society.

It turns out where I live was part of the Manor of Wakefield and we were under direct control (a graveship). Here's a bit about the manor:

[www.yas.org.uk/Publications/Wakefield-Court-Rolls-Series](http://www.yas.org.uk/Publications/Wakefield-Court-Rolls-Series)



Kiveton Hall

From about 1700 our Lord of the Manor was the Duke of Leeds, whose 'manor house' was at Kiveton Hall, east of Sheffield. He left the detailed admin to his stewards, who in turn relied on the local inhabitants to look after the lord's interests. Control of other parts of the manor, for example around Hebden Bridge, had been passed to other families. These were in effect 'sub manors' and might have their own manor house.

As it happens, we've recently been recording the Manor House at Rawtonstall, a hamlet on the hillside above Hebden Bridge.



Front (south) elevation, Manor House, Rawtonstall

We think this was the home for a time of the steward, but Covid has brought a halt to archive work at the moment. It's a fascinating building – not too large but challenging to interpret. It has some good surviving features, such as the octagonal king-post truss, which also has burn marks. Hopefully the full story will feature in a future edition of *Yorkshire Buildings*.

David Cant



Octagonal king-post truss at Manor House, Rawtonstall

## From your armchair ...

As most organisations have had to curtail their activities because of Covid, we've put together some suggestions for online activities which you can enjoy from the comfort of your home, including talks, conferences, podcasts and videos. Take a tour of Ayton Castle with YVBSG member Chris Hall, learn about datestones and windows with architectural historian Malcolm Airs, or listen to podcasts on medieval graffiti with archaeologist Matthew Champion.

These links and more can be found by visiting a new page, Online Occupations, on the YVBSG website.

## Missing reports

It's come to light that a few reports are missing from our archives. These are report numbers 3 (Isaiah's Farm, Arkengarthdale), 91 (Bank House, Fremington), 149 (Homestead, Killinghall), 151 (Springfield Farm, Killinghall), 152 (Crag Hill Farm, Killinghall), 153 (Myers Green, Killinghall), 310 (Manor Farm, Fadmoor), 410 (Park Corner Farm, Scriven), 674 (Old Hall, Swinithwaite), 1579 (High Oxnop, Muker), 1680 (Dairy Cottage, Thornhill) and 1733 (Hammerton Hall farm buildings). If anyone happens to have a copy of any of these, we'd be grateful if you could contact the Archivist, David Cook.

# The YVBSG Reports Digital Archive Project

Following the Chair's appeal in the spring for volunteers to help the YVBSG Archivist with this project, four members (Mary Cook, Richard Masters, Gunhild Wilcock and David Witcher) came forward to work on this.

This team has been responsible for producing over 1200 YVBSG reports in PDF format which have been added to the YVBSG Report Archive on the Box system, which is accessible by following the link from the Members' Area of the website. This has been completed in only four months, and is a remarkable effort, I think. The total number now available has risen to 1533 reports.

This total leaves us 366 reports short of the absolute total of 1899 YVBSG reports completed to date. This total includes

reports produced by the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Vernacular Buildings Study Group, the YVBSG's predecessor. Over the coming months I will be obtaining these reports from our other hardcopy archives to scan and add to the electronic archive to complete it.

Once this is done, the most significant archive of vernacular buildings covering Yorkshire will be much more easily accessible to our membership, and I hope will unlock the potential for much more research into the subject. I'll provide an update on progress in the next Newsheet.

I wholeheartedly thank the volunteers for their work to date in achieving this.

*David Cook, YVBSG Archivist*

## Great Lear Ings, Faugh Lane, Heptonstall

A seventeenth century farmhouse near Heptonstall, north-west of Hebden Bridge, that was visited by a YVBSG group in May 2007, and by more members in 2014, has been renovated and restored after being unoccupied since the 1960s or earlier. It is for sale as two plots, but visually it is still one house.

Great Lear Ings (listed Grade 2) has a three-room through-passage plan with a two-storey porch dated 1648:1:1:G. A rear kitchen wing, built of large stone blocks, is dated G:G:160(4) with a carved head that has a sleepy face. In the nineteenth century cells were added to the east and west, making a very long range. This south-west front is rendered, but the end cells are not. Interesting features at the front include the porch with scrolled plinth and one large scroll-type hoodmould stop. There are several examples of scrolled plinths locally but the best way to see these is to visit East Riddlesden Hall, near Keighley.



Great Lear Ings. Photo (by drone): Brian Harrison

The full-day visit for thirty members that I organised in 2007 was to six farmhouses and barns in the Heptonstall area. Great Lear Ings was added on at short notice right at the end at 4.30pm. The house was used for storage, and all beams were boxed-in. Access to the interior was difficult because of the clutter, so was not attempted. For more information on this visit (but not Great Lear Ings) see Newsheets 47, 48, 49, and the listing text on the Historic England website.

The next Heptonstall area visit in August 2014 was for the Calder Valley Historic Buildings Group, attended by twenty-six members. Fifteen of these were also YVBSG members. By now the house was becoming unsafe, especially the rear wing, so it was strictly external viewing, but still worthwhile as there is no close-up public access to the front. See the write-up and photos in *Yorkshire Buildings* No 43 (2015), or see Newsheet No 77 for a shorter report.

During World War II, the farmhouse was bought by Norman Culpan, the owner of Moderna Blankets Mytholmroyd, allegedly to avoid military service, but he did not live there and did not farm the land. He used a face with closed eyes and folded blankets as the firm's logo, used on all the firm's wagons and packaging. This idea was inspired by the carved sleepy face next to the 1604 datestone.



The 1604 datestone and sleepy face

The restoration of Great Lear Ings has revealed kingpost trusses with V-struts and a seventeenth century fireplace. Some housepart lights had been blocked in, but have now been opened up, revealing a nine-light window. Before restoration a kingpost truss with V-struts, and an internal corbelled structure, probably for a firehood, could be seen inside the ruinous rear wing.



Regd. Trade Mark  
The Moderna logo

It is not known whether the plank-and-muntin partition and reeded beams survived. Some of the online estate agents, such as [www.onthemarket.com](http://www.onthemarket.com), allow the photographs to be saved to the computer. The former barn nearby is dated 1865, but has a re-used apex stone dated 1619. The rear of the house can easily be seen close-up from public footpaths. The front can be seen by following the Calderdale Way. From this, a footpath heads north along a dry-stone wall towards the west end of the farmhouse.

*Kevin Illingworth*

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