

Crosby Garrett and Musgrave Tithe Barns

John Dunning, Peter Messenger and Mike Lea



Cumbria Vernacular Building Group

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CVBG Group visit, Saturday 5 July 2014

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(Photographs by Derek Horn, Michael Kingsbury, Mike Lea, Peter Messenger and Barry Stacey)

John Dunning and his family welcomed the Cumbria Vernacular Building Group (CVBG) to **Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn** on a summer's morning. John gave us a history of the Rectory, its former Rectors and the importance of tithes and its tithe barn. The parish Tithe Barn at Crosby Garrett lies at the foot of a steep knoll that dominates the village, on the summit of which stands the church. Once the site of a pagan shrine, before a cross was erected, this eminence still recalls its druidic past. The current church dates back to the eleventh century and has been faithfully added to and replaced over the centuries.

The Tithe Barn sits at the intersection of the path between church and rectory and the main road out of the village to Soulby. In one form or another the tithe has continued since the tenth century. Its purpose, since the seventeenth century, was the financing of the church and clergy through a levy of one tenth of the produce of the land. The present building dates from later in that century, but its special circumstances make it exceptional in the history of the tithe.

In the Middle Ages Crosby Garrett, previously called Crosby Gerard after its former resident owner, came into the hands of William de Soulby of the adjacent parish in 1296, and later it was acquired by the powerful Musgrave family. This meant that the lordship of the manor and gift of the advowson, continued without residence within the parish until early in the eighteenth century.



Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn (south side)

In the seventeenth century the parish lay within the influence of the Musgraves and the Whartons and in consequence sided with the parliamentary party in the English revolution. It, nevertheless, had the support of the local population who were incensed by a decision of Charles 1st to remove security of tenure from former monastic land. As a result the Reverend Edmond Mauleverer, whose religious views did not accord with the puritan inclinations of the locality, was ejected from the living. Following the Restoration and the Bartholomew Act of 1662, the Reverend Mauleverer applied for Reinstatement; the then incumbent, Christopher Jackson, was duly ejected and Mr. Mauleverer was restored to the parish.

In 1717 the Reverend William Bird was instituted as rector. A short time later he inherited the lordship of the manor and the gift of the advowson, which meant that for the first time in four hundred years the parish had a resident lord of the manor. To reflect his newly won dual status he renovated and extended the rectory, perhaps with a premonition that his own dynasty would continue there for more than a century; certainly with the knowledge that he could supervise the gathering of tithe into his own adjacent Tithe Barn.

Holding the offices of both lord of the manor and rector brought with it an entitlement to 'great tithe', which means the whole of the tithe levy. In this case the yield of the tithe was, no doubt, important to maintaining the combined status of both squire and rector, so we may therefore assume that his preference for payment in kind offered some advantage. In the early eighteenth century some places had already commuted tithes to cash, for convenience. But the Reverend James Bird, (son of William) was having none of this, indeed, he not only insisted on having produce delivered to the Tithe Barn in kind, but he built a substantial extension to the building in an L shape, with an elegant abutment and loft access, together with access to the lower areas from the road.

The local farmers rebelled at this imposition because much of the land from which tithe was due was some distance away in Musgrave and other farther reaches of the parish. Roads at this time were mud tracks and transport was by horse and cart, or sledge. It therefore seemed to them most unreasonable to require the physical delivery of produce in difficult circumstances when duty could be served with a simple cash payment.

The rector/squire would not listen to representations and was prepared to impose his will through the ecclesiastical court in Carlisle - until he discovered how much it was going to cost. At this point he sought another route, arbitration. Three worthies from within the county were appointed to arbitrate. James Bird, clerk, rector, and patron of Crosby Garrett asserted his right, as described in the leases, to receive payment of tithe in kind. He was opposed by Sir Philip Musgrave, Bart, on behalf of himself and the farmers, who claimed both the right and the practicality of commuting tithe to a cash payment. The judgement of the arbitrators was that payment in kind could be replaced by a single payment on Martinmas Day. Thus ended in 1752 the obligation to deliver produce into the Tithe Barn at Crosby Garrett and with it the traditional role of the Tithe Barn.

The arbitrator's decision was a great step forward for the local community, but it rendered a large, centrally placed building in the village bereft of its original purpose. As so often in these matters the building was modified for use as a farm building to house livestock and crop, and the storage of implements. Throughout the nineteenth century the Tithe Barn served a useful purpose as a farm building relating to glebe lands and thereafter being let to a local farmer. In the twentieth century, as farming became more mechanised, the building became less useful and its location more awkward.. Towards the end of the twentieth century and onwards to today, animal welfare legislation has rendered it unsuitable for housing livestock, very inconvenient for housing crop and of no value to agriculture that could support its upkeep.

Nevertheless, this is an important historic building that records an important part of the history of the parish and region, over more than three centuries. Its juxtaposition in relation to church, rectory, and farmland places it at the entrance to the village. It is also in its construction and design a very elegant building of its period, with its considerable height and abundance of ventilation slits, its concealed abutment and L shaped dual loft access, certainly meriting the listing it has been given.

The barn was renovated in 2004 with financial support from DEFRA. The work included stabilising and repairing the walls that have moved and reroofing the barn with its original Westmorland slate. The building was restored to its original layout using original materials as far as appropriate. The building is now available for local community use including several recreational uses consistent with its preservation as a Tithe Barn; part is used as a store without making any internal changes.



Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn (north side, from Soulby Road)

Peter Messenger then gave a brief introduction to Tithe Barns and the complexities of the Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn, before letting members investigate the building for themselves. The following is his favoured interpretation of the evidence to be found but it is certainly not the only one.

The statutory listing describes the barn as a bank barn dating from the 18th century ‘with the east wing being slightly later in date than the north’. The north wing is presumably the range which fronts onto the Soulby Road and the east wing is the extension which runs southwards from the east side of the building. The suggestion that the north wing is the earliest part of the building appears to rely on the section of wall which separates the two sections of the barn as well as the byre and sink mow on the floor below. The upper section of this wall contains a large arched opening and a single ventilation slit which by its construction indicates that the barn’s interior was to the north of this wall. There is nothing to suggest that this section of wall could not be the earliest part of the building. The alignment of this wall does not continue along to the western gable. Instead there is an unusual curved wall, which seems to be later in construction, linking the older wall to the rest of the north wing in a very unconvincing manner. I consider that the greater part of the north wing is of a later build than this ‘remnant’ wall and that much of the north wing was constructed after the east wing.

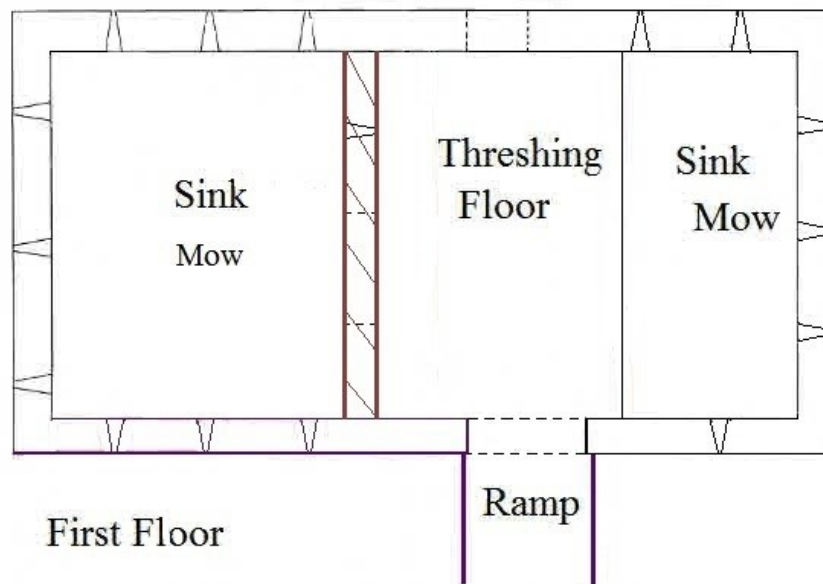


Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn (north side, from Soulby Road)

The original bank barn, with its cowhouse or byre below, is built across the slope and would have needed a ramp to gain access to the upper floor. This relatively small barn could well have been the 'One Byar; One Barne' mentioned in the terrier of 1704 referred to above (see Appendix). By 1749 the barn is now referred to as 'one large Barn with conveniences for Cattle under the Lofting' and it would seem reasonable to assume that the building has been enlarged in the manner shown on the drawing below.

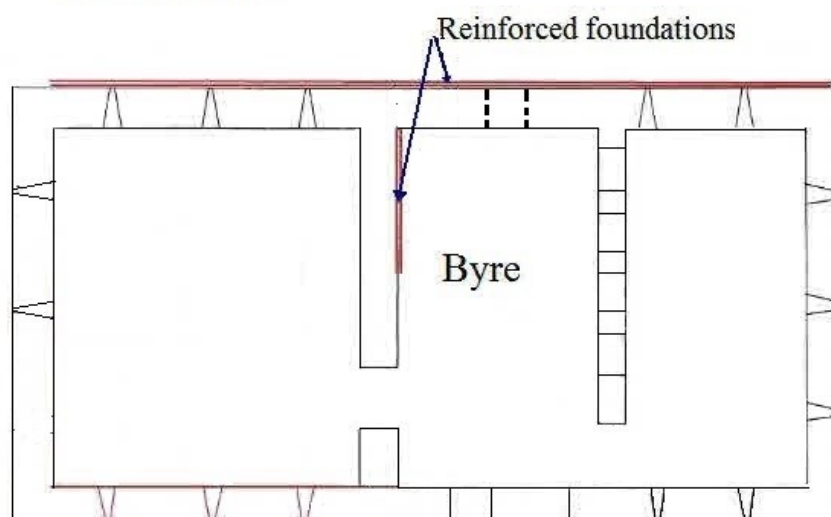


Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn – the byre



Possible Second Phase of Development of Tithe Barn

Ground Floor



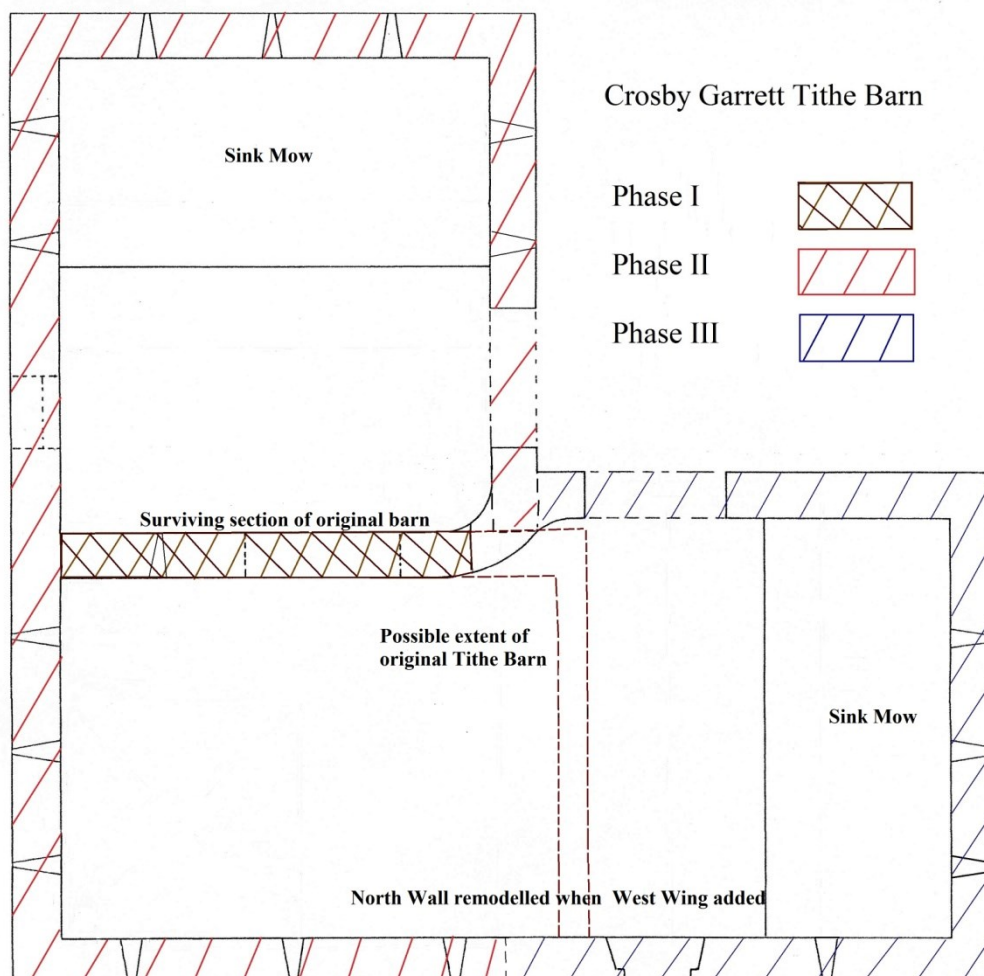
This is a more traditional bank barn built across the slope, with the barn accessed by a ramp from the yard, this is obvious from the remaining ground floor ventilation slits on the yard side of the barn. The upper floor had sink mows at each side of the threshing floor. Access to the north side was through the barn door opening in the remnant wall of the earlier barn. Access for cattle would have been through a door in the field side which has now gone. The removal of this door would coincide with the remodelling of the northern wing when access for cattle was shifted onto the Soulby Road elevation. The door could simply have been blocked up but this isn't the case. The opening in the corner of the byre is a low window with a substantial masonry plinth underneath it with no sign of a former jamb. In fact the reinforced plinth extends into the cross wall of the byre and can be seen at the base of most of the eastern sidewall. This suggests to me that this wall has been rebuilt probably at the same time as the western extension was built and the Soulby Road elevation remodelled. The bowing of the walls that needed to be repaired and rebuilt in the 20th century may have been a re-occurrence of the same ground instability.



Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn

The suggestion that the western extension, mentioned above, was the last element of the Tithe Barn's development is based on the linking curved wall and the close juxtaposition of the two barn door entrances. Neither the misaligned walls nor the relationship of the barn doors would seem to be the result of a rational approach to planning a complex building such as this. Both barn doors need ramps and having two barn doors so close together means that providing access requires the raising of most of the ground level in the yard. The neatest way of building the western extension on the south side would be to continue the surviving 'original' barn wall. The reason the extension wall doesn't line up with that of the 'original' barn wall may be due to the desire to create the largest floor area possible. The constraints for this would be the access into the yard from the Soulby Road and the existing barn entrance. As a result the barn is extended westwards towards the stable block leaving just enough room for a cart to gain access to the yard; and southwards almost to the jamb of the barn doors of the bank barn. The entrance into the new extension is placed close to the junction of the old and new build so that a sink mow can be created in the bay against the west gable to feed cattle in the byre under the threshing floor. This sink mow has limited headroom making it unlikely that the bay against the western gable would have been suitable for use as a byre.

On this interpretation the phases of development at Crosby Garrett would look something like the following:



After thanking John, Sarah and her daughter Alice for their hospitality (and cakes) the group reluctantly left Crosby Garrett to drive to **Great Musgrave**. Just beyond the magnificent 1825 Musgrave Bridge over the River Eden, we turned into **Musgrave Church Field** for coffee and biscuits provided by Barbara Dowson and Kate Lea.



Musgrave Church Field – Tithe Barn and St Theobald's Church

Mike Lea introduced **Musgrave Church Field Trust**, a charity formed in 2004 to buy the Field and buildings from the Diocese of Carlisle for the local community. The Field and Barn are used for community activities and for school visits by local pre-school, primary and secondary pupils. The Tithe Barn was restored in 2013 with generous financial support from Natural England (through a Higher Level Stewardship Agreement), local charities, historic buildings Trusts and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Mike stressed that the context of buildings was very important, including their surroundings, history and present-day use. The history of the Field was fascinating because it shows the influence of national events on local affairs and, in a few cases, the links from the Field up to national and even international events. These stories bring the site alive (and are good for grant applications!).

Because the Field was part of the old Glebe Lands of Musgrave Rectory, many Church documents survive in Cumbria Archives, in Kendal and Carlisle such as Ecclesiastical Surveys, Glebe Terriers (see Appendix), Probate Inventories and Tithe Books. Mike told just three stories from these records. The Survey of 1291 for Pope Nicholas IV valued Musgrave Rectory at £13/6/8, but following Scottish raids after Banockburn in 1314 and the plague in 1317, the value dropped to only £1 in 1318! Then in 1535 in the Reformation, Sir John Knollys, chaplain to Sir Thomas Cromwell (Secretary to Henry VIII) was appointed to Musgrave Rectory. But the local farmers refused to pay their tithes to 'an heretical priest' and a petition was sent to Lord Darcy, a leader of the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion. But to no avail, the rebellion collapsed and, inter alia, two residents of Little Musgrave were executed. The Rectory and barns were rebuilt in the middle of the 18th century. The most famous Rector was William Paley, whose writings strongly influenced Charles Darwin and Richard Dawkins in the development of the theory of evolution (though not as he might have expected!).

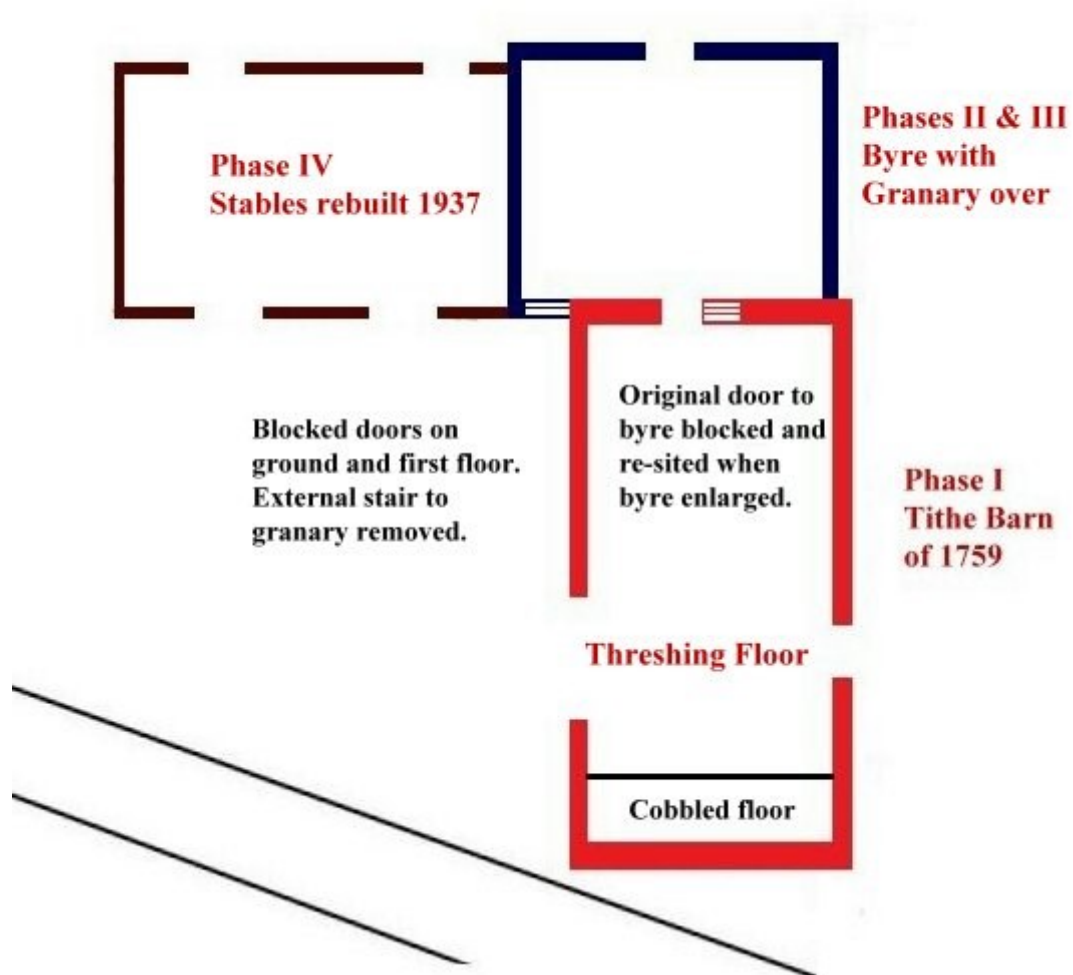
We can follow the detailed history of the buildings in the various documents. All the Eden bridges (except Warcop Bridge) were washed away in the Great Flood on 2 February 1822. But the new sandstone Musgrave Bridge in 1825 made the flooding worse on the Field which ultimately led to the rebuilding of St. Theobald's Church at a higher level in 1845 and the demolition of the Rectory in 1884. The barn remained, though modified and new stables were built in the 1937.

Peter Messenger had advised the Trust on the restoration and now guided the group round the restored barn. The barn had been a threshing barn (on 30 January 1670 it contained 'corne, threshed and unthreshed £34/0/0'; on 26 January 1719, 'Wheat, Barley, Oates, Hay, Husbandry Gear') with a blocked-up winnowing door opposite the main double doors. The centre threshing floor had been well worn and was now replaced with stone slabs for ease of use. But much of the original beaten earth floor was retained – analysis by Wardell Armstrong Ltd. showed that its composition was 56% medium-fine sand, 40% silt and 3% clay, with some organic material. This is quite different to the local soil and had been specifically engineered. Samples of the rock-hard floor were passed round. A cobbled section was also restored which may have been used as a foundation for an early threshing machine? The barn was rebuilt in 1759 on medieval foundations and pre-dates the byre on the north wall. This has stalls for 9 small cattle, separated by stone slabs and wooded boskins. Some of the tethering posts and iron rings survive. But the positions of the door do not quite line up with the central cobbled manure trough. Unlike the Crosby Garrett barn, the cattle would have been fed from behind. A granary over the byre had been removed in the 1930s, though steps up to a door were clearly visible. The first-floor 'house' type window was quite usual in farm granaries. Antique skylights made by the Bowerbank foundry in Penrith were set in the roof. The two separate stables were rebuilt in 1937 but incorporate many sandstone slabs which may come from the old Rectory, with lettering and symbols on them. The plan on p. 11 shows the probable development of the buildings.

All the buildings were repointed with lime mortar and the interior walls were lime-washed. The building work had been carried out by Mike Armstrong, MAE Eden Lime Builders Ltd.



Musgrave Church Field – the Tithe Barn and St Theobald's Church



Margaret Owen (Cumbria Archive Service) with Warcop School in Musgrave Tithe Barn



Byre before and after restoration



Musgrave Tithe Barn



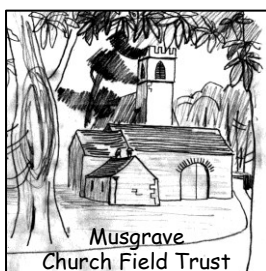
Restored Stable



Original Earth Floor

The Restoration of the Barn, Byre and Stables on Musgrave Church Field in 2013 was generously supported by Natural England, Heritage Lottery Fund, John Strutt Charity, Leche Trust, Manifold Trust, Alan Evans Memorial Trust, Co-operative Community Fund, Cumberland Building Society Charitable Foundation, Norben Trust and local benefactors.

Musgrave Church Field Trust thank the builders Mike Armstrong, Steven Armstrong and Adam Blair of *MEA Eden's Lime Builders Ltd*, Graham Alderson and Jim Rawlins. We also thank Tom Gledhill, Peter Messenger, Tim Nicholson and Martin Sowerby.



Tim Wells, one of the Trustees, is an expert on the use of lime in old buildings. His own house in Musgrave had long suffered from damp due to cement rendering and mortar which do not allow the walls to breathe. Any moisture coming in through the walls cannot escape. Using lime mortar instead solved the problem! Also cement rendering is much harder and stronger than sandstone or brick and its removal can strip the facing off a wall. Tim then demonstrated lime putty, lime mortar and some new lime insulation which he has developed. He starts with quicklime CaO from Shap Quarries. Adding water hydrates it to calcium hydroxide Ca(OH)_2 , and it can heat up to 1200°C – several CVBG members almost burnt their fingers on the sample he passed round! This slaked lime putty is matured in water for several months and can then be used for lime-wash, with added linseed oil for external walls. It was traditional to add horse or cow hair and sharp sand to make lime mortar, though Chinese goat-hair is now common. Tim had shaved two of his Galloway cattle to make a Cumbrian product! The mortar must be applied slowly and built up in several layers to form a strong stable bond which will last for many years. The lime absorbs CO_2 to form calcium carbonate CaCO_3 . He has also developed a new type of Lime Insulation which contains hemp and powdered volcanic rock. This can be used on any wall and can take a smooth finish.

Tim stressed that this is all a summer sport – any frost is a disaster during the curing stage. Lime is very versatile and ideally suited to old buildings but you have to know what you are doing! He has now been involved in many projects in Cumbria and throughout the UK.

See <http://www.eden-lime-mortar.co.uk> for further information and to contact Tim.

Lunch followed by the river, but with out lime juice!



Great Musgrave is one of 5 villages that still hold **Rushbearing** ceremonies in Cumbria (the others are nearby Warcop, Ambleside, Grasmere and Urswick). **Joy Thompson**, also a Trustee, told us about the history of the Church. St. Theobald is the patron saint of charcoal burners – but there are only two churches dedicated to him in England, though many in France. He died on 30 June 1066 (his feast day). The church was transferred from St. Mary's Abbey, York to the Diocese of Carlisle in 1248, though the abbey records were destroyed in the civil war (information thanks to Mike Kingsbury). There may have been several churches on the site – the latest built in 1845 in a transition period between Georgian and Gothic Revival styles.

Rushbearing is held on the Saturday nearest to the Old Midsummer's Day. The tradition of scattering rushes on the originally earth floors in the Church goes back for centuries. It was discontinued in the 18th century but restarted due to a bequest in 1827 from Septimus Collinson, who was the 7th son of a local farmer and became Provost of the Queen's College, Oxford for 31 years! The CVBG group watched a splendid procession of girls with crowns of flowers and boys with rush crosses from the village through the Field to a service in the church. This year there was an important diversion as rushes were strewn by the children on the earth floor in the Tithe Barn, recreating the true tradition from olden times. Tea and buns were later available in the Village Institute.

So ended an excellent day, with an emphasis on buildings, history and tradition in a modern context.

A 20 page full colour booklet, ***Musgrave Church Field and Tithe Barn*** is available @£4 from Mike Lea (mikeilea@gmail.com, 017683 42353), or the Old Bookshop, 22 Market Sq. Kirkby Stephen.



Rushbearing 2014 - Spreading rushes on the Earth Floor in the Tithe Barn

Appendix: Extracts from Glebe Terriers
Cumbria Archive Service, Kendal and Carlisle

Year	Crosby Garrett Parish	Musgrave Parish
1663		Rector John Vaux 'One dwelling house one Barne one Stable one Garden. . . . '
1704	Curate John Tillam 'One Dwelling-House; One Byar; One Barne; One Garden, One Orchard'	Rector Chrisopher Thornton 'The Parsonage house 2 Barnes one horse byer and Stable one Pigin Coate with Garth & Gardens'
1731/9	Rector William Bird 'One Dwelling House called the Parsonage One Stable One Byar Thereunto Adjoined. A Garden One Orchard (soe called) contained Three Roods. '	Rector Simon Pindar 'The Parsonage house, a Barn two Byers a Stable and a Brewhouse, A Garden an Orchard, and a parcel of Ground called the Green Garth;'
1749	Rector James Bird 'A Parsonage House (being seventeen yards long and six yards wide), one large Barn with conveniences for Cattle under the Lofting, one stable for six horses, one Carthouse one garden & orchard containing about a rood and a half more of less belonging thereto. '	Rector Simon Pindar 'the Rectory consisting of a Kitchen, Parlour, Celler and Milkhouse, below stairs, Three Chambers or Lodging Rooms above stairs with Garrets over them, a Barn, two Byers, a Stable and a Brewhouse. A Garden An Orchard . . . '
1777	Rector William Bird 'A Parsonage House covered with blue slate being seventeen yards long and ten yards wide, one large Barn with conveniences for Cattle under the Lofting, one stable for six horses, one Carthouse one garden & orchard containing about a rood and a half more of less belonging thereto. '	Rector William Paley 'One Slate Dwelling house, one slate Barn, Brewhouse, Stable and cowhouse thatched situate at Musgrave aforesaid. Item one Garden and Orchard . . . '
1828	Rector Thomas Bird 'A Parsonage House covered with blue slate being seventeen yards long and six yards wide, one large Barn with conveniences for Cattle under the Lofting, one stable for six horses, one Carthouse one garden & orchard containing about a rood and a half more of less belonging thereto'	Rector Richard Atkinson 'The rectory House, one Barn, one Cow House with a Granary over it slated One wash House, one Stable, one Cart House thatched. A Garden and Orchard . . . '
1867	Rector Isaac Smith 'A Parsonage House, with stable and Coach House A Garden and Orchard. A Farm House, with stable and byers for cattle and a large Barn with conveniences for Cattle under the Lofting etc' Isaac Smith Rector of Crosby Garrett'	Rector Joseph Chapelhow 'One Dwelling house, wash house, Barn, Granary Stable Cow house Cart house Pig-house and Privy situate at Musgrave aforesaid. Item One Garden and Orchard . . . '
1876	Rector George Ridley 'A Parsonage House with Stable Coach House and Garden and Orchard. A Farm House, with Stable Hayloft Byers a large Barn with conveniences for Cattle under the Lofting etc'	Rector Joseph Chapelhow 'one Dwelling house, wash house, Barn, Granary Stable Cowhouse cart house pighouse and privy situate at Musgrave aforesaid. Item One Garden and Orchard . . . '
1894	Rector George Ridley 'A Parsonage House with Stable Hayloft Coach House and Garden and Orchard. A Farm House, with Stable Hayloft Byers a large Barn with conveniences for Cattle under the Lofting etc'	Rector Stafford Haines 'One Dwelling house, Wash house Barn Granary Stable Cow house Stables Cart house pig-house and privy situate at Musgrave aforesaid and the Rectory on the Hill.'



Crosby Garrett Tithe Barn



Musgrave Tithe Barn