NEWSLETTER No. 37 – AUTUMN 2022

1. From the Chairman

I hope that 2022 will be the last of the difficult years for our group. During Covid, live events have been arranged at short notice, but have always been well attended, thanks to the interest of members. Regular Zoom talks have provided a monthly contact point for many of you. Especially welcome have been the members who rarely get to live venues. Eventually, all our Zoom sessions will be available on the Internet. You just type into your search facility, CVBG and the name of the person giving the talk together with the subject.

The AGM held in Appleby this year, saw some changes to the committee and the roles they perform. Mike Turner provides a constant service in so many ways. Helen Evans continues to look after the website, adding newsletters, e news and up to date information about CVBG. Francesca Halfacree has taken over our Social Media presence on Facebook and Twitter from Hannah Kingsbury. Stephanie Hewison was welcomed onto the committee at the AGM earlier this month and **Margaret Jarvis, a newcomer to the group has taken over the role of Treasurer, from Mike Kingsbury.** A warm welcome to Margaret. Mike has done the job so well for nine years since our foundation in 2013 and our grateful thanks go to him. Dan Elsworth is storing our library and equipment at his office in Ulverston. We're currently in the process of making arrangements for access, so more news later. Barbara Grundy keeps us supplied with refreshments which include delicious treats baked by her husband. Thanks too, to those relinquishing their roles and to all the committee, who work hard to keep CVBG a lively and active group. A new list of committee members and their responsibilities is printed on the inside cover of this newsletter.

We are planning two publications at the moment after work on them was interrupted by Covid. The first one, describing buildings in some villages on the east Fellside and the Eden Valley, should be completed soon. The other, a field guide which relates vernacular buildings across Cumbria to the geology beneath them, is a bigger project, and will need more time, but we'll persevere.
When CVBG was founded, one aim was to record buildings. This has proved to be a slow process, but this year we have begun to catch up. Also, we are receiving more invitations to visit buildings and will include the results in forthcoming newsletters.

Your comments, ideas and queries are always welcome, so please keep in touch.

Best wishes Janet Hill

2. CVBG Fallen Yew visit 28/07/2022 – Dan Elsworth

About 20 members visited this building in Underbarrow, led by Dan Elsworth and based on a survey Greenlane Archaeology had carried out for the owner, Mr Robert Cohen, who accompanied us on the day. The building is in need of renovation and the survey was commissioned in order to better understand the property and its significance prior to any work taking place. An added bonus of

Fallen Yew, rear view © Stuart Harling

this was that the owner had also commissioned a dendrochronological assessment, which added greatly to the understanding of the building's development. This was particularly fortunate because historical records are surprisingly sparse, it is known to have been the property of the Hubbersty family who were prominent in Underbarrow, and had been there since at least the 15th century, and were early converts to Quakerism following George Fox's visit to Underbarrow in 1652. It has been stated that the building had been constructed in 1565 but no evidence for this was given and is not clear when the current name was first used, making identifying it in records difficult. Nevertheless, a will for Robert Hubbersty from 1739 gives a list of rooms and it is therefore possible to get some idea of what the arrangement was.

The visit showed, however, that what externally appears to be a simple building with an original linear range extended by a two storey with attic cross wing at the south-west end, was surprisingly complex internally. There is an intra mural staircase in the centre behind the main fireplace, but to the north-east a timber staircase also of early date, while the cross-wing has its own staircase extending all the way to the attic with turned balusters. There is also an odd projecting extension on the north-west side of two storeys with a large chimney, and the cross-wing, which has some impressive rooms, originally panelled but now with only elements of this remaining, has some massive fireplaces but too many

chimneys! There is also an array of former window openings and some surviving timber mullions, including one very wide example, mirrored on the other side, that once illuminated a large first floor room later sub-divided by stud walls. This was also accessed by an external staircase, and it was apparent that the early timber staircase internally was a later addition. Also remarkable is the collection of early false-panelled doors present throughout the building, including one with naïve Gothic-style decoration.

Members explored the building thoroughly and there was considerable discussion about the development of the property and the uses to which elements of it might have been put, with my personal favourite subject of textile weaving coming up more than once! At least with the dendrochronological dating, which firmly dates the main range to 1653 and the cross-wing to 1679, we have a firm basis to begin our understanding of the building and can probably dismiss the idea of a 16th century date. Nevertheless, there is still potentially much more to learn and it is hoped that once work starts, particularly the removal of the external render, that this will provide further opportunities to refine the phasing of this surprisingly complex building ▪

Wooden mullioned window © Stuart Harling

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the year 2022/3 are due. If you are unsure as to your status, then please contact the secretary for confirmation. This will ensure you do not miss out on event announcements and newsletters.

We have some forthcoming **Zoom** events:-
3rd October '*Ships Timbers*' by David Cant
7th November '*Westmorland Barns*' by Hannah Kingsbury
5th December '*Vernacular Buildings*' by June Hill
A link will be emailed to members just before the due date.

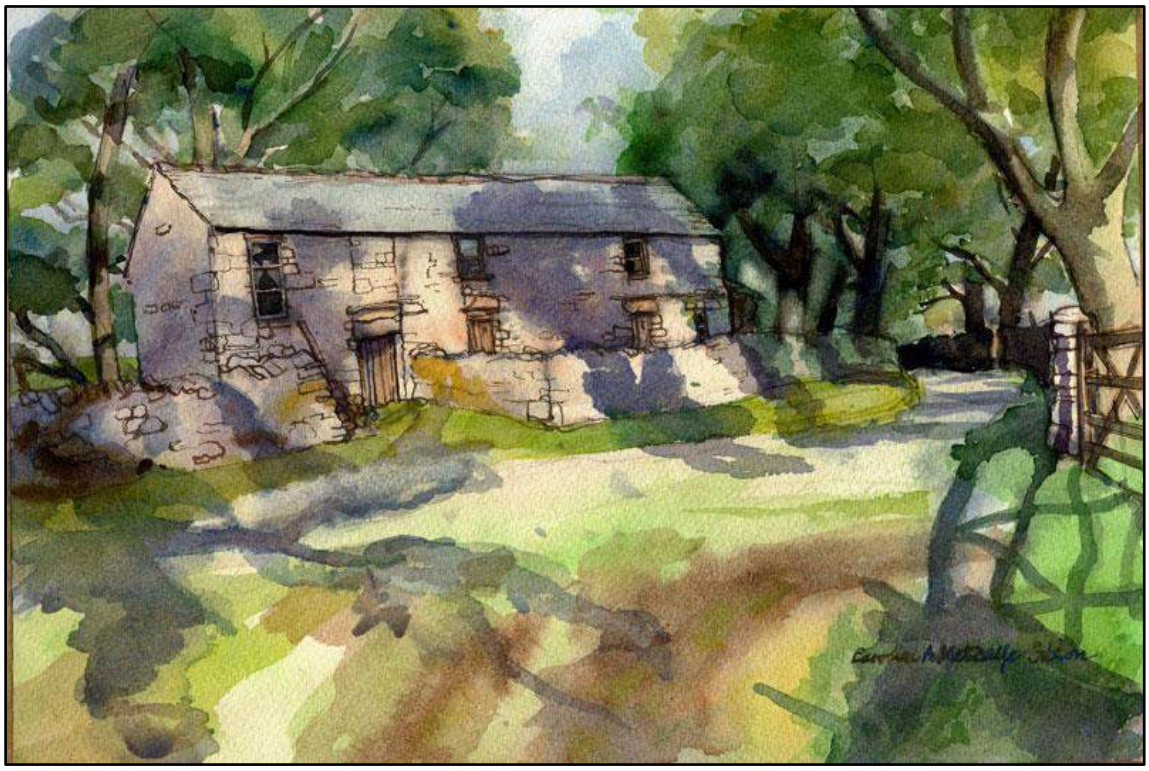
……..and **Live** events in the pipeline are:-
14th October visit to 'Ona Ash' with Andrew Carter
19th November looking at the buildings of Milnthorpe with Stuart Harling
Both these will require booking at £5 per person
Booking will open shortly via email.

3. Art Exhibition at Ruskin Museum

Art Exhibition of Vernacular Buildings held at the Ruskin Museum in Coniston, 25 June to 4 Sept.

This was a delightful exhibition of 30- 40 watercolours and pen and ink drawings of vernacular buildings and landscapes found in the area between the Lakes, Dales and Pennines.
It was entitled ``Capturing the past before it disappears; Vernacular buildings between the Lakes and the Dales ``.
The artist is Caroline Metcalfe -Gibson from the Scar Gallery in Ravenstonedale who members may recall gave us a most interesting, guided tour of vernacular buildings in the village earlier in the year.
Her interest and concentration were on ``ordinary working buildings found all over the area``. She loved the old farmhouses, limekilns, drop gates, becks and walls which still form so much of the character of the area.
She says that these structures are evidence of how things were done in the past. She is attracted by their variety and ordinariness; their quirkiness and character; and how they seem to grow out of the ground.
These are precisely the interests too of CVBG; and it was fascinating to see how, with shadow and light she captured the very simplicity and beauty of these everyday buildings which were so essential to the rural past for hundreds of years.
It would have been lovely to have a booklet of these fine and evocative paintings for sale ▪

Rachel Nutman



'Abandoned Farmhouse' © Caroline Metcalfe-Gibson: visit www.scargallery.co.uk
(Permission to use this image kindly granted by the artist).

4. VISIT TO SCALES HALL, September 8th 2022 – Paul Lewis

On the 8th of September the visit to the hall was preceded by lunch at the village hall in Skelton where Paul Lewis, Vice Chairman gave a summary of an earlier evening Zoom meeting about this Grade II* listed historic building; the history and architectural features of this semi-fortified house were described and members were then welcomed as guests of Mrs. Laura Jenkinson at her home, Scales Hall near Skelton.

© Paul Lewis

1. The southern elevation showing the central 15th century hall with 17th century service wing (left) and 1698 solar (right) by Henry Brougham.

Mrs Jenkinson illuminated members with her plans for the sensitive restoration of the hall, particularly the rare black paint scheme discovered on the underside of floor timbers in one of the bedrooms. Paul escorted visitors around the exterior of building and described the historical phases of development and the architectural features.

With early 15th century references to a 'lodge' at Scales, the Southaick family developed this house in the mid to late 16th century into the semi-fortified arrangement still visible today around a courtyard with its Tudor gate. The carved timber ceiling in the hall room and black paint scheme date from this period. Early in the 17th century a service building was taken down at the western end and a two-storey kitchen wing was added with servant accommodation above.

By the turn of the 18th century the Brougham family owned the hall and Henry Brougham rebuilt the eastern end of the main range with a two-storey solar and a staircase on the northern side. Two Gibsian doors had

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been added by this date to further embellish the impression for visitors entering through the Tudor gate. The property passed to the Ballantine Dykes of Dovenby during the late 18th century.

The lodging wing in the yard developed from 1575 through a variety of functions to be adapted for agricultural use in the 19th century. A piggery was added on the western side during this period when the property was tenanted but had been re-acquired by Lord Brougham and Vaux as the ancestral home of the family. Ownership was lost in the 1930's when the 4th Lord Brougham put the property up for auction to pay gambling debts ▪

© Paul Lewis

2. The Tudor gate at the northern end of the yard

Ceiling and Door © Mike Turner

3. The northern elevation showing the 1698 solar and main stair (left); the 15th century hall can be seen (centre) with its late 17th century link to the lodging wing (right).

4. The central hall and solar.

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© Paul Lewis

5. The 16th century lodging wing with 18th adaptations and 19th century changes to agricultural use

Door Graffiti © Sue Turner

Old Wallpaper © John McDowell

Clothes Airer © Mike Turner

5. Harby Brow Tower, Zoom Talk 1ST August 2022 – Paul Lewis

1. An aerial view of Harby Brow from the north © Paul Lewis

With thanks to Margaret Whiteley, owner, the history of this medieval site was explained, commencing with construction of the tower in 1465 by Alexander Highmoor. There is some evidence that a hall was attached at that time but was rebuilt in 1550, as commemorated by a memorial stone that curiously dated the building work by reference to the year when the price of wheat reached record high levels.

It was likely that the buildings were arranged around a semi-fortified enclosure for defence against Scottish raids, one of which was recorded in the 1580's when Harby Brow was named in a romantic border ballad recounting the fate of a young Scottish prisoner and the daughter of the neighbouring Salkeld family.

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The house and tower passed from the Highmoor family in 1675 and was recorded as derelict before the turn of the 18th century. The farmhouse and agricultural buildings appear to have been rebuilt around the turn of the 19th century, probably by the Charltons of Hesleyside, Northumberland who were recorded as owners in 1816. The styling of farmhouse masonry, roofs and windows all relate to this early 19th century period. The constrained site layout and absence of double-pile layout to the farmhouse possibly reflect a desire to rebuild within the original limits of the earlier semi-fortified house.

Porch and Tower © Paul Lewis

A stylish porch was added to the southern formal elevation in 1876. In 1980's Cumbria County Council funded consolidation and repairs to the tower and re-laid the floor above the vault, all of which have proven successful in stabilising deterioration of the fabric ▪

Footpath Sign © Mike Turner

6. Ona Ash, Zoom Talk, 5th September - Andrew Carter

Ona Ash is a small, thatched house in the hamlet of High Bank Hill, a short walk from the pretty village of Kirkoswald which is on the Penrith to Brampton Road in the unspoilt Upper Eden Valley. It is now only one of a dozen or so thatched cottages that remain in Cumbria, that are found in an arc that stretches from the Solway plain up the river Eden to the foothills of the North Pennines.

Now Grade II* listed because it's a rare example of an unaltered Statesman's long house derivative, with the typical arrangement of the late seventeenth century, with a down-house for the animals separated from the fire-house by a cross passage. Luckily saved from demolition to make way for a bungalow in the nineteen eighties it received statutory protection and numerous grants to fund its restoration.

In quite a brave decision at the time it was rethatched at some considerable expense, giving it the picture book country cottage look that is so distinctive, and unusual in this part of Cumbria. Preserved by neglect, the original turf and heather roof was still largely intact under the much later corrugated tin roof that had been added to keep it weathertight. The interior has likewise survived unmolested by the skin of its teeth, but in the spirit of the eighties

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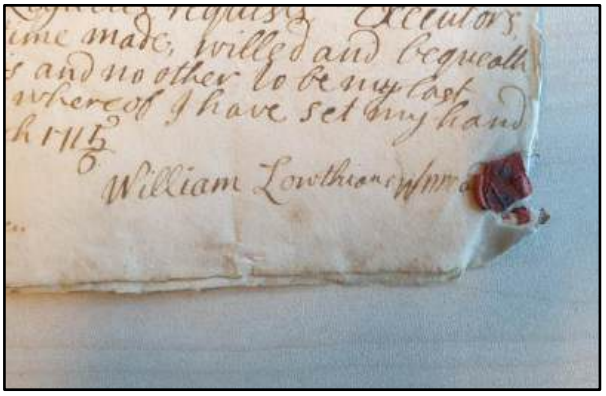
many later Victorian features were removed in the zeal to take it back to bare walls.

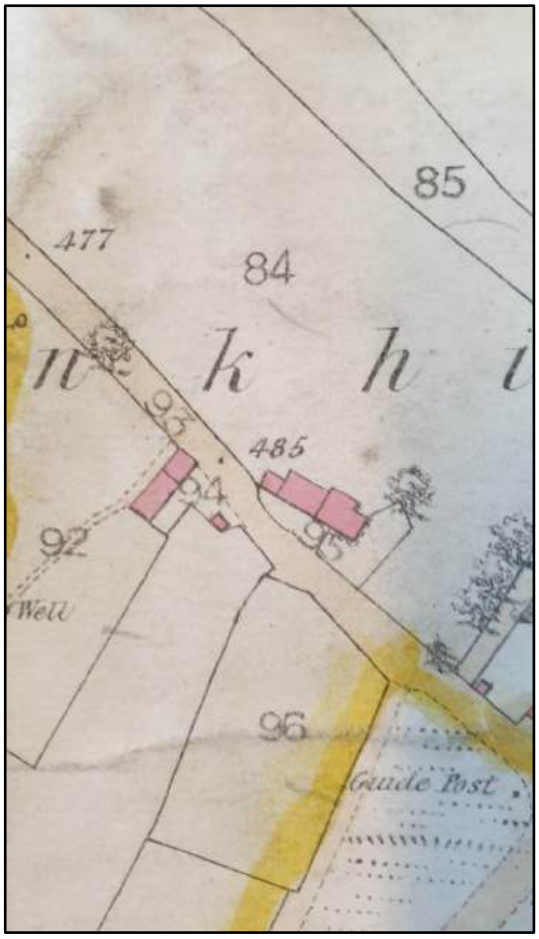
The house has evolved since was built in 1693 and what you see today is the product of nearly three hundred years of evolution, as the property was modernised, and extended to include windows on the first floor for two bedrooms. But, the original structure of the building remains, including three raised crucks utilising older reclaimed timbers from demolished farm buildings, and the main corbelled chimney on the cross-passage wall which would originally have had a smoke hood. In the eighteenth century an Eden Valley sandstone fireplace and range was inserted in the inglenook, that still has the original fire window, and massive bressumer beam resting on the sandstone heck. Sadly, the wooden doors of the bread and salt cupboard were lost when the fireplace was inserted, and they were plastered over.



The vernacular architecture historian R.W. Brunskill knew Ona Ash well, having spent his childhood visiting the Eden Valley, and his first recorded visit here was in 1965 when it was one of a select number of buildings he chose for the Vernacular Building Group spring conference, that took place in Penrith of that year. His original description gives a clue to the state of the building in the mid-sixties, it was apparently empty, and he couldn't find the cross-passage door into the byre, which has now been opened. Intriguingly he mentions it was thatched, so when was the corrugated tin roof added, before or after his visit?

One thing I feel for sure he didn't know, whose initials were on the lintel above the front door to the cross passage, recent research established the house was built by the fifty six year old William Lowthian, and his fifty six year old wife Mary who bore him eight children. At the time the small kitchen and bedroom would have been a busy place with at least four of his teenage children sharing the house and possibly sleeping in the loft above. William died aged 79, but Mary lived to the extraordinary age of 94, and I've had the thrill of holding William Lowthian's Will (image above) written in his own handwriting when I went to Carlisle Archive Centre at Petterill Bank.

He was clearly a character, a dissenter, constable, surveyor of roads, jury member and a bit of a wheeler dealer buying and selling demolished buildings and land, getting the where with all to build the house in the first place, which the CVBG survey has revealed might be on the site of much earlier building. Closer examination reveals the bower wall is constructed of quite different material, and the first-floor timbers are quite unlike anything else in the house.



A later dairy was added to the rear of the property adjacent to the spiral stone staircase under the outshut that provides access to the loft. In the 1980s the decision was taken to add two extra bedrooms and the bathroom in the space above the byre, which kept the animals and hay from the fields that immediately surround the property.

Mention of Ona Ash raises further questions as to how old the house name is, and why it was chosen, and it might just be that a large tree to the rear of the house shown on old maps could have been a landmark local Ash tree that postman and tradesmen would have used to find the house before satnav!

I bought Ona Ash eighteen months ago after the vendor had had the forty-year-old thatch replaced and I'd be delighted to see it replaced, but I'd be older than Mary Lowthian if I did. I'm determined to be a good custodian of this remarkable building and I hope to report more about the history of Ona Ash as and when I find out more. In exciting developments, I hope to get the timbers dendro-dated which will give us a clue to how old some of them actually are …. .▪

7. AGM and Appleby Activities

Following the Annual General Meeting, held in the Public Hall, members were offered a choice of activities. Those who chose to visit **St Anne's Hospital,** almshouses at the top of Boroughgate, were guided by Valerie Kendall, who is a resident there and a member of CVBG.

© Stuart Harling

The almshouses were built in 1653, by Lady Anne Clifford, for widows and unmarried women, the 'sisters', and a 'mother', who took charge.
The cottages are arranged round a square cobbled courtyard, (Image above) which has a fountain in the centre. In one corner is the chapel, which the women were obliged to attend, and where the rules laid down by Lady Anne are still on display, although no longer enforced.
Each cottage once consisted of a single room, but they have been modernised over the years, so that they have a bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom facilities on two levels. The single door remains, each with a carved shield beside it. The shields bear the arms of the various noble families from which the Cliffords were descended.

Some members chose the alternative activity, to take a close look at the buildings of **Boroughgate,** using the guide which was distributed with the summer newsletter.

© Stuart Harling

The next venue was St Lawrence's parish church, to see the **Clifford tombs.** (Image left) June Hill spoke about Lady Anne Clifford, (1590 to 1676), and the great medieval family of which she was the sole heir. Her father, George, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, a courtier of Queen Elizabeth 1 and a privateer, died in 1605, leaving his vast estates in Yorkshire and Westmorland to his brother, then to his nephew. This contradicted a medieval entail,

which said the property should go to 'heirs general' (male or female), and Lady Anne and her mother spent years fighting for their rights. Her mother died in 1616, after Lady Anne had been to visit her, from her then home in the south of England.
The tombs now stand in the north chapel of the church. That of the Countess of Westmorland, Lady Anne's mother, is a magnificent stone chest tomb topped by a marble effigy. The costume including shoes, is beautifully detailed. At the feet is a sheep. It is thought that the sculptor was the same person who made the effigy of Elizabeth 1, now in Westminster Abbey.
Lady Anne's own tomb is very different. It consists of rows of coats of arms, proving the descent of the Cliffords, and culminating in herself and her two daughters. The descendants of Margaret, the elder daughter, who married the Earl of Thanet, are commemorated in many names of streets and buildings, in Appleby and in Skipton, the principal town of the Yorkshire estates.

As an alternative, members were offered a self-guided walk beside the **River Eden,** where every year, horses are washed during the annual Horse Fair. A steep bank, cut by the river, exposes local sandstone ▪

Window at Scales Hall © Mike Turner

Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2022

At THE GREENHILL HOTEL – WIGTON

FESTIVE MENU

Monday - Thursday 12:00pm to 8:45pm
Fridays & Saturdays 12:00pm to 2:00pm
Booking advisable, pre order required for parties over 8
Two courses £24.50
Three courses £29.50

SEAFOOD COCKTAIL
prawns, cockles, mussels, marie rose dressing

FRENCH ONION SOUP
gruyère crouton

FRIED PEARS WITH ROQUEFORT
walnuts, pomegranate, bitter winter leaves

CHICKEN LIVER & COGNAC PARFAIT
cranberry & port wine relish, grilled ciabatta

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TINSEL TURKEY DINNER
roast lakeland turkey, baked ham, pig in a blanket, seasonal stuffing, cranberry relish, pan gravy

BRAISED LAMB SHANK
root vegetables, cannellini beans, shiraz, mint jus, colcannon

PAN FRIED SEA BASS FLORENTINE
chorizo, cherry tomato, spinach, cream sauteed baby potato

CRISPY FILO TART (V)
courgette, tomato, walnut, green pesto, dressed winter leaves

ALL SERVED WITH BRUSSEL SPROUTS, CARROTS,
ROASTED PARSNIPS, ROAST POTATO, MASHED POTATO

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TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS PUDDING
boozy rum sauce

PAVLOVA
strawberry, raspberry, blueberry

ST CLEMENT'S TRIFLE
lemon drizzle sponge, mandarin

FESTIVE CHEESE BOARD
vintage cheddar, white stilton with apricot, camembert,
water biscuits, red onion marmalade, grapes

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FRESHLY GROUND COLOMBIAN COFFEE
mince pie

THURSDAY DECEMBER 15th – 12.30 for 13.00

Bookings being taken **NOW** for this event, please send Mike Turner your choices with any dietary requirements, and at the **same time** make your payment to the ***new treasurer***, **BACS** is the preferred method please. Cash cannot be accepted, and cheques cost the CVBG 40p each to pay in, your help is most appreciated. Bank details are clearly printed on the rear cover of this newsletter, together with the Treasurers full details.

Please mark your BACS payment reference with Your name/Christmas