NEWSLETTER No. 34 – WINTER 2021

1. From the Chairman

- The Newsletter is arriving unusually early this year, and includes the Calendar resulting from the photographs you submitted. We hope it heralds a better year for everyone. An order form is included, so there is time before Christmas to order extra copies for family and friends. Supply is limited so don't delay.
- The committee is working on a programme for 2022 and we hope to include events from 2020 which were not delivered this year for obvious reasons. We did manage a few events, while dodging Covid. These included walks in Great Asby and Ravenstonedale; a Zoom version of the workshop on Using Inventories; two Zoom talks from Paul Lewis on his discoveries and conservation decisions at Gaythorne Hall and Scales Hall; and a trip north of the border to Hills Tower, with the Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group. The Christmas lunch will be held on 3 December at Broad Leys, Voysey's vernacular revival masterpiece at Windermere.
- We also achieved some recording: the Dame School at Raisbeck; Ona Ash, Kirkoswald; Fell View farmhouse and barn, Little Asby; and a cruck barn at Culgaith.
- Our aim is to complete all the unfinished building records in the coming year, working through the committee and local members.
- At the Armitt (Museum, Gallery and Library), a further planning meeting has taken place for a programme of activities and publications around the 2023 bi-centenary exhibition of the works by William Green. Any member with an interest in the artist, Ambleside's buildings or with experience of managing activities and supporting literature for a range of the public, including children, please feel welcome to join the working group.
- Finally, may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2022.

June L Hill

2. Guided Walk of Ravenstonedale – Saturday 9th October.

Members of CVBG joined members of the Ravenstonedale Parish History Group (RPHG) and Hannah Kingsbury from Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme (WDLPS) for a guided walk of Ravenstonedale. The WDLPS aims to unlock and reveal the hidden heritage of the Westmorland Dales. The scheme involves 21 projects and is primarily funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. One of these projects, Digging the Past, will involve the excavation of around 30 test pits in the village, to help reveal more about its development through time.

The village of Ravenstonedale has undergone much development and appears to have been very prosperous at the turn of the 19th/20th century. This included an attempt to turn Ravenstonedale into a health resort, as John Carver rebuilt the Black Swan and several cottages. This wasn't very successful, but left a lasting impact on the village, in its Victorian "Gothic" style architecture. This development was in part linked to the nearby railway, The South Durham and Lancashire Union, which opened in 1861. Ravenstonedale had its own passenger station until 1952.

The guided walk started in the church. The current building mainly dates to the 18th century, but there has been an earlier church on this site. St Oswalds' unusual interior includes a 3-decker pulpit, with the pews facing the aisle not the altar. A clock face has been relocated from the tower (via an attic) to the interior. This is painted on boards, dated to 1719 and has a brass plate that informs the clock was given to the church by John Forthergill, and its price was £10. One of the (commemorative 19th century east) windows is dedicated to Mrs Gaunt who was the last female martyr burnt at Tyburn for the cause of Protestant religion in October 1685.

In the churchyard are the remains of the Gilbertine ruins. The Gilbertine Order was the only order to originate in England. The ruins were partially excavated in the 1920s, and further investigation in the 1980s found that the remainder of the buildings survive as buried foundations. The monument was a cell of the Gilbertine Cannons of Whatton, it was founded in 1366 and was in use until the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

In addition to the church, there are also 2 chapels remaining in the village. Low Chapel was built in 1839 as a Methodist Chapel. High Chapel was built in 1726 as a Dissenters Chapel (it was later Presbyterian and then United Reformed before its closure in 2006). The current chapel is typical with tall semi-circular headed windows and 1 door, however earlier images shared with attendees shows an earlier arrangement of windows – standard rectangular windows at ground floor level, and smaller square windows under the eaves, as well as 3 doors. These openings were changed in around 1868.

Due to the development of the village, few buildings have survived without alterations. One of the better surviving earlier buildings, is now Scar Gallery. This cottage dates to the late 17th century and has a projecting stair turret at the rear with a stone newel staircase inside. Townhead Cottage may date to the sixteenth

century, with some later alterations. A former Dame School adjoins this building, this is dated to 1859, but may have been a conversion of earlier outbuildings. Back Lane Farm (now called The Manor) is dated to 1730 with the initials I & R B (John and Ruth Bousfield). This house has been in the same ownership since that time. The building has 2½ storeys and 8 bays overall. There is an outshot/downhouse to the rear. The group also visited the grounds of the Manse, which is a mid-nineteenth century house. However, the main interest was in the outbuildings, which included a former cottage, a double privy and cowhouse. The former cottage has since been altered, and was later used as a laundry, and still contains its copper.

Thank you to everyone who attended. And a special thanks to Caroline, Jackie and Val (members of RPHG) for sharing so much history about the village, its buildings and its people with us ■

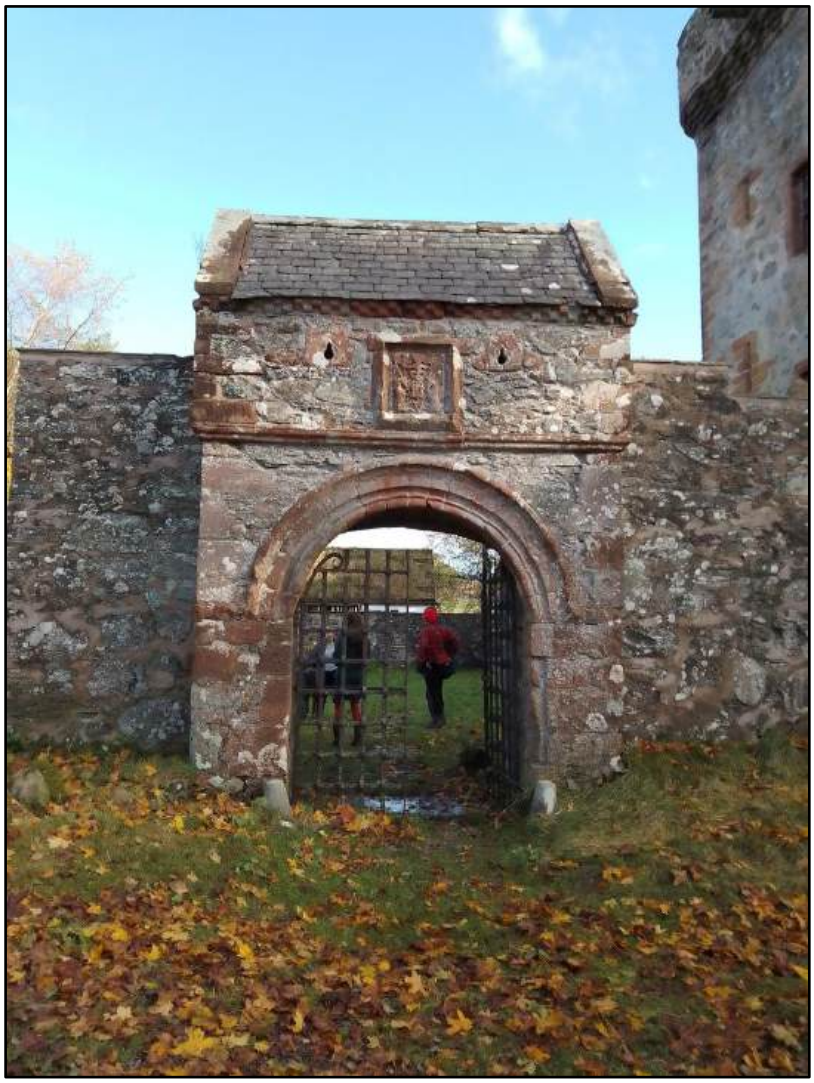
Hannah Kingsbury

Attendees looking at the Gilbertine ruins © Hannah Kingsbury

WESTMORLAND DALES

Made possible with Heritage Fund

3. Visits to Hills Tower, Dumfries 30 and 31 October.



First view of gatehouse and barmkin wall. The cruck barn is just visible in the background. © Stephanie Hewison.

Comments from members include the following -

Anne Porter
'Today's visit was outstanding and exceeded our expectations. The Gibbs are such a warm, welcoming couple.'

Greg Nicholson
'Alan certainly knew his stuff and it was knowledge that was gained from hands-on experience, and all the better for that. The work and time and effort they had put in was most impressive. … They're an amazing couple with a real affinity for the feel of vernacular building.'

John McDowell
'a fascinating tower house with gatehouse, barmkin and attached 1721 house which has undergone a sensitive restoration, with conservation of details revealing the history of the building. A huge project that has been undertaken with great care and complemented by a new barn built using traditional techniques and materials.'

Joint visit with Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group, looking at 16th century tower and 1721 house within the barmkin. © John McDowell

Annette Garforth
'Hats off to Alison, Alan and family for all their amazing work and dedication in restoring the building, not to mention their hospitality in welcoming us to their home and providing cake and coffee.'

Claire Jeffery
'It was a fascinating opportunity to look at an important site which has been rescued from ruin and restored with extraordinary attention to detail. It was not a project undertaken lightly, but I'm impressed that someone was willing to take on the challenge, and particularly by the fact that it was the whole family.'

Sarah Nicholson
'The setting was fantastic. I was blown away by that first impression of the barmkin and tower and the relationship between them and the house. It was great to see how all the work the family had done let the character of the building shine out, honest and solid, and the skill in how they'd managed to keep such major repairs so low key.'

4. CVBG Notes for Building Recording June Hill November 2021

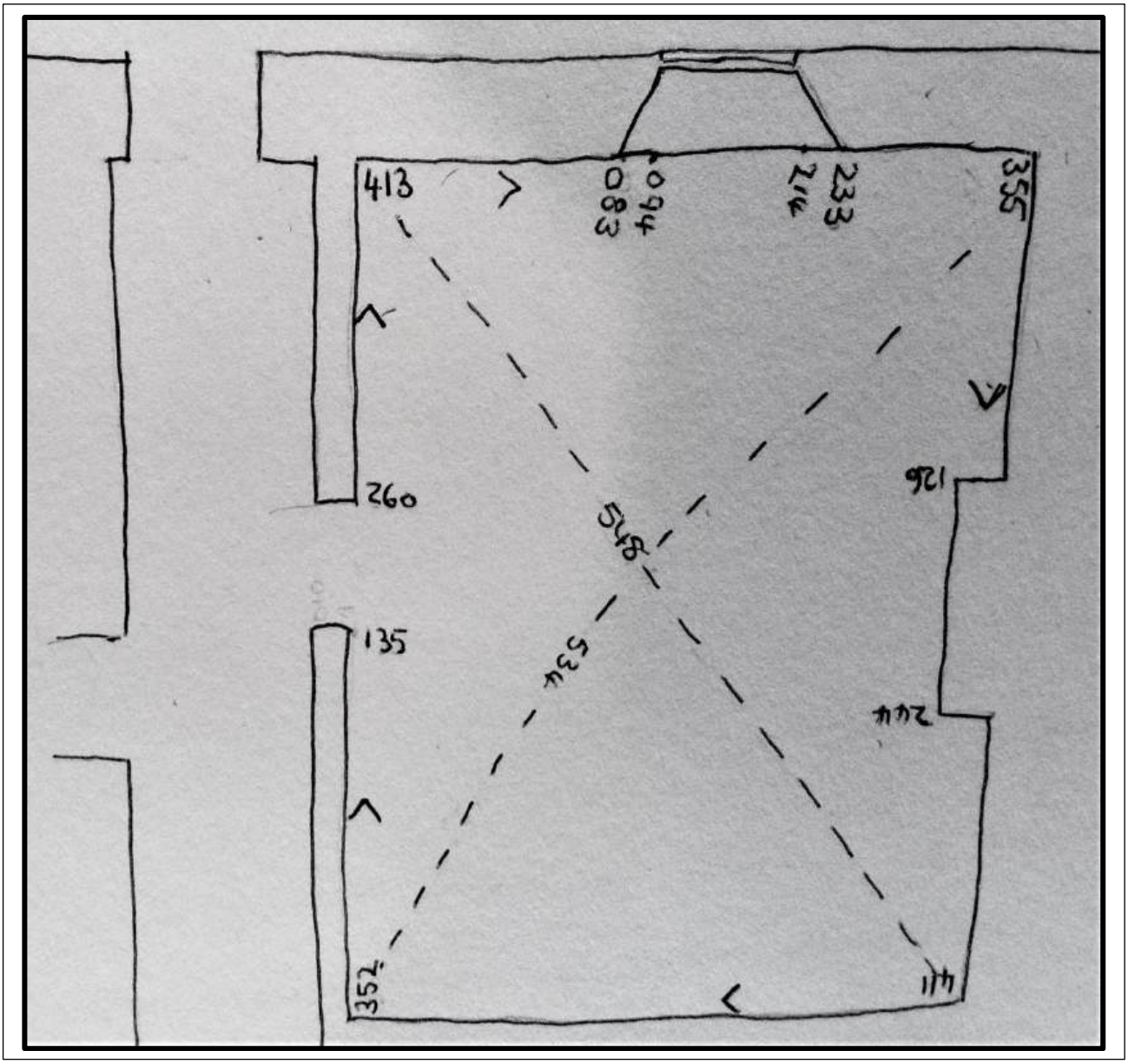
Recording Buildings
More of you are becoming involved in recording buildings. The following notes may be of help to enable you to 'have a go' yourself. There is a place for everyone in a recording group – even holding one end of a tape is essential and requires only a steady hand. In the coming year, a committee member may invite you to take part in a recording group in your area, so please join in if you can.

- Each building recorded needs the following -

Essential	**Desirable**
Summary sheet	
Plan, ground floor	upper floor(s) if possible
Elevation of main facade	side view and/or back
Description, exterior/interior	
Drawings of detail, (datestones, balusters, etc.)	
Photographs	
Maps	
Historical evidence	
Conclusions and interpretation	
Appendices	
Acknowledgements	

Before the recording session
Always obtain owner's permission to record as well as occupier, if different. (Notes available on information for owner/occupier.)
Intoduce the owner to the team leader and team
Reassure the owner of CVBG insurance
Make it clear that CVBG is only interested in the building and its historical development, and is independent of any other organisations
Three copies of the record will be made – one each for the owner, for CVBG snd for county archives
Comply with owner's wishes, re shoe removal, "no-go" areas, etc.
Allocate work

- **Bring** Drawing board, sketch pad, pencils, etc.
  Long and short tape measures
  Height rod (CVBG has this)
  Camera, binoculars, torch
  Brunskill's handbook
- **Procedure** All look round building exterior, discuss likely plan, rooms, hearths
  Tour interior.
- **Ground floor** Draw a **sketch plan** (see example, page opposite) of the interior, making sure you indicate doors, windows, hearths, alcoves and wall thicknesses. Draw a continuous line for ground-level features and dotted lines for anything above head height, eg beams.
- Leave a space for each door and indicate windows within the thickness of the walls. Go outside and complete the sketch plan, noting blocked openings and other features not visible from inside.
  Now add **measurements** to your sketch plan.



'Sketch plan showing measurements for the interior of a room. The arrows are useful to indicate the direction of measurement'.

- Always work in the same direction, round a room and round the outside.
- Start at zero on the long tape, work about waist height, and take 'running measurements', that is, reading along the tape and not starting again for every feature. Ideally, three people should work on this task, one to hold the tape firmly, one to read off the measurements and a third to note down the figures.
- Use metric measurements as it is much easier to convert them to scale for the finished plan. Work in centimetres, ie, 065, 132, 354 and so on, without decimal points. Write them at **right angles** to the wall measured.
- **Outside** Begin on the main facade
- Try to thread the tape behind drainpipes, vegetation, etc. Keep the tape taught and level, working at waist height.
- Check the overall length of each wall.
- Measure wall thicknesses. Measure inside and outside of wall where windows occur, to glass
- Mark the position of features such as blocked openings, carved stones,
- Be sure to mark the position of **straight joints.**
- **Inside**
  Work round each wall, in the same direction, writing the measurements at right angles to the wall.
- Measure wall thicknesses in windows to the glass.
- Always take diagonal readings.
- Take great care to avoid disturbing furniture and ornaments.

- **Elevation** Try to draw the main facade and one gable.
- Elevations are 2 dimensional and no attempt at perspective should be made. If part of the building is recessed, the same base line should be used throughout.
- Again, draw a sketch first, keeping in proportin as much as possible.
- Use the ground plan for horizontal measurements of the ground floor and take measurements for upper floors, to mark position of windows, etc.
- Take vertical readings, using the height measure where relevant. It is useful to have a plumb line to take height measurements from upper floor windows.
- It may be necessary to estimate the height of chimneys. Counting courses and the average depth of one course may help.
- Where ground level slopes, fix a datum line using chalk, and take measurements above and below the line.
- **Roof section** This is often where the true story of a building's history is revealed, but may be the most difficult to access. Try to draw a major truss and take measurements where possible, being extra careful to tread where it is safe. Note pegs, the apex, purlins, carpenters' marks, any grafitti or burn marks, etc. The torch will come in useful here.
- **Detail**
- Note details such as staircases (balusters, newel posts, carvings), plaster work, panelling, timber partitions, chamfers and stops on beams, apotropaic marks, fixed furniture (cupboards, dressers), re-used crucks, hinges, latches and other metalwork, evidence for smoke hoods.....

Make drawings, take photographs or write a description.

- **Final drawings.** Using a sharp pencil, make **drawings** from your field measurements, at a scale of 1:100, (ie 1cm on paper, for every metre of the building.) Only when you are sure these are as accurate as possible, make a good copy by **tracing in black ink on A4 paper.**
- Give each drawing a **title** ('East elevation', 'south gable' etc.) and add a **north point** and a **scale bar.** Include the date of the recording and your initials.
- **Description** A written description of the building, inside and out, should be made after discussion among the group. Aspect, position in relation to other buildings, materials (walls, roof, chimney(s), etc.), plan form, render, window types, quoins, outshuts, doorway (s), and other structural features should be included. Indoors, a room by room description is needed. Describe the roof structure if accessible.
- **Drawings** Draw details at a scale of 1:50, and include a scale bar. Refer to Linda Hall, *'Period House Fixtures ands Fittings 1300 – 1900',* Countryside Books, 2005.
- **Photographs** Try to photograph each face of the building & main features of the interior.
- **Maps** Seek out early OS maps on the website of the National Library of Scotland. (Mid 19th century and around 1900, at 25 inches to one mile and 6 inches to one mile). Compare the footprint of the building, then and now. If earlier maps are available in county archives or with the owner, so much the better.
- **Historical evidence** Try to find names of past owners/occupiers. Use **every available source** of information, amongst others –
    - oral evidence of owner and/or local residents; census returns and trade directories, sale particulars, (Libraries).
    - Tithe maps, enclosure maps, wills and inventories, estate papers, (County Archives).

'Westmorland Hearth Tax Michaelmas 1670 and 1674-5', British Record Society &CWAAS,

- Refer to the listing (if listed), on the website, 'British Listed Buildings'. Pevsner, Brunskill, but make up your own mind about what you see. The 'official' sources are not always totally reliable.
- **Conclusions and Interpretation** Try to work out the chronological sequence of the building. Work out which is the oldest surviving part of the structure. Get back to the original plan if possible. Show how changes in living standards and fashion affected the building. If it has changed use, (eg a house has become a barn; a large house has been subdivided; or a former mill is now a group of cottages), describe the material evidence. Emphasise significant surviving features (bread oven, plaster moulding, early fireplace, corbels for an earlier chimney and smoke hood, re-used crucks), etc. Sum up your findings.

- **Appendices** Add copies of appropriate documents, articles, etc., making sure you give references.
- **Acknowledgements** Thank everyone who contributed to the report, list the recording group ■

5. Graffiti in barns – Rose Lord, Built Environment Advisor, LDNPA.

A lot of research has been undertaken about Medieval Graffiti but what can later historic graffiti tell us about the people who carved it and their lives? Can we learn anything from the names, animals and objects carved into barn walls and doors? I don't know the answers to these questions and it's certainly an area that could benefit from further research in Cumbria; or if anyone knows any articles or studies of graffiti in vernacular buildings please let me know! Here are a few examples of graffiti I have seen in Cumbrian barns – ranging in date from the 1840s to the early 2000s possibly.

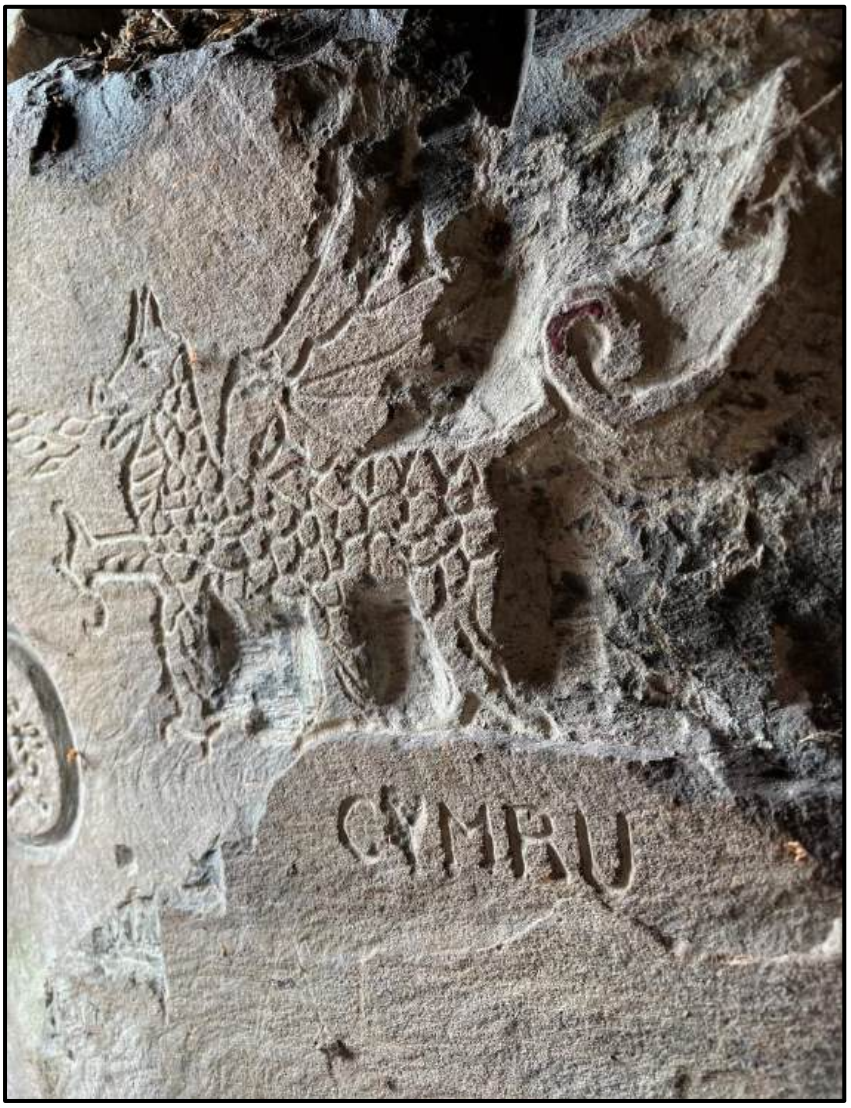
A lot of graffiti in barns can be found on lime washed plaster, either in pencil/crayon or sometimes carved in. These names and dates appear in a mid-18th century bank barn and may be the names of farm labourers employed on the farm. (Image 1)

Doors and door surrounds are a common location for initials and names. This example was carved into the inside of a byre door in an 18th century barn. The barn is a good 10 miles distance from Bassenthwaite so was Mr Brownrgg a live-in labourer here perhaps? (Image 2)

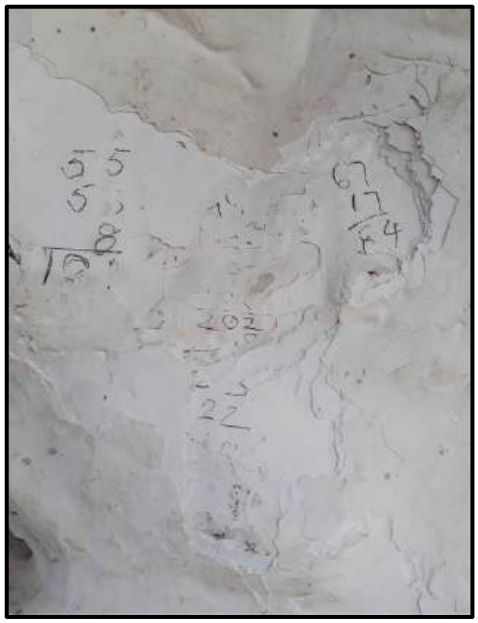
Some graffiti can be found in the outer faces of timber doors; this example includes a crude drawing of a horse(?) and a human head. Were these carved during a period of bad weather when farm labourers were forced indoors with little else to do? (Image 3)

This beautiful Welsh Dragon has been carved into a quoin in an early 18th century bank barn. This must have taken some time to complete and shows a high degree of skill. Was this carved by a farm labourer who was feeling homesick perhaps? There is no date, but there are some initials to the left of the dragon so it may be possible to find out who created this masterpiece with some skilled detective work. (Image 4)

(N.B. Cymru is Welsh for Wales)



This simple carving of a boat can be found within an early 20th century milking parlour near Windermere; an image of a sailing boat on the lake perhaps or does it have maritime connections? (Image 5)



The most common form of graffiti (aside from initials) I have come across is tally marks, numbers and sums. This might not really be classed as graffiti in the same way that the carved objects above are, as if barn walls were lime washed every year, then these markings would have been temporary in nature and were clearly part of the day-to-day farm operations, but many examples do survive in hidden corners. (Image 6)

Much of the graffiti in barns is very vulnerable to being lost as barns are repurposed and adapted. Further research and recording of these features would be very beneficial and may reveal more about the people who left their mark on farm buildings across Cumbria ▄ (All images © Rose Lord)