NEWSLETTER No. 39 – SPRING 2023

Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group

1. From the Chairman

- Now that spring is officially here and the daffodils are replacing snowdrops in our landscape, it's a good time to get out and about with the cameras to take photographs of our rich built heritage. Please send any photographs of good examples of vernacular buildings and/or close-ups of particular features to Mike Turner or myself, for inclusion in our ever-growing archive or in another newsletter. Don't forget to give location details. Only take photographs from public spaces or with the owner's permission.

- You will see that we have several contributions from members in this edition of the newsletter. Thank you for these, and remember that your observations, queries, photographs, and musings are all welcome.

- A reminder that there are some exciting events in the forthcoming months. The next one will be the study day at Naworth Castle on Monday 17 April. (See the full programme on page 5.) This will include the launch of the next publication written by several members and made possible by the North Pennine AONB, through their Fellfoot Forward Landscape Partnership Scheme, and funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.
  I urge as many of you as possible to sign up for this event which promises to be one of the highlights of this, our tenth year.

- In May, there will be the chance to see what has been discovered on Little Asby Common. A walk will be led by Hannah Kingsbury on 10 May.

- On 17 June we plan to visit Great Asby, to look at the Old Rectory in the village and the house featured inside the back cover of this newsletter, Grange Hall. Between the two visits, we are planning a pub lunch at the Three Greyhounds, which has recently changed hands. Keith Cooper, will be helping to organise this event. His recently published book ' *A year in the Life of Halligill*' (Hayloft Books, 2022), was the subject of a brilliant talk for the Cumbria Local History Federation,

- Our recording procedure has recently been revised and simplified by Paul Lewis. The event this month, at which he was planning to try this out, had to be cancelled because he was ill. It will be rearranged very soon.

June L Hill

2. Historic Farmsteads Survey in Bretherdale by Helen Evans (CVBG Committee)

Oxford Archaeology North (based in Lancaster) have recently undertaken a survey of farmsteads in Bretherdale, a secluded valley west of Tebay, which was part of the Yorkshire Dales until 2015 when it became part of the Lake District National Park. The project was commissioned by the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) by way of DEFRA's *Farming in Protected Landscapes* fund. The fieldwork comprised basic identification and condition survey of traditional farm buildings and other agricultural landscape features identified from desk-based assessment and historic mapping. Its purpose was to provide data for the Lake District Historic Environment Record (LDHER), which can then be used to inform potential future conservation projects and planning decisions.

Little is known about Bretherdale's history, apart from a find, reported in C&WAAS Transactions in 1989, of a fourteenth century wool weight from the manor of Wakefield. Byland Abbey, near Thirsk, was granted Bretherdale and established a grange there in mid/late twelfth century, so trade links between Kendal and Wakefield wool merchants may have been via the monks. After the Dissolution, the land was sold onto the Wharton family, then the Lowthers and various private hands.

Bridge End Bank Barn

Around 30 farmsteads and outbarns were recorded from historic OS mapping from 1863 onwards, alongside numerous sheepfolds, lime kilns, small quarries, bridges and other features. Whilst the buildings identified survive as working farms and smallholdings, barn conversions and holiday homes, by the most numerous, were ruinous and collapsed.

Most of the ruinous structures were whole farmsteads made up of linear houses and bank barns in laithe house arrangements, and large outbarns. The numerous outbarns indicate traditions probably more allied to the Yorkshire Dales than the central Lakes, which is not surprising given Bretherdale's location and historical connections. Several of the ruinous farmsteads included houses with features which we (as a vernacular buildings group) might more often see in extant buildings. Without timber fixtures and fittings and plaster and render on the walls

however, some of the basic sequences we often assume but rarely see have been laid bare in the stonework. That said, the ruinous (and sometimes dangerous) conditions of the buildings often frustrated close inspection.

Bridge End

Bridge End farmstead is shown extant on 1863 OS mapping, on the valley floor adjacent to Bretherdale Head Farm. The house is shown roofless in 1915, at which time the outbuildings remained in use. Constructed of slate and river cobbles, the former farmstead is comprised of a house with barns attached at either end. An isolated bank barn to the west forms the courtyard plan depicted on historic OS mapping. The former farmhouse has three partially blocked ground-floor windows, having been altered at some time to house livestock. Inside are the remains of a fireplace, a blocked fire window, and a single-storey gabled porch protecting the central entrance door. The upper floor has long, squat windows suggesting a one-and-a half storey dwelling. There is evidence within the stonework of numerous alterations, including an upward extension from a single storey. The barn at the northern end, lofted above a byre, is weatherproof (although not in its original form) and in use. The separate bank barn to the west is roofless and partially collapsed. Its stone-faced ramp leads to the remains of a double width opening into the loft space. Internally, a ground floor division demarcates a byre and sink-mow.

Eskew Head

Eskew Head is a large, two-storey house with a separate bank barn at a height of around 300m AOD on the edge of Birkbeck Fells common. Shown extant on the OS maps of 1863 and 1915, it is set in a shallow upland valley below a hill shielding it against the worst of the weather, and it's now roofless and ruinous. The main part of the farmstead is linear, with two-storey extensions at either end of an original three bay house. The windows on the earlier central element are the long and low examples of a seventeenth-century vernacular house. There is a fire window in the east end, a sandstone fireplace and a niche which may have been a spice cupboard. Above the fireplace is a fossilized gable indicating that the house was originally single storey; it is an incline too steep for slate, which suggests a lightweight heather roof. The upward extension is also clearly visible on the rear elevation. The southern addition to the house has two small-flued brick fireplaces at ground and first floor level, indicating a nineteenth century date. It has blocked-in ground-floor windows: OS mapping from the 1970s indicates part of the house was roofed, apparently re-used as a barn. The two-storey extension to the north was also a barn, evidenced by a partially blocked double-width door opening at the rear.

High and Low Whinhowe

High Whinhowe is collapsed house and bank barn on the eastern edge of Birkbeck Fells common. The name means either 'gorse' or 'wind-swept' hill, and the farmstead was certainly exposed, facing east over the valley and backing onto the common, set against a low outcrop. It was a linear arrangement of two storeys with the house containing the remains of a stone staircase which may once have been the outer steps of the barn. Its northern elevation had a single-storey gable incorporated into the larger structure, indicating the roof was raised

to create a first floor. The collapsed bank barn at the southern end of the house had the remains of a door opening visible on its east elevation with a possible double door opening at the rear against the natural slope, providing access to what was once a lofted space above a byre. Internal floor sockets are visible, and the remains of wooden cattle stalls below.


Low Whinhowe House

The remains of Low Whinhowe, as the name suggests, indicate it was the more successful of the two Whinhowe properties. Low Whinhowe farmhouse is Grade II listed (Historic England list entry 1145391) and is in a deteriorating condition, with a partially collapsed roof (although re-roofing of the unlisted adjacent barn is in progress). The house has nineteenth century additions, but its vernacular characteristics are clearly discernible, including a rear stairwell/buttery extension with a catslide roof. Internally, the listing description records a timber plank and muntin partition and a studded oak door.

The unlisted double bank barn, adjacent to the north, is partly collapsed but illustrates several clear phases. Within its northern element there is an upward extension to its limestone build in red sandstone, contemporary with the construction of two storey wagon doors, probably in the late nineteenth century.

Scales and outbarns

Several of the buildings recorded in Bretherdale have scale or sheiling placenames, suggesting their localities were in former summer grazing lands, perhaps dating back to medieval transhumance practises. Angus Winchester, in *Harvest from the Hills* (2000), records a probably later medieval sheep-milking placename, Ewelock Bank, which is an inhabited and architecturally nineteenth century farmstead. During and after the classic vernacular building period of the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries, intakes demarcated by drystone walls were extended into formerly unenclosed common land. Land at the upper extents of these intakes (in the case of Bretherdale around the 300m contour) is often occupied by occupied and ruinous farmsteads and outbarns, some, based on placename evidence, very probably established on earlier sites. One of these, Scale Howe at the head of Bretherdale, incorporates a classic bank barn, animal housing and storage facilities. There are clearance cairns, simple slate footbridges and a sheepfold nearby. Winchester indicates that many scale placenames are within walking distance of permanent settlements, so rather than being associated with transhumance, these probably provided seasonal shelter for those tending and or milking cattle or sheep on the common or in landscapes without enclosed cow pastures ▪

Health warning

Most of the buildings illustrated here are accessible, located along public footpaths along the bottom of Bretherdale valley and between Greenholme and Birkbeck Fells common. Please be considerate to the landowner and keep off private farmland. Please do not enter the buildings, are many are not structurally sound.

Images (© Oxford Archaeology North or OA North)

3. CVBG Study Day at Naworth Castle – Monday April 17th

£15.00pp including buffet lunch, coffee and tea - No limit on numbers

Booking open now via BACS - Booking deadline 4 April 2023
Bank details on the rear cover of this newsletter.

- The Hearth is a fundamental element of all domestic buildings of the Vernacular period. It controls the plan of the house and the way it was used. The number of hearths denotes the social status of the owner.
- This study day will explore some aspects of The Hearth. Guest speakers will be Ivan Day, food historian, and Robert Baxter, Senior Archivist with Cumbria Archive Service. The other speakers, Helen Evans, Graham Brooks and Paul Lewis, are drawn from our talented membership.
- We shall also launch the publication (a guide to buildings in the Lower Eden Valley written by several members of CVBG) produced in cooperation with the Fellfoot Forward Landscape Partnership Scheme, led by the North Pennine AONB Partnership, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- Naworth Castle is the home of our Patron, The Hon Philip Howard, who has generously made the venue available to us.

Programme for the day:-

Arrive and coffee		10.30
Introduction	June Hill	11.00
Fuel for the Fire	Graham Brooks	11.20
The Hearth Tax	Robert Baxter	11.50
BUFFET LUNCH		**12.30**
The Smoke Hood	Helen Evans	13.30
Chimneys, outside and in	Paul Lewis	14.00
Cooking on an Open Fire	Ivan Day	14.30
Launch of Publication and Tea		15.30
Depart		16.00

Booking via BACS please, details on the rear cover of this newsletter
Use as bank reference: surname/STUDY

4. Countrystride in Askham – Alexandria Fairclough (CVBG Member)

I'm Alexandra Fairclough and one of your newest members. I am a keen ambassador for heritage, vernacular architecture, and Cumbria generally. I am also a Blue Badge Tourist Guide for Cumbria and Salford/Manchester. However, I have been leading architectural walks for many years around the North-West mainly but also round England including London.
I started my vernacular road to discovery as an undergraduate writing a thesis on the diffusion of polite architectural concepts on the vernacular buildings of the Craven Dales and was a member for the NYVBSG and VAG for several years until a change in career forced me to cancel all memberships for impartiality reasons.

Sawmill Cottage and Datestone
© Mike Turner

The thesis opened up dialogue with Dr Ron Brunskill and I studied with him at Manchester School of Architecture and learnt so much. I also studied with another great academic of architectural history, John Archer, and I owe a lot of my career as a heritage specialist and my passion for buildings to those two gentlemen.

So, what is Countrystride? In case you have never heard of it, it is a podcast which celebrates the landscapes, culture, heritage and people of Cumbria and the Lake District through a mix of field recordings, commentary and interviews. The Podcast is led by Dave Felton and Mark Richards. I was lucky enough to be asked to do it. It was not easy. My recording was not perfect, but it was done without notes, or rehearsal and in one take. So, if I have made an error, all I can do is apologise. I did promote the CVBG in my recording but this has been left out so I have put information on social media, and I will use this short article to promote this group also.

The podcast was set in Askham and included a very brief background to the locality and a little about the relationships of the major heritage designations and land ownership. Not enough to be comprehensive but enough to set the scene. I explained the meaning of vernacular architecture and a little about the different villages in the locality. Lowther village, a planned settlement, Helton a spring line village with Anglo-Saxon origins and then Askham village which has evolved around the Hall church and River Lowther.

We walked up the street looking at several buildings and analysed the features surmising the likely history and development of these buildings. The assessment of vernacular buildings is not a precise science, and we have to look for clues so I entered the realm of the building detective. Assessing the local geology and the materials nearby we discussed the materials used and the methods of construction. I looked at several different buildings and assessed the social standing of the occupiers as well as the village hierarchy. I could have spent the day analysing all the buildings but as it was an introduction to vernacular architecture, I chose a few to highlight the pertinent points.
I hope that you enjoy it▪

Playing the podcast:-
Type this address into your browser/search bar and hit return; when it played for me, the sound was clear, without any playback problems and lasts 45 minutes.(MT)

https://www.countrystride.co.uk/single-post/countrystride-98-askham-a-vernacular-celebration

© Mark Richards

One-time farmhouse in Askham.

5. The Historic Building Doctor -Chapter 2 – The Repair of Roofs and Chimneys

By Paul Lewis, Chartered Building Surveyor
Vice Chairman, CVBG

1. Coniston Hall, a Tudor Hall with cylindrical chimneys and swept slate valleys.

This chapter describes how the roof and chimneys of a vernacular building may be repaired using the principal of minimum intervention articulated in 'Chapter 1 - Introduction.' In some cases where dilapidation is severe, renewal or rebuilding may be needed – the situations where this can be justified will be explored and any special Town Planning considerations explained.

The roofing materials employed in Cumbria and the Western Dales vary with the geology of the locality. Traditional techniques have evolved to accommodate how the materials can usefully worked, trimmed to shape and fixed to the roof timbers. For example, in many parts green or blue Westmorland slate has been quarried in varying thicknesses and fixed with either iron nails, oak pegs or sheep bones. On some high-status houses there is some evidence of lead pegs being used too. Lead roofing is only usually found on Churches and some high-status houses built after the vernacular threshold so are not discussed here.

Along the Pennine fringe, lower Eden Valley, and Westmorland Dales the local sandstones split readily into flags, most commonly fixed with oak pegs. Where flags are eventually replaced with slate, the flags are retained along the eaves to create a characteristic vernacular detail (see Plate 2).

The slates or flags are fixed to roofing battens that span between the rafters. In older (pre-1800) buildings these can often be riven oak but later buildings incorporate machine-cut battens that have been produced in timber mills, initially water-driven and later by steam engines.

The underside of the slates is usually finished with lime mortar to curtail wind-blown rain and snow; when the complete under-surface is protected as in the hay barn shown in Plate 6, the technique is known as pargetting. Where a fillet of mortar is applied along the timber battens, this is can be known as either torching or tiering, again with the same purpose. None of these techniques are normally used in animal houses as the accent here is on maintaining ventilation for reasons of animal welfare. Where flag roofs exist, the oak pegs are commonly held in position with lime torching to help stop the pegs from twisting and becoming loose.

Irrespective of materials and fixing techniques the slates or flags are laid in diminishing courses, i.e. smaller slates are laid as work proceeds towards the ridge from the eaves where the largest units are employed. This technique has developed as the most effective way to use quarried slate or sandstone as it minimises waste.

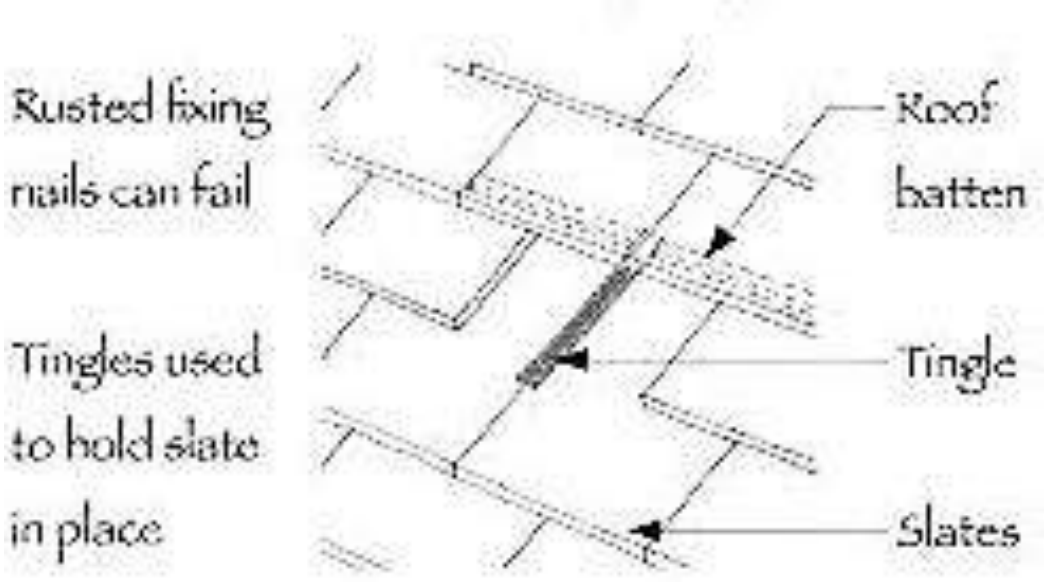
3. Keld Chapel with Westmorland slate laid in diminishing courses, sandstone ridge pieces and eaves courses

The most common repair needed to roofs is to re-fix a loose slate when the fixing nail has corroded. The easiest way to do this is with a lead or copper strip known as a tingle. Plate 4 shows how the tingle is folded over a batten and laid down the roof ready for the slate to be re-inserted; the bottom edge of the tingle is then folded up to hold the bottom edge of the slate in position (see Plate 5). The benefits of this technique include the re-use of the original materials and the minimum of disturbance elsewhere.

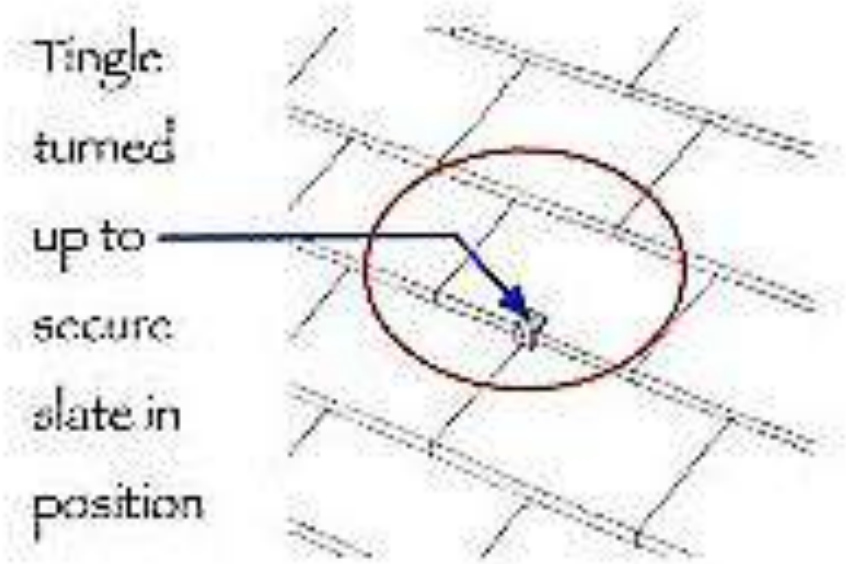
As the roof ages, more nails may corrode, or the battens may decay progressively. A good guiding principle is that when more than 20% of the roof has been repaired with tingles, then stripping and relaying the reclaimed slates on

new battens is normally more economic than continuing with patch-repair. This also has the advantage of saving most of the original roofing materials for re-use.

Planning consent will always be needed for re-roofing as Local Authorities wish to control matters pertaining to the use of matching materials for damaged slates; a wildlife habitat survey will be needed to support any such application as roof spaces can often be homes for bats and owls. If the building is also listed by Historic England then a listed building consent would be needed also, including details of any repairs needed to roof timbers. Care should be taken to avoid using modern fibrous sarking felts where bat roosts are known to exist as bats can get entangled in these materials; traditional torching or pargetting offer a better solution.



4. How to insert a lead or copper tingle to refix a loose slate



5. The original slate can be reinserted and held in place as shown

6. Lime mortar pargetting to the underside of the slates

The repair of chimneys commonly raises issues of mortar or render renewal on random rubble masonry; on higher status buildings finely worked stone known as ashlar brings with it some special considerations. Once again, the objective is to achieve a good standard of repair with the minimum of disturbance.

7. Lime render repair to a masonry chimney with additional lead protection to the

Plate 7 above shows a tall cylinder chimney that has been repaired with new

layers of lime render. The use of lime-based materials will be considered in more detail in a later chapter, but the principal reason for using this material is its ability to remain breathable whilst retaining resistance to wind driven rain. In this way moisture is drawn away when the weather improves, rather than remaining in the fabric and percolating to the interior. It is no coincidence that the poorer masonry commonly used on chimneys was almost always finished with render because the masonry alone could not offer sufficient weather resistance.

In the example shown in Plate 7 the render coating is made up of three layers, each weaker and thinner than the last. The final layer is known as a shelter coat of lime and fine sand that has as a sacrificial function, weathering gradually over 20-years or so in preference to the main weatherproofing layers beneath.

8. Chimney of coursed ashlar with eroded cornice, string moulds, mortar pointing

Plate 8 shows a fine sandstone chimney that requires the use of specialist restoration mortars to reinstate the shape of damaged cornice and string courses. These details have more than aesthetic functions as they help shed water away from the masonry units, so it is important that they are reformed to limit stone erosion. The specialist mortars can be coloured to match the existing stone, and with a period of weathering, will become almost undetectable. Where the building has been listed Grade I by Historic England decayed stone would be removed and copied in matching materials; a process of 'indenting' new stone would then follow to achieve a longer-lasting repair.

Weather penetration through the coping over the plinth can often occur and it is good conservation practice to protect these materials from further erosion by dressing with lead aprons and drips; rainwater can then be effectively shed from the drips and protect the render materials on the plinth beneath. An example of this approach is shown in Plate 7.

Chapter 3 will be included in the next newsletter and will address the issues arising from the repair of masonry, lime mortars and renders▪

Paul Lewis BSc(Hons) MRICS

6. Zoom Talk by Paul Lewis, on Craggs Farm, Eskdale, 13/02/2023 (Report by John McDowell, CVBG Committee Member)

Cragg Farm is set within an area of great archaeological interest in Eskdale, 3 miles inland from Ravenglass and south of the River Esk. Thanks to David & Liz Hughes for allowing a presentation on their property.

An ariel view of Cragg Farm

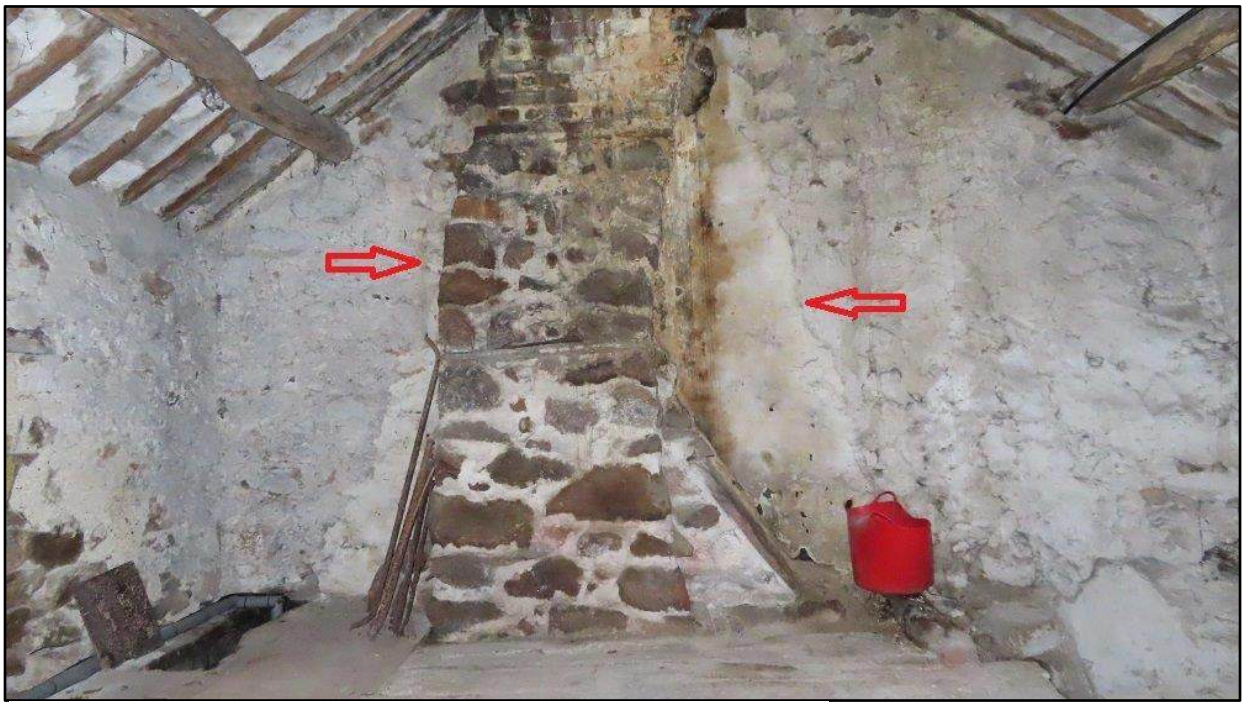
Birkby derives from the Old Norse 'birki', a clump of birch trees. Bronze Age settlers had cleared large areas of upland forest & high on the fells overlooking Birkby are the remains of the City of Barnscar. The Romans were in Eskdale from AD 79 for around 350 years, Celts populated the valley in the Dark Ages, later Angles from Northumbria and then the Norsemen in the 9th and 10th centuries. The area is a special continuity settlement; many medieval features remain as an archaeological record.

farmhouse circa

Front elevation of 17c farm, and later farm.

Cragg Farm's buildings include a polite 18th c farmhouse with a bank barn nearby but the adjoining building to this 2nd phase is the1st phase 1650-1675 which is in double bay single pile layout whereas the later farmhouse dates from 1781, a style from the1750s in symmetrical double pile layout, with central stair, a room in each corner and chimneys for the fire in each. This is an early example of its type and faces down the valley & the road of approach, a cobbled yard remains at the rear.

Paul illustrated this building progression with photographs of the elevations, aerial views, maps and with drawings from Brunskill's book 'Traditional Buildings of Cumbria'. The 1600's house has been recorded in detail giving evidence for its original state and along with a floor plan documenting the later additions and alterations. Of note are the windows on either side of the door on its front elevation, with a sunny aspect facing uphill, a simple first floor window had timber bars & no rebate as originally without glass, a ground floor insertion window of the 1780s has slender glazing bars, small panes and a section of opening casement. There are some blocked windows, one in the gable where an18th c extension of dry stone wall construction for agricultural use was added still shows remains of wooden frame, thick lime render & light grey limewash (this suggests originally use throughout as a generous protective layer). Another window was blocked much later due to change of building use to a byre and one first floor window was partially blocked due to the19th c addition of an earth closet.
The fireplace demonstrates a series of changes from the 17th c hearth, with impressive remains of an early bread oven within an original stone stair, atypical in an agricultural building, the insertion of a late 19th c bread oven with cast iron cover & a stone slab hot plate also, the later fires & stoves were placed centrally.



Chimney hood detail upstairs.

Remnants of timber next to stairs may be of a timber framed hood to fireplace. All this is evidence of the building being used later as a downhouse, the salting dish on imperial bricks would date from after1865.
The chimney stack sits abreast projections inside & out, the later brick & stone chimney hood upstairs replaces the original hood of timber lathes and plaster. A second chimney may have been removed during the 2nd phase farmhouse building.

The simple roof trusses with ridge & side purlins, simple central posts are typical of late 1600s but the building was reroofed with machine cut rafters in the 1860s as indicated by the graffiti on lime pargetting to underside of slates. A bottom tie beam has signs of previous use in a bigger roof structure & extra timber has been inserted at some time to support a loft at one end for storage. The internal walls are plastered with a lime wash. An original pine floor upstairs is fixed with iron of varied board widths with plain edges.
Paul also discussed remains of medieval ruins predating the 1600s house, one of single pile, two basic units & with a porch lies to the south east of the farm under newer walls of field boundaries; there is also a circular structure from even earlier times nearby. Ruins in rectangular layout have large foundation boulder stones at corners, upper material has been removed for use elsewhere.

A diagrammatic plan extract from Historic England's Map of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments, indicates the Bronze Age cairnfields nearby, at 500' above sea level and the extensive Romano British settlement and field system of Barnscar.
An interesting discussion followed the talk with further contributions from attendees.


Roof detail of 17th c building

Archaeology in the area, that a listed neighbouring farm has a surviving wattle fire hood, also the1781 house was probably built on the site of byres, so a new barn was likely built before the farmhouse. There are archives for Cragg since 1609, enfranchisement; copyhold tenure & freehold, blocked up windows and window tax were also raised.

Cragg Farm has a great heritage record with linkage and readable farmhouse buildings, set in a fascinating landscape which is full of history having been used for over 2000 years for farming. The talk is available to view through a link on the CVBG website ▪

(Images © Paul Lewis)

7. Zoom Talk by June Hall on VAG Conference 2015: 06/03/2023 (Report by Stephanie Hewison, CVBG Committee Member)

VAG (Vernacular Architecture Group) was established in 1952 and now has a large membership from the UK and overseas. Since its inception, numerous other groups have formed, including in the north in 1972, YVBSG (Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group) of which June Hill was a founder member, and in 2013 our local group, CVBG.

In 2015, it was planned that VAG's spring conference would come to Cumbria and June was approached to organise this. Strict rules apply to the way the conferences are organised and a large planning folder was duly sent to June and CVBG.

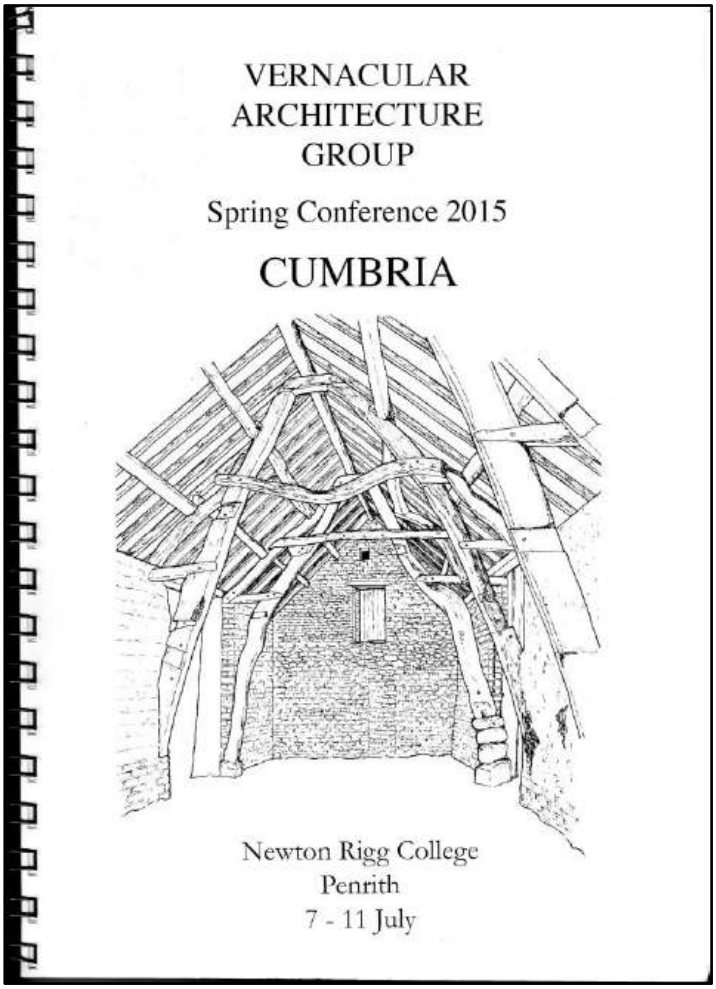
This planning included:

a) putting together a handbook (Image on right)in black and white with information on all buildings to be visited, details of risk assessments, a plan of the venue (on this occasion, Newton Rigg College) and a bibliography

b) coordinating accommodation for 100 people with full board for five nights

c) coordinating evening lectures

d) arranging for two coaches to depart punctually and in opposite directions each day, June to be on one and a fellow Committee member on the other.



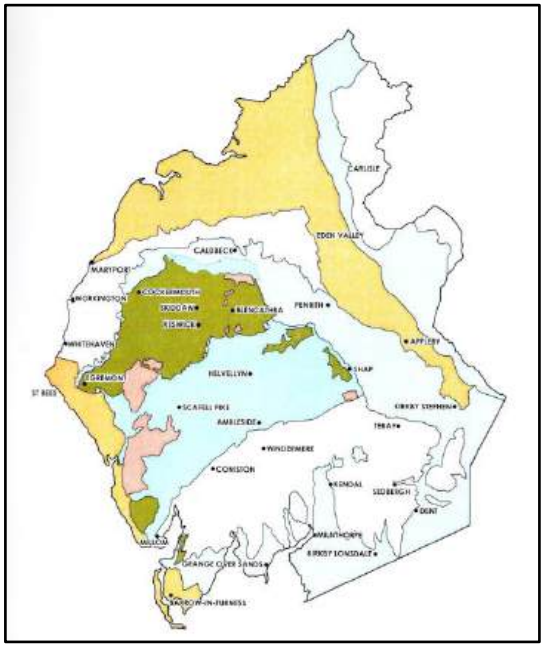
The Spring Conference on this occasion took place from 7th-11th July with Easter time being avoided because of a potential snow risk.

Forty five buildings were to be visited over three days, covering the following areas;

Tour 1-The Central Lake District

Tour 2-Carlisle and the Solway Plain

Tour 3-Alston Moor and the Borderlands



A slide of the geology of Cumbria (see left) clearly illustrated the great diversity of building materials available throughout the county.

Tour 1 included the grade 2* farm at Glencoyne, close to Glecoyne Bay on the shores of Ullswater. Whilst alterations have been made to the buildings, Glencoyne Farm has clear evidence of its earlier 17th century roots in its cross passage and a stone staircase in the thickness of the original back wall. There is also evidence of early fitted furniture and old plaster remnants. The crowstep gables and cylindrical chimneys were later additions.

The How in Hartsop is an abandoned C17 farmhouse, now in the hands of the National Trust. Many early features remain, including an intact masonry smoke hood supported on the bressumer beam and rannel-balks still in place in the chimney from which meat to be smoked. There is also a blocked original mullion window.

The grade 2 Corn Drying Kiln, behind The How, dates from C16 or early C17 and has a cruck beam structure. On the first floor, slates are placed on end and covered with horse hair to prevent grain from dropping through to the fire below. Once dry, grain would be taken elsewhere for milling.

Troutbeck village(and early plans are available) includes a number of well-preserved C17 buildings as well as the famous house, Townend, originally belonging to the Brown family. Whilst in the village, visits were made by the groups to Lane Barn which had also been owned by the Browns (and early plans from 1still available). A visit was also made to Lane Foot Barn, a cruck frame bank barn with gable entry.

A coffee break took place at Cragwood, a vernacular architectural revival building dated 1911. Beautiful workmanship in evidence in the mullion and transom bays and the superb joinery in the staircase.

This was followed by a visit to grade1 listed Castle Dairy in Kendal, dating from C14 with later remodelling. A massive chimney remains and a well-preserved interior with many early features. A daisy wheel motif in the shape of a six petalled flower or six pointed star is visible in the stonework. Such motifs existed as protection marks or to keep evil away (apotropaic). In C17 at a time of fervour for witch hunts, there was a fear that wherever air could get into a building then so could a witch. Daisy wheels were frequently carved close to windows and doors.

Tour 2

This tour began with a visit to Hardrigg Hall at Ellonby. Attached to a C17 farmhouse, this building has a classic tower house layout, with a ground floor store, central floor for living, bedrooms on the upper floor and a corner spiral stair accessing all floors. A fine cruck barn standing close by with several sets of full crucks was also visited. (Image below © Peter Messenger)

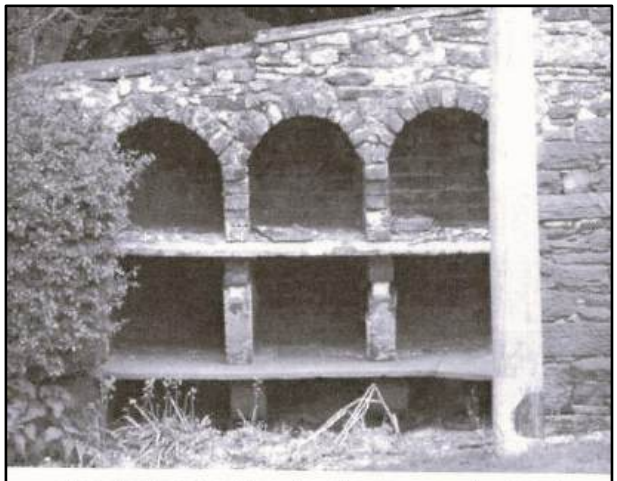
Three different group opportunities in Carlisle:

The Guildhall, now a restaurant and museum, was built around 1395 by Richard de Redness. It is the only complete standing half-timbered house in Cumbria and is an L shaped building, jettied out on both upper storeys. A small two-light C15 windows on the Fisher Street side of the building has wooden tracery. The main roof timbers are possibly C16/C17 replacements but timbers in the wing are mostly original with a number of crown posts.

Prior's Tower in the cathedral precinct. Probably started by Prior Gondibour in the1490s and later finished by Prior Senhouse. A superb painted ceiling with Prior Senhouse's mottoes and badges repeated many times. (see image page 20)

The Tithe Barn built by Prior Gondibour in the 1470s with an almost complete timber frame. A striking roof with heavy kingpost trusses and 2/3 pairs of queenposts.

The Solway Plain



Bee boles, Curthwaite House, garden (PM)

Burgh by Sands,a village built on the site of a Roman Fort and with many interesting buildings:

St Michael's Church dating probably from C12 and built from stones from the Roman wall. A barrel-vaulted structure lengthened in C14 with the addition of a pair of defensive towers. The small internal doorway to the west tower still has its iron gate or yatt, with huge hinges and bolts.
Several clay buildings (dabbins) remaining, some with thatch:

Lamonby Farm a clay building and formerly a long house with a cross passage, inglenook and parlour and attached byre in line with the dwelling.
A further C17 clay building was visited at West Curthwaite, complete with thatched roof, cruck beams and buttress to support bulging walls.

Coffee break was at Curthwaite at Beech House with Beeboles in the neighbouring garden , unusual in that they're two tiered.

Tour 3

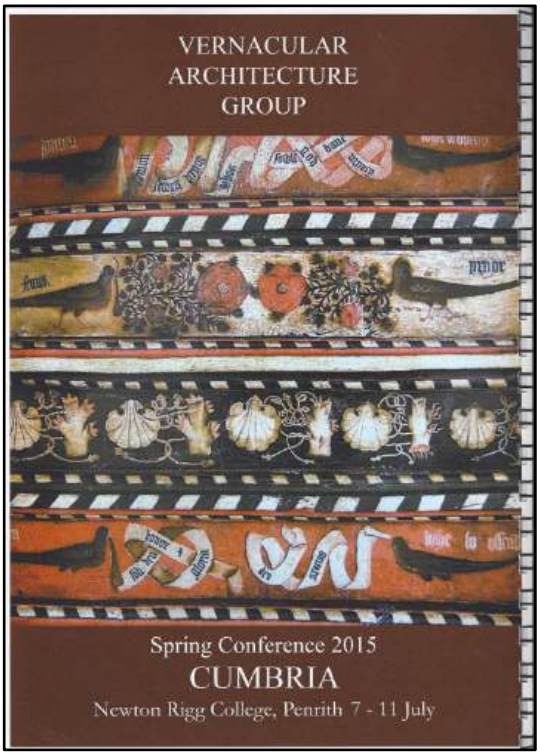
The Bastle at Glassonby. Built between 1550 and 1650 at the time of the Border raids…a fine example though now with addition of outside stairs. Groundfloor accommodation for cattle was entered via a door, in the gable. Drawbar holes still visible. The upper floor accessed via a ladder for security. Mason's mark or protection mark visible on lintel on the first floor. This upper room may have been divided with a hearth and a fire window.

Stokoe House, Alston. A three-storey house dating from the early C18 and adjoining the pub The Turks Head. It was common at this time for the ground floor to be used for commercial purposes or, as in the case of Stokoe House, for stabling. An external staircase led to a first floor front door and remnants of this arrangement can be seen around Alston. In times of growth, these ground floor spaces were let as further dwellings. 'Living Upstairs' was the theme for an evening lecture on this subject.

Visits also took place to High Mill, equipped with machinery by John Smeaton, The Friends Meeting House and at Nenthead, The Old Bastle at Nentsberry, still with evidence of a smoke hood and stone staircase.

The final visit was to Naworth Castle (dating from C14), and its gatehouse with its original iron yatt. Denton Foot Bastle (now a house on the edge of Naworth Park) with its very thick walls and tiny barred windows was also visited.

A fascinating whistle stop tour over 5 days and only 5 minutes adrift on one visit! ▪



Ceiling detail at Prior's Tower