NEWSLETTER No. 38 – WINTER 2022

1. From the Chairman

I hope this finds you well and that you were able to celebrate Christmas with friends and family.
We have had a busy time since the last newsletter in September as the list below shows. Fuller reports appear later in these pages.

Meetings held since the last newsletter include -

Zoom talks-
October, David Cant, Ships' Timbers
November, (talk on the barns survey of the Westmorland Dales, by Hannah Kingsbury was cancelled).
December, June Hill, A celebration of Cumbrian Vernacular.

Live meetings -
October, Ona Ash, near Kirkoswald
November, Milnthorpe Walkabout, led by Stuart Harling
December, Christmas Lunch at the Greenhill Hotel, Wigton.

Various groups have been recording buildings –
(Photographs with remarks for the properties appear on pages 3-5)

Ona Ash, thorough recording including the use of a drone. An application for a dendrochronology survey on the substantial cruck trusses in under way.

Common House, Armathwaite. A disused building turns out to be the former farmhouse. It has a raised cruck truss.

Cragg Farm, Eskdale. Another former farmhouse with many interesting features.

Fell View, Little Asby. This former farmhouse is lived in and appears to be a four square 18th century house, but started life as a single storey thatched house one room deep.

St Martin's Cottage, Gamblesby. An enigma of a building, embodying a former structure with outside stone steps.

Lime Grove, Tirrel. Built in 1765, and incorporating earlier elements, this fine house uses many local materials.

more on the next page……

More recorders are needed and a training course in planned. Three copies of each record are made, for the owner, for CVBG archives and for county archives.

- The project in cooperation with the Fell foot Forward initiative of the NPAONB continues. Working on the publication are Bruce Bennison, Ruth Lawley, Stephanie Hewison, Sheila Fletcher, Lesley Frazer and June Hill. Publication is planned for March or April and a launch could be part of our event to be held at Naworth Castle, home of our patron, the Hon Philip Howard.
- Cumbria Archive Service 60th anniversary event, CVBG stall. Recruited 2 new members, possibly more. Last year, I proposed history fair, but Covid intervened and now CAS held one. Should we hold a national one? Could this be our 10th anniversary celebration?
- Cumbria Local History Federation Annual Convention was held in October. CVBG had a display there and sold several publications. If you know of other events where we could publicise what we do, recruit new members and generally raise awareness of CVBG, please contact me.

E mail queries answered- Include limestone as roofing material, non-members asking permission to view Zoom talks, invitations to examine buildings,

Stephanie Hewison and John McDowell, members of CVBG committee, have taken on responsibility for organising reports on events. This is a great help, and we look forward to reading their work.

Finally, all good wishes for 2023. May it turn out to be a happier time for everyone.

June Hill

CVBG Chairman

Festive scenes from The Greenhill Hotel © John McDowell

2. Recorded Buildings

Small groups of CVBG members responded to requests to visit several houses during October and November 2021, these buildings are shown on the following pages…….

Ona Ash, Kirkoswald. © Jen Callis

Driving by on the road from Kirkoswald to Croglin, it is very easy to miss this treasure of a house. We are fortunate that the owner, Andrew Carter, is a member of CVBG and is more than willing to share the house with the group. The house was of one storey for some years, before another floor was inserted but the three cruck trusses are in situ. It is a remarkable survival.

Common Farm, Armathwaite. © Liz Kerrey

Enough evidence remains in this disused farm building to prove that it was once a dwelling house, now replaced by an early twentieth century farmhouse. Blocked mullioned windows, a fire window and the blocked doorway from a cross passage are clear to see. Two gable chimneys and a raised cruck truss, empty holes where beams carried the inserted floor and an added dairy in an outshut are further clues to its past. It was built long before the common was enclosed in 1821.

Cragg Farm, Eskdale.© Peter Messenger

Set in a landscape of prehistoric settlement, Cragg Farm stands beside a beck which joins the River Esk, in Birkby parish, The farm has a bank barn and other buildings including a disused farmhouse which adjoins the present one. The stone spiral stair is beside the chimney.

Fell View, Little Asby. © Jen Callis

The house is first seen from the back and was once a farmhouse. Part of the separate barn has been converted to a house. Facing west, there are clear signs that the house began life as a single storey house one room deep, and in the eighteenth century, was remodelled to form the building we see today. Now it is a four-square Georgian house, with elegant features such as the round headed staircase window.

St. Martins Cottage, Gamblesby. © Peter Messenger

Standing gable end onto the village green, this is another house with an eighteenth century exterior. It conceals a building which had an external stone staircase, now within the house. The question is, was this a bastle or a farm building? Adjoining the house is a barn, converted to a separate dwelling. The boulder plinth suggests that part of the house is older than the Georgian remodelling.

Lime Grove, Tirrel. © June Hill

Work started on recording this house before Covid intervened. Built by Quakers prominent in the local community in 1765, the house has an elegant symmetrical stone facade. However, although the listing (it is a Grade 11 building) states that the brick section standing back, to the left, is an extension, it is in fact the earlier remaining part of the structure. We are fortunate in having access to the will of the builder, John Ritson (written 1799) and his widow Ruth (proved 1811), which contain information about the house and its contents. The datestone above the front door carries their names.

3. The Historic Building Doctor : Chapter 1 – The Philosophy of Repair

By Paul Lewis, Chartered Building Surveyor
CVBG, Deputy Chairman.

1. Townend, Troutbeck, one of the finest vernacular buildings in Cumbria

In this first of a series of articles on how to repair your vernacular building, the craft nature of vernacular buildings is recognised, and the philosophy of their repair is explored. Later papers will provide useful guidance on the repair of the fabric, element by element.

So where to start? It was back in the late 19th century when the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) began to establish principles for the repair of historic buildings; William Morris and Philip Webb were guiding lights. As a reaction to industrialised construction, the Society evolved a sensitive approach to repair and developed principles that sought to save historic buildings from damage by over-repair and unsympathetic alteration. Today, those same principles can be aptly applied to the vernacular buildings of Cumbria as one of the best surviving collections of historic buildings in Great Britain.

Modern and many post – Victorian buildings are the product of industrialised component manufacture and assembly; the advent of an effective railway system from the mid – 19th century accelerated the import of manufactured construction materials and the local building traditions that had served for centuries began to decline. Design ideas had already changed significantly by that time, even from as early as the 17th century as more 'polite' design forms were adopted, but the methods of construction and use of materials remained largely traditional until the late 19th century.

Our vernacular buildings were always erected using largely local materials with craft-based methods of construction that had served well for hundreds of years, reflecting the geology and character of their area. In that, they remain a precious repository of people's ideas, tastes, skills and the relationship with their locality. It is this that sensitive repair seeks to retain so that these buildings can be appreciated by future generations.

When SPAB wrote its Manifesto in 1877, one of its guiding principles proffered '*stave off decay by daily care*.' By doing simple maintenance tasks 'little and often', more costly and disruptive interventions can be avoided. A leaking downpipe or slipped slate can cause major damage; eroded mortar pointing and ensuing dampness, if left unattended, can provide moisture for timber decay in structural timberwork. Good conservation starts with good maintenance and is a useful way for an owner to learn the use of traditional materials and techniques.

By immersing oneself in the gentle maintenance of an old building, one's observations will build to an understanding of its history, design and construction. The sequence of change, and the relative importance of the parts that make up the whole, will slowly become apparent. Often, the best initial approach is to monitor, watch and learn, but when intervention is needed, it is this intimate understanding of the building that will help evaluate next steps and avoid unnecessary damage.

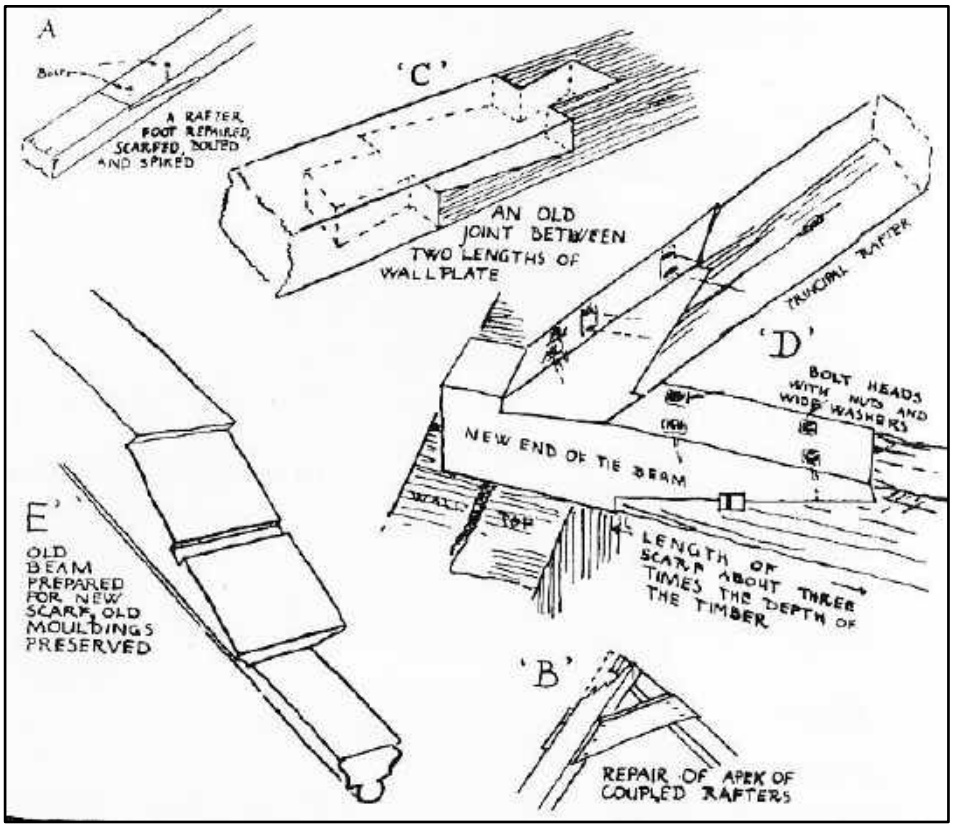
The SPAB approach has often been described as 'considered inaction' but for good reason. The 'oldness' of an historic building is displayed in the patina of age held in its slender surface layers - the irregular roof lines, the patterns of wear in stone flags, the undulations of old plaster – all serve to tell the building's very particular story. Accordingly, works of repair should be '*no more but no less than is essentia*l' and thereby ensure the maximum survival of historic fabric. This is known as the principal of minimum intervention.

At some point every owner of an historic building will be tempted to recreate the past or turn back the clock in some way, perhaps to re-open a closed window or reinstate a missing heck. Restoration is a process fraught with risk for historic buildings as there is always the likelihood that ancient fabric and detail are lost, or that results lack authenticity. Too often the significance of a building is not yet fully understood before the process of restoration commences; this where the prudent owner can bring to bear the knowledge built up from sensitive care and the study occasioned by his own work. A useful guiding maxim is that '*restoration stops where conjecture begins*.' Sometimes, it is entirely valid to remove unsympathetic alterations to better display the story a property can tell, but the process starts with that early detective work of observation and understanding.

There are always options when considering how to repair historic fabric; using the principle of minimum intervention, matching materials could be used to insert

new stone for old, for example, but this will always be expensive. Alternatively, a compatible brick may be indented to create an honest but functional repair. In this way once more the maximum of historic building material is preserved with its 'patina of age.'

In modern times we have been drawn to create uniformity when we repair, often encouraged by tradesmen that lack empathy with older buildings. Patch repair of render or pointing, for example, is far preferable (and cheaper) than wholesale renewal if it achieves its function of weather protection. Once again, wholesale renewal of decayed structural timbers can also be avoided by deploying carpentry techniques that have been understood for centuries. Plate 2 below is an extract from 'The Repair of Ancient Buildings' by A. R. Powys, first published in 1929 and shows how spliced repairs can be conducted to old timbers without complete renewal. Such is the process known as 'conservative repair.'



2. Sympathetic methods of timber repair

An owner could be drawn to think that alterations to modernise and adapt a vernacular building should be discouraged in favour of its preservation; indeed, the SPAB Manifesto of 1877 implored owners and Architects,

"to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands; if it has become inconvenient for its present use, to raise another building

rather than alter or enlarge the old one; in fine to treat our ancient buildings as monuments of a bygone art, created by bygone manners, that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying."

Fortunately, the modern constructive approach to conservation recognises that sympathetic alteration, adaptation, or extension can provide an economic future for our historic buildings whilst avoiding unnecessary damage. By using a compatible pallet of materials, avoiding pastiche, and ensuring that '*old joins new gently*' an extension or alteration to an old structure can appear subservient and yet achieve an appearance of its own time. Informed by understanding, an owner can thereby continue the story of an historic building from past to present in a gradual process of change that has given us the fascinating and informative vernacular buildings we enjoy today. (***to be continued in subsequent newsletters).***

TALK REPORT

In October, David Cant, former chairman of the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group and a member of the Cumbria group since we started in 2013, gave an informative and entertaining talk on Ships' Timbers.
He set out to discount the many myths surrounding this subject, pointing out that land transport of heavy goods, including timber, was hugely more expensive than carriage by water, for most of the vernacular period. Unless buildings were only a few miles from the coast, therefore, the likelihood that timber from defunct ships should become part of a building, is very slim.
He did give instance of this, where it was proven by documentary evidence, but in general, the message was that this myth is exactly that. **June Hill.**

Gosforth Hall Hotel in Seascale (inset): David had tales of groaning timbers and sailors' cries as their ship is wrecked – the timbers re-used in this bedroom!

4. CVBG event Milnthorpe, 19th November 2022

Attendees: - Stuart Harling, June & Roy Hill, John McDowell, Anne Porter, David & Noelene Shore, Frances & Adrian Garne, Gilly Kendall, Alan Smith, Barbara Grundy, Claire Jeffery, Helen & Desmond Holmes. Lynne Seignot, Stephanie Hewison, Ken Howarth, Mike & Sue Turner, Lyn Prescott.

Stuart Harling arranged a very interesting afternoon for us in Milnthorpe. We met at the RC Church Hall on Haverflatts Lane and began with our packed lunches as well as refreshments provided by Barbara Grundy. Stuart then introduced us to how the event was conceived and detailed the why, the who and background to a study of vernacular elements of building in Milnthorpe in particular. The 'Along the Lines' project inspired by Alan Smith and the geology beneath the buildings across Cumbria had led to a small local group of members, Rose, Len, Ken & Stuart examining Milnthorpe more closely.

Red Barn © John McDowell

Here the predominant building materials readily available have been carboniferous limestone and Westmorland slate. Vernacular features have become harder to elicit due to rebuilding and modifications over the years, with the more basic wood, wattle, turf & thatch properties having been lost to demolition or removal long ago. The true vernacular buildings locally mostly preceded 1800, before architects' plans were more commonplace and with transport of materials becoming easier by the development of the railways and the Lancaster Canal of 1819. Principal features in the history of Milnthorpe were as a market town and its development due to a port at Dixies to the west at Sandside, a custom house & warehouses. The River Bella with adjacent watermills and forges were involved in shipbuilding along with a trade in gunpowder which led to the prosperity of the town as the principal port of Westmorland until the 19th century.

The Norse Viking origins for the name Milnthorpe is 'mill village' and for Haverflatts, 'bread/oats & farmland'. The Arnside Railway Viaduct of 1857 obstructed the Upper Kent Estuary stopping ships which had unloaded Welsh slate, Furness iron ore and pig iron from Scotland. The road from Arnside to Kentside was built by the Furness Railway Company in 1859 and between Sandside and Milnthorpe it skirts the Park of Dallam. The main road through the town was initially to

Crooklands towards Kirkby Lonsdale. The Lancaster to Kendal section of the A6 required the widening of the crossroads to relieve congestion, which remained a problem until the opening of the M6 motorway. Heversham with Milnthorpe township was an ancient parish in Kendal ward, becoming separate parishes in 1896

The group then joined a relaxed walkabout tour for 2 hours led by Stuart, assisted by Ken Howarth to keep us all together on the way. Haverflatts Lane was the access to two farms outside the town. We walked to the Red Barn c1750, which was a 'bonded warehouse' associated with the port on the old road passing through Crooklands and situated close to a family of carriers. The name arose from the woodwork being painted red around 1840, part of the guano trade from South America, guano was used as fertiliser.

© Mike Turner

We returned down Harmony Hill, stopping to examine a row of old cottages set back in a close behind other stone houses, notable exposed limestone walls on boulder footings and stone window lintels, one has a painted date-stone of 1726. Then down Windy Hill past some warehouses, also Georgian Villas with their symmetrical front elevations and an adjacent older rendered house. Entering Clark Mews, we could see the exposed stonework and wooden lintels at the rear of the house. We passed other modified warehouses with evidence of change of use and the previous fenestration was visible on those with exposed stone. The Coach and Horses Inn dates from the 18th century, one of eleven inns at the time, then along Main Street and over the Crossroads. The Cross Keys, the main stagecoach inn of 16th century origins is here, but largely rebuilt in 1821. It is where gentry & royalty were entertained, we viewed the rear, accessed by an old coaching entrance with exposed beams and walked past converted outbuildings and stabling. The Bull's Head is nearby but is neither the original building nor site.


Rear of Parkside © John McDowell

Further along the narrow Park Road with its terraced cottages and shops to the River Bela and over the old bridge built in 1763. Prior to 1813 the road to Arnside crossed here, Through the Park to Dallam Tower and over the hill to Sandside. We saw steps upstream near the site of an

older bridge of 1542. We didn't visit the Bela Mill 400 yards down The Strands, being of 3 storey and 8 bays, it is now converted to housing, the original corn, twine and sacking mill & later as Dobson's hair comb manufacturer since 1868, the fourteen feet diameter wheel survives. We viewed Dallam Tower from a distance, a tower from 1320, now a substantial country house as rebuilt 1720-25, aggrandized by George Webster in 1826 along with a symmetrical group of farm offices near the old bridge.

Parkside © John McDowell

Parkside is an attractive rendered farmhouse nearby, painted white, but with South Westmorland features, including the cylindrical chimney stacks on the house, (7 in total). The group were invited to view modified barns at the rear, noting interesting original wood features and the well-worn steps to the cellars. Our return took us past the Memorial Hall, the front part built as a Market house in 1843, the Memorial Reading Rooms of 1880 and the Markert Square. A Charter for a weekly market by Edward III dates from 1334, the 18th century Market Cross is surmounted by a ball and was the whipping post local wrongdoers. On the other side of the square, we viewed the site of a fountain or main village well, under a grating by the Village Green, in front of St Thomas's Church of 1837. The Church was completed by George Webster, we viewed the stonework by the porch, which is all in hard limestone, but with little detail.

We concluded the tour by returning up Main Street to where there is a group of individual Houses: Harmony Hall completed c1790 of fine sandstone ashlar was built by Joseph Fryer, a sea captain and slave trader; Laburnum House c1828 in painted hammered limestone, its roof hidden by a parapet and Belvedere the ex-vicarage, also of hammered limestone and again with Webster detail.

Many thanks to Stuart for his thoughtful preparation and for leading this worthwhile event, we heard and saw more in Milnthorpe than might have been expected, both vernacular styles there and the town's history.

John McDowell
CVBG Committee

(Books as sources of history recommended by Stuart: The Chronicles of Milnthorpe by Roger K Bingham and The Kendal's Port by Leonard Smith).

© John McDowell

5. 2022 CHRISTMAS LUNCH at THE GREENHILL HOTEL, RED DIAL, WIGTON.

On a bright, crisp, and cold December day 24 CVBG members (plus cat) enjoyed the annual Christmas lunch. The Greenhill Hotel is located a couple of miles south west of Wigton at Red Dial on the A595 Carlisle to Cockermouth road. It is a stunning Georgian mansion, built of red sandstone, set in nine acres of North Cumbrian parkland. The seasonal decorations added to the ambiance of a very pleasant afternoon. The venue hosts weddings, group luncheons and dinners, antique fairs, and conferences, and is in a popular easy to find location.

Image © John McDowell

The excellent food was served efficiently by attentive staff, from arrival at 12.30 until departure at almost 2.45, the afternoon was held in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. **Mike Turner, CVBG Secretary**

Image © Andrew Carter

"It was a pleasant day to drive (or be driven thanks to the kindness of colleagues in the Group) to the lunch venue and to enjoy the meal. Even the long and slow detour needed to get back home didn't spoil it, though of course I didn't have the tedium of doing the driving in what seemed like endless traffic jams!" ……. Valerie Kendall

6. THE DUDDINGS OF GREENHILL WIGTON

About fifty years ago, I went to an auction at a farm in Caldbeck. That was in the days when articles were brought into the yard and displayed to the encircling crowd. The reason that I had gone was because I had heard that an oil painting of a bull was one of the items for sale and I wanted a birthday present for my husband. The bidding was quite brisk to begin with, but because my godfather had left me a little money, I held my nerve and bought the rather fine painting in its gilt frame. I think it was £45, quite a hefty price in those days. On the back, in an old-fashioned hand was written "Bought at Mr. Dudding's sale, Greenhill, farmed the King's farm at Sandringham."

The shorthorn bull was shaped like a tin of corned beef and had legs which seemed inadequate for his bulk. In the background was a windmill. Was this a clue to Norfolk? The auctioneer quipped" You might have bought a Stubbs there."

That sent me on a quest, long before the days of internet searches. Who were the Duddings, was there evidence of their days at Sandringham, what were their origins?

While we were nearby on holiday, we called at Sandringham to enquire if they had records of stock. The farm manager was on holiday too, so I left a note for him with my query. He replied with the disappointing news that records only went back to the nineteen thirties.

Dudding is not a Cumbrian local name so when the internet began to be a useful tool, I looked up the name in the censuses. I soon found Henry Arthur Dudding, a solicitor in Wigton. He was born in 1854 at Bennington in Lincolnshire and his father Richard was a curate there when he christened his son at St. Andrews church. Richard was the namesake and oldest son of another Richard and his wife Mary Anne Dudding of Panton House, Wragby. Richard the elder was born in 1796 and in the 1861 census was farming 620 acres, employing nineteen men and eight boys. His firstborn, named for his father, was the only child of the clan to be born in Bennington, the other seven were all born in Panton.

Andrew Humphries, one time vice principal at Newton Rigg was very helpful in my early searches. He sent me a nineteenth century article about noted shorthorn

breeders called Dudding in Lincolnshire although it was many years before I could follow this up. When *Find My Past* gave us access to newspapers all over the country, I began to find articles relating to two younger unmarried brothers of Richard, William, and Henry. *The Lincolnshire Chronicle* had regular reports over many years of the family's frequent wins for their Lincoln Longwools and their Shorthorn cattle, with mostly first or second prizes. In 1874, they joined an association with 55 other landholders at a meeting held to resist wage increases of their labourers. Also, they agreed not to employ any farmhand who belonged to any sort of Union. The labourers were asking for another sixpence a day to add to their allotted three shillings.

From the censuses one can trace the size of the farm at Panton House, Wragby. In 1851, Richard the elder had 1200 acres, employing 45 labourers and 8 boys. The *Lincolnshire Chronicle* recorded his retirement sale in September 1871 when he put his sons William and Henry in possession of the now reduced farm, its acreage by then only 620 acres. The article refers to father Richard's careful stockbreeding from his own father's stock, hiring the best bulls of the time. The sons continued with the blood lines and won 2nd prize with yearling Shorthorn heifers at the Oxford royal show, the prize heifer being sold for 350 guineas to a Canadian buyer, a fabulous sum in those days.

The brothers also won many 1st prizes at the Royal and Yorkshire Agricultural shows, their names appearing regularly in the Lincolnshire press with their prize-winning Shorthorns and Lincoln Longwools. In 1863, Father Richard and his sons William and Henry won 1st prizes for bulls and sheep at the North Lincolnshire show, winning prizes of £20, £8 and £4, the value of the £1 then equalling more than £50 today.

Several people have remarked that bulls were not really that shape, were they? Well yes, they were. It was fashion combined with very different tastes in meat. Fat was prized for its flavour which permeated the joint, whether it was pork, beef or mutton. After photography replaced animal portraits, the annual Smithfield Show before Christmas portrayed beasts with very similar proportions, certainly not bred for speed.

William was born in 1833 and died in 1879 at Panton House, Wragby, his father's farm. Two other Duddings of Panton house died within months of William, possibly in an epidemic of some kind.

Richard, the oldest Dudding brother of that generation took Holy Orders and after being a curate of several parishes, became the vicar of Saleby, near Louth in Lincolnshire. He married Marianne Nelthorpe and his son, Henry Arthur born in 1854, became a solicitor in Wigton. *The Lincolnshire Chronicle* recorded he was first in his exam year and "A credit to his schoolmaster." His first address at Wigton was 41 West Street but by the 1901 census, he had acquired Greenhill, the red sandstone mansion outside the town. His wife Edith had a son Lawrence Stanley in 1899 who was an articled solicitor's clerk in the 1911 census. He had a sister

Edith Winifred, born in 1891 and two brothers, Arthur Norman, born in 1897 and finally, Henry Basil born in 1900.

On May 24th, 1913, the *Lincoln Chronicle and Boston Guardian* published an article about Henry Arthur's uncle, the bachelor Henry Dudding, by that time at his own farm in Riby Grove near Grimsby. The previous year, Henry had died aged 78 leaving considerable wealth and valuable artefacts to his relations and to charities. The estate was valued at £22,674.9s 4d. and he left family portraits and the silver cup (presented to his father) to his nephew, Henry Arthur Dudding of Wigton.

It would be reasonable to think that the bull was one of the "family" portraits but unless another newspaper reported itemised bequests, we shall have to merely surmise. Maybe the silver cup went with the bull's portrait, but though I have searched online for the actual will, nothing registers.

None of this explains the teasing line "Farmed the King's farm at Sandringham" which is in another county to the Dudding family farm holdings although not so very distant as the crow flies but on the Southern side of the Wash. Sandringham did not come into the royal family's holdings until 1862, so that leaves nearly sixty years when there were no stock records in their archives. Somewhere, there may be a Dudding who knows the answer, but the name is not in any current Cumbrian phone directory.

Jennifer Forsyth (CVBG Member)

A REQUEST FROM GEOFF BRAMBLES (Cumbria Industrial History Society)

On page 158 of " The Industrial Archaeology of the Lake Counties", a well-known classic publication, written by two pioneers of the study of industrial history, John Marshall and Mike Davies-Shiel, both of whom were fastidious in their approach to their research, it is stated that roofing tiles were made out of thin fissile limestones at various sites lying in the triangle Penrith - Brough - Tebay, giving Warcop, Great Asby, Orton, Thrimby, Temple Sowerby and Culgaith as examples. They go on to say that "… the resultant roof tiles are to be found along the Eden valley as far as Dalston in the north".

There is no reason in principle why such limestones should not have been used in this way, but in all my extensive meanderings around the county, I've not knowingly come across any examples. Next summer, I'll be making a dedicated search.

Notwithstanding the above, I must declare that I have examined the "stack of discarded limestone roofing flags" referred to in the 1971 report on archaeological digs at Kendal castle conducted 1967- 1971, and stored in Kendal Museum. This "stack" comprises five incomplete slabs, the largest of which measures c. 25 x 23 cm. They all have a fixing hole. To describe them as "slabs" in the context of roofing material is, however, nothing less than generous, as their thickness varies irregularly, and would have made using them problematic to say the least

If any member of the CVBG knows anything about limestone used as a roofing material, please contact secretary@cvbg.co.uk and the message will be passed on.

7. Around Cumbria: A celebration of vernacular buildings. Presented via Zoom by June Hill.

This was an interesting and wide-ranging talk, embracing the richness of our local architecture which has evolved over the centuries.

June began by speaking about some of the Pele towers in Cumbria. These included Dacre Castle, a freestanding tower and defensible building of four storeys, the ground floor having a vaulted undercroft, Hardrigg Hall, a partially ruined tower with later farm building attached in Ellonby. Winton Hall, a medieval tower, substantially altered and used as a school during Victorian times. Yanwath Hall, one of the most perfect examples of a tower and attached hall, which still has traces of Elizabethan plaster remaining on the walls. Permission is currently being sought to convert the hall to holiday accommodation. Many of the slates

Croglin Old Rectory © Ken Howarth

were held on by sheep bones (by comparison, 2000 sheep shanks were ordered for a similar sized hall at Stockbridge). The Rectory Pele at Croglin has a vaulted undercroft and the tower being inaccessible from the ground floor. Fortified church towers such as St Michael's at Burgh- by-Sands still stand with its original iron gate intact.

Bastle houses, dating mainly from the 16th century were two storey defensive buildings providing accommodation for animals and people during times of raids

and unrest on both sides of the Scottish border. External stairs were often added later in more peaceful times. Good examples remain such as Blackmiddens Bastle in Northumberland, the bastle at Newbiggin (near Croglin and now converted to a bank barn), Glassonby, Denton Foot (near Naworth) and also at Clarghyll Hall, Alston. Most bastles on the Scottish side of the border are now gone.

For a brief period in the north of England multi-storey porches were a feature of some simple, non-fortified buildings giving increased emphasis to the entrance, Gaythorne Hall (Asby) being an example. These however mainly disappeared in the 17th century.

Gaythorne Hall © Paul Lewis

Thatched roof buildings with cruck beams also featured in June's presentation, for example, Ratten Row near Dalston, Ona Ash in Kirkoswald and at Burgh-by-Sands, where they're also known as clay dabbins, due to the use of clay in the buildings. Thatch could be of straw, bracken, turf, reed or ling.

Bridge End, Eamont Bridge © Mike Turner

Slides of a selection of date stones were shown, ranging from 1592 to1702 and from houses in villages such as Askham, Eamont Bridge and Cumrew. June explained that symbols such as 'daisy wheels' were protection marks to keep evil spirits out of the house.

A variety of window styles were discussed with examples from Great Asby, Crosby Ravensworth and Appleby. The significance of the fire window was also discussed in houses of a longhouse layout with inglenook. Chimneys also featured, particularly the cylindrical chimneys often seen around the Lake District.

June concluded her fascinating talk with references to the fine half-timbered Guildhall, still standing in Carlisle with 14th century roots and to Hudbeck, near Raughton Head, a late 16th/early 17th century farmhouse currently being restored, with raised crucks and very rare curved windbraces.

Stephanie Hewison, CVBG Committee.

8. Keld Chapel, Shap - Paul Lewis, Vice Chairman CVBG

The date of construction of Keld Chapel is unknown but a christening was recorded here in 1672. By the end of the 17th century the chapel ceased to be used for religious purposes and was converted into a house. The 3-bay window in the gable with its elliptical-headed lights dates from 16th century but is now known to have been inserted from elsewhere in the 19th century. It may originally have been a chantry chapel in pre-reformation times, served by the nearby Shap Premonstratensian Abbey; however, there is no record of it being used as a chapel of ease within the Carlisle Diocese, so its post-reformation use is more likely to be associated with one of the dissenting religious groups of the area.

Both images © Paul Lewis

9. Oriel Window at Grange Hall, Great Asby. – June Hill

Oriel windows are quite rare in Cumbria, and best described as upstairs bays. They are corbelled out from the wall, usually three or five sided, and often have window seats inside. This one is at Grange Hall, where we are hoping to hold an event during the coming summer.

Grange Hall was a monastic grange, or farm, attached to Byland Abbey in North Yorkshire. Monasteries received grants or bequests of land spread over a very wide area, deriving much of their income from the rich limestone pastures of the uplands. Byland began as a daughter house of Furness Abbey. After the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s, granges were leased or granted to gentry families and continued as farms and residences.

Images of Grange Hall Oriel Window © Dr Justin Wood (CVBG Member)
Monochrome Image of Tufton Arms © Google Images.

Grange Hall has survived with very little external change. The oriel window is typical of its period, that is the 15th century, with tracery of the Perpendicular style.

Such features were a luxury of high-status houses. It is now without glass, being partitioned off from the interior but is a complete example of its date.

In the Gothic Revival of the Victorian age, such windows became popular as seen at the Tufton Arms Hotel, Appleby.