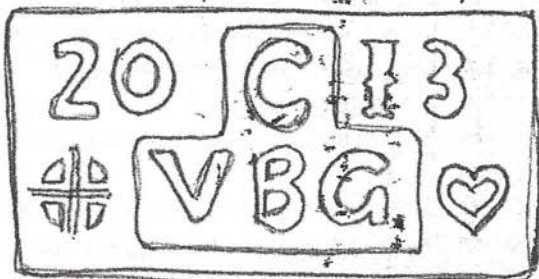


CUMBRIA VERNACULAR BUILDINGS GROUP  
NEWSLETTER Number One July 2013



The study of "home grown" buildings in Cumbria, made for a particular purpose from materials to hand, using local skills and traditions.

1. Welcome to the first newsletter of the CVBG. It is very exciting to embark on this new venture. We have made a promising start and plans are now in preparation for a busy year ahead. I hope that members will feel that there is something for everyone to enjoy, wherever they live in Cumbria, and that they will take part in activities.

**Steering Committee** The following volunteered at the Launch event on 15 May, to serve until the first AGM -

June Hall, Penrith, Chairman

Mike Kingsbury, Kirkby Lonsdale, treasurer and membership

Sally Newton, Keswick, Newsletter processing and distribution

Sarah Woodcock, (National Trust) Grasmere

Richard Wilson, Carlisle

Vicky Slowe, (Ruskin Museum) Coniston

Ian Thomson, Keswick

Dan Elsworth, Ulverston

2. **Membership** has been recruited from the three short courses led by June Hall in March and April, and other interested individuals. A flyer is enclosed to invite a wider membership. Your help in publicising the Group will be appreciated.

To date, there are 36 members, who, by joining before the AGM, will enjoy membership until subscriptions are due on 1 August 2014.

Another tangible benefit of membership is the offer by English Heritage, of a discount of 20% off the price of the newly published book, *Alston Moor, Cumbria, Buildings in a North Pennine Landscape*. (Details from June Hall, if you were not at the Launch.)

We are grateful for the generous donations from individual members which have helped to build funds.

Dr Ronald Brunskill has agreed to be our patron. His life's work has led the way in recording and understanding Vernacular Architecture in the UK and abroad. His work in Cumbria has given us a head start in our endeavours and we have a lot to live up to. Ron wishes us well and is "honoured to be nominated." In turn, we are privileged, and send him our thanks and good wishes.

### 3. Launch of CVBG, 15 June, 2013.

35 people attended the event at Millhouse village hall. The programme of lectures covered a wide range of topics.

*Malcolm Birdsall*, Membership Secretary of the Vernacular Architecture Group, (VAG), spoke about the role and activities of the national organisation.

*David Cant*, Chairman of the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group (YVBSG), gave advice to our new group, based on 40 years' experience of recording buildings in Yorkshire.

*Vicky Slowe*, Director of the Ruskin Museum, Coniston, gave a tour de force on Cumbria's vernacular buildings, based on surviving buildings and evidence from old photographs, literature and landscape paintings.

*Sarah Woodcock*, Curator, National Trust, concentrated on the built-in cupboards in seventeenth and early eighteenth century Cumbrian houses.

*Chester Forster* explained his methodology in recording the urban terraced houses of Carlisle.

*Mike Kingsbury* gave a presentation on his house at the eastern edge of Cumbria, and the problems of interpretation,

The excellent lunch was provided by The Watermill Café, Caldbeck.

### 4. Books Basic to the understanding of Cumbria's built heritage are -

R W Brunskill, Traditional Buildings of Cumbria, Cassell, 2002.  
Susan Denyer, Traditional Buildings and Life in the Lake District,  
Gollancz and NT, 1991.  
Nina Jennings, Clay Dabbins, Vernacular Buildings of the Solway Plain,  
CWAAS, 2003.  
Lucy Jessop, Matthew Whitfield and Andrew Davison, Alston Moor,  
Cumbria, Buildings in a North Pennine Landscape, English Heritage, 2013

5. **Recording** Work has begun on recording seven buildings around the county. Please let a committee member know if you wish to join a recording group, which will involve measuring and drawing plans and elevations, a written descriptions and a probable chronology of the building's development, with historical research where appropriate, Training will form part of these sessions. Whether you simply want to hold one end of a tape measure or draw architectural detail, take a photograph or examine old maps, you will be making a valuable contribution to a team effort.

Each record made will form part of an archive which will eventually become a historical resource. In 40 years, the YVBSG have recorded almost 2,000 buildings. (We have to start somewhere...)

6. **Requests to record buildings.** Please let us know if you have requests from owners to record vernacular buildings. In our first year, we will have to be realistic about what we can achieve, but the more members who become involved, the more buildings we can record. Priority will be given to "undiscovered gems".

7. **Code of Conduct** It is especially important that when members visit properties, as representatives of CVBG, they have guidelines to follow. A simple Code of Conduct is being prepared, to reassure both members and property owners that the Group's aims are purely for historical purposes. The Code will be circulated at the AGM.

8. **VAG Annual Conference, Carmarthen, South Wales. June 25-29**

June Hall attended the VAG, along with almost 90 members. The days were spent visiting buildings -

Brecon Cathedral and Bishop's Palace, Hay on Wye Castle, Houses in rural Carmarthenshire, Tenby Tudor Merchant's House, Monkton Old Hall and a tower and dovecote at Angle.

In the evenings, lectures were given -

Eurwyn Williams, on Homes of the Rural Poor, the cottages of SW Wales.

Richard Bebb, Interiors, fixtures and fittings.

Joanie Speers, on efforts to preserve and find uses for endangered buildings in rural South Wales.

To see a different region of Britain, with so many people from a wide range of backgrounds and experience in the study of buildings, is stimulating and enriching.

In 2014, the VAG Conference will be in Gloucester and in 2015 in Cumbria.

See [www.vag.org.uk](http://www.vag.org.uk)

**9. CVBG Programme for 2013/2014** will be circulated to members as soon as dates and venues are confirmed. It is a full programme of events around Cumbria, so that all members will have chance to participate. Included are visits, lectures, recording sessions, training, and study days.

**10. Joint weekend with YVBSG, 10/11 May, 2014, Sedbergh.**

The Yorkshire group have generously offered to share their annual recording weekend with us. On the Saturday, small teams will record buildings and on the Sunday, plans and elevations will be drawn up and descriptions, historical information and interpretations written, with guidance from experienced recorders. Details available at AGM.

**11. First Annual General Meeting of CVBG.**

Saturday 14 September, 2013, at Acorn Bank, Temple Sowerby, Penrith, (National Trust). 1.30 pm., followed by a guided visit round buildings. These include a restored watermill, a bank barn undergoing restoration and vernacular pig styes!

Booking form for visit enclosed.

June Hall, acting Chairman, July 2013.