

NEWSLETTER No. 22 – WINTER 2018



1. From the Chairman

Festive Greetings to you all. At this time of year, we look back, and ahead to the next year. Reviewing the past year, membership has increased, funds are greater, and all events have been well supported. Thank you all for making this possible. A special thank you goes to the committee, who have put in another twelve months of effort in organising events, giving talks and leading walks. I also want to thank others who volunteered to run an event: Alex Gibbons, Anna Gray and Chris Craghill.

As we look ahead to 2019, the programme (enclosed) is very exciting. Again, the committee and members have suggested and helped to plan events, and we are joining with several organisations whose job includes responsibility for historic buildings. By joining forces with other organisations, we gain from their expertise and spread the word about CVBG.

We plan to work with the **Heritage Action Zone** project in Appleby; the **RSPB**, who are responsible for maintaining farm buildings on the land they lease in Swindale and the Naddle Valley; the North Pennine Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (**NPAONB**); The Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group, (**SVBWG**), on a joint visit to the Debatable Lands; and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (**SPAB**) on an important aspect of Cumbria's historic buildings – the point at which vernacular building gave way to polite style.

To start the year, when we expect the weather to be too chilly for outside work, we aim to work on the half-finished records we have compiled, so that we can deposit a body of work in the county archives. This would be a major achievement. In response to my appeal for volunteers to complete this work, several members came forward and have already drawn up lists of what remains to be done to complete the records. More training sessions are planned for the coming year, outside our formal programme of monthly events and will be advertised. All are welcome.

Mike Kingsbury, our treasurer, has done some useful analysis of member participation in events. Compared with many other societies, participation is relatively high. While it is quite usual and perfectly understandable that many members subscribe to CVBG to support the organisation and to receive information, it would be good to meet more of you at events. Your support is

really valuable and much appreciated, but we feel that you would gain more value by sharing in the events offered.

We are planning to produce a publication during the coming year. This will be a descriptive account of Cumbria's traditional buildings, based on what we have discovered in our first five years. If you have a contribution to make, please contact me or the secretary ■

Wishing all our members a good year ahead *June L Hill*

CHRISTMAS LUNCH - Wednesday 12th December 2018

26 members enjoyed a traditional and delicious two course lunch held at the Watermill Café, Caldbeck, served by the friendly staff who have in the past provided our group with so many superb buffet spreads at functions around Cumbria.



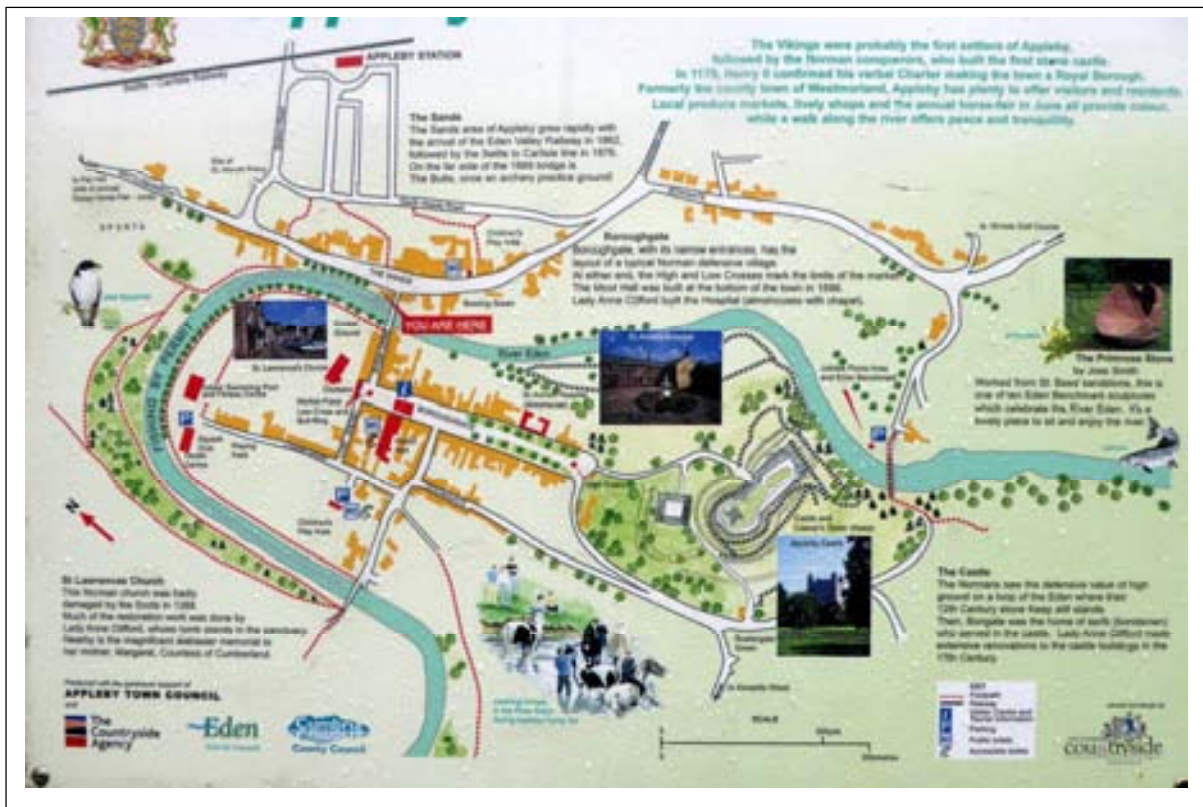
The view John Barrow would see as he came home from school, from the lane where his father worked as a tanner © Roy Hill

2. Appleby Study Day and Heritage Action Zone, 13th October – June Hill

This was an event arranged in conjunction with the **Heritage Action Zone** project, and its leader, Adrian Banford, who is one of our members. Claire Jeffery, a CVBG committee member, was co-organiser.

We met in the Methodist room, next to the church. The event was open to interested local residents, as the project seeks to work with the community.

By cooperating with the HAZ project, both parties gain – the project from having a group of people with a lively interest in buildings and some knowledge of traditional architecture, and CVBG by having access to buildings, some training in recording and shared funding for events.



Heritage Action Zones are an initiative by Historic England, to revive the fortunes of historic towns. This is to be achieved by funding a project officer to be responsible for coordinating the efforts of local councils, and other bodies, to unlock the economic potential of the historic environment. Ten towns were selected in the first round of applications. Appleby is the only one in the north west, others in the north of England including Rochdale and Sunderland. The historic environment is seen as a catalyst for reviving the tourist trade. It is intended that local partnerships are formed to respond to economic, social and environmental needs, to make the area's heritage more productive.

In Appleby, the key elements are to repair and conserve buildings on the “at risk” register; to enhance shop fronts; to help improve flood resilience; to increase visitor numbers; and to increase tourist opportunities at the Castle.

Before any of the aims can be achieved, buildings to be included in the project need to be identified, understood and researched. This is where CVBG can help. It is a surprising fact that Appleby has no less than 143 listed buildings. The obvious place to start is Boroughgate, the main street of Appleby, between St Lawrence's parish church and the Castle. During the morning, we had a very brief excursion to see some of the buildings, including the sixteenth century Moot Hall, still used as the council chamber for Appleby. We had planned to make a longer trip in the afternoon, to undertake a brief record-making exercise, but the weather took over, and created a huge area of standing water outside the Methodist Hall, and the programme was abandoned. It was a wise decision, as roads in Cumbria were flooded. We have arranged to resume & expand the event in March, and all are welcome to take part. Before lunch, we heard an introduction to the project from Adrian Banford, and an outline of Appleby's historical development by Paul Crosby, from the architects **Crosby Granger, Kendal**, who are consultants for the HAZ project, who gave a presentation about the buildings in Appleby ■



Images © Barbara Grundy

3. Ulverston Workshop – 17th November – June Hill

CVBG Chairman June Hill introduced the workshop, with the rest of the morning spent hearing talks from Dr Helen Evans and Dan Elsworth, committee members of CVBG and working archaeologists, Helen with *Oxford Archaeology North*, and Dan with his company, *Greenlane Archaeology*. Their talk summaries follow:



© Mike Turner

Longhouses by Dr Helen Evans

Helen talked about several long houses recently surveyed and excavated by Oxford Archaeology North in the Lake District, and how they might be related to the region's agricultural landscape history. She also showed how archaeological sites can be surveyed using a camera attached to a drone. Hundreds of images are taken from above, then stitched together to create three-dimensional photogrammetric models and ground plans. Surveys have been undertaken of two abandoned tenements at Little Langdale, which CVBG visited in August this year. These comprised two significant long house settlements, associated with retting ponds, which had documentary records from the 17th to the late 18th centuries when they were abandoned, and the land bought up by local landowners the Le Flemings. These sites were close to the junction of enclosed land and the high fells, and both incorporated the remains of earlier buildings.



© Oxford Archaeology North

Helen then outlined the history of medieval transhumance in the Lake District valleys, where communities moved from their valley-bottom residences, with their animals, to exploit grazing lands in the high fells in the summer months. Shielings, often in the form of longhouses, were built in the summer grazing grounds.

In 2016, CVBG visited several longhouses in the Duddon valley, with the Duddon Valley Local History Group. These were located not far above the transition between enclosed and unenclosed land, and were in stone-built 'closes' belonging, according to nineteenth-

century mapping, to farms in Dunnerdale. Excavations have produced radiocarbon dates ranging from the Bronze Age to the 17th century AD, illustrating that the relatively sheltered location between valley bottom and high fell was a popular one.

Given the study day's 'plan form' theme, Helen concluded with a discussion of what, from an archaeological perspective, constitutes a longhouse. The term is often used as a shorthand for a long building, with a single entrance, serving animal stabling at one end and a domestic dwelling at the other. Archaeological excavations and building surveys however almost always illustrate that buildings see many phases of use, addition and alteration over their lifespans. Longhouse dwellings were often expanded into former animal housing and new barns were built increasingly further away.

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This is not the whole story though; in the Lakes there is good evidence for 17th and 18th century farmsteads- many of which remain extant- being built on the sites, and presumably the footprints, of former sheilings, often built 'in between' seasonally exploited arable and grazing. Although the study of vernacular buildings is often closely focussed on plan form, it was suggested that interpretations should also take close account of their setting and agricultural landscape history.

Double pile houses by Dan Elsworth

Dan's session looked at double-pile houses, initially explaining the ways in which they had previously been described, in particular by Brunskill, who considered them largely of late 18th to early 19th century in Cumbria and spanning the transformation between the truly vernacular and the more designed 'polite' house, inspired to some extent by larger houses. They are easily defined as being two rooms deep and typically two rooms wide, forming a neat square with a regular frontage, although the front door is usually just off centre due to the position of the central dividing wall.

The talk focussed on a handful of examples from the south of the county, and one from north Lancashire, examined as part of professional building recording carried out as part of the planning process. They had a range of uses: some formed part of a larger complex of buildings while others were entirely isolated, and included farm houses a pub. The investigations revealed a number of interesting themes. In all of these cases they were actually closer to early 18th century in date than the late 18th to early 19th century date range suggested by Brunskill. They were also remarkably similar in plan form, with the internal arrangement of the rooms and even the overall footprint size – typically 9 or 10m square, being very consistent. What was also evident in some cases was evidence for archaic features such as smoke hoods and decorative details, but also the possible presence of industries making use of them, particularly weaving.

Why such a regular plan form became so common is less clear, but it seems likely that this was a deliberate move to a 'modern' style of dwelling with some pretence at design when compared to a truly vernacular farmhouse. Such as plan form was specifically mentioned in John Holt's *General View of the Agriculture in the County of Lancaster* (1794), which recommended it as the preferred form for a farmhouse, which suggests that by that date it was already well established.

After lunch, we walked in warm sunshine, across the Dragley Beck, which gives its name to the former settlement once separate from Ulverston town, which has now engulfed it. Here lived tanners and other tradesmen, whose houses we passed en route to our destination, the cottage where Sir John Barrow, probably the most famous person to come from Ulverston, was born in 1764. An only child, his father, Roger Barrow was one of the tanners in the vicinity, and John's childhood was humble. The cottage, of two ground floor rooms with a later outshut, has an attic space entered by a ladder, and a fireplace. The main room has a hearth which would have been the only source of warmth and heat for cooking. The remains of a bread oven are at the side. The whole building has been carefully restored by Dan Elsworth's *Greenlane Archaeology* company, who lease it from Ulverston council. Roof repairs, damp control and re-painting inside and out, have transformed the fortunes of what was a decaying building. Furniture and contents are appropriate for the period, and include some interesting country chairs, one made by a local chair-maker. It is a remarkable survival of a Georgian cottage.

Sir John Barrow attended Ulverston Grammar School until he was 13, and went on to work in an iron foundry in Liverpool before going on a whaling expedition to Greenland, while still in his teens. He excelled at mathematics, and taught the subject to the son of a gentleman through whose influence he gained a position in the British Embassy. This took him to China, where he became fluent in the



Inside the cottage © John McDowell

Chinese language. He went on to work in South Africa and wrote accounts of his explorations and discoveries. What became his main career followed, when he was appointed to the post of second Secretary to the Admiralty. He promoted voyages to the Arctic, including those of Ross and Franklin, and had several geographical features named after him. He was a prolific writer, whose published works include an account of Pitcairn, and a life of Peter the Great. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society, was a founder of the Royal Geographical Society and was made a Baronet. He wrote his autobiography in 1847 and died a year later.



© Sue Turner

The Hoad Monument, above Ulverston, is in honour of the town's highest achieving son.

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Sir John Barrow's Cottage is now a museum, with exhibits and displays which tell the story of Sir John. The building can be used as an arts space, and is open to the public on Thursdays, 2 – 4pm, and on Sundays, 1 – 5pm ■



Montage © Mike Kingsbury/John McDowell/Mike Turner/Roy Hill

EDITOR'S NOTE TO MEMBERS

The 2019 Events Programme included with this newsletter has one date (the AGM) still to be confirmed, it is unfortunate because the committee has worked hard to ensure that everything could be in place for this mailing, as soon as this information is known, another programme will be issued. Some dates have a red star marked, bookings can be made immediately for these events, (no booking form required) please follow the bookings advice on the back of the events programme.