

Further information on the planned Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study

Group Visit and the Timber Framing recording at Oakwell Hall

on the 20th and 21st May 2026.

(There is no charge for this event)



Advice on getting to Oakwell Hall

By foot

You can find Oakwell Hall on Nutter Lane/ Nova Lane, which runs between Bradford Road and Fieldhead Road.

By bus

The 180 and 229 run between Leeds and Huddersfield. There is a stop at Birstall market place, which is a moderate one-mile walk to the museum.

By car

Accessed from Nutter Lane in Birstall. Please use postcode WF17 9LG for Sat Navs.

Parking is free. There are two car parks: one on Nutter Lane near the Hall and one on Bradford Road towards the south-west of the site, both open 24 hours a day. Both car parks have spaces for disabled users.

Call Mark on 07802 549634 if you need any information about the two-day visit

Planned timetable

The days will focus on adding to what is already known about early timber framing and the history of this building. Please bring notepads for taking notes and making simple drawings, tape measures, measuring poles, and your phone or camera (although some equipment will be available for everyone to use). The event is a great opportunity to look at this well-known building in a slightly different light. You can contribute by helping with the surveys or by going through the archival information that will be available on the day. Come on both days or just one, but don't miss this opportunity to spend time in this wonderful building.

Wednesday, the 20th of May

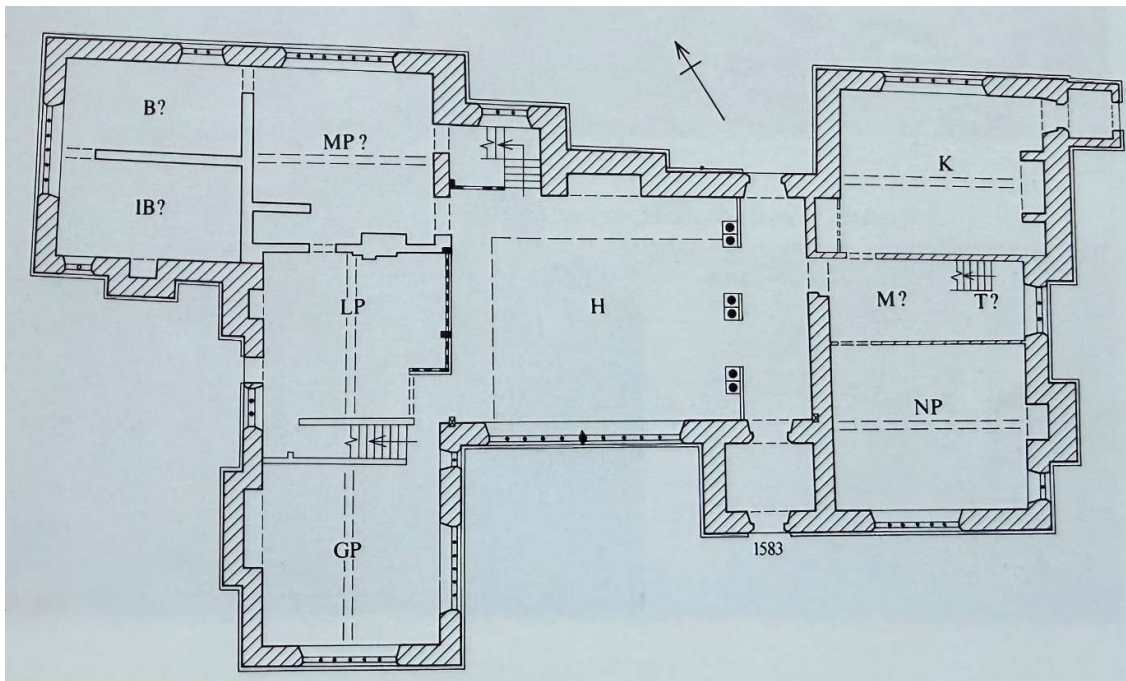
9.00 - 10.00 am	Arrival, Tea, Coffee and Fresh Pastries
10.00 – 10.15 am	An Introduction and a Welcome to the Hall
10.00 – 11.00 am	Guided walks around the inside and outside of the Hall
11.00 - 12.00 Noon	Split into groups to review the archives, take photos, draw or describe the remaining 16th-century timber framing within the hall. Groups will be led and guided by more experienced members of the YVBSG
12.00 – 1.00 pm	Lunch (Tea, Coffee, and Water will be available). Visit the next-door café or bring your own packed lunch.
1 pm to 3 pm	Continue with the group work

Thursday, the 21st of May.

9.00 - 10.00 am	Arrival, Tea, Coffee and Fresh Pastries
10.00 -10.15 am	An Introduction and a Welcome to the Hall
10.00 – 11.00 am	Short presentation by each group on their finding so far and discussions.
11.00 - 12.00 Noon	Continue with group work to review the archives, take photos, draw or describe the remaining 16th-century timber framing within the hall. Groups will be led and guided by more experienced members of the YVBSG
12.00 – 1.00 pm	Lunch (Tea, Coffee, and Water will be available). Visit the next-door café or bring your own packed lunch.
1 pm to 2.30 pm	Presentation of our findings in the afternoon to all those who would just like to visit this wonderful house but can't attend the rest of the event.

What do we know about the Hall?

Description from 'Rural House of West Yorkshire 1400-1830' RCHME: OAKWELL HALL Stone house, 1583, built by the Batt family on a standard medieval plan of hall-and-cross-wings with hearth-passage entry, but with innovations of a single-storey hall, a kitchen within the house at the rear of the lower wing. 1611 inventory describes house: hall for reception; upper wing with heated Great Parlour for dining, heated Little Parlour for sleeping, Maydes Parlour, Buttrie, Inner Buttrie and Mylkhouse; lower wing with Tavourne, Kitchine and New Parlor. First floor includes Hall Chamber, showing that the hall was then single-storeyed. Structural breaks in upper wing and mention of New Parlor suggest prolonged building activity. Significant remodelling of house c. 1630-40, when single-storey hall replaced by hall open through two storeys; front wall of hall rebuilt to provide large window, firehood backing onto passage replaced by lateral stack; gallery, stair, elaborate screen and plaster ceiling inserted to make hall an impressive entrance area. Plaster ceiling inserted into Great Parlour. Inventory of goods of Robert Batt, Ill, in Foster 1954; Ambler 1913, 55; Woledge 1978.



Copy of Figure 32, p. 73 from 'Rural Houses of West Yorkshire 1400-1830' RCHME



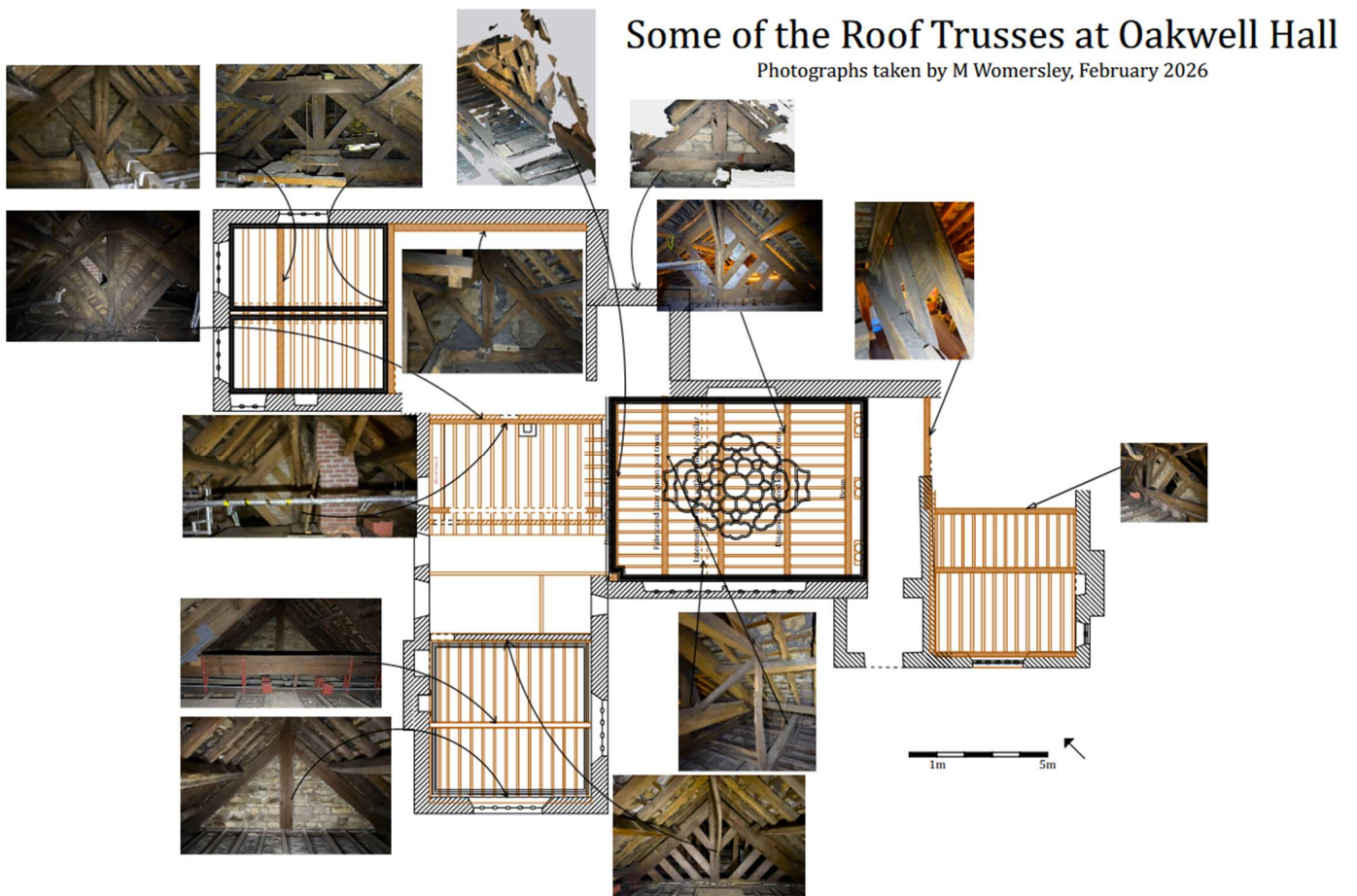
The Little Parlour Chamber and the lobby accessing the New Parlour and the back Kitchen Stairs at the Hall, with visible 16th-century timber framing



Some of the archival images of framing that are now hidden behind 17th-century panelling will be available on the study days, along with others.

What we know about the earlier timber roof trusses and framing at Oakwell Hall, based on dendro dating done 30+ years ago and published in VA22 (1991).

The date of the outermost rings, including the sapwood, from the tie beams, was from 1517 to 1561 (8); King posts from 1575 (11) to 1579 (30c); And Principal rafters from 1582 (27C, 20c, 42c). With suggested tree felling dates of 1583. Based upon NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY TREE-RING DATING LABORATORY RESULTS (R. E. Howard, R. R. Laxton, C. D. Litton and W. G. Simpson)



What we know about the chronological development of the Hall

Date	Content	Source
1311	John de Tilly (d 1343) 'Lord of Okewell' Admin of Gomersall based at OH	OL3 - Land grant GNC p19
1441-1512	Pigot family	OL3 - dates from GNC p20
	Hussey family inherited	OL3
1565	Henry Batt purchased OH from Husseys. Specific mention of OH and Nettilton family tenants.	OL3; GNC p21- Thoresby Batt papers
1572	Death of Henry Batt at Haigh Hall, E Ardsley	GNC p22
1583	Date + initials IB John Batt (-1607) son of Henry Dendro date for central range timbers	OL3, VA22
1586	Dendro date for W wing	VA22
1602	Commission forced Batts to compensate for wrongdoing	GNC p22
1603	Manor Court at OH	OL3
1607	Robert (1560 – 1618) inherited. OH leased to Waterhouse of Shibden, cousins	OL3
1609 - 11	David Waterhouse at OH John Matteson, steward a/c book survives	OL3
1609	Wm Mortimer 4 days laying chamber over kitchen	OL3 A/c book
1611	Inventory of Robert Batt's goods at OH. Ref to New Parlour Assumed to be in E wing, Ref to Hall Chamber. Lewes Waterhouse tenant	OL3 GNC p16 GNC p23
1618	Robert died – son John (1606 – 52?) ward of Crown	OL3; OL2 has 1653
1631	John takes possession of OH	OL3
	Probable changes to Hall	OL3
1644 Aug	Capt. John Batt surrendered to Parly forces	OL3
1652?	John's son William (1626-73) inherited	OL3, OL2 has 1653
1658	Wm married Elizabeth Horton and moved to Howroyd. OH leased to John Holdsworth	OL3 + GNC p24
1673	Wm's son William inherited	
1684Dec	Wm buried at Birstall aged 25 OH passed to brother Gledhill, then shortly to brother John	OL3 quotes O Heywood
1707	John died. No male heir	OL3
	OH tenant Thomas Bilton, attorney of Birstall	OL1
1747	OH sold to Benjamin Fearnley (- 1756)	OL3

1756	Benjamin son Fairfax (- 1791), lawyer inherited + many debts	OL3
1784 Mar	Advert OH for sale	OL3 – Leeds mercury
1788/9?	OH sold to Henry Barker of London	OL3, GNC has 1788
1797-1810	Fairfax brother Benjamin (- 1810) tenant at OH	OL3
1811- 1818	Benjamin's son Thomas tenant OH	OL1
1821-2	Thomas Clapham, farmer + cloth manufacturer of Fieldhead tenant. Charlotte Bronte connection through cousin's Nussey niece Ellen. Part of OH undertenants.	OL3 OL1
1830	Girls school	OL1
1882 Dec	Storm damage to west wing incl plaster ceiling	OL3 – Batley Reporter of 1920
1926	Sale by Mr A Wheeler + Mr E Fitzroy. Purchased by Sir Norman Rae + Mr John Sharman who restored and gave to Birstall UDC	OL3
1928	Opened as Museum	OL1