

Newsletter

No 120 – August 2025



Shiver me timbers!

Welcome to our August Newsletter. Although one of our recent events had to be cancelled due to the vagaries of the British summer weather, our excursion into Lancashire went ahead and an account can be found on page 6.

Teams have been out and about recording various buildings including Filey Museum, pictured on this page. We're normally quick to debunk the myth that all old timbers in a building have come from a ship, but in this case we might actually have some re-used maritime timbers! A purlin and perhaps a joist appear to have been masts, probably from a coble, the local type of fishing boat. Investigations continue and more details will be published in the report.

On page 5 we introduce you to some of the East Riding's datestones, and on page 10 we have an update on the small building in the grounds of Woodsome Hall, together with a hot-off-the-press dendro date for the Hall.

*Photos: Filey Museum,
8-10 Church Street, Filey.*

*Top: front elevation, render
recently removed.*

*Left: length of re-used timber
supporting the roof truss.*

*Centre: repaired roof truss with
possible mast re-used as purlin.*

*Right: another possible mast
re-used as joist.*

Future YVBSG events: dates for your diary

Annual Recording Conference Follow-up Day

Saturday 18 October 2025

As usual, we'll be holding a review day to hear about the buildings recorded at the annual conference, held this year in the Bradford area in May. The venue will be the Salvation Army church in Wibsey (www.salvationarmy.org.uk/bradford-citadel). The expected programme is: refreshments at 10.30am, presentations from 11am to 1pm, lunch from 1pm to 2pm, and from 2pm to 4pm a look at local buildings led by Mary Twentyman. Full details to follow.

Annual Day School 2026

Saturday 28 February 2026

We are planning to hold next year's day school in Skipton – details to follow.

A Walk around the Vernacular Buildings of the Upper Holme Valley

After carefully monitoring the increasingly ominous weather forecast in the days leading up to this event in the Pennine uplands planned for 19 July 2025, we reluctantly decided to cancel the walk. We hope to rearrange it on a future date, ideally on a day without weather warnings for torrential rain and thunderstorms!

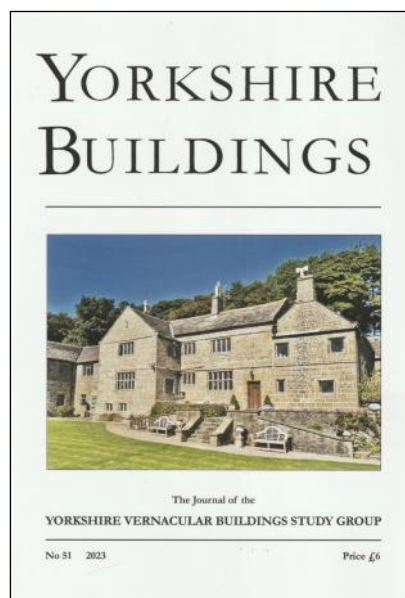
Third Thursday Talks

We hope to resume our online talks later in 2025 although none are confirmed at present. These talks normally take place by Zoom at 7.30pm on the third Thursday of the month. We are always looking for volunteers to give future talks and if you are interested in doing so, please contact Mary Cook on secretary@yvbsg.org.uk. Recordings of previous talks can be watched online by going to our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@yvbsg.

Next Newsletter

The next Newsletter will be in November 2025 – please send any contributions to the editor at newsheet@yvbsg.org.uk by 31 October 2025. Short articles on buildings or features would be appreciated, as well as details of publications or events of interest to other members. Is there a particular building or feature which puzzles you? Do tell us about it! A big thank you goes to the members who contributed to this edition.

A new look for *Yorkshire Buildings*



From issue 51, *Yorkshire Buildings* has changed from the pocket-sized A5 format to A4. This will allow the use of larger photographs, drawings and maps and marks a move from the rather cramped A5 format.

Printing and postage costs continue to rise, and we have had to raise the cover price to non-members to £6, a rise of 33% from the former price. This is the first price rise in twenty-five years (since 2000), while postage costs have more than doubled over the same period. Consequently, postage and packing for a single issue will now be £2.50.

All members should have now received their copy of *Yorkshire Buildings* No 51 and we hope you enjoy reading it.

Tony Robinson, Editor

Next committee meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Saturday 8 November 2025. If you'd like to raise any matters, or have ideas for future events, please contact the Secretary, Mary Cook.

An update from Peter Thornborrow

We hear from Peter that he is now back at home following his stroke. He is confined to the first floor of his house, where his daughter has created a sitting room with big TV and his winged leather armchair. He's having physiotherapy on his arm and on his walking, which is improving every day using a zimmer frame.

He's completing his latest book *Halifax in 50 Buildings*, which he reports is no easy task using one finger of his left hand when he's right-handed! However, the book will soon be in the hands of the publisher, and Peter says 'As with my attempts at walking with a paralysed right side only my dogged determination keeps me going and at it.' We wish him well in his continuing recovery.

List of Members 2025

The List of Members for this year is now available in the Members' Area of the website. You just need to log in with the username and password which was included in your membership renewal letter. The list contains only those members who agreed on the membership renewal form to be included (191 members). The current total number of members is 224.

From the archive: farmsteads and animal houses

Over the years the YVBSG has recorded a number of entire farmsteads and standalone animal houses. We featured some barns in Newsheet 112, August 2024; below is a selection of other farm and animal buildings, the reports on which can be found in our archive. For an overview of buildings at Weston, see 'A Unique Collection of Animal Enclosures' by Malcolm Birdsall in *Yorkshire Buildings* No 23 (1995). If you have an interest in agricultural buildings, you might wish to join the Historic Farm Buildings Group (www.hfbg.org.uk) which organises conferences with visits to buildings. Photos below by Lorraine Moor and Kevin Illingworth.

Lorraine Moor



Hennery piggery at Low Birkwith Farm, Horton in Ribblesdale (YVBSG 1499). For housing hens above and pigs below, with the adjacent enclosure probably containing a feeding trough. The building was within easy reach of the farmhouse kitchen. Perhaps early 19th century.



Grove Farm, Flamborough (YVBSG 1615). Piggery of chalk and brick, part of a farmstead which developed mostly after 1766 and also included a calf house, stables, loose boxes and other buildings. The piggery has now been demolished.



The Bull Hole, Thorpe (YVBSG 1743).

Probably an early 18th century communal bull house. Until Enclosure in 1793 a bull would have been shared by all who had communal use of the fields and pastures. The value of the animal, in keeping the pedigree and renewal of livestock, is recognised in good stonework details. Hayloft floor beam possibly reused from nearby medieval manor house.



Pedigree bull mistal, Weston Hall, near Otley (YVBSG 1485). Probably late 18th or early 19th century, extended in about 1869 for the purpose of breeding pedigree bulls – single storey building raised to two storeys and bays added. Neaby in the same field are a set of dog kennels for otter hounds (YVBSG 1484), with space for food preparation, probably dating from the 19th century.



Norton Priory farm buildings, Norton, Doncaster (YVBSG 1913). A good collection of buildings including a hennery-piggery, stable and carriage house, granary barn, hay/threshing barn and horse engine house. The mid 18th century two-storey dovecote has about 340 L-shaped nest boxes on the upper floor. Outside is an alighting shelf below an opening which provides access for the birds.



Outbuildings at Keepers Cottage, Brackenbottom (YVBSG 1489). A haybarn with integral shippin, and a separate midden house in front of it. Midden house has wide opening to take a cart to load manure to carry to fields. Barn probably 1730s, midden house a 19th century improvement.



The Stables, Otley (YVBSG 1533). Part of Manor House outbuildings. Polite frontage of c1783 with evidence of older buildings including a possible single-storey cruck-built cottage. Used for a variety of agricultural purposes over the years.



Model Farm, Copgrove (YVBSG 1071). A farm designed for a gentleman farmer or landowner as a home farm, with farmhouse dated 1854. The farm buildings are plain and not very up-to-date for the time, apparently with no provision for powered threshing.

Plenty of ways to get more involved!

I was delighted to receive the latest edition of *Yorkshire Buildings*, our annual journal, in its new format. I hope you agree that increasing the size and using better quality paper has been a positive step. To me it fully justifies the time and effort our publishing team spent and I'm already looking forward to next year's edition. Of course, it will need some input and we would welcome articles, photographs and drawings from you.

It was a pity that the British summer scuppered the plans for a walk led by Peter Burton in the Holme valley near Holmfirth. Peter has said he'd prefer to wait until next year before we try again. We're very grateful for all the work that went into preparing the walk and look forward to the new date.

The Group has had several requests recently for visits to see whether buildings could be recorded by our members. Like the proverbial London buses, three came along almost at once. I'm not complaining – it shows our Group is 'visible' and people are willing to share their buildings and would like to find out more about them. We would welcome more members taking part in looking at these buildings initially. If it would help, we could look at offering training on how to assess whether detailed recording could add to the story of a building.

On the topic of training, I was fortunate to have the opportunity of helping YVBSG committee member Mark Womersley record the small timber-framed structure which lurks in the corner of the grounds at Woodsome Hall, near Huddersfield (see page 10). He showed me the use of an app on his mobile phone which speeds up the recording and photography and can be input to computer-based drawing packages. Earlier in the year David Cook ran a trial day of practical training in the use of the latter. Do get in touch if you would like to know more about this.

Forthcoming Group events include the reporting-back day in October, when we will meet in Wibsey, south Bradford, for presentations about the buildings recorded earlier in the year. Further ahead, we're making contact with groups in Wharfedale and plan to have a day school in Skipton on 28 February 2026. We welcome the chance to work together with local groups – their knowledge and contacts are invaluable.

Over the winter months we hope to offer some more 'Third Thursday' talks online. These have proved popular in the past and offer the opportunity of continuing building studies from the comfort of your home.

David Cant, Chair, enquiries@yvbsg.org.uk

A letter from America

Those who attended our annual conference in Bridlington last year will remember Sam Fahnestock, who travelled all the way from Texas to join us. We were delighted this week to receive this letter and a parcel from Sam. Sadly it's not feasible to share the chocolates with all of you, so please forgive the committee for enjoying them at their next meeting. Archie the Armadillo is adopted as our Group mascot. Thank you, Sam!

Dear members of the YVBSG

I hope you're doing well! I'm currently writing from my hometown in Georgetown, Texas, although I'm soon relocating to Colorado Springs, Colorado. This is a very belated note, but I wanted to show my appreciation for the group! I attended the May 2024 annual recording conference, and I had some of the most fun I've ever had and learned so much spending the few days with you all.

I received notes over the past year from many of those who helped me participate, and I want to send a special thanks: Lorraine, David and Gunhild, Tony, David Cook, and Andy! All of you made it possible, but I'd like to thank everyone who came and whom I had the pleasure of meeting while I was there. Pat, Lorraine, and Jan are now helping me become an official member.



In this package, I've included a small handful of things that are pretty quintessentially (if not slightly stereotypically) Texan, but I can't mail barbecue! Inside is a postcard, which couldn't fit this note on the back, but which I wanted to send to you as a nice picture of Texas. There is also an armadillo, who I hope can find a good home with the group! Lastly is a gift box of Longhorns, a local delicacy made by a historic Austin candy company called Lammes. They're chocolate turtles, including Texas pecans, caramel, and milk chocolate.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome and for accommodating me while I was there in Yorkshire, and I hope to meet you all again very soon!

All the best, Sam



Datestones of the East Riding

In comparison with the more decorative datestones found in some parts of the county, such as Craven or the Calder Valley, datestones in the pre-1974 East Riding tend to be relatively plain and simple, and are not found in great numbers.

The datestone on the recently-recorded Filey Museum, pictured below, is described in Pevsner as 'the East Riding's most ornate datestone'. Archaeologist Trevor Brigham, who had studied the building before the YVBSG survey, reports that *'The interpretation of the elements of the datestone has varied over the years with successive repainting and perhaps weathering, as the photo from the 1950s/60s shows. Another datestone (or possibly marriage stone) from a demolished building of 1690 has been reset in a private garden wall close to the museum. It's not as elaborate but possibly by the same hand. The reset stone is framed by what may be the reused lintel and sill of a hearth window with an inset semi-circular heading similar to the one at the museum.'*

A selection of East Riding datestones is pictured below. Many of these buildings are listed and more detail can be found in the listed building descriptions, and also in *Yorkshire: York and the East Riding*, Nikolaus Pevsner and David Neave (1995). Two of the buildings have been recorded by the YVBSG: 17 and 19 Northgate (YVBSG 0969) and West House Farmhouse (YVBSG 0603).

Lorraine Moor, newsheet@yvbsg.org.uk



17 and 19 Northgate,
Hunmanby



Village hall and
school house, Skipwith

Left: The Filey Museum datestone in 2025 (left) and in 1950s/60s (right). Earlier photo by the late Walter Cockayne, in East Riding Archives digital collection.

Datestones of Muston

'Muston has one of the best series of traditional buildings in the East Riding. Two at least are cruck-framed with chalk walling.' (Pevsner East Riding 1995)



Appleby's,
King Hill



Former Cross Keys
Inn, King Street



White Horse
Cottage, 19
Hunmanby Street



Bank House,
Hunmanby Street



West House
Farmhouse,
West Street



6 and 7
Hunmanby Street

Datestones of Nafferton

'A notable feature of the large village is the number of modest brick and pantile houses with datestones, at least nine ranging from 1748 to 1799. Most also have the initials of owner and wife. It was a village of small freeholders who clearly wanted to indicate ownership of their homes.' (Pevsner East Riding 1995)



26 Station Road



6 Coppergate



33 Middle Street



32-34 High Street



31 Middle Street

Past YVBSG events

A visit to the Pendle countryside

Eleven members gathered at the Pendle Heritage Centre in Barrowford on Saturday 2 August 2025 to explore this interesting and beautiful part of Lancashire, led by Kevin Illingworth again following our first visit in 2023.

Car-sharing underway, we set off and almost immediately encountered a road closure on the way to the first building, but undeterred we eventually found an alternative route to Laund Farmhouse and Cottage in Barrowford Booth. Comprising a main range and a cross-wing, both with round-headed mullion windows, the house dates from around 1600 and blocked doorways provide evidence that it formerly extended further to the left, that end now replaced by a nineteenth century house. New owners have recently stripped the render from the main range, and whilst doing so had found bones and a mysterious green bottle filled with ashes and herbs. A so-called 'witch bottle' perhaps, used for magical house protection? Well, who knows. But being in the shadow of Pendle Hill we are certainly in the heart of witch country here!



Laund Farmhouse and Cottage



Notched stones at Higher Spen Barn

A drive up the hillside brought us to Higher Spen Barn, Goldshaw Booth, and we thank Sue Wrathmell for arranging access to the converted barn which is home to members of her family, and to the garden of the adjoining seventeenth century Higher Spen Farmhouse. In the porch of the barn are set three notched stones from a corn-drying kiln as a triangular decorative feature. For an illustration of how these worked, see 'Corn-Drying Kilns in Wharfedale and Mid-Airedale' by Kate Mason and Arnold Pacey in *Yorkshire Buildings* 28 (2000), available on the Members' Area of the YVBSG website.

At Newchurch-in-Pendle we visited the picturesque St Mary's Church where Kevin challenged us to find the four datestones inscribed 1653, 1712, 1740, and 1816. Weavers' cottages were spotted, and a couple of members also found time to slip into the nearby 'Witches Galore' shop (for what, we know not!).



Spen Barn Farmhouse

Down a stony track we reached Nabs House, a two-storey double-pile house dated 1756 with flat-faced mullion and transom windows, currently up for sale. Just along the lane is the late eighteenth century Spen Barn Farmhouse, with an impressive ten-light mullion and transom rear stair window which has been extended upwards at some time.



Newchurch-in-Pendle

After lunch at The Cabin in Barley, we burned off a few calories with a look around the village and a walk up to Darney's Cottage. With its round-headed mullion windows, the cottage dates from around 1600 but might have been rebuilt at some point. It stood empty for many years but was restored in 2005. The story of William Darney, an eighteenth century journeyman cobbler who became one of the preachers who helped to found the Methodist Church, can be found online in the *Burnley Civic Trust Heritage Image Collection* (www.bcthic.org).

In Barley village, Wilkinson's Farm, a linear farmstead end-on to the street, caught our eye with its intriguing array of blocked doorways and openings. Kevin had previously come across a conjectural drawing by the late W John Smith showing a house somewhere in Barley but the exact location was unknown. In a lightbulb moment some days after the visit, we eventually realised that the drawing related to what is now the barn at Wilkinson's Farm, but evidently was formerly an end-passage house (one of six known examples in the Pendle and Burnley areas), probably in existence before the current house was added at the other end of the range in the eighteenth century. Chimney stacks have been removed and windows blocked.



Darney's Cottage



Wilkinson's Farm with earlier house on the right, now a barn

To end the day, we headed off to Roughlee. On the way we had a brief stop at Thorneyholme Hall, a late eighteenth century house with rear elevation facing the road and front elevation looking onto the garden. One of our party, Ian Pattison, had lived in the house for a while in 1940 before moving overseas. Being just a baby at the time, Ian couldn't remember the house but his mother had written in the family journals about a ballroom which contained an upright piano, which she was able to play. After

consulting his family archive at home, Ian reported back that "We must have rented the whole first floor, so as well as two bedrooms we had the use of a large bathroom and a sitting room, in which we were served our meals, as we had no cooking facilities. Our landlady was a Mrs Allison, who must have lived on the ground floor. To start off with meals were served by a servant called Doris. She was six feet tall, taking after her father, who was the local policeman. He appears on a photo outside the hall on his horse, accompanied by Doris and a younger girl called Audrey, who I take it was probably his daughter as well. By the time we left Mrs Allison seems to have been coping on her own; she gave us breakfast on the morning of our departure. We left by candlelight; whether this was the only available lighting I don't know." Ian's parents had slept in a four-poster bed, the timber at the head end of which came crashing down, fortunately when no-one was in bed! The family archive contains photos of Ian consuming chocolate biscuits, which he now realises were taken in the grounds. We were invited into the house to view the cellar, and the householder confirmed that the ballroom had extended along the full length of the top floor, and that local people still remembered attending dances there.



Rear elevation of Thorneyholme Hall

In Roughlee, we had another look at Roughlee Old Hall, a late sixteenth century house with hall and cross-wings and yet more round-headed mullion windows, seen during our first Pendle visit in 2023 (see Newsheet 113).

We thank Kevin for arranging and leading this enjoyable and enlightening day. We are indebted to Sarah Pearson for her detailed study of buildings in this area in *Rural Houses of the Lancashire Pennines 1560-1760* by Sarah Pearson/RCHME, 1985.

Lorraine Moor

The fun and surprises of a reconnaissance mission!

Many of our events, particularly walkabouts and the annual recording conference, involve a number of recce visits beforehand to check out the availability and accessibility of buildings, as well as the more mundane requirements such as public transport, car parking, refreshments and, of course, loos! Our recording conferences in the Doncaster area, for example, took a small group of us on ten or more recces. Such explorations are usually very rewarding and you do get to see some amazing buildings. We often start in a new locality by looking at the listed buildings or those already covered in published studies, and knocking on doors or accosting residents in their gardens sometimes leads to opportunities to visit neighbouring houses.

Inevitably, there will be buildings visited during recces which for various reasons cannot be included in the eventual walkabout or conference, and the Pendle area was no exception to this. I accompanied Kevin Illingworth on two or three recces to prepare for his two walkabouts in 2023 and 2025; here are some highlights of the things we saw.

Lower Houses Farmhouse off Haddings Lane in Goldshaw Booth (Grade II listed) is an attractive house comprising main range and cross-wing, late sixteenth or seventeenth century, with a recut datestone of 1592. Window mouldings are both ovolo and hollow-chamfered. A public footpath runs past the front of the house so it can be viewed on foot. Alas, the owners were not at home when we called.



Lower Houses Farmhouse

Outside Whittakers Cottage at Whitehough near Barley, we met the owner walking her dog and she permitted us to step inside the front door to see a cruck blade set into the cross-wall. Sarah Pearson describes this as the only known cruck truss surviving inside a domestic building in



Whittakers Cottage, Whitehough

this area, but it is not known whether it was always domestic. Access was not possible on the day of the YVBSG Pendle visit as the owner was not going to be at home.

Whilst wandering around Higham village, we were invited into the ground floor of Higham House in Higham Hall Road (Grade II listed), a small seventeenth century yeoman's house, to see a surviving section of plaster frieze depicting a lion's mask, basilisks and foliage. Another length of frieze was upstairs, not seen. Many interesting details of this house, including photos, are available in the listed building description on the Historic England website.

Nearby, in the private rear garden of Higham Hall (Grade II listed), we were shown an unusual stone plaque set into the house wall, featuring the 'Legs of Man'.

They had the builders in at Sabden Great Hall which dates from 1577 onwards (Grade II* listed) in Haddings Lane, Goldshaw Booth, but the owners were not at home so we were unable to establish contact.

Nearby, Green Top is a two-cell house dating from the second half of the seventeenth century. It was formerly an end-lobby entrance house, with the blocked front door just out of sight in the photo below, on the left behind the little conifer!



Higham House, Higham



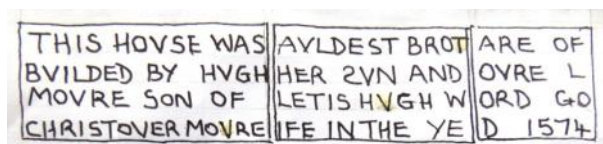
Green Top, Goldshaw Booth



Sabden Great Hall, Goldshaw Booth

Near Sabden we set off down a rutted farm track, grass growing down the middle. 'I don't think it will be a very rough track' said Kevin. After a mile of bouncing along, my little Skoda wasn't so sure. But waiting for us at the end of the track was Dean Farm which incorporates a two-cell two-storey sixteenth century range with yet more of those attractive round-headed mullion windows. An unusually long inscription is set into the wall above the ground floor windows. It wasn't practical to arrange a group visit down the long track, but the house can be seen on foot from public footpaths.

As always, we are very grateful to the householders who welcome us into their properties (or at least, tolerate our curiosity and answer our questions!), both during recces and walkabouts.



Lorraine Moor

The inscription at Dean Farm, with transcription



Dean Farm, Sabden

Publications

Fullwood Hall – the first 600 years by Susan Hostombe and Alan Crutch. Tells the story of a property that has been an important part of Fulwood, Sheffield, since the early fifteenth century. The book is a limited edition hardback lavishly illustrated with photographs of the hall. The YVBSG recorded the house in 2023 (YVBSG report 1923), and a summary was published in *Yorkshire Buildings* 51. Findings from the report have been included in the book. December 2023, £25 from Amazon.

Heritage Open Days 2025

This year's Heritage Open Days take place on 12 to 21 September 2025, on the theme of architecture. As always, there's too much to include here but the full list of walks, talks and open buildings can be found at www.heritageopendays.org.uk. The printed booklet for the East Riding includes a two-page article on the Vernacular Architecture of Beverley and East Yorkshire by Barbara English.

Just a taste of what's on offer: Beverley Friary, with 16th century wallpaintings; the Monks Walk Inn, Beverley; Hebblethwaite House, Bridlington; Bridlington High Street's Backside; a Hornsea walk focusing on cobbled buildings; Grassington to Linton walk and talk taking in 17th century buildings; Barnburgh Dovecote; Bullhouse Chapel; a walk around historic Bawtry; Sheffield's Paradise Square; a walk around historic Kippax; an Architects and Architecture walk around Pontefract; an East Keswick village walk; and much more. Look out for local publicity or browse the website above.

VAG databases updated

The Vernacular Architecture Group's Dendrochronology Database and the Wealden House Database have recently been updated. Follow the link on the 'Databases' page of the VAG website at www.vag.org.uk.

Historic buildings for sale ...

One of our members has pointed out an interesting building currently for sale with Savills, if anyone has a bit of cash to spare. Grange Hall at Kildwick is Grade II listed and has been recorded by the Group (YVBSG 0590). A house was built here in 1614-20 but the site is much earlier, being a grange of Bolton Abbey by the fourteenth century. Most of the exterior and much of the interior, including panelling and fireplaces, has survived well. Photos can be found on the estate agent's website.

Also currently for sale with Dacre Son and Hartley is a Grade II* listed house visited by the YVBSG in June 2015 – Royds Hall Farm at Heaton Royds (a hamlet also known as 'Six Days Only' – see Newsheet No 81 and *Yorkshire Buildings* 44 for an explanation!). The house dates from 1671 and features wall paintings of pomegranates and fleur-de-lys. Again, photos on the estate agent's website although not specifically of the wall paintings.

Thatching & Thatch

If you're interested in learning more about thatching and thatch, you might like to take a look at the comprehensive guide available on the *Thatching and Thatch* website at thatchinginfo.com.



Rose Cottage in Beadlam acquiring a new layer of thatch in 2005 from thatcher William Tegetmeier

The Woodsome mystery building – still some questions!

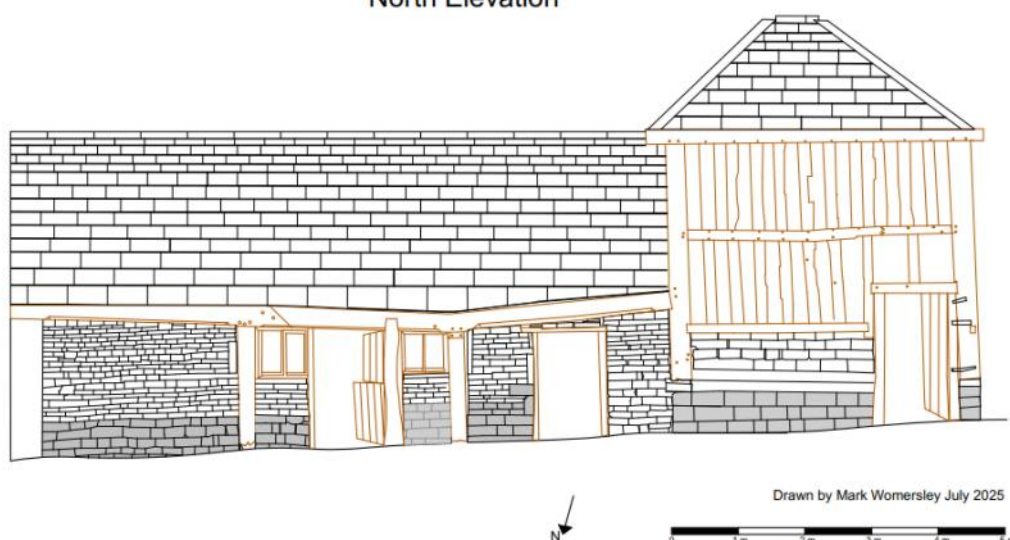
After the Group visited Woodsome Hall in April, David Cant and Mark Womersley returned in July to record the timber-framed garden building south-east of the main hall. Whilst the building formed part of the late Victorian kitchen gardens, incorporating heated glass houses to the rear, its earlier origins are a bit of a mystery, with no archival information or early plan of the building. Mark has so far prepared a plan, elevation, and a drawing of a half-truss, as shown below.

The taller square end of the building could potentially be a reused dovecote, with many of the original vertical studs replaced and the infill now consisting of cement lime render

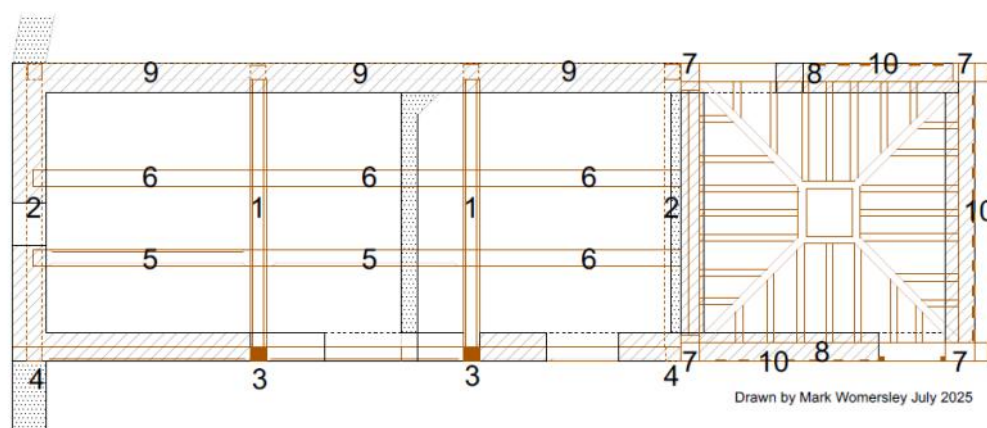
on chicken wire. There is now no evidence of earlier nesting box walls internally. But what is even more fascinating is the long, low building attached to it. Whilst much of the stone is later infill, and the walls have been completely rebuilt for the glass houses on the southern elevation, the two half trusses and signs of potentially two more in the main wall plate are substantial, and like the wall plate, they are chamfered and stopped. Did these form part of the originally-aisled Woodsome Hall? Answers on a virtual postcard, please. A full report will be deposited in the archive after a little further investigation.

Mark Womersley, mark@mwomersleys.co.uk

Garden Building 200 m Southeast of Woodsome Hall
North Elevation



The existing and suggested earlier timber framed elements are numbered



Key

1. Potentially reused aisle trusses.
2. Sockets in the wall plate suggest the location of two more aisle trusses, now lost.
3. Posts which appear contemporary with the wall plate beam.
4. The potential location of missing posts.
5. Chamfered purlins which appear contemporary with the wall plate and aisle trusses.
6. Newer Purlins.
7. Early shouldered Corner Posts to a possible former Dovecot.
8. Early stone wall below later infill above.
9. Rebuilt wall possibly erected with the Victorian kitchen garden creation.
10. Close vertical studs, including much later potentially 1930s fake studs.

Some initial thoughts on the possible dovecote at Woodsome Hall

Woodsome Hall saw significant development under the Kay family, and the core of the present hall may well have replaced earlier medieval structures. The remains of part of the aisle (illustrated below) could remain in the building attached to the possible dovecote.

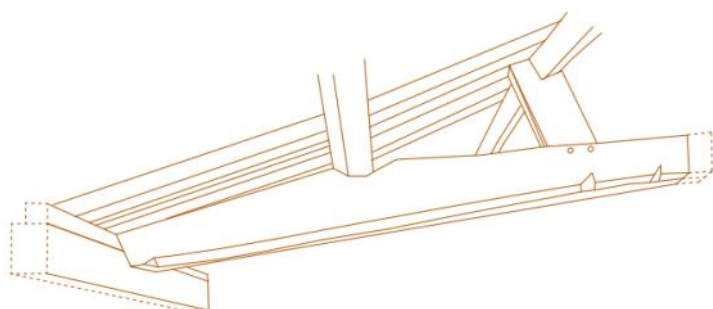
The early sixteenth century was part of the golden age of dovecotes in Britain. During this time pigeon meat (especially young pigeons, or squabs) was considered a delicacy. Only landowners with manorial rights were legally allowed to keep dovecotes, a sign of status and privilege. Buildings were often more substantial than necessary: hence the large corner posts (although the weight of the internal pigeon nest boxes full of birds would have been considerable).

From the eighteenth century onwards, the importance of dovecotes declined sharply, and by the nineteenth century many dovecotes had fallen out of use or were repurposed. All evidence of the original use may have been lost at this point. The only suggestion of it being a dovecote is the large, shouldered corner posts, with no sockets for braces that you would expect for a longer, wider building.



The conjectural dovecote

A potentially reused ancient aisle truss



Drawn by Mark Womersley July 2025



The nineteenth century at Woodsome Hall was marked by internal refurbishment, the installation of decorative garden features, and increased involvement in local estate life and philanthropic efforts. This is when the dovecote may have been repurposed as a feature in the new kitchen gardens, along with orchards, fountains, and other garden elements. The lath and plaster on the east side of the wall probably dates to this period.

When the entire estate was transferred to the Golf Club, the building was refurbished with new timber vertical facing studs and a cement lime render applied to steel mesh.

Mark Womersley

A new dendro date for Woodsome Hall

As a Grade I listed building it is described as 'being built in four phases in the 15th and 16th century' and is attributed to Arthur Kay and his son John. The Kay family lived at Woodsome for twelve generations from 1378 to 1734. The history of the family pointed to the Hall being built in the mid fifteenth century but only ring dating of the timbers would confirm this date.

Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory were contracted to carry this out and presented a full report in July 2025. Samples were taken from timbers in the main hall and these provided high quality data. The tree rings covered ninety-eight years and gave a good range of heart-wood and sap-wood. They correlated well with ring samples taken from other Yorkshire buildings (Calverley Old Hall, Kirkburton Church, Horbury Hall). This enabled Robert Howard and Alison Arnold to conclude that all the timber sampled was felled in the late summer of 1462. The listing information for Woodsome Hall will now have to be updated to show this Tudor period hall being constructed in 1462.

Work is ongoing with other buildings on the Woodsome site and further ring dating may take place.



Philip Sands

Taking core samples at Woodsome Hall

Other events of possible interest ...

We recommend that you check for any updated information if you plan to attend an event, in case of late changes to schedules.

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Heptonstall

This unusual octagonal chapel of c1764 is open to the public at weekends and Bank Holidays, 10.30am to 5pm. Listed Grade II*. heptonstallchapel.wordpress.com.

The Folly, Settle

Until Friday 26 September 2025

Free tours on Thursdays at 11.30am, Fridays at 2pm. See thefolly.org.uk.

Look Up!

Until Friday 3 October 2025

Exhibition at Beverley Guildhall on hidden details in Beverley's architecture. Wednesdays and Fridays, 10am-4pm, free. www.eastridingmuseums.co.uk.

A Walk around Heptonstall Village

Friday 29 August 2025

A walk with the South Pennine Archaeology Group (SPAG) at 10am. digspag.org.uk.

Building the East Riding – and how to research it!

From 5 September 2025

An exhibition at East Riding Archives, Treasure House, Beverley. www.eastridingarchives.co.uk.

Calderdale Heritage Walks

Various walks with some vernacular building content. Programme available at calderdaleheritagewalks.org.uk.

"Heavens to Murgatroyd"

Thursday 11 September 2025

A talk by David Chellingsworth on East Riddlesden Hall to Aireborough Historical Society, 7.30pm at Guiseley Methodist Church. aireboroughhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

Recording Historic Graffiti

Saturday 13 September 2025

A practical workshop at Skeffling Church, East Riding. Joint Event between CBA Yorkshire and Friends of Friendless Churches. 10am to 4.30pm, £12. Details at cba-yorkshire.org.uk/1/.

When the Tide of Salvation Flowed up Witchfield Hill

Tuesday 16 September 2025

Talk by Ben Stables on places of worship in Shelf for Halifax Antiquarian Society, Maurice Jagger Centre, Halifax, 7.30pm. www.halifaxhistory.org.uk.

North Yorkshire Archives

Wednesday 17 September 2025

Behind-the-scenes tours of the Archives in Northallerton, £3.30. Also exhibition on 'Treasures of the Archives'. Details at www.northyorks.gov.uk/leisure-tourism-and-culture/north-yorkshire-archives.

The Excavation of Kirkstall Abbey Guest House

Thursday 18 September 2025

A talk by Dr Stuart Wrathmell to Olicana Historical Society, 7.30pm at Clarke Foley Community Centre, Ilkley. See ilkley.org/clubs-and-orgs/local-history-olicana-historical-society.html.

East Yorkshire Local History Society Book Fair

Saturday 20 September 2025

In Hull Minster from 10am to 3.30pm. www.eylhs.org.uk.

Everingham Hall and Chapel

Friday 26 September 2025

A visit to Everingham Hall and Chapel with Georgian Society for East Yorkshire. www.gsey.org.uk.

York Unlocked

27 and 28 September 2025

A weekend of open buildings, free of charge, to celebrate the built environment of York. Programme at www.york-unlocked.org.uk.

Walk to Low Riggs Farm, Middlesmoor

11 and 12 October 2025

A Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority event. A guided walk to Low Riggs Farm, Nidderdale, where Stonebeck cheese is made, 2-5pm. £15. www.yorkshiredales.org.uk.

CBA Autumn Showcase

Saturday 18 October 2025

In person at Sheffield Workstation Creative Lounge or by Zoom, 10am to 4.30pm. See cba-yorkshire.org.uk/1/.

Decorative Door Lintels in Tatham Parish

Saturday 25 October 2025

A talk by Peter Osbourne for Tatham History Society at The Old School, Tatham Fells, 7.30pm. www.tathamhistory.org.uk.

Counting Chimneys: The Hearth Tax in Lincolnshire

Saturday 25 October 2025

Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology event at Lincoln College, £32. Includes a talk on East Riding hearth tax by David Neave. www.slha.org.uk.

YAHS Yorkshire History Conference

Saturday 1 November 2025

A general history event at the Friends Meeting House in York. www.yas.org.uk/Meetings/Yorkshire-History-Conference.

Back to Back Houses in Bradford

Thursday 6 November 2025

A talk by Jude Roberts to Bradford Family History Society, 10am at Bradford Mechanics Institute. www.bradfordfhs.org.uk.

Echoes from the Meadows: a History of High Hirst Farm

Wednesday 12 November 2025

Talk by Paul Knights to Hebden Bridge Local History Society, 7.30pm at Methodist Church, Hebden Bridge. www.hebdenbridgehistory.org.uk

Sheffield's Ancient Suburbs – part 3

Monday 17 November 2025

Talk by David Templeman to Sheffield Family History Society, 2pm at Aizlewood Business Centre, Aizlewood Mill, Sheffield. www.sheffieldfhs.org.uk.

Walkers of Crow Nest Property Empire

Tuesday 18 November 2025

Talk by Ian Philp for Halifax Antiquarian Society, 7.30pm at Maurice Jagger Centre, Halifax. www.halifaxhistory.org.uk.

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