

Life after the Calverley Family



The demolition of two of the later cottages in the early 1980s.



The central window on the gable of the Great Hall, once perhaps used to take in bales of wool or other goods.

A new purpose

After Walter Calverley moved to live at his wife's home at Esholt Hall in the 1660s, Calverley Old Hall was no longer needed by the family. The once great manor house was subdivided into a series of smaller cottages which were let out to local people.

Finally, in 1754, the building was sold to Thomas Thornhill, who continued to subdivide it into smaller tenancies. During its time as individual dwellings, the building has seen many additions with at least three smaller cottages being built onto the main building in the 19th and 20th centuries, two of which are now demolished (pictured above). If you look carefully on the front of the Chapel, the faded rooflines of these cottages are still visible. The last tenant did not leave Calverley Old Hall until 2007.

Signs of cottage industry at Calverley Old Hall

During Landmark's renewal works, the story of the building began to reveal itself. We uncovered a lot about the people who had previously lived and worked at Calverley Old Hall.

In particular, the building's links to the cloth industries of Leeds and Bradford are evident. A central opening in the gable of the Great Hall, which was later converted to a window (pictured above), may once have formed an entry point for bales of wool or other goods. Small indents worn into the floor of the Painted Chamber show that people may have been spinning or weaving in this room, wearing the floor by pressing the treadle (foot pedal) of a spinning wheel or loom. A number of wooden bobbins like the one on display have also been found on site, some with their spun wool still intact.

Everyday life in the cottages

Census records from 1841 give us an insight into those who once lived in Calverley Old Hall, with many working in the agricultural or cloth industries. Several family names are regular occurrences on the records through the years, including the Grimshaws, Thompsons and Pratts, suggesting that the tenancies were often passed down in families.

One of the last remaining tenants living at Calverley Old Hall was Mrs Bartle, who moved out in 2001. Mrs Bartle's home was in the Chapel and the part of the building we now know holds the Painted Chamber. Her granddaughter Sharon, who was also born at Calverley Old Hall, has fond memories of the cottage, which she shared with us in an oral history interview.

The floor of the Painted Chamber, showing signs of wear from the treadle of a loom or spinning wheel.



"We used to play in here, as kids as this was the best place in the world to play because of the secret passageways".

"The fact that those paintings were in her bedroom... that's where I slept! You can't believe that they were behind the plaster."

– Sharon Gott

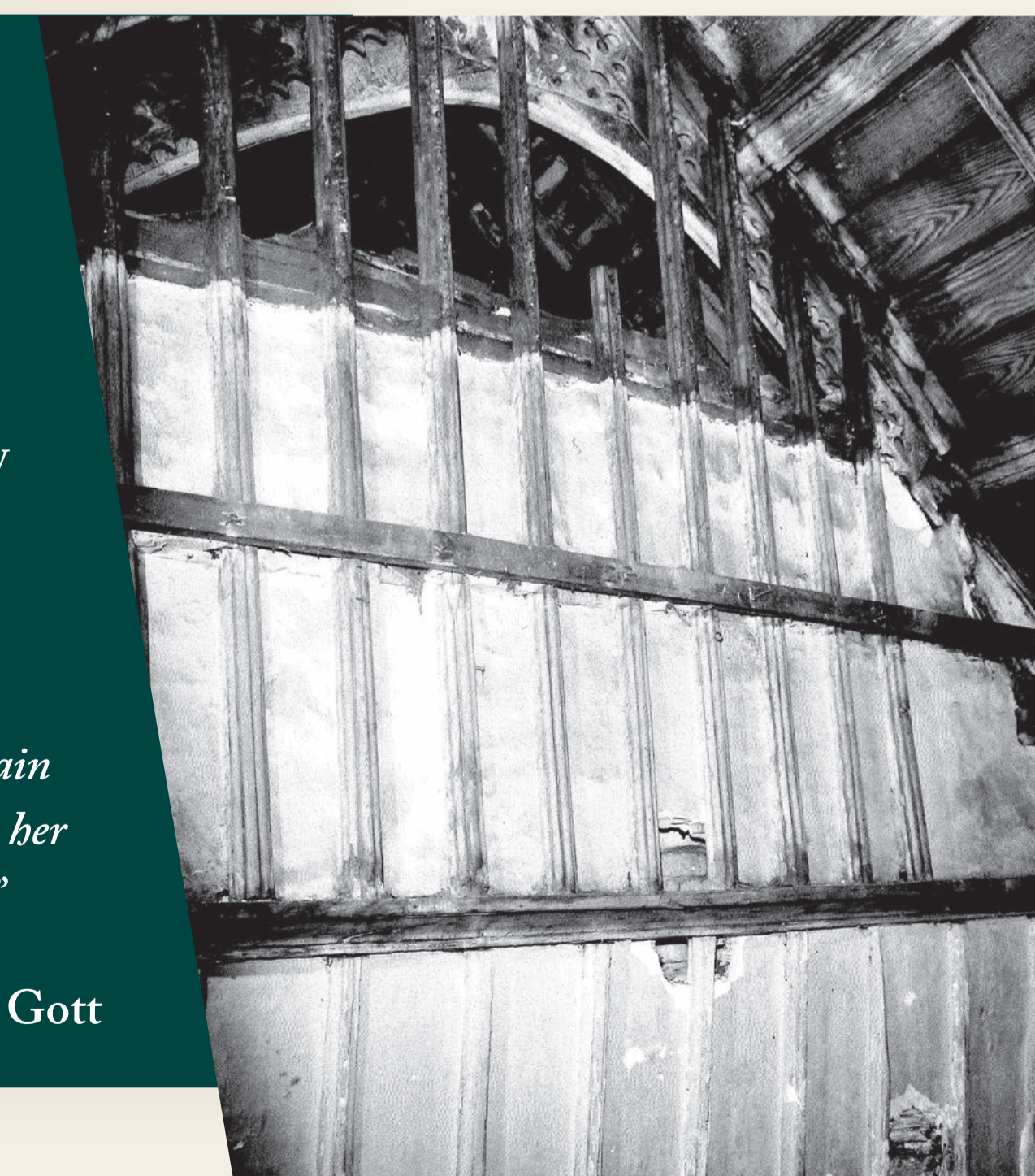
The plastered chapel screen which was used as a partition wall to divide the dwelling.

BATHING IN THE CHAPEL

Despite the conversion of the Chapel into a cottage, much of the original fabric including the 15th-century chapel gallery has survived intact. This incredible survival was enabled by the screen being plastered for many years. The upper gallery once housed a bathroom, evidenced now only by the blocked window on the outside of the chapel.

"There were lots of quirky features in the building... Going up the stairs, you had to jump onto the landing to go into the bathroom and before you got to the bathroom, my uncle had a train set... the bath was by the window, so my grandma used to sit in her bath and look out of the window whilst she was having a bath."

– Sharon Gott



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Scan for further information on the cottages and to hear more of Sharon's memories

