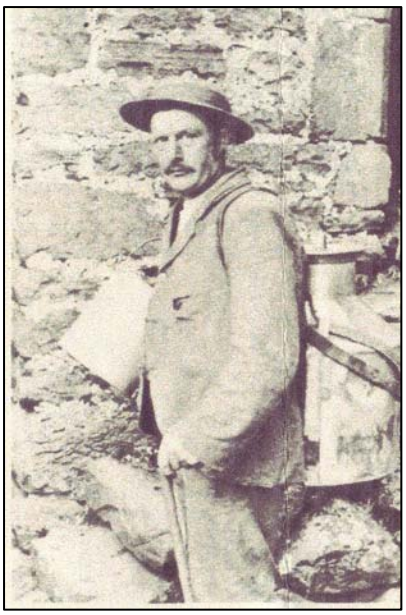
The Landmark Trust

COWSIDE

History Album



Let's call at George Beresford's up at Cowside
Hen-keeping and making great pigs is his pride...

Written and researched by Caroline Stanford
Updated December 2011

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BASIC DETAILS

Built:	**late 17th century**
Listed:	**Grade II**
Tenure:	**99 year lease from the National Trust**
Restoration architect:	**Linda Locket**
Building analysis:	**Colin Briden**
Contractors:	**G. I. Hopley Ltd**
Wall paintings conservation:	**Perry Lithgow Partnership Ltd**
Dendrochronology advice:	**Ian Tyers, Dendrochronological Consultancy Ltd**
Fundraising:	**May 2007- April 2009**
Re-roofed:	**Autumn 2009**
Work started on site:	**Spring 2010**
Opened as a Landmark:	**October 2011**

Landmark gratefully acknowledges a significant bequest from the late Mrs Sylvia Chapman which allowed us to close the Cowside appeal. We were also most grateful for donations towards the restoration from its Guardians[1] and many other private trusts and individual donors (some of whom are listed at the end of this volume). The building could not have been saved without their support.

[1] Cowside was the first Landmark project to have 'Guardians.' The term came about because one lady wrote to us after reading about Cowside and our restoration appeal, saying that she would like to contribute 1% of the total cost. This in itself was such a generous gesture that it gave us the idea of seeing whether others would follow her example and so we launched the Guardians scheme, which has since been successfully applied to other projects.

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In researching Cowside and preparing this album, the work and advice of Dr. Colin Briden, Dr. Kathryn Davies and Dr. Adam Menuge is gratefully acknowledged.

The Cowside farmstead before restoration

SUMMARY

Cowside is significant as an unaltered example of a late 17th/early 18th- century farmhouse of the North Yorkshire Dales. It is entirely typical of its area in many respects, but in a few it is unusual, not to say exceptional. The farmstead is set on the fellside above the young River Wharfe, just after it has been christened as such at the meeting of the becks at Beckermonds. It is made up today of the farmhouse, two attached outbuildings or barns, a poultiggery (henhouse and piggery combined), former privy and various enclosures created out of the ubiquitous Dales drystone walling. In facing south up the slope and away from the river, Cowside perhaps seems to turn its back on the world, but more likely is that there was once a packhorse trail running along the contour line above it, (the Dale was an important through route from Lancaster to Newcastle-upon-Tyne).

There is a datestone "I S 1707" above the front door, but a panel of disturbed masonry around it indicates that it has been re-set from a two-storey porch (since lost), a common feature on houses of that date. The porch's existence was proved when we found a blocked doorway under plaster on the first floor. The front elevation has a set of fine stone mullioned windows with an echo of earlier centuries about them, placed with a careful symmetry that was very up to date for the early 18th century. The rear elevation is interesting for different reasons. It has an unusual twin gabled service range, of a stair tower with a pair of two storey service chambers to each side. The windows on this less public side are various, clearly re-used or even cobbled together from pieces of salvaged stonework, some arched, some little more than square openings. Whether they came from an earlier building on the same site or elsewhere is not known.

There has been much debate about when Cowside was constructed, and documentary references suggest there was a farm called Cowside in Hubberholme parish by 1682, when Jane, wife of Francis Slinger of Cowside, was buried. Dendrochronology (dating by tree ring analysis) proved inconclusive (although the main roof structure is of oak, the joists and internal joinery are thought to be mostly ash). The safest to say is that the house was built around 1700, and probably as an extension of activity by the prosperous Slingers of Beckermonds, who are known to have been living at Beckermonds in the 1660s.

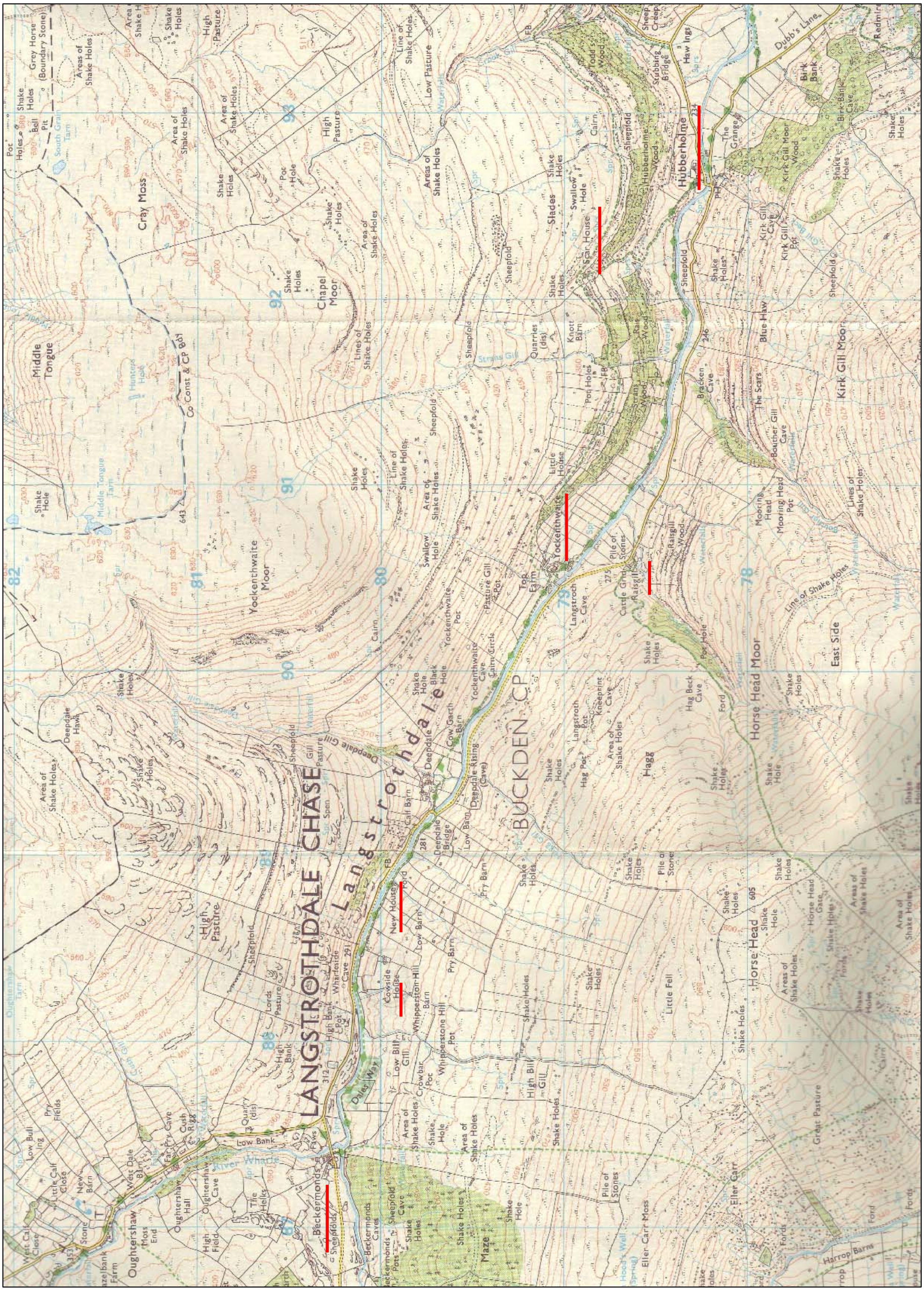
The farmhouse itself is a simple two cell, direct entry house on two floors. It is built of the local, highly durable limestone with freestone quoins and dressings. As originally built, the entrance led straight into a hall/housebody (today's kitchen) with a massive inglenook fireplace under a stone arch and a fine six-light stone mullioned window with window seat beneath. In the 18th century, a self-contained stone fireplace was inserted into this massive hearth and the flue narrowed. Probably in the early 19th century, perhaps when the porch was taken down, the partition wall to the left of the main entrance was inserted to create a through passage (and no doubt better insulation from the draughts). Now across this passage is the parlour, the finest room in the house with another good stone fireplace and wall paintings. These paintings are an exceptionally rare survival in this remote corner of Yorkshire, and

noteworthy in a vernacular building even beyond. One on each wall to either side of the window, they are monochrome Biblical texts in Gothic script, surrounded by flamboyant frames of foliage and scrolls. They are clearly the work of skilled hands, and by two different artists. On the west wall is *Whether ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do do all to the glory of God Cor*[inthians] *X:31* and *For of him and through him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. Rom*[ans] *XI: 36.* On the east wall is *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith Pro*[verbs] *XV: Cha*[pter] *17 ver*[se]. We know that a William Slinger of Langstrothdale went to Sedbergh School in the 1670s before going on to Cambridge University and becoming a clergyman. It is quite possible that he was Frances & Jane Slinger's son, growing up at Cowside in a prosperous and educated household with these cheerful texts, although there is no definitive proof. Both these main ground floor rooms have fine beams with well carved ogee stops.

To the rear of the ground floor are a former dairy on one side (now a scullery) and a washhouse on the other. Before restoration, the dairy still had remnants of shelving and the washhouse a copper for boiling clothes. Note too the stone spout for waste water which projects through the wall. There is a very small cellar below the stone dog leg stairs. The banisters and newel post had completely disappeared, now reinstated on the basis of other local examples.

Upstairs, the hall chamber was heated only by heat radiated from the massive chimneybreast. The parlour chamber was clearly the best bedroom, with a third well-made fireplace with capitals and a mantelshelf. The window has a well-shaped central king mullion. It seems both these rooms were originally open to the rafters, perhaps until as late as the mid-19th century.

In spring 2009, a generous bequest from Mrs Sylvia Chapman allowed us to close the Cowside appeal. We re-roofed the house in autumn 2009 as a preliminary phase, fearing the leaking roof might collapse under its own weight in the snows of another winter, and moved on site in earnest in spring 2010. All the external masonry was repointed, and the house replastered throughout internally. Those flagstones that could be salvaged were relaid in the cross passage and today's kitchen, and the opportunity was taken to lay underfloor heating beneath new stone floors elsewhere on the ground floor. The first floor floorboards were all so rotten that they had to be replaced. Later infilling was removed from each of the fireplaces. New doors were made to match an original that survived to the parlour. Since 2017, Cowside has been on mains electricity. Water is provided from a specially drilled borehole, and thus Cowside is ready to face another era of inhabitation.


LANGSTROTHDALE CHASE
Langstrothdale
BUCKDEN CP
Yockenthwaite Moor
Cray Moss
Middle Tongue
Chapel Moor
Horse Head Moor
Horse Head
Kirk Gill Moor
Hubberholme
Yockenthwaite
Beckermonds
Cowside House
New House
Deepdale
Oughtershaw
River Wharfe
High Pasture
Low Pasture
Slades
Scar House
Raisgill
Hagg
Little Fell
Great Pasture
East Side
Blue Haw
The Scars
Maze

Introduction

It is impossible to think of Cowside without at the same time being aware of the wider landscape that characterises it and produced it. Yet despite the vastness of the sweeping fells, there is soon a sense of intimacy and close local connection through the centuries with the farmsteads that dot their slopes and with the lives of their inhabitants. In the words of a revered historian of the Dales, Ella Pontefract, 'each farm and hamlet is vital.' Here the River Wharfe runs through Langstrothdale down to Buckden and here is a small world in its own right, with its own songs, religion, tales of distant wars, festivals, legends, births, marriages and deaths. The names of the Langstrothdale farms provide echoes of Old Norse dialects and come to seem like familiar friends in the history of the area, as families and fates interweave – Beckermonds, Yockenthwaite, Scarr House, Raisgill, Cray Farm……

Even now, Langstrothdale has a unity which corresponds broadly with the former manor of Buckden. Today, like wider tracts of the North Yorkshire Dales beyond, much of Langstrothdale is owned by the National Trust, thanks to the generosity of brothers Graham and David Watson (of whom more anon).

The name Cowside itself possibly suggests Norse beginnings, *sætr* being Norse for a hill or summer pasture. As '-sett' it crops up in several place names in the higher Dale. Many of these former yeoman's dwellings also survive, although almost all have either fallen into agricultural use or been significantly altered. Only Cowside remains so little altered, constructed during the 17th century but in the 20th century left stranded in isolation on the fell side without road access or services. Its repair became beyond the National Trust's resources and perhaps its remit, leaving the Landmark Trust as its only possibility of surviving.

A sketch of the landscape

Cowside is so entirely characterised in position, form and materials by its place in the sweeping Dale landscape that a brief consideration of this setting is a necessary part of its tale. The topography of this distinctive natural landscape results from specific geological events associated with a feature known as the North Craven Fault, which is rather a series of geological fault lines running along the southern and western edges of the Yorkshire Dales. Millions of years ago, carboniferous limestone formed in the area as flat layers beneath a clear sea. Eventually, the land south of the North Craven Fault subsided to create the Craven Basin in the area around Bolton Abbey. A layer of Millstone Grit formed over the underlying limestone, and local earth movements then caused the layers to fold and buckle, creating the sweeping northern dales we see today, interspersed with spectacular cliffs and gorges. Other limestone features to look out for in the Dales are reef knolls (conical, fossil-rich hills which formed as coral atolls in the shallow waters of the prehistoric sea – look out for these around Cracoe and Burnsall) and limestone pavements, caused by the scouring action of the glacier along the strata.

Mesolithic flint finds (from 7-5,000 years BC) suggest seasonal hunters were the first human presence in the landscape, and by Neolithic times (4,000 BC), finds at Elbolton Cave near Burnsall indicate that people had started to settle and carry out a primitive form of agriculture. By the Iron Age (from about 1200 BC) the Brigantes were using ploughs with metal blades and had established rough tracks and roads in the dales. The Romans spent little time in the area; when they left Britain, around 400 AD, it was the incoming Anglo Saxon settlers who started major tree clearance on the valley floors for their farms and terraced the hillsides in strips known as lynchets. The Saxons were mostly arable farmers, so it was Norsemen who settled up the Dale, grazing the higher fells in summer and wintering the cattle on the lower slopes.

Today's landscape still retains extensive and visible evidence for early farmsteads and their field systems dating from prehistoric times, which predated the development of these valley-floor settlements by the 11th century.

The River Wharfe, another defining feature of Langstrothdale, actually finds its source at the confluence of Oughtershaw Beck and Green Field Beck near Beckermonds (the name itself means 'the meeting of the becks'). Gathering numerous becks and rills which rise from shake holes on the moors, it winds its way to join the River Ouse near Cawood. As well as the Landmark at Cawood Castle, the river also passes close to Beamsley Hospital, another Landmark and formerly, like Langstrothdale, part of the Clifford family holdings.

A brief history of Langstrothdale

After assimilation by the conquering Normans, the lands of Langstrothdale were eventually granted to the monks of Fountains Abbey, founded in 1132 and soon after admitted to the austere order of the Cistercians. Richard II confirmed the grant by charter in 1188. However, it seems their ownership of Langstrothdale did not last long: a century later Henry de Percy challenged the Abbey's ownership and Edward I instructed it to release to de Percy 'all the meadows and pastures in Buckden and elsewhere within the bounds of Langstrothdale and with the wild beasts of that chase.'[2] At de Percy's death, it seems the lands passed to the Crown and in 1315 Edward II appointed one Roger Damory as supervisor and keeper of the Chases of Langstrothdale. In time the lands passed to Clifford ownership, as Earls of Cumberland.[3] The dale became a renowned hunting ground for the lords of the land over the next centuries and deer still survive in remote woods.

[2] Transcript in legal papers of Sir John William Ramsden relating to the Craven Estate, Leeds City Archive, cited by Baird, 1987.
[3] An apparent reference to Cowside as still belonging to Fountains Abbey in 1540, cited in A.H. Smith's *The Place Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* (1961) seems to relate to a holding in Malham rather than Langstrothdale – Cowside is not uncommon as a farm name.

Meanwhile, alongside the periodic raucous arrival of the hunting parties, the lives of the peasant farmers continued their seasonal round. By the 14th century, individual peasant farmsteads were springing up as sheep and cattle farms under the strict feudal tenure of the day. It was not until the early 17th century that yeomen in the Dale began to buy their own land with the right to inheritance, through a combination of their own rising prosperity and the aristocracy's need for cash. While the Cliffords as Lords of the Manor retained hunting, shooting, fishing and mineral rights, this was the beginning of a period of considerable building activity in the Dales, of which Cowside is just one example and for which the security of land tenure was an important contributing factor.

The present stock of farmhouses in the Dales essentially dates from a period of buoyant livestock prices that began in the 17th century. They are part of a wider boom in vernacular house building between around 1550 and 1650, first postulated by W. G. Hoskins in the 1950s and christened the Great Rebuilding. Debated ever since by historians of vernacular architecture, the Great Rebuilding is still considered by most a valid hypothesis and, allowing perhaps for an extension after the disruption of the Civil War in the 1640s, Cowside's construction seems entirely consistent with the broad trend.

The changes in agriculture in the late 16th and early 17th centuries that led to this rise in prosperity still form the basis for the present day farming activity in the Dales. At that time, dairying, cattle rearing and sheep farming were often combined on small holdings of no more than 30 acres of arable, pasture and meadow land. Grazing on the fells increased their land fourfold, but was perhaps only a third as valuable as the enclosed fields. Not much of the holding was given over to corn, perhaps only an acre or so of oats or rye on a level spot and with soil deep enough to take a plough. Critically, waste land was being improved, arable lands enclosed and open commons converted into regulated pasture. In time, such arable land as existed was gradually converted into meadow as

farming began to concentrate on stock. Once the hay crop had been gathered from the higher slopes above the tree line, the pasture and meadow would have been used for grazing.

A typical farm of this time, the period when Cowside was built, would have had some lower meadows and pasture (reserved for milking cows and for fattening cattle in the summer) and an allotted number of sheep and cattle 'gaits' on the harsher pasture of the uplands. A gait was the amount of land required for the pasturage of one sheep, an economical species since a cow required four gaits, a horse eight and a mare and foal ten. Grazing on these stinted pastures was strictly regulated by the Lord of the Manor, who imposed limits. In many farms, income was supplemented by some domestic industry (weaving or spinning) and surplus produce for market would include wool, lambs, cheese and butter. Corn, for some at least, would have been an import. For some, employment in local mining activities would have supplemented income at times, the Dales being rich in mineral deposits (especially lead) and the Lords, to whom the mining rights belonged, keen to exploit them.

Communication routes were important, not just down the Dale to the market at Kettlewell but also between the Dales: Langstrothdale was one of the major east-west packhorse routes, via which all goods were carried through the Dales. The tiny stone bridge at Hubberholme was a vital link on the route between Lancaster and Newcastle upon Tyne.

The landscape and buildings of the 17th century would not have been very different from what we see today. The dry stone walls would already have marched across the fells to enclose commons and pastures, the limestone gathered painstakingly from the slopes around and just as durable. Wooded areas would have been more extensive than they are today. Dwellings, farm buildings

and outhouses would have been grouped in farmsteads with good stone barns, typically built with just as much care as the houses, scattered across the fields.

A yeoman a few miles down the Dale at Conistone kept a logbook which included building accounts for extensions to his house and farm buildings. Timber had to be brought from Barden since none was available locally – the growing lead mining activity had used up all local supplies. As a freeholder, the farmer had the right to fetch building stone from the outmoor, transported back on grass sleds. Roofing tiles were brought from Waldenhead or Starbotton Moor. He completed his house in 1687 and added a porch in 1694. His house was called Hemplands, indicating another local industry. His house finished, he went on to build his laithes or barns, one described as '11 yards in length within and 5 yards in breadth in ye shippon and fower yards high above ye earth' using 'hewn stone for a rough arch and cornerstones' – a typical Dales barn.

The eighteenth century saw cattle drovers bringing increasing numbers of highland cattle from Scotland south along the drove roads. These drove roads cross the Dales from north to south, generally keeping to the upper slopes and open moors avoiding the settlements who might dispute their passage, and intersecting the packhorse routes at right angles. Cattle crossing Langstrothdale would usually end up at Great Close near Malham, where more than 5,000 cattle were grazed at a time on an enclosed pasture of 730 acres, waiting to be auctioned off to small farmers who would graze a few head of cattle over the winter, to be sold on again in the spring. The increase in this trade was another stimulant to the enclosure and improvement of the upper slopes of the Dale. These were converted to pasture by burning the moorland and then enriching it with lime. The remains of these 18th-century lime kilns dot the Dales to this day, interesting the contemporary writer and agricultural commentator Arthur Young so much that he thought it worth a detour on his travels through the British countryside.

Lead mining too increased in the Dales in the 18th century, flourishing until the end of the 19th century and an increasingly important source of income for many families. In Langstrothdale, this activity was concentrated between Buckden and Cray, where several miners cottages remain.

The first half of the 19th century saw the last enclosure of common lands in the Dale. Sheep, dairy farming and cattle rearing remained the chief agricultural concerns and arable farming virtually ceased. Land continued to be improved and reclaimed from the moorland wastes and the same indigenous building materials continued to be used. As the railway never reached beyond Grassington, it had little direct impact on Langstrothdale and helped maintain this indigenous character to its building materials. The railway did however weaken the east-west communication routes of the old packhorse routes, strengthening the longitudinal links down the Dale towards the railway and leaving many farmhouses isolated that would once have enjoyed busy passing traffic from the packhorse trails. This is perhaps especially true of Cowside, high up on the fell side and without ever achieving a proper access track. One theory on why it faces south up the slope, rather than towards the Wharfe valley below (which to our modern sensibilities seems the more obvious 'public' face for passing traffic) is that a packhorse trail may have passed along this upper slope.

In the 20th century, it was only the post-war years that brought significant change, as agriculture became increasingly mechanised and subsidised. That Cowside remained so unaltered was because these most recent changes did not touch it. While at one level this meant it became no longer viable for modern life, we also benefit for the unique insight it now affords into these ancient ways of life. Its new role perhaps epitomises the latest dimension to life in the Dale, whose beauty and the careful guardianship of the National Trust has now made tourism an important and defining local activity.

Field Barns

The characteristic Dales field barns scattered across the fells also deserve a mention. These were another result of the late 17th century agricultural improvements as the communal grazing ground on the valley-side pastures was enclosed and cow pastures and grazing rights transferred to individual yeomen. Most of the surviving field barns date from late 18th and 19th centuries. These two storey structures were used for wintering cattle and storing hay, and some show evidence of adaptation and rebuilding of earlier, steeply pitched heather thatched barns. They also helped avoid the tensions that arose when cattle were herded home to scattered farmsteads in different directions across the landscape. By the early 18th century, storeyed barns with truss roofs develop. As well as storing hay for cattle, corn was stored and processed, and cattle housed, all under the same roof. These buildings were generally some two metres higher than earlier generations of single storey cruck barns (formed from a simple span of curved tree trunks) and some of these later barns have evidence of cut down crucks in their lintels and roof carpentry.

Today, these scattered and redundant but soundly constructed structures provide an ongoing conservation concern. Given the sensitivity of their setting, it is hard to envisage use as anything other than their original purpose however much their presence may lend the landscape its character.

A field barn near Cowside, soundly constructed out of the local stone with the projecting stones common in Dales buildings. This one is still kept in good repair by its farmer, but many more are falling derelict.

History of Cowside and its inhabitants

Beyond a broad attribution to the 17th century based on both building analysis and documentary evidence, the exact date of Cowside's construction was something of a mystery. The apparently helpful datestone of 1707 above the front door turned out to have been re-set in its current position, probably from a two storey porch typical of such houses in the Dales at the end of the 17th-century but removed at an earlier stage. Datestones are notoriously unreliable things.

Even though the main structural timber in the house is oak, dendrochronology (tree ring dating) proved impossible because of the paucity of the database in the area. Not surprisingly, the Dales farmers used whatever came to hand for their buildings, fortunate in the hard limestone that lay just beneath the surface of their pastures, and indigenous oak and ash for their timber. Sycamore, now a ubiquitous northern feature providing shelter to every fellside farmstead, was introduced to Britain only in the sixteenth century. Lime-rich soil suits sycamores and they quickly colonised. Sycamores also thrive on manure, so benefited from the shippons built on for the cows that had become more profitable than sheep. These shippons were built at the end of the farmhouses where the land sloped away so that the slurry could be carried off – exactly what we find at Cowside. Today, solitary clumps of sycamores often mark the sites of vanished farmsteads.

According to the National Trust Vernacular Building Survey carried out by Dr Adam Menuge in 1990, Cowside does not feature in medieval records of the area.[4] The survey also suggested that Cowside represented the rebuilding of an earlier farmhouse on the same site, probably in the first half of the 17th century, reflecting the growing prosperity of the yeomanry and aspirations for a higher

[4] The meticulous NTVBS records have been invaluable in understanding Cowside's context among the other early farmsteads in National Trust ownership in the Dales. For those interested, photocopies of the reports for nearby farmsteads will be found in the separate reader folder in the Landmark bookcase.

standard of accommodation and a display of status. Whether it was an actual rebuilding, or a new farmstead incorporating some fragments brought from elsewhere remains impossible to say, but the overall hypothesis holds true and was confirmed by the building analysis carried out for Landmark by Dr Colin Briden.

So it has been documentary evidence tracing the inhabitants of Cowside that has provided the clearest evidence of its age, and a summary of this is given on the next pages.[5]

The first firm evidence of a farm called Cowside in Langstrothdale appears in the registers for the parish of Hubberholme, where on 7th October 1682, the burial is recorded of Jane, wife of Francis Slinger of Cowside. So far so good, but Slingers were a long established local family and there were many Slingers in and around Buckden in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and the same Christian names appear repeatedly too: William the shoemaker and son John; Matthew shoemaker and cordwinder; Francis carpenter; Francis yeoman; John miner and, in 1783, George the dancing master. The names of other local families also weave in and out of Langstrothdale's history – Calverts, Tennants, Jaques [gentrification of Jake] and Lodges. Earlier still, Thomas Slinger of Langstroth wielded a bow at the Battle of Flodden in 1513 (as did three Tennants and a Jake).

[5] Thanks are due too to the many family historians who got in touch in the course of the Cowside project with details of their forebears.

RESIDENTS OF COWSIDE

Entries in **bold with an asterisk** are those where firm evidence of residence has been found.

By 1682 FRANCIS SLINGER:
***1682 Oct 7, burial of Jane, wife of Francis Slinger of Cowside**
1682 Oct 27, baptism of Jane, daughter of Francis Slinger (could be the same FS, wife dying in childbirth?)
1697 Jan 30, burial of Elizabeth, daughter of John Slinger (bap 1663?)

By 1692 JOHN SLINGER:
1684 June 1, baptism of William son of John Slinger
1687 Jan 22, baptism of Mary, daughter of John Slinger
1688 Nov 7, marriage of John Slinger and Anne Slinger
1689 Feb 9, baptism of John, son of John Slinger (poss. dies in 1694 aged 5)
1690 Sept 26, baptism of Jane, daughter of Jns. Slinger
1691 Mar 6, baptism of Matthew, son of John Slinger
Mar 21, baptism of Francis, son of John Slinger
*** 1692 Oct 27, burial of John Slinger I of Cowside**
1694 May 13, baptism of Elizabeth, daughter of John Slinger II
1694 Sept 23, baptism of John, son of John Slinger
1694 Dec 14, burial of John son of John Slinger II (?) of Cowside (which John?!!)
1698 Mar 27, baptism of **Francis**, son of John Slinger II
***1700 Jan 25, burial of Anne, wife of John Slinger II of Cowside**
[datestone, 'I S' Did John follow John and remarry after Anne's death?]
1702 Nov 23, baptism of James, son of John Slinger
1713 Mar 11, baptism of Matthew, son of Mr John Slinger
1714 May 26, burial of Robert Slinger, yeoman

By 1721 FRANCIS SLINGER:
*** 1721 Nov 14, burial of Francis Slinger, of the Cowside [sic], batchellour**
*** 1724 Aug 9, baptism of …., son of Francis Slinger of Cowside, yeoman**
*** 1725 Dec 28, baptism of Ann, daughter of Francis Slinger of Cowside**

By 1731 THOMAS CARR
1692 May 21, marriage of Thomas Carr and Mary Jaque
*** 1731 April 9, burial of Ellin, wife of Thomas Carr of Cowside – died in childbirth since:**
*** 1731 April 9, baptism of Thomas, son of Thomas Carr of Cowside**

By late 1731, ROBERT WILLIAMSON: (unless Williamsons are servants?)
*** 1731 Dec 14, burial of Issabel Wiliamson of Cowside**

*** 1738 Oct 31, burial of Robert Williamson of Cowside, yeoman**

*** 1751 Feb 7, burial of Agnes Carr of Cowside**

By 1770 PAUL TENNANT
1770 July 12, marriage of Paul Tennant, husbandman, and Margery Tailforth, spinster

*** 1770 Aug 5, baptism of Anne, daughter of Paul Tennant of Cowside**

(The faint inscription 'GT 1798' over the lintel to the western extension of the outbuildings suggests Tennants may still have lived in the house at this date)

By 1807 WILLIAM MAWER:

***1807** **April 1, baptism of Anne, daughter of William Mawer of Cowside**

***1835** **John Constantine born at Cowside**, son of John (1810-?) who was son of James (1764-1831). This pers comm from two separate genealogists. Constantines said to have lived in the house for many years.

***1841** **William Smith, who farmed 90 acres**
(Buckden Tithe, NYCRO, T (PR/HBB)

***1851** **Thomas Dinsdale**, with wife and daughter farming a mere 8 acres (Census)

1860s John Wray (born at Thoralby in 1838). By 1875, has moved away. (pers comm. Jeanette Keel)

1877 John Falshaw (NB big local family) is farmer (Kelly's Directory, but the farm is not mentioned in later editions). John married to John Wray's sister, Anne, in 1860 and they lived at Cowside until at least 1891. (pers. Comm.. Jeanette Keel)

from 1896 **George Beresford**, whose son Frank was born in the house in 1900, one of a family of eight.

From 1905 **George's brother, Robert Beresford** took over at Cowside. (*Dalesman*, 1/06/08).

Late 1920s Simsons (pers comm.)

1935/6 **Ernest Buxton and son John** (pers comm. John Buxton) lived at Cowside, the last inhabitants before it fell into dereliction. They moved out in the 1960s. Water still drawn from a spring, and there was no electricity (even though lines passed close by) and no road access.

The returns for the West Riding Hearth Tax levied in 1672 for Buckden are typically inconclusive (the Hearth Tax returns yield notoriously erratic evidence). Only four houses were assessed with 3 hearths as Cowside has (just one house has four), and none of these are lived in by a Slinger. Fr[ancis?] Stringer, who possessed two hearths, may be a mistranscription of Slinger and this entry could be a sloppy assessor's record of Cowside, but while the returns affirm the status of triple-hearthed Cowside as a house of relative affluence in the immediate area, they provide no evidence for a construction date earlier than1682. (Of the rest of the Slinger clan, John, Matthew and William each had houses with1 hearth, while Thomas had two, as did 'Widd' [Widow?] Slinger.)

Francis Slinger (though it could have been his father or simply another relation) figures in earlier references too. In 1660, 'Francis Slinger yeoman of Boggermont' [Beckermonds, which lies just across the Wharfe and one of the closest farmsteads to Cowside] is signatory to a deed of indenture which leases Boggermont to John Lodge and guarantees Lodge's payment of rent on the farm to the Earl of Cumberland.[6] The parish registers show apparently the same Francis Slinger of 'Beggarmans' baptising four children through the 1660s and 70s, and burying two, and is buried himself in 1676.

Was Francis Slinger of Cowside, husband of Jane who died in 1682, son of 'Francis of Beggarmons' and Cowside therefore built as an additional farmstead for a thriving family? Certainly Slingers continue to live at Beckermonds until well into the 18th century.

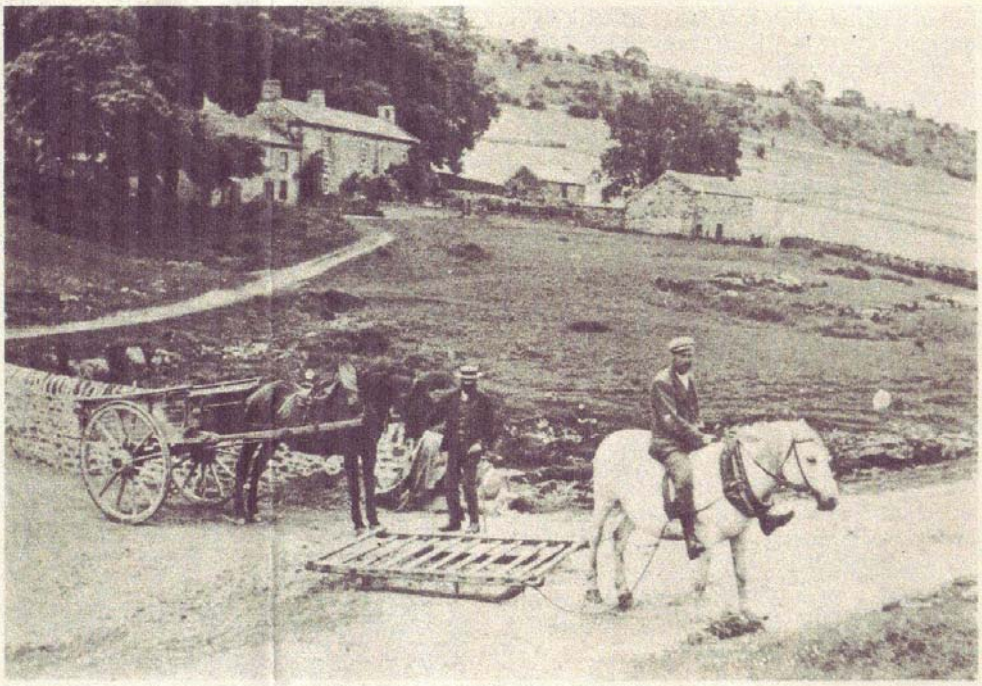
[6] This reference is from a pamphlet, *Beckermonds in Langstrothdale* (1962) by Florence Brook, a former inhabitant of Beckermonds herself, who recalls having seen the indenture in her younger days, and that it bore the seals of both the Earl of Cumberland and Slinger. The date suggests the transaction may have been part of a reestablishment of order at the Restoration. The anecdote is interesting too in revealing that the land still belonged to the Earl of Cumberland at this date, and had not been bought by a Dale yeoman.

To return to our datestone, it yields the initials 'I. S.' and the next conclusive evidence from the Hubberholme Registers is the burial of 'John Slinger of Cowside' in October 1692 (I representing the Latin form of John, Iohannis, and suggests a certain educational level among the Slingers which investigation of the wall paintings tends to support – see below). The wife of another John Slinger of Cowside is buried in 1700, suggesting that a son John had taken over the farm and was responsible for the datestone (and so perhaps for the construction of the whole house) in 1707.

By 1721, a Francis Slinger is in residence and was buried a 'batchellour' in the same year although he was succeeded by another Francis Slinger who baptised a son in 1724 and a daughter, Anne, in 1725. Anne's baptism is the last evidence of Slingers living in the house; by 1731 Thomas Carr was farming there and then Robert Williamson through the rest of the 1730s. By 1770 Paul Tennant had taken over; by 1807 William Mawer. By 1835, John Constantine was born at Cowside, the son of John (1810-?). The Constantines are said to have lived in the house for many years.[7] From the Buckden Tithe Map of 1841, William Smith was farming 90 acres from Cowside; by the 1851 census, Thomas Tinsdale and his wife and daughter were farming a mere 8 acres. By 1877, Kelly's Directory has John Falshaw as farmer at Cowside although he is not mentioned in later editions; as the Falshaws were another well-established local family, it may be that the Cowside holding had been absorbed into another at this point.

We now enter the era of oral history, and the recollections of Frank Beresford, who was born at Cowside in 1900 and whose memories were set down by W.R. Mitchell in an article in *The Dalesman* in July1981. Frank's father George moved into Cowside in 1896, having served his time as a farmhand at both Yockenthwaite and Raisgill. This excellent article is reproduced in full over the next pages.

[7] Pers. Comms. Deborah Weston and Mary Webb.



The Beresfords of Cowside

Cowside farmhouse, above the infant Wharfe, has not heard family chatter for years. The days when it was occupied, live on in the memory of Frank Beresford, of Hellifield. He was born at Cowside in 1900 and he spent the first few years of his life there. Pictured above is his father, George, with white horse and sled. The photograph was taken at Yockenthwaite in 1900.

A HORSE and cart moved the few possessions of George Beresford from Thorpe to Cowside in 1896. George — who was nicknamed Duad — was born in Langstrothdale, and he already knew Cowside well, though it was tucked away out of the sight of casual visitors to the valley. The main buildings stand in a field mid-way between the river and the moor.

He was one of a family long settled in the Dales. The surname Beresford had often been entered in the register of the church at Hubberholme, the yard of which contained the mortal remains of generations of the family. George had lived at the family farm in Yockenthwaite until he was 12 years old; he then moved to Raisgill to work for his Uncle John.

When George was 35 years old, he decided to marry. He left the farm and sought his own way in the world. (He had, in fact, only 13 more years to live).

Thorpe gave him his modest start, and then he heard that the Falshaws had moved from Cowside. With his wife, Jane — a Metcalfe from Starbotton — and his daughter, Alice, he moved his meagre possessions and his farm stock to the head of the dale.

Langstrothdale was a forest once, and within it hunted the illustrious Cliffords of Skipton, Yeomen had arisen from the ashes of feudalism, and at the time of George's re-entry to the dale these families were well-established: Turnbull at Oughtershaw; Foster at Beckermonds; Lodge and Parker at Deepdale; Beresford and Hird at both Yockenthwaite and Raisgill.

The Lodge family lived at Hubberholme and Deepdale, but the hamlet's most distinguished resident was Grace Pawson, publican. She rented the *George Inn* (the

former parsonage) from the church. It was here, annually, that the parson, Fred "Totty" Anderson, presided over the January letting of the Poor Pasture, an outstanding excuse for gossiping and hard drinking.

Well-used Track. The last stretch of the route followed by the Beresford family when they moved to Cowside was little more than a field track beside a beck — a track which, in the years to come, would be modified occasionally to reduce the wear caused by heavy cart wheels on the same strips of turf. In fact, George Beresford was to have good use of his sled, made by Joe Rowe of Kettlewell, which moved with equal facility over springy grass and hard-packed snow.

Cowside had a modest amount of meadowland, rather more rough pasture, and rights on the moor for the sheep, which in those days had much Scotch blood in them. The Swaledale type had not yet evolved to take over the Pennines.

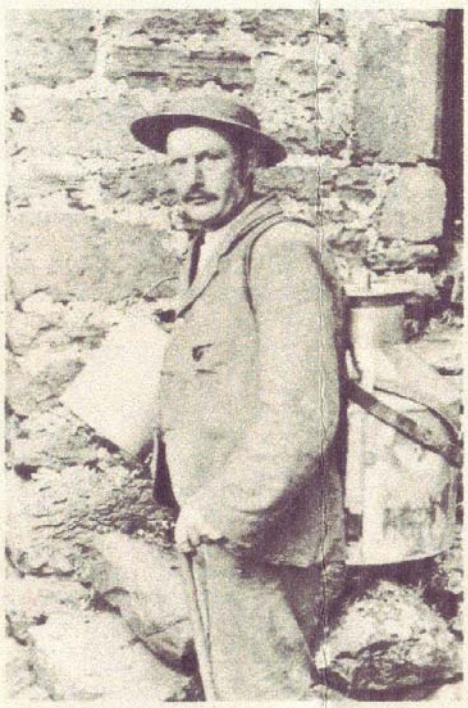
When there was a dry spell, one of the family had to carry a back-can for several hundred yards to where a beck poured down the hillside. Here water was collected for human consumption. The farmer need not be quite so fussy when it came to watering the stock.

Jane bore him more children. When another child was due, a message was sent to Mrs. Roland Parker, of Deepdale, who acted as midwife in the dale. She was a midwife of considerable experience but with no formal qualifications. Her assistance was much more prompt that that of the local doctor, who lived in Hawes and had to be summoned by someone riding to his home on horseback. The doctor had then to make the often grim journey over Fleet Moss and by Oughtershaw to reach his Wharfeside patients.

There were soon eight Beresfords at Cowside. Apart from Alice, these were Hannah, Peter, Nora, Eva. Another child died in infancy. They grew up in a farmhouse with little space. The living room was always crowded, and George chose to keep the "proven" in the parlour, where it was relatively dry. He bought, in bulk, from Threshfield, and re-sold some of it to his friends. They might, for example, require some Indian meal for the dogs or the pigs, and some corn for the hens.

Peat and Coal. In the living kitchen, everything centred on the fireside, the source of warmth, and hot water for drinks or washing, and hot food for the meals. The fire in the grate rarely went out. Even on hot days in summer there was a need to heat water. On to the fire went a few peats dug from Little Fell, and quite a lot of coal brought from the pit on the moor near Threshfield.

George and Jane Beresford and their family. The couple moved to Cowside from Thorpe.



George, who was nicknamed Duad, to distinguish him from many other Beresfords, with back-can and pail.

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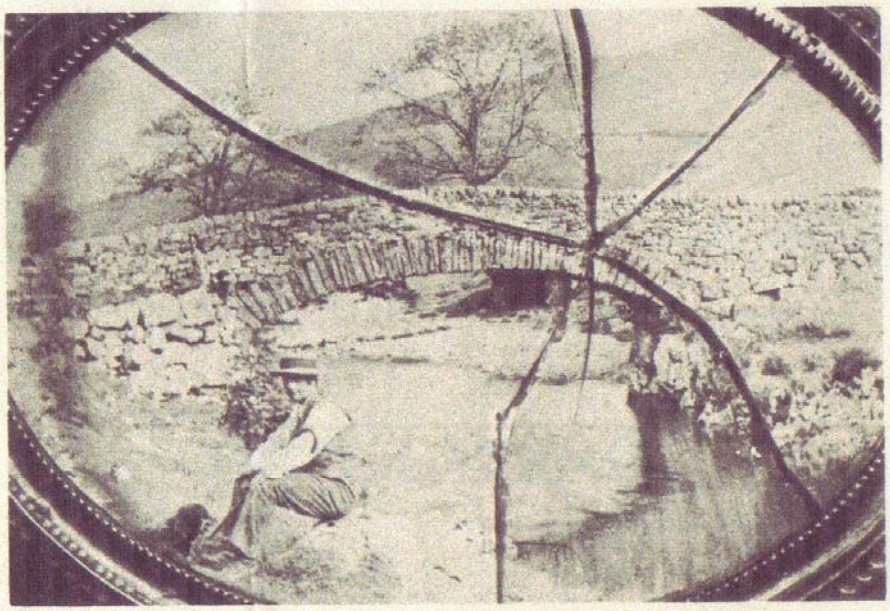
George Beresford, periodically collecting coal, would set off from Cowside with the horse and cart at first light. The coal was lifted straight from the mine shaft into the waiting carts; he was a restless man who begrudged time that was wasted in a queue, and thus he contrived to be at its head when the day's work at the mine began.

The kettle, which dangled from the arm of a reckon, was black from much use. There was little time to devote to cleaning the kettle. (Only when the family had dispersed did a member do this work, and she found it to be of gleaming copper).

were biting, it was not unusual for the cow being milked to dash madly off, taking the rest of the little herd with her!

Milk from the cattle was conveyed to the farmhouse by back-can, and Mrs. Beresford might then "use" some of it for butter-making, and sometimes even for cheese. Poured into "leads", which were shallow containers of metal, the milk stood until the cream rose to the top. The "blue" milk was drained away, and the cream scraped off to be stored in a crock until the day for churning.



This stone bridge near Deepdale was demolished about 1907 to be replaced by an iron bridge. (In the picture is George Beresford).

In Langstrothdale, at that time, the farmers went less by the clock than by the slow progression of the seasons. The farming year proceeded in a time-honoured way. Life ticked over in winter, and became feverish in spring and summer. Aspects of that life in 1900 were recorded by a visiting photographer, Mr. Brundrit.

As the meadow grass was allowed to grow unchecked, so that it could be mown and taken as hay, the cattle were summered on the pastures and, invariably, milked out of doors. They had to be coaxed to stand quietly as the milker, occupying a three-legged stool, stripped them of their milk by hand.

It sounds idyllic, and yet in fact it was not all joy. To milk a cow outdoors in the rain was never pleasant. When the "gadflies"

Work with Sheep. Summer was also a time for sheep-washing and clipping. For the washing, the Wharfe was dammed and the animals were immersed, and rubbed, in the pool. A large fold lay on the riverside in which sheep could be kept. It was to this croft that the local postman, Ben Lofthouse of Cray, drove with the day's mail. (Ben kept the inn at Cray; he delivered the letters by horse and trap, and was noted for keeping a good trotting horse).

Ben had first to go to Buckden. He then set off on foot to follow a gruelling round. If there were letters for Cowside he placed them in a recess in the wall of the croft, blew a whistle and — in case the whistle was not heard — placed a white stick upright on the

wall so that the Beresfords could see it from their home.

There was a morning when Frank, then four years of age, heard the whistle and ran down the fields to the stepping stones to meet the postman. Ben was in a teasing mood, and threatened: "I'll dip thee in t'beck." Frank never again went to collect the mail!

The summer routine of haymaking was spread over a month, and into the dale came Irish helpers, hired at Skipton or Hawes. One of them, John Carrol, was at Cowside for a number of years and, even after he had left — and the Beresfords were elsewhere — he remembered the family with affection, pressing half-a-crown against the palm of any of the young people he met.

There was neither the opportunity nor the financial resources to enable the family to travel far. Kit Tennant, of Starbotton, bought up any surplus cattle, specialising in cows that were carrying calves, calving them at Starbotton, invariably returning the calves to their native farms and selling the older beasts at Skipton. It was a two-day journey to market, starting early on Sunday morning. The drover housed the cattle at *None-go-by* that evening, ready to resume the journey at first light on Monday, which was market day.

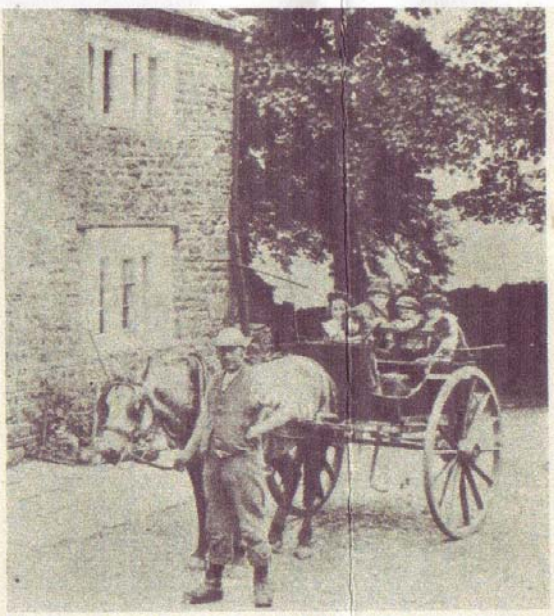
Those were the days when the Wensleydale village of Gayle was noted for its geese, large numbers of which were reared in that locality. Farmers in upper Wharfedale might buy some geese and their offspring. The birds were driven across the fell to their new homes.

The "geslings" developed into fine birds which were killed and sold — or consumed at Christmas. Quite often, the old geese were returned to Gayle, and another generation was bred from them.

Leisure Times The older children from Cowside attended the school at Oughtershaw. Once, George Beresford gave the family a treat by harnessing up the horse to the cart, sprinkling some straw in the cart bottom, and taking off his wife and children to Buckden, to attend a kinematograph show.

Some dalesfolk drank to excess. There was a steady demand for drink at the *George Inn*, though Grace Pawson never allowed circumstances to get out of hand. If it appeared that someone would become unruly, she placed the poker in the fire and then brandished the poker, glowing red-hot, near the offender.

When families were "on the spree", they drank themselves into oblivion. Once, two families did this for six days and nights. The bar was kept open throughout, with Grace presiding over it at night and her maid taking over during the day. (They arrranged this to tease Grace).



George Beresford and his children at Cowside Farm. The farmhouse is no longer occupied.

George Beresford was an enterprising farmer. There came a time when his ideas could not be accommodated at a modest little farm like Cowside. Trade in the Dales had been good, following the outbreak of the Boer War. He left Cowside and rented Greenfield, with its 1,000 acres. He improved his stock and, alas, he found himself with awesome commitments when, after the war, the stock prices slumped.

He died in April, 1905, aged 48, at a time when many dalesmen were facing lean times. Wool that year fetched a miserable 2½d a lb. Yet it was not worry that led to his death; he had an abdominal pain, and a man was sent on horseback to summon the doctor. He was sure that George was suffering from "a bit of colic."

He had, in fact, appendicitis. He died quickly, with little fuss. His body was taken by horse-drawn hearse along the dale road, to a last resting place among his ancestors in the yard of Hubberholme church. His was one of the last funerals to cross the old stone bridge near Deepdale. As though to testify to changing social conditions, the venerable stone bridge was blown up in about 1907, and an iron structure was put in its place.

Jane left Greenfield in the "back-end" of 1905. As for Cowside, when George Beresford left it in the spring of 1905 his brother Robert took over as tenant. Others followed. By the 1960s the farmhouse was no longer being used as a home.

W. R. Mitchell

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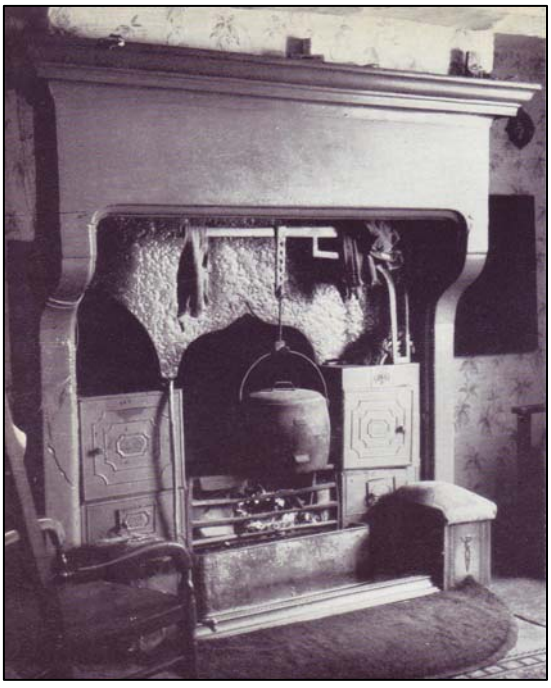
Florence Brook's little book also has something to tell of the Beresfords of Cowside and more glimpses of the stalwart but cheerful life in the Dale. Beckermonds, a multi-dwelling farm that was almost a hamlet in itself, was a focus for local life: the Beckermonds Ball and Beckermonds Bonfire on Harpot Green every Nov 5th were keenly anticipated each year. The Coronation of Edward VII in June 1902 was celebrated by damming the Wharfe just below Harpot to make 'quite a big lake'. A borrowed boat was brought by horse and cart from Low Greenfield and the three organising elder Dalesmen were rowed across. It was for this occasion that William Foster wrote *The Song of Upper Wharfedale* to a traditional tune. The song, which traces the length of Langstrothdale through its main inhabitants, includes the verse:

'Let's call at George Beresford's up at Cowside
Hen-keeping and making great pigs is his pride
He holds the New House, but he doesn't there stay
Nothing lives there but a ghost, as folks say.'

The musical accompaniment at such events was played by the Langstrothdale String Band, which included Beresford cousins of William Foster. George Beresford clearly put the piggery at Cowside to good use. (There was another George Beresford at the time, of Yockenthwaite, a road builder and father of the Beresfords in the band).

George Beresford died of appendicitis in 1905, when he was just 48, having fathered eight children with his wife Jane, all of whom lived at Cowside. His brother Robert took over the farm. By the 1920s, a family called Simpson had moved in. The last tenant of Cowside Farm was Ernest Buxton who moved there in the 1930s with his wife, two sons and daughter. His wife and daughter died whilst still young, and his older son took up work at other farms in Langstrothdale but Ernest and the younger son farmed Cowside until 1956. In a letter to his sister, Ernest wrote that he'd 'been wanting to be out of this old ship for a bit now' as he took on a bigger farm at West Deepdale just down the river. The

A traditional Dales kitchen, with a 17th-century inglenook fireplace filled with a later range, just as at Cowside.



A 19th-century fireplace at Low Hall, Garsdale. The kail pot hangs from reckan and crane.

formal end of the Cowside tenancy was 1957 and it was unoccupied thereafter. When the Buxtons, left the Cowside land was amalgamated with New House, which in turn eventually ceased to be farmed. The former Cowside land is now farmed from Yockenthwaite.

Right up to the departure of the Buxtons, Cowside had remained a leasehold farm to mostly absentee landlords and never acquired a longstanding association with a particular family. Tenants seem to have moved on fairly frequently and certainly within the space of a generation. However conscientious its tenants this must largely explain why Cowside alone among the Langstrothdale farmsteads remained so unaltered from its 17th-century origins.

In 1879, the Wharfedale estate, including Cowside, was bought by Colonel Crompton Stansfield of Esholt Hall near Leeds from the Duke of Devonshire, to whom it had descended by marriage. At the colonel's death in 1904, ownership passed to his daughter, Miss Elizabeth Crompton Stansfield, a redoubtable Lady of the Manor and a force to be reckoned with in Buckden until her own death in 1938.

In 1938, the Crompton-Stansfield estate was broken up and part of it was bought by Graham Watson, then Managing Director at Manningham Mills in Bradford, home of Lister's textile manufacturers. Graham Watson continued to buy up farms in the Dales through the next decades with his brother David, acting out of their shared love of the Dales and a wish that life and landscape there should continue unspoilt.

David Watson died in 1989, and Graham Watson decided to donate their entire estate to the National Trust, whose holdings in the area now amount to some 80,000 acres. Graham died in 2003 and the brothers' ashes were scattered high on the valley side above Redmire Farm, the place they both loved best.

The dairy in a Dales farmhouse in the early 20th century. The cheeses sit on traves (cheese shelves) alongside butter, honey, preserves and shallow bowls for skimming cream.

Postman Harry Robinson delivering the mail at Deepdale, Langstrothdale in 1926.

Cowside's wall paintings and the 17th-century Slingers

The self-evident interest of Cowside as a structurally unaltered example of a 17th-century farmstead was considerably increased during our analysis of its fabric by the discovery of wall paintings in its former parlour. To date, these paintings seem almost unique as surviving decoration in homes of the middling sort in Yorkshire even though studies elsewhere in Britain (notably Kathryn Davies' work in the Marches and Andrea Kirkham's in Suffolk) suggest that from around 1550 to perhaps 1700, such wall decorations may have been pretty much ubiquitous in such vernacular houses.

The wall paintings had lain unregarded beneath later layers of limewash and distemper for centuries. When we came to the building, it was derelict and boarded up and so it was some time after we had agreed to take it on that the faint outline of a few petals of a Yorkshire rose was noticed where some of the later paint had flaked away on the east wall of the parlour. Further careful initial investigation and trials by specialist wall painting conservators, the Perry Lithgow Partnership, confirmed the existence of some kind of text panel with decorative border, and even more excitingly the existence of a second, matching panel on the facing wall. The Gothic script suggested Biblical texts of some kind, although we had just two revealed and inconclusive words, 'him are/and.' At this stage we still had a huge fundraising task ahead of us, and a soaking, unsecured building and so any further uncovering had to be deferred until we were confident that humidity levels had stabilised within a fully restored building. The wait until this was so was a tantalising one.

With the restoration works virtually complete in June 2011, conservators Mark Perry and Miguel Aguilar were at last able to return, to fully uncover and conserve the paintings. We were all thrilled with the extent of the survival: it was always Landmark's aspiration that the paintings should be fully revealed for all to see,

and we rely on the restraint and responsibility of our visitors that this can continue to be the case.

Miguel Aguilar (left) and Mark Perry working on the wall paintings in June 2011.

As is now clear for all to see, the two monochrome panels consist of decorative rectangular frames of exuberant scrolls and stylised foliage and flowers, and do indeed contain Biblical texts. The two panels seem to have been done by different hands and were clearly executed by skilled craftsmen (even though the executor of the west wall must have cursed as he found the balance of his composition cramped at one end, so that he had to continue the furbelows of his cartouche around the corner and onto the south wall). The archaic, respectful form of the Gothic script for the texts is counteracted by the Baroque embellishment of the borders, and although the texts are religious, they are cheerful, relating to food

and drink and perhaps suggesting that the room was used as a dining room. It is hard not to feel that our 17th-century Cowside farmers were not good trenchermen.

The east wall on day 2 of the conservators' work.

On the west wall is *Whether*[8] *ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do do all to the glory of God Cor*[inthians] *X:31*

For of him and through him[9]*, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. Rom*[ans] *XI: 36*

On the east wall *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith Pro*[verbs] *XV: Cha*[pter] *17 ver*[se].

The fact that the two panels were executed by different hands no doubt accounts for the difference in form of abbreviations in the citations.

[8] The word 'therefore' has here been omitted in the wall painting.
[9] 'and to him' is omitted in the wall painting.

EAST WALL PAINTING BEFORE AND AFTER UNCOVERING & CONSERVATION

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith Pro XV: Cha 17 ver.

WEST WALL PAINTING BEFORE AND AFTER UNCOVERING & CONSERVATION

Whether ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do do all to the glory of God Cor X:31

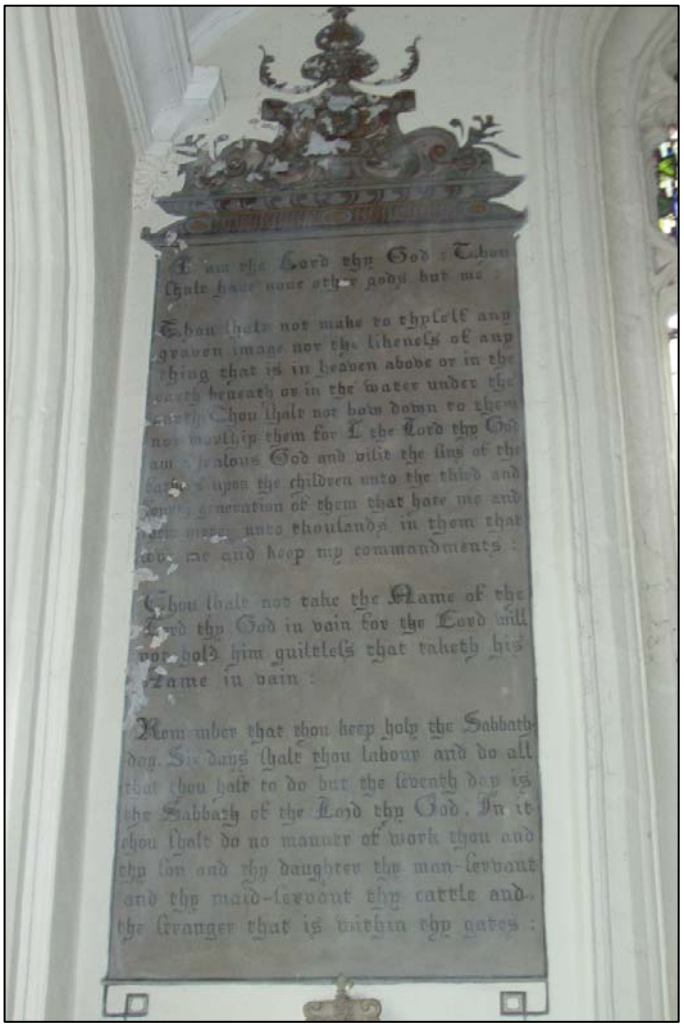
For of him and through him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. Rom XI: 36

These texts are from the Authorised ('King James') Bible, published in 1611 and so provide the other bookend to the datestone in confirming a 17th-century construction date for the house. The paintings are done on the first layer of limewash covering what is deemed to be a late 17th-century, lime-rich hair plaster skim. No evidence of painted lettering or cartouche border was found among the plaster patch repairs surrounding the panels, suggesting that we have managed to retrieve the whole of the paintings as they originally existed. From an evidential point of view, they are an extremely significant survival. As literacy and the Protestant Reformation gathered pace, such written decoration in English in churches and other ecclesiastical settings became more common into the 17th-century as the written word of the Bible became increasingly important, at the expense of the images of the Blessed Virgin, saints, angels and wealthy donors that had decorated pre-Reformation churches. Such written decoration was characteristic of the Anglican church under Archbishop Laud.[10]

The religious upheavals of the Civil War mean these too are relatively rare survivals. As examples, Abbey Dore in Herefordshire has written exhortations to its congregation executed in the 1630s. St Mary the Virgin at Astley, adjacent to Landmark's Astley Castle, also enjoyed a Laudian refurbishment in 1627 and has very fine panels setting out the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. In both cases, sober script is given greater impact by surrounding Baroque cartouches.

Survivals of such Biblical texts in domestic settings are even more isolated, and typically date from the 16th rather than 17th century. At a presumed date of c1680, no other comparable example has yet been identified, either in Yorkshire or beyond (although we would be delighted to hear of any!)

[10] Laud was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633-45. His High Church views and the liturgical practices he imposed were resented by the more puritanically minded, and increased their suspicion and dislike of Charles I and his Catholic French wife. Laud became a focus for anti-Royalist feeling in the years leading up to the Civil War and was beheaded in 1645.



Ecclesiastical wall paintings (1630s) at Abbey Dore in Herefordshire (above) and the Ten Commandments in St Mary the Virgin, Astley (1627 - left).

The closest example so far is at 34-5 Upper High Street, Thame in Oxfordshire, a vernacular house in private ownership where wallpaintings in an upper chamber were recorded in 1980.[11] This painting dates from the late 16th century and is particularly interesting because it incorporates the same passage from Romans chapter XI, albeit including two additional verses. A house in Glycywarch, Merioneth (1664), has Biblical text over bedroom walls although in a much freer hand. It seems very unlikely that the Cowside examples were unique, but they are certainly an extremely rare survival.

34-5 Upper High Street, Thame. This painting in an upper chamber dates from the late 16th century and features the same text from Romans XI as Cowside.

[11] M. Airs & J. G. Rhodes, *Oxoniensia*, 1980. Malcolm Airs, now Emeritus Professor of Conservation and the Historic Environment at Oxford University, has been a Landmark Trustee since 2007.

The next question is of course what the wall paintings tell us about the inhabitants who commissioned them. Their position (and no further paintings were to be found anywhere else in the house) is almost suggestive of a 'high end' to the parlour, where perhaps Mr Slinger held forth at the head of his table. Perhaps too the 'dinner of herbs' was a wry joke, a metaphor for the sometimes meagre life of the Dale. That the family had the money to commission skilled artisans to execute the paintings in itself speaks of a prosperous and literate household, with some aspiration to gentrification. This latter impression is perhaps further confirmed by the nods to Classicism in the house which are early for the Dales. For all the traditionalism of Cowside's many-light mullioned windows, they are placed with careful symmetry and the uprights to the parlour hearth also have suggestions of Classical capitals.

The use of Biblical texts is also interesting and an initial hypothesis was that the Slingers might have been connected with the Quakers of nearby Scarr House, one of the earliest Friends' meeting houses in the country. This quickly proved unlikely, given that the Quakers set no great store by the Bible, and also that the Slingers can be traced through the Anglican parish registers, which would have been unlikely had they been Quakers themselves. (The registers include very occasional references to the baptism of 'a convert from Quakerism', 'a Quaker woman' and so on, but the Quakers had their own burial ground and by definition were largely outside Anglican remit. However, the story of the Langstrothdale Quakers is interesting in its own right and is told in the next section.)

Then a chance search of the Clergy Database threw up a reference to a 17th-century clergyman, one William Slinger, son of Francis yeoman of Langstrothdale, who was born in 1656 and became a clergyman. He attended school in Sedbergh, from where at 18 he went on to St John's College Cambridge (matriculating in June 1672, taking his BA in 1676 and his MA in 1681). From 1674-91 he was Master of Colchester Grammar School, and from 1686 until his

Henry Compton, Bishop of London 1675-1713 and William Slinger's master. Compton was one of the Glorious Seven who invited Protestant William & Mary to take up the English Crown after the demise of Catholic James II in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Compton presided at their coronation. He was fiercely anti Catholic but was unusually tolerant for the time towards Protestant dissenters, hoping to reunite them with the Established Church. This was William Slinger's milieu, and he must have shared many of Compton's views to have served as his chaplain.

death in 1733, he was rector of East Doniland in Essex, adding Layer Breton in 1692. In the 1720s he lived at the Hythe in Colchester, but served both parishes himself, holding one Sunday service at each church and administering holy communion 4-6 times a year. Slinger was also chaplain to Henry Compton, Bishop of London, and a sufficiently significant figure for his death to be noted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

This of course is intriguing. A small leap of circumstantial evidence may be required since, as already noted, Slingers were well-established in the Dale and Francis a common family Christian name. The entry above ties William's father Francis only to Langstrothdale, not to Cowside specifically. Francis Slinger of Beggarmans [Beckermonds] was buried in 1676 so it is possible that William was *his* son. We also know for certain that Jane and Francis Slinger were resident at Cowside in 1682. Frustratingly, the Hubberholme Registers, privately printed by an eager antiquarian in 1910, only begin with the reestablishment of order in 1660. Born in 1656, William Slinger would have left the Dale in the early 1670s to pursue his studies at Cambridge (university students began their studies at an earlier age at that time). The dates for him to have been the son of Francis Slinger of Cowside fit as well as for Francis Slinger for Beckermonds, who might equally have been his grandfather.

Whether this direct association of the Reverend William Slinger with Cowside is allowed or not, his career in itself opens a new window on life in the Dale in the second half of the 17th century. How did the son of a farmer in a remote part of England end up at Cambridge University and eventually as chaplain to the Bishop of London?

The trail provides a fascinating snapshot of 17th-century social mobility through the agency of a local grammar school, Sedburgh School (still in existence as a thriving independent school today). The town of Sedburgh lies across the head of

the Dale, some 17 miles to the north. It was founded in 1456 by Roger Lupton, himself born in the Sedbergh parish. Lupton became Provost of Eton and in 1525 endowed a chantry chapel at Sedburgh to pray for his soul after death. By 1528 land had been bought and an associated school built. The foundation deed bound the school to St John's Cambridge, itself still quite a young college having received its charter only in 1511. Its Master at the time, Dr Metcalfe, was also a Yorkshire man and perhaps a friend of Lupton's. Lupton left provision in his will for two fellowships and eight scholarships at the college in his name, to support four boys through their studies at any one time.

Not every chantry had a school, but the duties of a chantry priest were defined in extent and never took long to fulfil. It was therefore wise and thrifty provision to use such men to educate the next generation of priests. After the English Reformation, when prayers for the dead were outlawed, it was the school work that ensured the survival of a foundation like Sedbergh. In 1547 under Edward VI an act was passed granting all chantries to the Crown. Letters Patent were issued for the Sedbergh school in 1552 after a visitation: the school's lands were to be sold and the school renamed as Edward VI's Free Grammar School. The sequestration of chantry schools provided an ideal vehicle for imposing royal will and explains in part the proliferation of schools across Britain that bear the young king's name. Edward gave endowments of land and property to Sedbergh worth £20 13s 10d – the proceeds no doubt of the dissolution of other such chantries. Edward also confirmed that the St John's Fellows and Scholars were to be tied to the school, and an association between school and college continues today. The St John's Admissions Registers make interesting reading in their own right for the number of late 17th-century students at the time who came to the school not as the sons of gentry but rather of yeomen, inn keepers, tailors and the like. In this respect at least, William Slinger's progression was not especially unusual, the combination of free local grammar schools and closed scholarships representing a genuine route to upward social mobility.

William Slinger, then, must have been one of the bright Sedbergh pupils who won a school scholarship to St John's. The headmaster while he was at the school was probably one Edward Fell, a pair of steady hands after a period of decline for the school during the Commmonweath when Richard Jackson was dismissed from the post for drunkenness[12] and James Buchanan was indicted for assault. We can imagine the bright schoolboy leaving his family at Cowside and wending his way, behind his father's saddle or perhaps with the packhorse trail, over the Dale and along the wooded valley to his new school. And later, when he had finished his studies and taken his MA, did he perhaps return home with new fangled ideas from the south and persuade his parents that the home of an Anglican divine deserved some embellishment? Or were the wall paintings in the parlour simply the initiative of a proud father and mother?

Early Quakerism and the Tennants of Scarr House

There was another important feature of religious life in 17th-century Langstrothdale that we should touch on briefly. In May 1652, in the years of Cromwell's Commonwealth after the vicissitudes of the Civil War, a young man called George Fox came travelling on foot through the Dale, on a journey that would add a significant new strand to the history of Christianity in Britain. Fox

[12] While not strictly relevant to Cowside, the school governors' petition to the Fellows of St John's against Mr Jackson in 1653 makes entertaining reading. They claimed 'great neglect of the duty of his charge, arising from his debauched and dissolute conversation. A constant haunter of Alehouses, frequently intoxicated with immoderate drinking, who (without regard had either to the gravity of his function or the duty of the day) on a late Sabbath was most notoriously drunke, engaged wagers of no small value to kindle strife and adverse contention… In the pursuite of which disordered pursuits he has now for a long time deserted his employment, shut up the schoole rooms, discharged the usher, and those few schollers left, who are so thinned by his gross neglect, that scarce a sixt part of that number his former predecessors usually had either is or has any time been resident since he came amongst us…. And the schoole house, instead of young Athenians, been left a lodging for owls and batts to roost and rest in.' Platt, A. E., *The History of the Parish & Grammar School of Sedbergh* (1876)

was the founder of a new sect christened 'Quakers' by their detractors for its followers' restless movements when inspired by the Spirit, and known to themselves as the Society of Friends. The Pennine Dales were its cradle.

Fox was born in 1624 in Leicestershire. While walking to Coventry in 1646, he experienced a religious revelation, of the direct, unmediated presence of the divine life in man. He avowed that the spirit of Christ was to be found in the heart of each individual and was the final authority, without need of churches ('steeple houses'), priests, nor even necessarily the Bible. These views were extreme even in Cromwell's England and Fox had already been imprisoned for his faith by 1652, when he set out for the north west of England on a personal pilgrimage of discovery.

In Fox's own words,

> *Some places where the priests were paid, they fled from the town as I came to it; and the people would break open the doors if I would go into the steeplehouse, if the churchwardens would not open it. But I would not let them, but spake to them in the yards or any where, the Truth of God and in love it was received, and many justices were loving in Yorkshire and the truth spread.'*[13]

In May, at Pendle Hill, he had a vision at an alehouse where he was staying of a great people in white raiment by a river's side coming to the Lord, and a vision of places where a great people would be gathered. He travelled on to Sedbergh (which had 14 alehouses and a clergyman as well as schoolmaster who frequented most of them) or, more precisely, to Briggflatts above the River Rawthey – and this proved the place of his vision. Briggflatts lay on the eastern edge of a district already containing an organised community of Separatists, those who had turned their back on the Established Church. They had been under the ministry of Thomas Taylor from Carlton near Skipton, an Oxford graduate and priest who refused his maintenance from tithes as Popish and antichristian and

[13] Nicholls, J. L. ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (1952), p.88.

who was well known in Swaledale, but had fallen out with Taylor over infant baptism.

There was also a community of Seekers, as they were called, at Preston Patrick who had sought Taylor's services as a lecturer (an approved preacher without settled maintenance) and were also without a leader.

It was at this point that Fox appeared – and the Swaledale Seekers proved to be the people in white raiment of his vision, waiting to be gathered. It is a wonderful story of a few weeks in which a solitary enthusiast was rapidly surrounded by an eager band of disciples, largely prepared already for his message of personal enlightenment.

On June 13th 1652 Fox preached to an expectant crowd of 1000 or so at Firbank Fell between Sedbergh and Kendall, with far stretching views on the Westmorland side of the Lune. In the freshness of his powers and of his experience, Fox delivered his message with prophetic authority, both message and charismatic messenger answering the yearnings and hopes of this community of earnest hearted Seekers, many of whom became the heroic pioneers of the new movement, enduring persecution for their faith. Quakerism would burn most brightly in Yorkshire, Cumbria and Westmorland, and the Dales at once became a strong centre of Quakerism.

A rock outcrop near Firbank is still known as Fox's pulpit. The little church that stood there fell into ruin in the late 19th century and only the burial ground is left. The topographical precision of Fox's journey as described in his own journals provides a detailed and intimate connection with the landscape even today, and a specific connection with Cowside's Deepdale. The Anglican Slingers may not have been convinced by Fox, but some of their neighbours were among the very earliest converts to Quakerism.

For in late May 1652, in Fox's own words as he journeyed on from Pendle Hill towards the gathering that would occur at Firbank,

> *'I came through the Dales to a man's house, one Tennant, and I was moved to speak to the family, and as I was turning away from them I was moved to turn again and to declare God's everlasting truth to him and he was convinced and his family, and lived and died in the Truth.'*[14]

This man was William Tennant, of Scarr House just across the valley from Cowside over Hubberholme Bridge. Fox visited again in 1677, when he came from Richard Robinson's of Countersett and

> '*passed from thence over ye hills where we had much to do to get thorow ye snow, and so we passed to widow Tennant's at Scarrhouse in Langstrothdale who greatly rejoiced to see George Fox there – there was a large meeting.'*

The Tennants became counted among the leaders of the Dales Quakers. James Tennant represented the Settle district at the Quaker's general meeting held at Scalehouse in June 1658 to organise a collection for service overseas. For Quakers risked persecution, imprisonment and personal violence for their faith especially after the Restoration, and many chose to emigrate to follow their faith in the New World. At the York Assizes in 1663, George Wilson of Cray Farm was prosecuted for holding meetings in his house, as was Anthony Knowles in Buckden. James Tennant himself had died in York Castle between Fox's two visits, imprisoned for his faith. It must have been their neighbours in the Dale who informed the authorities of their activities, and suggests undercurrents of religious antagonism as radical new religion rubbed shoulders with nostalgia for pre-Reformation ways.

Scarr House had meanwhile become one of the first meeting houses in the area. The present Scar House is Victorian and the second to be built there since Fox visited. A door-head for 1698 with the initials of James and Anne Tennant has been reset above its entrance. From 1709, the site was the property of the

[14] Ibid, p. 106.

Society of Friends and a Friends' burial ground grew up around it, since the Quakers saw no need for consecrated ground. A small enclosure with a few trees marks the spot today.

In 1675, the Quakers built their own purpose-built meeting house at Briggflatts, two miles south of Sedbergh. While Quakers initially met in private dwellings, Briggflatts is the oldest purpose-built meeting house in the North and is still used as such, surviving virtually unaltered. With its carefully tended little garden, it is a resonant place of peace and beauty, usually open in daylight hours for reflection and tranquillity. For all its double height meeting room, the building is not dissimilar in external form to Cowside, including a two storey porch, which may well be similar to the one lost at Cowside.

The Meeting House at Briggflatts (1675), just south of Sedbergh. Cowside's lost porch would have been very similar to this, complete with datestone and, perhaps, little window to light a tiny porch chamber above (this one is very similar to the little arched window, now blocked, which once lit Cowside's parlour chamber).

By complete contrast, St Michael & All Angels Church (St Leonard's for most of its 800 years) in Hubberholme contains the remnants of a Catholic rood loft supported by a much earlier screen. Rood lofts and screens were banned by edict by Henry VIII, and the Hubberholme one is one of only two surviving examples in Yorkshire. Made by William Take, carpenter, the loft was probably brought from Coverham Priory in 1558 although such ornament enjoyed a brief revival under Mary I's brief Catholic reign. It was at Hubberholme that the Anglican Slingers of Cowside would have worshipped, and this screen and loft that they would have contemplated.

The rood screen and loft in Hubberholme church. The loft is missing a floor to support the musicians and also its painted panels with angelic minstrels. Originally a figure of Christ would have been on the cross, with Mary to right, St John to left. The rood acted as a visual aid to remind worshippers that the entrance to heaven was paid for with Christ's life. The screen is carved with the Percy badge, a fetlock within a crescent and has probably been moved to Hubberholme from elsewhere. This sort of iconography and richness of church furniture, and indeed 'steeplehouses' and priests, were rejected by the Quakers, who preferred to meet in their own dwellings or meeting houses and manage their own relationships with God.

Some Notes on Life in a Dale farmhouse

Cowside was undoubtedly a house of some status when it was built. The Corporation of London had estates in Wensleydale in the 17th century and a 1652 document records commissioners negotiating the sale of these estates: their tenants had 'for the most part houses no better than their cowhouses, built without mortar or loam.' Many of the cottages on the Duke of Devonshire's estates at Bolton Abbey were single storeyed, cruck-framed and ling heather thatched right up until the early 19th century. Even with living memory, there were Westmoreland farmhouses that retained direct communication between family and livestock.

At the end of the 17th century, Gregory King places Yorkshire among the seven poorest counties – but northern farmers had evolved a way of life to survive, reinforced by the habits of thrift and husbandry encouraged by the Cistercian monks, who had studied Roman writers on agriculture. A shepherd on Fountains Fell in Giggleswick giving evidence at the time of the Dissolution told how he had been given a lamb by his Cistercian employers as part of his wages at the end of his first year's service, and when the abbey estates were re-distributed, his lamb had produced for him three score and thirteen good ewes. Such practices also reinforced the northern system of tenancy, by which a stipulated flock often accompanied a farm at its change in tenancy.

The distinctive house-style of dales and fells of Yorkshire was originally the laithe-house, from the Old Scandinavian word for barn. Families and stock lived under one roof as shelter from the harsh elements, the roof extended to incorporate a barn between the shippon and the house. 'To understand the fell farmer's attachment to the lathe-house it is only necessary to spend a few nights in one in mid-winter, when the wind is howling and the snow drifting perilously near. At such times, it is a great comfort to hear the quiet lowing of the beasts in the

byre, or the clatter of hoofs on the cobbles of the stable floor as a horse rises from his bed of bracken to answer the whinny of a mare on a farm half a mile away. The animals share in this sense of security, as well as in the warmth that circulates from one end of the building to the other.'[15]

The monasteries also influenced domestic architecture so that unlike, for example, Cotswold farmhouses, the old farmhouses of the North were never much influenced by the Gothic. The dominant monastic influence was Cistercian, and the Cistercians built churches like barns rather than the reverse. The relatively conservative styling that characterises vernacular architecture in the Dales springs perhaps not so much from ignorance but from the innate steadfastness of men who liked to live as their fathers lived. Thus the hints of Classical detailing at Cowside are placed upon a very traditional form.

Most farmhouses had an orchard with apple and damson trees, gooseberry bushes and perhaps honeysuckle over the roof of a privy in a corner of the garden. The number of place names with 'apple' and 'plum' testifies to the fruits having grown here time out of mind. Farmsteads also had small fields known as garths enclosed by dry stone walls, used as folds for sheep brought down from the moors in bad weather. Pigs were fattened on acorns and beech nuts in the shaws and cloughs of the fellside gills, or might, as at Cowside, be kept in their own sty alongside poultry, which were abundant. In Swaledale at least, most farmers kept bees; the best yield at Crackpot was 8 stone 2lbs from a single hive.

A farmer had to be able to build too. He could be called upon to be mason, road-builder, bridgemaker, not to mention the maintenance of the ubiquitous stone walls. Timber was needed not just for house building but also for the lead mines

[15] Addison, Sir William, *Framhouses in the English Landscape* (1986), p.125.

– so for example in 1802, Francis Garth of Crackpot planted a field with ashes, elms, fir, larches and oaks, which he bought from a Malton nursery.

Lead mining became an important source of employment in the area and when it fell into bad times, the local population suffered. This was so in the first half of the 19th century, when cheaper foreign lead led to serious unemployment. Richard Garth, a Dalesman, closed his diary for 1830 with the following entry:

> *'Hard frost and a small quantity of snow closed the year which was marked throughout by the greatest distress in Swaledale which the oldest can remember…the very low price of lead has reduced wages to a starving state – great numbers with their families gone off – and pauperism has become almost general.'*

By 1890, the Dales mines were no longer economic, and many miners emigrated to find work in America or Durham or on new railway projects. After 1850, farming too was at its lowest ebb after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 initiated a period of Free Trade and competition from abroad. More and more wool for the West Yorkshire mills now came from Australia. For lack of opportunity many a farmer's resourceful son left the Dales to seek fortune elsewhere, or to become a schoolmaster or land surveyor or mining engineer or a profession unconnected with farming altogether, and descendants today are scattered across Britain and the globe. Under high limestone scars of the valley and upon the narrow sides of ravines, entrances to old shafts and levels are now covered with mosses and ferns and slag heaps have slowly acquired a mantle of grass and lichen. Stone-built smelt houses have fallen to decay, only ruins left to bear witness to a time when men laboriously and dangerously worked the rich veins of lead ore.

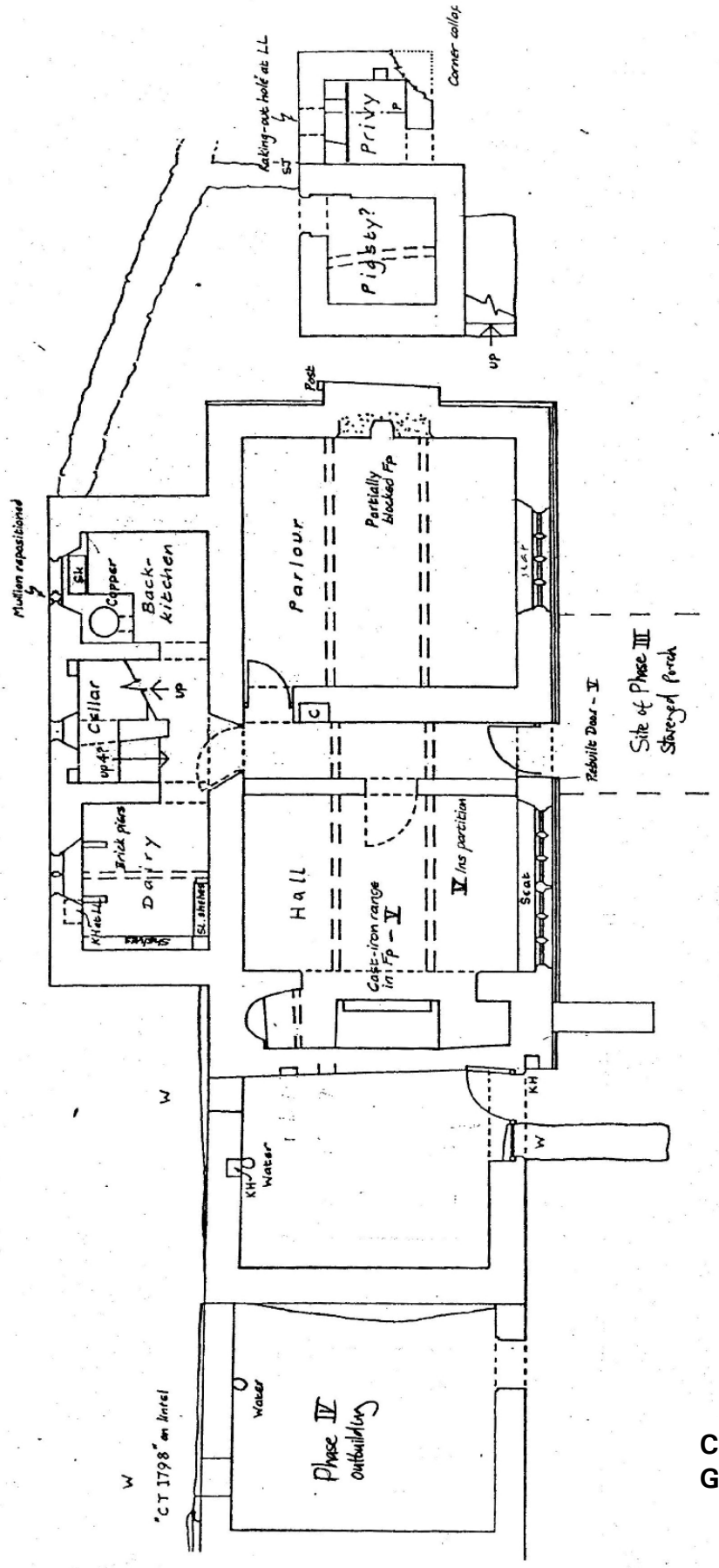
Every farmhouse had its dairy, built on the cooler, north side with huge slabs of blue slate from local quarries as worktops. The milk was left to settle in shallow pans, and the cream then skimmed off with shells or shallow saucers. Sometimes

the maids' drudgery in churning was replaced by a dog wheel, the dogs apparently barking merrily and with every appearance of enjoying themselves. When the wheel started to 'bump' the butter was ready, to be moulded in round wooden bowls and imprinted with the farm's emblem. In Wensleydale, the local cheese originally derived its flavour from the cows browsing in spring on the fresh green leaves of the alders that grew along the banks of the becks. Yorkshire men ate cheese with everything – apple pie, currant cake, mince pies, bacon. Records suggest that Wensleydale cheese was being exported to the Continent as early as the twelfth century by the industrious monks of Fountains.

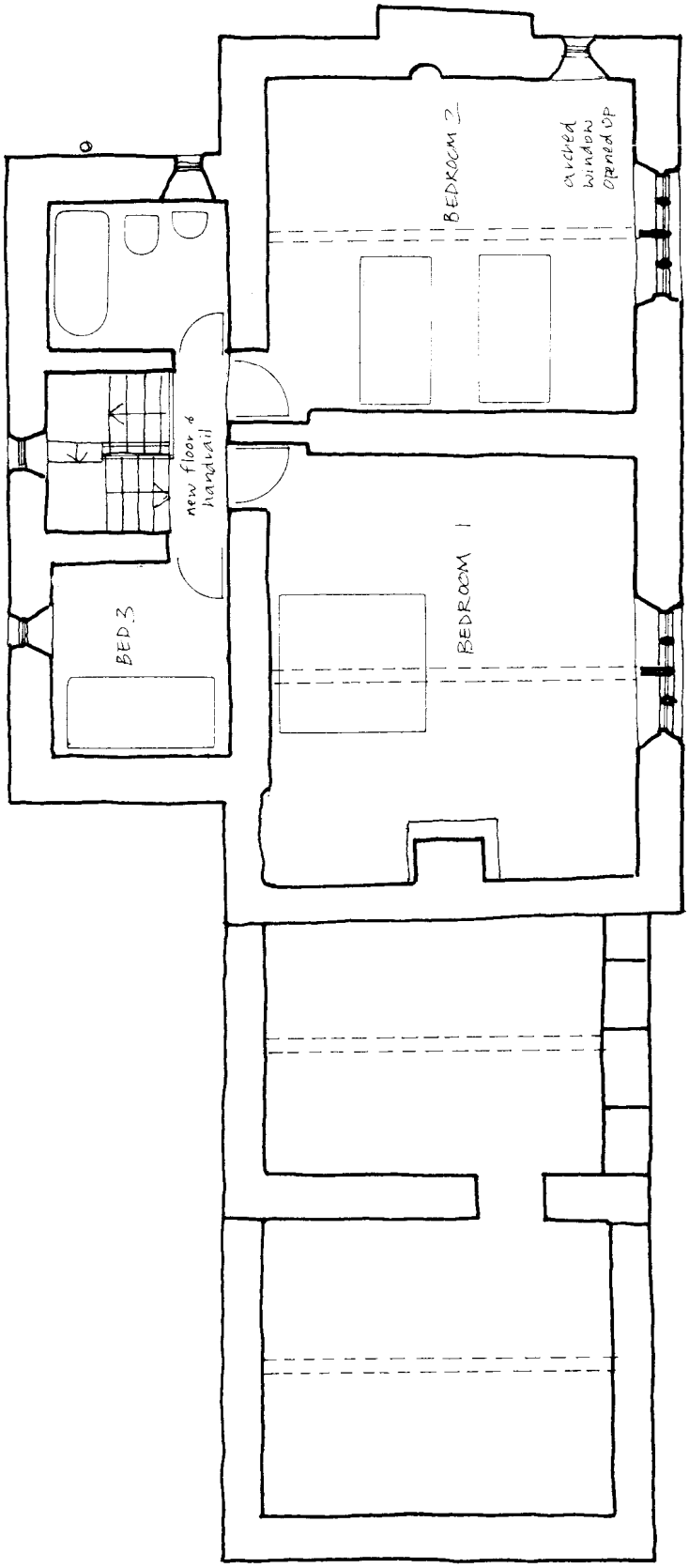
A mince pie without the cheese
Is like a kiss without the squeeze.

Hams hung from hooks for at least three months from the ceiling of warm, well-ventilated (!) kitchens, wrapped in muslin, and deriving their flavour from the meal, buttermilk and potato peelings on which the pigs had fed. Oatmeal porridge, oatcake, hasty pudding, clapbread and riddle-cakes were daily fare in the Dales (oats can tolerate a wetter climate than wheat). A kiln for drying ('parching') the oats was often held in communal ownership and acted as a place for gossip about politics and people. The oatcakes were called clap-bread because they were clapped out by hand on a concave board, rather than being rolled out as a stiff paste, before being cooked on a stone or iron plate called a bakstone.

We must not, however, romanticise the life. Cowside represents a comfortable home compared to what most endured in the Dale.



Cowside
Ground Floor Plan



Cowside
First Floor plan

In facing south up the slope, Cowside perhaps seems to 'turn its back' on the road. In fact, it is possible that a packhorse trail ran above the farmhouse, which would make sense of its orientation.

Analysis of Cowside's fabric and description of its repair

Summary of the buildings

This account of the fabric of Cowside as we found it when we took it on is largely based on Dr Colin Briden's report, which was in turn informed by a 1979 North Yorkshire & Cleveland Vernacular Buildings Study Group report and the 1990 National Trust Vernacular Building Survey. Valuable insights were also contributed on a site visit by Adam Menuge and Kathy Davies, and by architect Linda Locket as works progressed. For the purposes of orientation, the River Wharfe lies roughly north of the farmhouse, which faces south up the fellside.

The farmhouse is a two-cell, direct entry building typical of this district. When completed, in or by 1707, on the ground floor it had a heated hall and parlour (each with a characteristic fireplace under a well-made segmental arch), with a heated parlour chamber and an unheated hall chamber above, a two storeyed porch (now lost), and an interesting and unusual rear service wing incorporating centrally-placed stone stair and cellar, dairy, wash house, and upper chambers for storage and accommodation. In both plan and elevation the house betrays an interest in symmetry, the result perhaps of the emerging Classical influences in contemporary gentry housing. The standard of workmanship in both masonry and timber is high. Within the building numerous important historic details survived including doors and windows, floor and roof structures, iron glazing bars, decorative paint and other finishes, and original fireplaces and fittings. The quality of the wall paintings in the parlour is particularly suggestive of high social status.

Cowside also includes a group of outbuildings. The first, attached to the west end of the house, was constructed at the same time as the house and also retains a great deal of interesting original detailing including a fine four-centred arch as its doorway, which has a ram's horn chamfer stop on its eastern jamb, high quality work. One hypothesis is that this doorframe, along with the

chamfered two-light window, may have been reset here at a later date from the lost porch. The unusual width of the opening suggests eventual use through adaptation as a cart shed, although the cobbled floor also shows evidence of cattle stalls. Today, this building houses a store and, in a little garden shed, the housekeeper's cupboard.

The second, western outbuilding was added at a later date, since its walls do not bond with its neighbour. Faintly inscribed over a lintel is 'GT 1798', which suggests the barn does not predate this, but readers will be aware by now of the dangers inherent in the interpretation of datestones as evidence. It is possible that this extension was built to provide a larger dairy, frequently added in this period to coincide with an intensification of activity in dairy farming at this time. The original kneelers were re-set at the eaves corners of the new west gable. This west wall is built of stones which are canted, a typical detail of the period to throw water away from the walls. The projecting stones so common in wall construction in the dales may have served a similar purpose as well as tying-in the masonry.

A detached piggery and henhouse survives virtually complete under a 19th-century roof structure; it retains two chamfered stone doorways and much of a heavy first floor structure of stone slabs on massive timber joists. There is a former privy attached.

The implications of the 1707 datestone loom large in any analysis of Cowside's fabric, not least because it is clearly reset. The house certainly includes re-set

Autumn 2009. Wrapped against the elements, the roof tiles have been carefully removed, revealing remarkably slender rafters for the weight borne. When the snows came, it was a comfort to know that the roof was sound.

material of demonstrably 17th-century date, like the hollow-chamfered window heads and reveals; these may be reused from an earlier structure but there is, of course, no guarantee that such a structure stood on this site. Equally, it might seem strange to demolish a high status building so soon after construction. The datestone is also somewhat at odds with the documentary evidence of a farm in Hubberholme parish called Cowside in 1682; perhaps the safest is to say that we can infer a construction date of between 1680 and 1707.

Internally, the only key change to the house's primary form was the insertion of the partition wall to the left of the main entrance, to create a through passage. It can be plausibly assumed that this change took place when the porch was removed, probably in the late 18th/early 19th century. All three hearths were infilled at various later stages. Otherwise, Cowside survived the centuries and generations of tenant families very little changed.

By the time Landmark signed the 99 year lease with the National Trust on Cowside in 2006, the National Trust had already reconstructed the collapsed roofs of the stairwell and the northern range, as well as some repointing of the northern elevation. However, the building was in a very parlous condition.

Philosophy of repair

Although Cowside was remarkable for having survived so little altered in recent years, building analysis soon revealed the complex and subtle changes that had taken place during its lifetime. The most significant of these are the insertion of a crosswall in what is now the kitchen to form a passage through the ground floor, probably when the lost porch was demolished; the insertion of a smoke hood into the massive kitchen hearth; the insertion of a ceiling in the bedroom above the kitchen, and the replacement of simple direct, non-opening glazing (probably leaded lights) with timber casements. All these probably took place during the

18th and early 19th centuries, with other lesser alterations ongoing to a later date, such as infill to fireplaces and the insertion of a laundry kettle.

The typical approach is often to 'conserve as found' but in the case of Cowside, this would have meant leaving the wall paintings covered and the fine early hearths with their crude brick in-filling. After much discussion, it was decided that the building should be returned to its form after its last major and considered refurbishment, probably around 1800. This still very gentle approach entailed keeping the timber windows, smoke hood and passage wall, but allowed us to present the hearths in their form at that date, and we also took the decision to reveal the wall paintings. While there is no doubt that there was once a porch on the house, and that such porches are a characteristic local feature throughout the 18th century, its reconstruction was considered only briefly, and ruled out as too speculative.

The roof

The roof, of stone slates in graduated courses with the fine stone kneelers typical of Yorkshire at its corners, was leaking badly when we took the building on, which was leaking badly above the parlour and kitchen. Holding repairs were carried out in 2008 by local contractors Grosvenor Construction, during which our architect Linda Lockett carried out a full inspection of the roof. Woodworm had attacked the laths supporting the massive stone tiles, and the laths were so soft that even a finger could push through them. Many of the rafters were found to be unsupported, having rotted both top and bottom. Fearing for the stability of the roof given the weight of such material, the building was entirely reroofed and the walls repointed in autumn 2009, ahead of the main works. This was done by G I Hopley of Settle, a local contractor with considerable experience of working on Dales barns and farmhouses, used to working in remote areas and with traditional material.

A temporary roof was erected over the whole of the house to provide a dry working environment and the main roof stripped of its stone roofing tiles. The stone tiles were generally in a good condition and all sound tiles were set aside for reuse. The removal of the rotten laths gave our archaeologist Colin Briden the chance to have a close look at the roof structure. Apart from the horizontal beam of the truss (now visible in the parlour chamber), the eastern half of the roof was all sawn timber, indicating that it had been replaced, probably 19th century. The roof structure of the western side was oak and almost entirely original.

Many of the timbers showed signs of having been recycled - one rafter was even notched for wainscot panelling - but many of these rafters were rotten at eaves and ridge level. Where rafters required replacement, new oak was laid alongside the original and wherever possible the old oak was retained. Where repairs would not be visible, stainless steel plates were used to allow as much original material as possible to be retained. Where they would be visible (as in the horizontal member of the parlour chamber truss) repairs were carried out using traditional carpentry repair techniques. Once the repair of the structure was complete, the stone tiles were replaced on new laths, fixed with pegs. As the roof is quite a shallow pitch it was decided to use a breathable roofing felt below the tiles to improve the water tightness of the roof.

The first floor ceiling was repaired at the same time as the reroofing. The ceiling joists were in a good condition but were not fixed into the walls securely and so were strengthened by the addition of a hidden wall plate to ensure that the original joists could be retained. Only about a quarter of the ceiling boarding could be salvaged and this was used to board the western end of the parlour chamber ceiling. The rest of the ceilings are new pine.

The walls

The main block of the house is built of the very hard local limestone as coursed squared rubble, while the window surrounds and quoins are a softer, Pennine sandstone. There is a double-stepped stone plinth to the balanced south elevation and simpler, more rugged, plinth courses to the east and rear elevations.

Both stones had stood up well through the centuries, but the pointing had fared less well, especially on the north elevation, allowing water to penetrate to the core of walls as it gradually washed away and leading to cracking.

Mortar analysis showed that the original mortar mix contained very little sand. Instead the aggregate used was mainly a mixture of river gravel and crushed limestone bound with a white lime putty, a difficult mix to replicate. In the end, we were able to benefit from mortar research carried out by the National Trust. By taking samples from barns across the Dales, the Trust had been able to map the local variations and create a number of recipes for matching mortars. The mortar used for repairs on the barn at New House proved a good mix for that at Cowside, providing us with a proven and consistent recipe to use. The walls were consolidated by ramming lime mortar into the voids left, open joints were filled and the walls repointed in the thickly spread, 'butter pointing' style of the area. Traces of limewash were found on the stone window surrounds, but it was decided it would not be appropriate to re-limewash the exterior given the prevailing approach not to do so in the area, as well as maintenance considerations.

This first phase of work was completed mid December 2009, just days before the heaviest snowfall in the Dales for some twenty years. Its completion almost certainly prevented a collapse of the roof, which would have caused irreparable damage to the historic structure. We then anticipated a pause, while we completed the fundraising but in the event, our target was abruptly met thanks to

a large and very timely bequest from Mrs Sylvia Chapman in Spring 2010 meant the project team could swing action sooner that expected. Hopleys moved back on site in October 2010 to complete the mains works. In the event, the snow hit early again, in mid-November, halting work on site for three months.

Access & setting

The absence of an access track up to the house, and the impossibility of a permanent one in this sensitive National Park setting, necessitated the construction of a temporary one for site vehicles delivering materials to the house. Even so, larger items still had to be craned or carried across the River Wharfe below. Permanent vehicular access across the Wharfe at this point, needed eventually for Landmarkers as well as contractors, proved very difficult to resolve since the existing track along the river bank largely consisted of exposed, naturally formed limestone pavement, too potholed for anything but working vehicles and far too expensive an undertaking for us to level, even had permission been given by the park and planning authorities. Similar constraints applied to our initial aspiration to build a new bridge.

Discussions dragged on for months, and the eventual decision to use the pre-existing bridge below New House, do what we could for the existing track and accept the impossibility (and indeed undesirability) of creating a permanent access up to the house itself relies on Landmarkers' spirit of adventure and resourcefulness, even if they may at times long for George Beresford's horse and sled! Above the spate flood level, the track was hardened with crushed limestone mixed with soil and a local grass seed to encourage grass to take hold along the centre of the track. Small rivulets that crossed the track were either diverted via a culvert under the track or channelled into the cobbled ford to direct the water to the river. As the track can also flood when the Wharfe is temporarily in spate, Landmarkers may also have to use caution and patience in waiting for the water to subside from the track.

Provision of heat, light and water at Cowside

Cowside has been on mains electricity since 2016. The underfloor heating is still powered by a LPG fired boiler, which also heats the hot water.

Cowside has a private water supply (John Buxton remembered fetching water from a spring up the hillside even in the 1960s). We drilled a borehole which is over 150 m deep, drawing water from below the limestone, the water is filtered and softened when it arrives at the house and is tested regularly

Drilling the borehole for Cowside's water supply.

Windows

Cowside's window openings are various in date and style. The south elevation has carefully executed, many light stone mullioned windows. The symmetrical placing of these windows is perhaps another nod to the fashion for the Classical in the gentry houses of this Queen Anne period, but the windows themselves may be considered somewhat archaic in form for c1707. The frames are of sandstone.

On the rear and east elevations of the house there are windows containing lengths of hollow-chamfered masonry. The round-headed window on the first floor of the east elevation, now blocked but apparently once lighting the parlour chamber, is wholly hollow-chamfered; it resembles the fire-windows which lit the large inglenook fireplaces of 17th-century Dales houses as well as windows in the two-storey porches of the period. On the rear elevation, simple two-light hollow-chamfered windows light both levels of the dairy and wash house. The upper reveals of the stair window, above the slab transom, are also hollow-chamfered but not its head; although this window may have been subsequently altered. The later cellar window, on the other hand, like the head of the stair window, is wholly plain chamfered.

The re-used window mouldings may, of course, have come from almost anywhere, including an earlier Slinger farmhouse on this site: but their use on side and rear elevations, and the mixture of mouldings on the stair window, suggest that they had a use that predates their presence in the present house.

The eastern chimney stack, serving the parlour end, appears primary to the house construction despite the fact that it is not encased by the plinth. In contrast, disturbed masonry in the outbuilding adjacent to the hall end suggests that this stack may have been rebuilt at some stage.

The lost porch

On the south elevation, there is an asymmetrical scar of disturbed masonry which marks the position of the lost two-storey porch. The porch was bonded with the walls of the house above plinth level, but probably, like the rear stair wing, it lacked the plinth course of the main block. A blocked doorway was found beneath later plaster at first floor level (now covered once more) showing that the upper floor of the porch held a closet accessed from the parlour chamber. The hoodmoulds of the ground floor hall and parlour windows, which now terminate properly only at their outward ends, clearly once passed as a continuous string around the three elevations of the porch. The date-stone has been reset in disturbed rubble masonry complete with part of the upstand of the hoodmould of the lost porch door, a characteristic feature of dated doorways in this area. When the porch was taken down, it seems highly likely that the outer doorway of the porch, and a two-light mullioned window above it that lit the porch closet, have been reset in the south wall of the outbuilding attached to the west wall of the house.

Floors

The ground floor was originally paved with York sandstone laid directly onto rammed earth. To the rear of the house, rabbits had undermined this paving. The remaining flagstones were numbered, recorded and carefully lifted although many of the thinner ones broke and could not be re-used. The soil below was then dug

out in order to insert a limecrete floor slab. First a layer of 400mm expanded clay ball was laid, a lightweight aggregate that looks a bit like Maltesers without the chocolate. This layer acts as an insulating layer as well as forming the hardcore that then supports the limecrete floor slab. Limecrete is a combination of natural hydraulic lime and lightweight aggregate, which creates a breathable floor slab with a degree of flex. Underfloor heating pipes were then laid on the limecrete slab, and finally a lime screed with crushed glass aggregate provided the base for the relaying of the flagstones. The whole process took about six weeks, to allow each layer to cure and settle.

Enough flagstones were salvaged to re-lay as the floor of the kitchen and hall, but new stone has been honestly laid elsewhere.

Decorative finishes

The lime plastered walls had always been limewashed and in some places the layers had built up to as much as a centimetre thick. Red and yellow as well as plain white washes had been used in the past. The colours chosen for the redecoration evoke some of these earlier shades, while at the same time reflecting as much light as possible. The ceiling boards and joists also showed traces of having been painted and have been repainted in several coats of very thin limewash to give an almost translucent effect. The ox blood red paint used on all new internal joinery replicates that found on the surviving joinery, earlier paint being simply painted over.

Room by room

Entrance and passageway

The plain boarded doorway with its overlight (not needed until the passage was inserted) is in the position of the original entrance but was thought to be 19th century. The door was so decayed it had to be replaced.

As shown by the fine stopped chamfers on the ceiling beams running through from today's kitchen to abut the parlour wall and by plaster passing behind the rear end of the partition wall, the main entrance originally gave straight into the farmhouse kitchen. The partition to create the current passageway was probably added around 1800.

The door from passageway into the kitchen is of late 19th-century date and has been kept. There is a small set of recessed shelves built into the wall by the doorway from passageway to parlour.

The kitchen (hall etc)[16]

The inglenook fireplace before restoration.

The hall, today's kitchen, is dominated by the fine inglenook fireplace which spans the width of the room and is entirely typical of 17th-century dales hearths. Jambs with stopped chamfers carry moulded and, when we started work, colour-washed rectangular caps: from these springs a massive segmental arch embellished with a broad chamfer and also retaining remnants of paint finishes. These earlier paint finishes were recorded but were too patchy to be worth revealing and have been covered over. In the north end of the inglenook there is an alcove with a half-domed head, possibly the surviving half of a bread oven.

[16] A note is needed on terminology. In the Yorkshire Dales, the principal heated room in which most of the life of the house – including cooking and eating – was carried on is given a number of different names and debates rage as to which is the correct one: hall, housebody, bodystead, forehouse, firehouse, houseplace, and so on. To avoid confusion (not to mention controversy) this room is described here according to its current function, as kitchen.

Traces of colour found on the inglenook fireplace.

In our second phase around 1800, a sturdy, well-made smaller fireplace was inserted into this span of shaped stone slabs – again, very typical of other examples of such adaptation in the region. A slender flue was inserted to serve it, altering the original and larger chimney, and a change indicated by a butt joint in the floorboards of the room above. Later still, a range was inserted, much broken and dilapidated by the time we took the house on. The repair treatment of this hearth presented an interesting philosophical conundrum for us, and a contributory element to our eventual philosophy of repair: a return to c1800 implied the removal of the battered range as well as making practical the insertion of an efficient modern wood burning stove, to boost the underfloor heating.

The spine beams of the kitchen ceiling have chamfers with elaborate barred ogee stops; the common joists have a *cyma* moulding and are borne on shaped stone corbels. Both these details are characteristic of the late 17th century. The beams throughout the ground floor seem to have had various thin washes of limewash at various stages and this made identification of the timber difficult even for the dendrochronologist without putting a lump under a microscope, which given such fine specimens, we were reluctant to do. While the roof structure is of oak, the most likely species for the ceiling timber joists is ash, which, as dendro databases do not currently exist for it, cannot yet receive the detailed scrutiny it deserves.

In both kitchen and parlour, the north face of the north ceiling beam is waney (rough) and lacks a stop at its western end. Two halves of the same tree have been used in pairs in each room, and their placement reinforces the sense of a carefully planned hierarchy in all the choices of available fabric between the 'politer' south elevation and the service role of the northern end of the house, with its stairs and service rooms. Even the placing of the parlour wall paintings follow this. The joists of the kitchen were studded with hooks for hanging hams and implements.

The room has a practical six-light plain chamfered mullioned window, with king mullion and window seat. It is the biggest window in the house; the parlour may have been the finest room, but it was the farm kitchen that needed the best light. A single iron glazing bar survived in the eastern light, an important find since it tells us that the windows were most likely leaded originally. We considered replacing them as such, but decided that maximising the light in the building was more important, a trade off no doubt also considered at some stage by earlier inhabitants.

Both kitchen and parlour had been painted many times, mostly with yellow ochre and red ochre limewashes and distempers, a colour scheme we have sought to replicate through the building while at the same time trying to maximise the sense of light in these deep rooms.

The parlour

The parlour before restoration, its hearth infilled with mid 20th-century brickwork. At this stage, the wall paintings lay undiscovered in the corner.

A door to the parlour survived intact, six-panelled and retaining its sneck and one butterfly hinge. It probably dates from c1700 and provided us with a reference for replacement doors elsewhere in the house. The primary stone fireplace is a much smaller version of that in the kitchen, with similarly moulded caps and a shallow segmental arch. This had been subsequently narrowed by the insertion of two brick pillars, and then again by a fairly crude brick hearth in the 20th century. These have been removed and a woodstove installed. The flagstones are of course modern, with underfloor heating beneath. The ceiling beams are, like the kitchen, finely moulded although interestingly the chamfer stops are simpler, lacking a bar crossing the ogee stop as in the kitchen.

With its wall paintings (discussed earlier in this album), neat stone hearth, moulded inner face of the king mullion to its four-light window and finely crafted beams, this would have been a fine room in its original form, the best in the house. There is a hint of a 'high end' in the placing of the wallpaintings to either side of the window, where the master of the house might have sat at the head of the table on high days and holidays, when out of his working clothes and boots.

The parlour in April 2011, now re-glazed and with the as yet unrevealed wall paintings still masked for protection.

The dairy/scullery

The dairy also had a flagged floor and timber shelving on laddered supports from the floor joists. There were the remains of what may have been a stone gantry Interestingly, scraps of several patterned wallpapers still clung to the main beam despite later layers of limewash. In this area of dairy farming and cheesemaking, most farmhouses would have had a service room dedicated to making dairy products.

The dairy before restoration, with shelves still in situ. The wallpaper scraps below were found on the central beam.

The cellar

The small cellar, entered below the central staircase, has two niches for lanterns or candles.

The washhouse

The interior of the washhouse was virtually ruinous although the copper boiler, a 19th-century insertion in which clothes would have been boiled, was still in situ. A stone spout for waste water emerges externally.

The stairs

A simple stone dog leg stair, much decayed and precarious when we took the building on, rises to the first floor landing in the central portion of the service range. Scars on the walls of the stair-well and on the stair itself provided evidence for the lost joinery, such as a closed string and sturdy newel. The replacement is based on careful study of other houses in the area, although it proved remarkably difficult to find an unaltered original of the same date. The single light window seems to have been rather crudely extended downwards at some point, and then equally crudely blocked up. This window also retained a single glazing bar.

The hall chamber

The hall chamber before restoration. The first floor was perilous when we took the house on, (right) looking across from the head of the stairs to the hall chamber. Note the remains of an early door, too damaged to save.

Reverting to traditional terminology, the chamber above today's kitchen was always unheated, benefiting instead from radiated heat from the flue to the main hearth in the house. There has been some debate about whether a staircase also originally rose into this room to the north of the flue; however, no evidence for this has been found and it seems somewhat superfluous given a purpose built staircase tower.

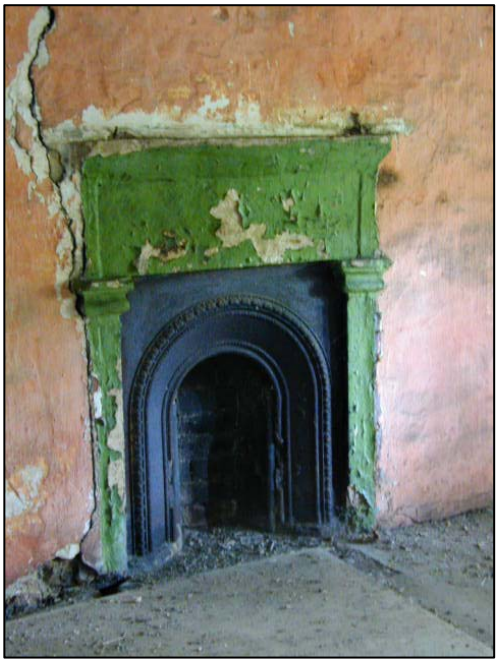
Examination of the roof timbers and the fact that the early wall finishes rise above the boarded softwood ceilings indicate that originally this and the parlour chamber were both open to the rafters, probably all the way to the ridge, until a relatively late date (the plaster on the stone cross-wall in the roof space stops at lower purlin height, but with a very ragged edge). The chambers seem to have been ceiled over as late as the mid-19th century, since the existing ceiling joists are softwood, and rather slender and widely spaced. They seem to be the first joists that had ever been lodged on the tie-beams.

Inside the roof space above the hall chamber, before restoration. Note the plaster rising almost up to lower purlin height, showing that the ceiling was originally open to the rafters.

The hall chamber still had a panelled door, plausibly dating from c1700 but too damaged to retain. The floorboards are modern replacements of the decayed softwood boards we found in situ. The little sliding sash window is an interesting survival, presumably introduced to provide ventilation among otherwise fixed lights.

The parlour chamber

As befitted what was undoubtedly the best bedroom, this has a small stone fireplace whose capitals repeat the moulded detail on the kitchen/hall fireplace. It also has a high stone lintel with a shallow projecting mantelshelf. A late 19th century cast register late had been inserted and has been retained. The fine king mullioned window reinforces the sense of importance for the bedroom.



Discussing the scheme in the parlour chamber in April 2011.

Architect Linda Locket and Landmark's furnishings manager John Evetts reviewing the arrangements in the bathroom over the washhouse.

Below: with internal plastering in full swing, lime plaster is mixed outside and brought in by the barrow load.

Plastering the first floor walls with lime plaster. Clockwise from top left: the wall is dampened to ensure a good take; the base coat of plaster is applied; next it is 'scratched' to ensure adhesion of the final top coat; some areas are easier to plaster than others!

Cowside's windows before restoration

The fine many-light stone mullioned windows on the south elevation characterise Cowside. Clockwise from top left: kitchen/hall chamber (note too the little vertical sliding sash); parlour chamber; parlour, and hall.

Windows elsewhere in the building clearly incorporate fragments re-used from elsewhere in purely utilitarian fashion.

Porches on Dales buildings

At this house at Oughtershaw (top) the porch survives alongside a later outshot. The porch at Swarthgill House (below), on the road to Sedburgh, has a datestone of 1712 but its drip course seem in imitation of jetties and beg the question of an earlier construction date, reinforced when it is noticed there is the shadow of an earlier, steeper porch. Datestones are so rarely what they seem!

Henneries, piggeries and poultiggeries

Most Dales farms kept a few hens and a pig or two for their own use, feeding them on kitchen scraps and, in the case of pigs, waste from the dairy. The Cowside piggery is difficult to date, but was probably constructed during the 19th century. It was not unusual for a piggery to be combined with a hennery, as we think was the case at Cowside, into a building known as a 'poultiggery.' The hens lived 'upstairs', the pigs below, and they helped keep each other warm, while the pigs also frightened off predators. At Cowside, the pigs had their own entrance through an opening on the north side. The hens' chamber on the upper floor was created by the insertion of stone slabs on massive joists (the other possible use for this space is a small granary or hay loft although the association of such storage so close to hungry pigs is not an obvious one).

Hens were generally the responsibility of the farmer's wife and foraged freely in the farmyard, with the henhouse providing a roost and easier egg collection in nesting boxes around the walls.

Many pigsties had a small yard, although in Yorkshire, they commonly open straight into the farmyard, allowing the pigs to wander about freely. At Cowside, the footings of a wall between the pigsty and the front of the house show the pigs were sensibly confined to a small

enclosure at the north east corner of the house rather than sullying the more public south yard. The chickens, presumably, had freer rein across the south yard and beyond.

Archaeological evidence was found for a cluster of animal middens around the north eastern corner of the site, perhaps reflecting the prevailing wind direction.

Larger pigsties than Cowside often had rows of individual cells with chutes in the walls through which swill could be emptied directly into feeding toughs. Today, henhouses, piggeries and poultiggeries are vulnerable to neglect and decay, being too small to re-use. This makes Landmark's continuing care of the example at Cowside important in its own right.

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