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The Oxon Recorder is the newsletter of Oxfordshire Buildings Record and is published four times a year. OBR aims to advance education and promote research on the buildings of Oxfordshire by encouraging the recording of buildings and to create and manage a publicly accessible repository of records relating to such buildings. The Oxon Recorder is also available in the members' section of our website: www.obr.org.uk

Next copy date for contributions is 1 June. Please send any contributions or comments to Richard Farrant at newsletter@obr.org.uk Contributions need to be Word or Pages documents and photographs in jpg format.

OBR News

AGM.

The OBR AGM will be held in Finstock, near Chipping Norton on Saturday 1 June. Further details and booking form are appended to this issue of OR. Please note the deadline of 24 May for booking lunch at the Plough Inn.

OBR BURSARY SCHEME

Members may recall that last year we piloted a bursary scheme to allow members who engage with Oxfordshire buildings, whether professional or 'amateur', to attend a relevant course or conference. The bursary covered the course or conference fee, but not travel expenses. David Wheeler won a bursary to participate in the Vernacular Architecture Group training weekend course in September, which he reported on in Oxon Recorder 76,

The pilot was a success, and we intend to repeat the offer on an annual basis, with an overall limit of £500 available each year, awarded on a 'first come first served' basis to qualifying applications.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Applicants must be OBR personal members;
- Applicants must demonstrate that the bursary is being used to pay for course/conference fees and for no other purpose;
- Applications should demonstrate how the course/conference will improve the applicant's ability to record and interpret a vernacular building;
- Applicants will be expected to demonstrate commitment to support and promote the OBR's aim*;
- Applicants commit to make a report on the course or conference which may be published in the Oxon Recorder.

To apply, complete the application form appended to this edition of OR (and available on the OBR website), and return it to David Clark at secretary@obr.org.uk

**OBR's aim is to encourage the better understanding of Oxfordshire's built heritage, and to this end its members carry out building recording, teach courses, give talks, and write articles (or even books) on the subject.*

WANTED: SUGGESTIONS FOR OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS WORTH RECORDING

The committee is always on the look-out for buildings worth recording. If any member knows of one, please contact David Clark at secretary@obr.org.uk. Recording buildings at risk of modification or destruction can prevent their existence from being lost for ever. Members may know of owners and residents of potentially interesting buildings who would like to discover more about their history. Special function buildings and artifacts (such as farm buildings described by Heather Horner in her article below) preserve knowledge of past working practices.

WANTED: JOURNAL EDITOR FOR THE OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Many OBR members will have had recourse to articles published in Oxfordshire Local History, the journal of the Oxfordshire Local History Association (OLHA) – which despite its wide remit has regularly included pieces on building-related subjects. In recent years these have ranged from Chalgrove's medieval wall paintings to Oxford Power Station and the 19th-century development of the 'Keble Road triangle'.

The OLHA committee is actively seeking a successor to the journal's current long-standing honorary editor, who is keen to step down. The role involves assessing submitted articles (with plenty of expert help to hand where needed), editing them to house style, liaising with authors, and preparing each issue for the printer. It is not necessary to have had direct experience of editing – the main requirements are basic literacy and computer skills, enthusiasm, and broad historical interest - and whoever takes on the role will be given whatever initial help and guidance are needed. There will also be a small honorarium. To find out more (without obligation), contact the OLHA Chairman Tony Hadland at chair@olha.org.uk, or the treasurer and membership secretary at membership@olha.org.uk. Recent issues can be downloaded at www.olha.org.uk/journal.

WANTED: OBR EXCURSIONS SECRETARY

OBR itself is still in need of an Excursions Secretary to help arrange trips for members, whether to particular buildings, interesting towns or villages, or anything else buildings-related. More information (again without obligation) is available from the OBR Secretary David Clark at secretary@obr.org.uk. As a final incentive, free tea and biscuits are on offer at every OBR Committee meeting!

VAG TRAINING SUPPORT FOR BUILDING RECORDING

The Vernacular Architecture Group has revised its list of recommended reading for building recorders, accessible on its website at <http://www.vag.org.uk/booklist.htm>

OBR MEMBERSHIP OF THE OHLA

OBR has become a corporate member of the OHLA, entitling OBR members to participate in OHLA activities, notably its study days and listing of local history group events..

The Historic Farm Buildings Group

I love farm buildings. I don't often get access to working farms, but once or twice a year I get to see lots of farmsteads, in different farming regions of the country. Most of them are no longer working farms, but I still love the left-over details of working lives, both human and animal. I admire the ingenuity of make-do and mend, rough and-ready repairs that have been necessary to maintain a working farm in its later days, as business is failing and poverty threatens buildings that were erected, with confident hope of more prosperous times. I admire the optimism of saving machinery that has done its job well though now redundant, maybe as a reminder of better days gone by, but might yet once more come into its own.

Fortunately for me, the Historic Farm Buildings Group is full of like-minded enthusiasts from all over the country. Each year someone takes on the task of organising talks and visits to farms in their home area. In September 2018, Jeremy Lake took us to Derbyshire, exploring the Chatsworth Estate. The farms ranged from medieval hamlets through to 19thC model farmsteads on newly enclosed and improved moorland. This part of Derbyshire had an emphasis on animal husbandry, so we saw pigsties and cheese rooms, hay barns and cattle housing in inventive vernacular adaptation. Here is a series of photographs with explanatory captions *(all photos © Heather Horner)*.



Figure 1 In the Estate village of Beeley, sets of community piggeries had been built, with access directly from the street



Figure 2 At Norman House, a two-storey cheese house had these enormous cheese presses outside; adjacent were sheltered outdoor draining/drying/maturing shelves.



Figure 3 In the next hamlet of Calton Lees, this dairy turned out to be a converted late medieval cottage. Inside, there were cheese press stands with channels for whey drainage, though the presses themselves had gone.



Figure 4 Inside the dairy, an original cruck truss



Figure 5 The whey from the cheese making was poured through the funnel on the parapet above these pig troughs. They are just yards away from the 16C manor house, and the well is between the pig troughs and the manor beyond.



Figure 6 Much of the milk for the cheese came from field barns like these three pairs evenly spaced along the valley. Each half housed 2 or 3 cattle, maybe with a calf, and with hay stored above. The valley bottom beyond the wall has a stream; cattle each need 5 gallons of water a day, so you don't want to have to carry it far! Hay and grazing from the small fields each side of the valley (see earlier field divisions). So in this landscape, 6 smallholders (probably dual economy millworkers) had around 10-15 cows between them, no transport of bulky materials, manure directly out onto pasture for fertility.



Figure 7 This is a different landscape, high on relatively recently enclosed moorland. Narrow shelter belts of trees are typical. Park Farm, close to Chatsworth House, was created around 1800 by ploughing up some of the Parkland. Laid out in courtyards, additions (and deletions) right through to the 1990s when the portal-framed shed visible right rear was erected.



Figure 8 This hay barn was added around 1885; the stepped pillars are a local style which we encountered several times.



Figure 9 This sheep creep in one of the older boundary walls is confirmation that Park Farm is close to the open moorland. A complex culverted water management system in Park Farm was used to feed some of the ornamental fountains and water features in the gardens adjacent to Chatsworth House.



Figure 10 A rare example of an ephemeral building. This hay barn in Beeley was built quickly to serve an urgent need, using materials to hand - a true vernacular building? I can envisage a hay wagon in the far bay, hay on the platform, a calving pen below, or a lambing enclosure made with hurdles.

Most years I try to stay on a working farm, in an attempt to understand the continuum of the farming cycle and the changing building requirements of modern farming practices. However this time a friend invited me to stay in the early industrialised town of Cromford, where I was able to see some of the half-way buildings between home working and full factory production.



Figure 11 North Street, Cromford. Early industrial housing with continuous frame shop on the top floor.



Figure 12 These are even earlier houses on the main street. I expected the small panes to be mounted in cast iron frames, but no, each of these is made of timber throughout, some very skilled joinery.



Figure 13 The mill owners erected these poultiggeries for their tenants; a pig sty with feeding shutes this side, poultry in the loft, and a privy for the tenants round the back.

If this has whetted your appetite, have a look at the *Historic Farm Buildings Group* fledgling website at www.hfbg.org.uk. A membership form is appended to this newsletter. This year HFBG plan to explore further afield to learn about farming and buildings in the Massif Central of France – I feel an adventure coming on.

Heather Horner

VAG 2018 winter conference; vernacular landscapes

The Secretary attended this conference, and produced the following conference notes.

Robert Liddiard, *Room at the Top: Interpreting elite buildings and landscapes of the Middle Ages*
This paper discussed ideas of buildings in the landscape that have been derived from recent work on castles. Although some of the conclusions seem to have little relevance to vernacular buildings, as the conference moved forward it did in fact appear that how people saw their homes, and how they wished others to see them, were similar across the social scale. This session also had relevance for Chipping Norton castle, especially when taken

together with any evidence for lost routeways, as surveillance and visibility were important: the visitor was to be both intimidated and impressed.

Paula Henderson. *Recovering the lost settings of C16 and C17 houses*

Elite houses had settings, some of which were carefully designed by their owners, and the house was designed to be a viewing platform. Where the landscape has been changed – ie almost everywhere, historic maps and images can show us what was originally intended, and they also involved a number of ancillary structures, some of which were specifically intended for viewing the landscape or garden. I was struck by the resemblance between the Pleasaunce at the edge of the great mere at Kenilworth Castle and the ‘Wilderness’, which was once part of the garden at Caldecott in Abingdon. This is something that will need to be followed up in order to understand better the setting of this lost house.

Paul Stamper *Region and Place. Mapping medieval England*

Distribution maps have been important in the development of vernacular building studies, but they have their limitations, particularly if the time dimension is not included. The session ended with a question: what do distributions tell us about buildings – are they simply a reflection of building technology and style or are there other parameters involved?

Adam Menuge *Building in a landscape: vernacular architecture and landscape presence.*

It is difficult to find definitive contemporary evidence for vernacular buildings – many 17th century illustrations are continental – and illustrations on early maps are often formulaic rather than accurate representations of real buildings. The paper looked in detail at a 1580 map of Berwick and an illustration of a house by Gervase Markham in 1613, both of which are useful in coming to an understanding of how houses were viewed in the early modern period, though neither was without problems of interpretation.

Edward Martin *Windows to the outside world.*

This asked some pertinent questions, though they had already been discussed by others, and made some interesting points about window glass. I learned that a sash window dating from 1671 was found in the Palace House Mansion Newmarket. This is important as it pre-dates all other known examples.



Newmarket sash

Duncan James *Inhabiting the Landscape: House site constraints in the medieval world*

The first part of the paper revisited Duncan's work on house orientations in Pembridge (VA 34) before moving on to address the architectural evidence for the front and back of a building. In some cases where there are jetties to more than one side, the building was on a corner or island plot. Fabric analysis also showed how fronts had changed over time, and this led to more evidence for lost roadways, some of which could be identified on the 1830s OS maps. The talk also pointed up how little we know about the structure and settings of 'well-known' buildings such as Lower Brockhampton and Little Moreton Hall.

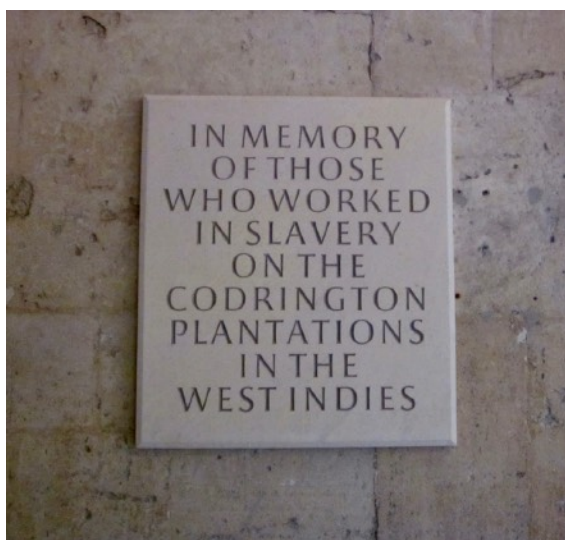
**Lower Brockhampton****Little Moreton
Hall**

Brendan Chester-Kadwell *Landscape and Settlement in the Kentish Eastern High Weald.*

This was a tightly-focussed study of three parishes on the Kent/Sussex border, dominated by a river estuary (since reclaimed) which was a key element of their historic landscape. The reclamation changed this landscape and the pattern of routeways through it. Frensham manor was used to illustrate the changing orientation of back and front, as well as the usual changes from the Middle Ages onwards, with a lordly remodelling in the early C20 – similar to that at Old Hall in Ramsden.

Adrian Green *Sooty Faces: Buildings and Landscape in the Durham Coalfield in the 17th and 18th Centuries*

Despite its apparent lack of relevance to the Oxfordshire vernacular, this was a thought-provoking paper based on his recent book, *Economy and Culture in North-east England 1500-1800*, the blurb of which reads, 'Putting forward several new research findings and much new thinking, and covering many aspects of the economy of north-east England in the period, the book shows how rich and varied it was, and how vital the interplay of social, political and cultural forces was for industrial development. The book demonstrates that the economy of north-east England was not dominated by coal alone, and that previous historians' focus on 'the working class' misrepresents the full complexities of society in the period.' What is of local relevance is the relationship between the industrial revolution and slavery – on both sides of the Atlantic – and hence to contemporary concerns such as the use of possibly 'tainted money' to fund prestige building projects – from the Codrington Library onwards (Christopher Codrington (1668-1710) was a plantation owner in the West Indies)



**Plaque at the Codrington Library,
All Souls College, Oxford**

Mike Nevell, *Domestic vernacular space and tenant hierarchy in Warburton*

Mike presented another closely defined study, using an extensive documentary archive, a local archaeology project and building recording to understand the landscape and development of this threatened area south of the Manchester Ship canal. The results were published in 2015 and are summarised at <https://archaeologyuos.wordpress.com/2015/06/30/exploring-the-landscape-archaeology-of-warburton-community-participation-impact/>

Mike is organising the 2020 VAG Spring Conference which will be held in the Greater Manchester area.

Heather Horner *Ancillary buildings and external features – putting buildings into their landscape*
Heather's paper brought things down to earth, starting with the basics of shelter, food, fresh water, toilets, and firewood, using examples from Oxfordshire and elsewhere to show how these are expressed in the landscape and buildings. They also raised gender issues as women were involved in delivering many of these requirements, yet they have limited visibility in the landscape. There are of course the obvious building evidence, wells, privies, milking parlours, cheese rooms, but less obvious are the landscape signals such as yew trees near privies, Scots pines near overnight drovers' stops and abandoned sheep-washes. Many of the buildings for ancillary activities are either ephemeral or incapable of adaptation to other uses and thus do not survive – thus those that do have great evidential value.

Adam Menuge. *The peripatetic landscape of the Yorkshire Dales field barn*

The field barn of the Yorkshire Dales is a distinct vernacular building type which reflects both the environmental conditions in the area – the topography and climate are 'challenging' – and the agricultural practices of the inhabitants. They were built to store hay and shelter cattle, though some for sheep are also found. Each farmer might have 5 or 6 field barns, sited to minimise the distance that manure had to be taken out into the fields. Their materials and structural arrangements are also distinctive.



Field Barn, Weardale

Jeremy Lake *Farmsteads and their landscapes – towards a national framework.*

The purpose of this final paper was to show how to use landscape to suggest what we might find, and how building surveys can refine our understanding of landscapes. Among the topics covered in a romp across the whole of England were courtyard vs dispersed

farmsteads, how landowners from medieval monasteries to 19th century improving landlords reorganised their farmsteads, and how an analysis of a single farm – at Ightham Mote – could show how it was adapted over time.

If you want to read more, some people used twitter during the conference to summarise the talks – go to <http://www.vag.org.uk/> and you should see them on the right hand side.

Other VAG news

1. A list of useful books has been added to the VAG website. See <http://www.vag.org.uk/booklist.htm>

2. The VAG Rewley House ‘conference’ will return this year, on 28 September, with ‘The House of Wessex’, Anglo-Saxon hall complexes, their architecture, use and setting. For further details see <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/the-house-of-wessex-anglo-saxon-hall-complexes?code=O19P101HCJ>

Although the talks occupy the Saturday, there is an optional visit on the Sunday to Long Wittenham to see the Wessex project reconstruction work – for details see <https://sylva.org.uk/wessex> Also on this website you will find details of one-day ‘Treewrighting’ and other courses in early timber framing techniques, run in association with the Carpenters’ Fellowship.

David Clark

Forthcoming Events

OBR recording days

We hope to have a number of recording days this summer - open to members of all experience levels. Dates will be circulated by email, so please make sure we have your up-to-date email address.

Oxford Architectural & Historical Society

See website (http://www.oahs.org.uk/new_program.php) for the spring and summer series of events, including:

- Chastleton House and Abington Manor day outing on 16 May
- Wantage walking tour on 22 June
- Hook Norton walking tour on 10 August

OBR members who are not OAHS members may participate in OAHS events if places are available.

Oxfordshire Local History Association

See website (<http://www.olha.org.uk/events/talks-and-meetings/>) for extensive listing of local lectures.

Council for British Archaeology South Midlands

Conference reviewing recent archaeological research in Northamptonshire on 6 April at Bugbrooke. See <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbasn/cba-sm%20events.htm> for details.

OBR Contact details

Membership – Paul Clark (membership@obr.org.uk)

General – David Clark (secretary@obr.org.uk)

Newsletter - Richard Farrant (newsletter@obr.org.uk)

Webmaster – Tim Peacock (admin@obr.org.uk)

Website: www.obr.org.uk



OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD NINETEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The nineteenth Annual General Meeting of the Oxfordshire Buildings Record will be held on Saturday 1 June 2019 in The Village Hall, **Finstock**, starting at 11.30 am. See location map over. Coffee will be available from 11.00am. Guests are welcome but are not eligible to vote at the AGM.

Please let the Secretary know if you have any further items you wish to place on the agenda. Motions should be proposed and seconded.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the eighteenth AGM on 12 May 2018 (on pp.17-19 of Oxon Recorder no.74 – if you have lost your copy, please visit www.obr.org.uk to download another).
3. Matters arising
4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year 2018
5. Secretary's Report
6. Membership Secretary's Report

7. Election of Officers and Committee for 2018/19

The following Officers need to be elected at the AGM (present incumbent in brackets)

Chairman (Paul Clark),

Secretary (David Clark),

Treasurer (Tim Peacock).

The Committee currently consists of the following (present roles in brackets): Kathy Davies, Richard Farrant (Newsletter Editor), Heather Horner, David Hughes, Donna Thynne (Archivist) and Simon Townley. All retire annually but are eligible for re-election. John Steane was co-opted as a committee member during the year.

8. Election of Examiner

The OBR accounts examiner, Malcolm Lucas, has been nominated to the post.

9. Any other business

We welcome offers from members to join the committee. In particular we need an Events Secretary. If you would like to serve on the Committee, please complete the slip below and return it, if possible before the AGM. to the Secretary, D Clark, 21 Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HQ.

After the AGM, a buffet lunch will be provided in The Plough (at a cost of £12.50) Please complete the form below *before the 24 May*, so we can plan lunch numbers.

After lunch there will be a guided walk around the village led by Shaun Morley, starting about 2.00pm and finishing around 4.00pm. We hope to arrange access to the DuCros mausoleum at the church.

Nomination of candidate for election at the Annual General Meeting, 1 June 2019

.....(Name)

is nominated for Committee Membership*/the post* of.....

Proposed by.....Seconded by.....

I accept nomination and will serve as above if elected.....

Date.....2019

(*delete as appropriate)

(signature of nominee)

Please return to D R Clark, 21 Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HQ (secretary@obr.org.uk)

✂.....

Name*.....e-mail*.....

I intend to come to the AGM on 1 June 2019, and would like to have lunch £12.50 () Please specify number of people.

I enclose a cheque for

I should like a lift to Finstock from.....I can offer a lift from.....(... places)*

Please return to David Clark, 21 Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HQ (01865 516414; secretary@obr.org.uk) by 24 May.

*by giving us this information you agree that we may put you in touch with another member who may offer/accept a lift to Finstock

Directions to Finstock village hall

The Village Hall is situated off Well Hill, at the southern end of the main road through the village. Car parking is mainly on the approach roads, and car sharing is recommended where possible. The S3 bus service between Oxford and Chipping Norton goes through Fawler, from where it is about a 20 minute walk to Finstock. Also the X9 from Witney to Chipping Norton stops very near the hall. Check the Stagecoach website for timings, though, as there is a new timetable from 1 June this year.



Finstock Village Hall



Oxfordshire Buildings Record Bursary 2019: Application form

Name

Address

e-mail

telephone

Description of the course/conference (including title, organiser, stated purpose, headline content, website address if advertised online)

Course/conference Date(s)

Cost

Previous building recording experience (amateur/professional)

Courses/conferences attended in the past three years

What do you expect to get out of this course/conference?

As a member, how would you plan to use what you have learned to support and promote the aims of the OBR?

Signed and dated



Historic Farm Buildings Group



A national organisation for all those concerned with the past, present and future of old farm buildings.

Why old farm buildings are important

Old farm buildings are amongst the most conspicuous features of the traditional countryside and are one of the most important contributors to the distinctive character of local landscapes. They are also amongst the most interesting, for they are valuable and substantial sources of historical knowledge and understanding.

By their siting, design and construction, they tell us much about:

- the pattern of rural settlement, reclamation and enclosure;
- the farming systems and technologies for which they were originally designed or later adapted;
- the development of building materials and methods of construction;
- the life and work of our ancestors - peasant and monk, landowner and farmer, craftsman and surveyor, engineer and architect.

Why the Historic Farm Buildings Group was founded

The Group provides a forum for anyone interested in old farm buildings. In particular it seeks to promote the study of such buildings because this:

- provides evidence of the number and type of surviving old farm buildings;
- makes clear their varied historical importance and so enables recommendations for conservation to be made where appropriate;
- suggests new ways in which they can be adapted to new purposes with due care for their historical value;

- places on permanent record details of old farm buildings which cannot be conserved.

The Group's Activities



- Annual weekend conferences in different parts of the country, which include visits to farm buildings of historical interest;
- Occasional Newsletters to members;
- Publication of Occasional Papers;
- Membership of the Group is open to individuals and associations;
- Associate membership is open to any independent organization such as a group or museum, which may appoint one member to attend and vote at all meetings.

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE
www.hfbg.org.uk

Become a Member NOW!

To join the Historic Farm Buildings Group, please send the completed form with your subscription to:

Mrs Pauline Wilkinson, (Honorary Treasurer)
'Stranraer',
Bolter End Lane,
Bolter End,
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 3NB

The annual subscription for individual members is £15, due on the 1st January.

Please enrol me as a member of the Historic Farm Buildings Group. I enclose a cheque for £15 (made payable to 'Historic Farm Buildings Group')

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

e-mail: