Contents:

Copy date for the next issue is 1 March 2016. Please send any contributions or comments to newsletter@obr.org.uk

OBR News:

Renewed call for an excursions organiser

The Committee still needs a natural organiser to help arrange occasional excursions, which are valued by members. If you are good at pulling things together, we need you, and if you have a little energy to spare which needs harnessing, you need us! Ideally you would be co-opted onto the Committee (which meets every two months) pending formal appointment at the next AGM. Contact Chairman Paul Clark (membership@obr.org.uk) or Secretary David Clark (secretary@obr.org.uk) to discuss further.

Vernacular revivals

Heather Horner attended the study weekend held on 25-27 September at Rewley House, organised by the OUDCE in conjunction with the Vernacular Architecture Group. Following it, she makes the following observations on vernacular revivals.

My paternal grandmother was raised in a Yorkshire mill town and brought up her family in the terraced streets of Leicester. By the 1930s she aspired to a new house; it had to be 'in the country'. She got her wish in a mock-Tudor ribbon development which drew what had been outlying villages towards the city, the first stage in what has now swallowed those villages into suburban sprawl.

This level of vernacular revival, probably the most familiar and stylistically homogeneous in England, was never addressed at the study weekend. Instead, we were introduced to a series of both self-taught and professional architects who were building for themselves or for rich clients wanting to return to 'the simple life'.

Most speakers looked at one of two recognisable periods of vernacular revival, the 'Cottage Orné' around 1800, and those associated with the Arts and Crafts movement around 1900. Both revivals had aspects of being led by social change. The former was influenced by the French Revolution, which reduced the numbers taking the 'Grand Tour' thus raising interest in local tourism and a rise in Nationalism. The latter revival felt the effects of agricultural depression in the second half of the 19th century, with consequent interest in rural housing. Commissions to architects were often for dowager's cottages, or rural second homes for the wealthy.

In both these revival periods, regional styles were not always recognised, producing some picturesque but anachronous buildings in the landscape. The second revival was architect-led, frequently adapting already-standing buildings, but with approaches that could come from opposite extremes of the vernacular spectrum, depending on the motivation of the architect or client. At one end, they were designing in local

vernacular style using local materials and the very best craftsmanship, producing a obviously modern building using vernacular techniques. At the other end of the spectrum, a few architects set out to deceive, disguising additions to genuinely old vernacular buildings with the intention that no-one could detect the join between old original and new build. Most designs fell somewhere in between.

Whilst it can be conceded that there were some well designed buildings, particularly in the Arts and Crafts era, often criticism could be levelled at the architects for not understanding how vernacular spaces work. In the true vernacular, everything is functional, everything is on show, it is the 'theatre of life' – and it requires lots of work space and storage space. But by its very nature, revival architecture tended to be top-down, often paternalistic, as the clients were gentry, used to separating spaces into social/private/servants, etc. Thus most of the 'vernacular revival' buildings that were lauded in the architectural press of the time have not survived intact into the 21st century, since they were designed to be run by servants. It was not long before the new owners (and probably the servants) found the vernacular-style open hall in their country cottage retreat to be draughty and cold. The plan form lagged behind the design, pretty on the outside but the spaces don't work. And how do you reconcile the clutter of, say, a working smallholding, with the immaculate exterior and interior of a *Country Life* feature article?

Of course, the vast majority of vernacular revival building was, and still is, simply pastiche. An important aspect of the Arts and Crafts period revival was the recent introduction of new building materials that fundamentally changed building practice forever, namely steel framing and reinforced concrete.

With the two revivals coincidentally happening about 100 years apart, are we in the throes of a third? Some modern housing developments do seem sensitive to the local style and materials, where advice from local characterisation projects has been taken. The present vogue for self-build is arguably the modern version of vernacular, and is developing a grammar of its own. It is certainly more bottom-up than the earlier revivals. I wonder what my grandmother would have said if offered the chance to build her new house 'in the country' from straw bales?

Cragwood © H. Horner)

Cragwood, a beautifully constructed Arts and Crafts house overlooking Lake Windermere in Cumbria, was built in 1910 by craftsmen from Jackson of Ambleside as the summer residence of the Warburton (bread) family. The architect was Frank Dunkerley,. Such a lifestyle could not be maintained; use changed to a hotel by 1930s; note the necessary extensions of service buildings to the right. The materials are local, though the style is an eclectic gathering from various periods and regions.

Church House, Dorchester © P. Clark

Church House in Dorchester was designed by Sir G, Gilbert Scott in 1878. A local example of vernacular revival, another eclectic mix of fragments borrowed from various regional traditions, but which are unlikely ever to have evolved in a single true vernacular building, and certainly not in Dorchester.

Heather Horner

Historic Farm Buildings Group Chilterns conference, September 2015

The Historic Farm Buildings Group, despite not having the resources of the VAG or SAHGB, manages to put on some great conferences, showcasing the agricultural history of specific parts of the country. The format is the usual mixture of talks by local experts and field visits to farms. The 2015 conference was brilliantly organised by Barbara Wallis and Pauline Wilkinson. The landscape background was admirably set out by Alison Doggett, co-author of 'The Chilterns' – still the key book for understanding the area. She explained the unique geomorphology of these chalk uplands, resulting in deeply dissected valleys with a thin layer of glacial boulder clay on the hills, supporting woodland and, in Domesday times, pigs. Most farms were mixed arable and pastoral, and the parishes were long and thin, containing areas of grazing in the vale, settlements on the spring line up the scarp slope, then 'hangers' of beech trees for firewood, and finally at the top, wood pasture. Many farmsteads were isolated, and there were few nucleated villages.

Although a relatively local event, based at Lane End near High Wycombe, I had visited only one of the eleven farms before. The sites chosen reflected the state of agriculture in England today. Thus only four of the eleven were actively using the historic farm buildings as facilities for their current agricultural regime. At the other end of the spectrum, on seven of the farms the historic buildings were largely redundant for agricultural purposes, but in most cases the buildings were in good shape and being used for other purposes – without losing their character by conversion to domestic use.

Hambleden valley © D. Clark

The image below of the west barn at Colstrope Farm, Hambleden, illustrates the local materials well: flint with brick dressings on the farmhouse and walls facing the public domain, brick and weatherboarding elsewhere. All roofs were covered with plain red tiles. An unusual brick detail was noted at a barn at English farm – where alternate corner bricks had angled cuts.

West barn at Colstrope Farm, Hambledon

© D. Clark

Brick detail at English Farm
© D. Clark

As for structural techniques, a common roof was the cranked inner principal structure with its highly localised distribution here, and in Berkshire and north Hampshire. Here, they were found in the barn and – surprisingly – the granary at Lower Farm, Britwell Salome, and the south barn at Upper Assendon Farm (both Oxfordshire) and in Buckinghamshire barns at Pigotts, Collings Hanger Farm and Fingest farm.

But the queen-post was also ubiquitous – in each barn at Colstrope, and even in the magnificent aisled barn at English Farm, Nuffield.

Cranked inner principals, Fingest Farm © D. Clark

Aisled barn, English Farm © D. Clark

There was a great selection of ancillary buildings, cow sheds, stables, granaries, milking parlours, and even a magnificent living trailer. On the working farms, other buildings were now used as pigsties and bull pits.

Some farms had already diversified into non-agricultural uses – small businesses, holiday lets and the like, but the most comprehensive reuse was of Piggotts, acquired in 1928 by sculptor Eric Gill for his unconventional ménage and now run as a music centre, but retaining much of Gill's equipment and residual sculptures.

Barn at Piggotts, converted by Gill as a studio © D. Clark

David Clark

The 'Great Barn" at Harmondsworth

The Society for the History of Medieval Technology and Science organised a talk and tour by Dr. Justine Bayley of the 'Great' Barn at Harmondsworth on 24th October. The barn is sited near St. Mary's church with a fine Norman door in the attractive centre of the village, almost all now marooned in a sea of surrounding commercial development adjacent to Heathrow, and potentially significantly impacted by new runway proposals for Heathrow. Dr. Bayley and a small band of locals have had a great deal to do with the rescue of the barn, which was well

The barn © R. Farrant

maintained by continued agricultural related use until the 1970's, but seriously deteriorated when acquired by a property developer in 2006, until rescued and ultimately purchased by English Heritage in 2011. It has undergone extensive restoration, including complete retiling with new but hand-made peg tiles, and is now back open to the public.

It deserves its 'Great' monikor. 192 feet long, 37 feet wide and 39 feet high. English Heritage describe it as the eleventh or twelfth largest barn known to have been built in the British Isles, and as the largest all-timber example to survive. Inside, it is easy to understand John Betjeman's description of it as 'the cathedral of Middlesex', a less jaundiced view than his feelings about nearby Slough!

Documentary evidence substantiates a build date of 1425-7, on the orders of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, to replace a previous barn on land bought in 1391 to endow Winchester College. A dendrochronological survey shows that the timbers were felled in 1426. All the structural timbers survive, as does an estimated 95% of the framing timber. The main replacements are new tiling battens and some wall boarding at the south end following a fire in 1972.

The barn is all oak, sitting on a low masonry sill-wall of 'ferricrete'. a local iron-oxide cemented coarse gravel.

Ferricrete sill-wall
© R. Farrant

English Heritage describe its construction succinctly:

"In plan the barn has a central 'nave' with aisles to each side, divided along its length into 12 bays defined by 13 oak trusses (including the trusses forming the end walls) and three doors on the east side. The trusses are formed of massive aisle posts up to

14 inches square, standing on squared blocks of Reigate stone. The posts are linked at the top, across the central nave, by tie-beams. The ties are propped by curved braces, and carry unbraced crown-struts propping a collar near the apex of the roof, about 11.8 metres (39 ft) from the floor. Aisle ties link the aisle posts to the walls, lateral strength being added by pairs of curved braces.

The trusses are linked along the length of the barn by the aisle-plates, wall-plates and two sets of purlins; the timbers of the plates are linked end to end by elaborate scarf joints. The rafters – largely original – are pegged to the backs of these longitudinal timbers, and the clay tiles are fixed to battens nailed to the rafters.

Barn interior © R. Farrant

Externally the walls are clad in broad elm and oak boards, vertically fixed to the timber frame. Some of the boards may be original. Three sets of full-height doors are set flush into the long east elevation. In the opposite wall (where one would normally expect a matching set of doors), shuttered openings were inserted in more recent times to admit light and air as necessary."

At least one of the pairs of main posts were made from a single tree split down the middle, and they were all placed upside down so that the larger end could accommodate the joints with the roof beams.

The barn's main purpose was to house sheaves of wheat, barley and oats produced on the estate, which would then be threshed as needed over the winter and later. It featured three threshing floors, but unlike many barns it does not feature opposing doors on both its sides. It was never a tithe barn. English Heritage note that its usable internal volume of 3,310 cubic metres closely match the rough estimate of the 2,800 cubic metres needed to store the produce of the farm of 236 acres.

John Betjeman was right. This is a must-see building, thankfully now sympathetically rescued and restored and in good hands.

Apotropaic mark on an aisle post stone base © R. Farrant

R. Farrant

OBR Presentation Day

Some 30 OBR members attended the Presentation Day in Headington. First up was a walking tour of old Headington. Few of us had stepped off the main London Road to visit the centre of the old village before, and we were pleasantly surprised to be introduced to a committed community with an air of tranquil permanence. A generous number of older properties of all eras, and representing the whole spectrum of social status, survive along leafy lanes and footpaths. It seems that many of the great and good of Oxford who found the foul air of the city destroying their health migrated to the breezy air on the higher ground of Headington.

Our guide for the morning, Stella Welford, a former secretary to The Friends of Old Headington, pointed out several houses that had been former residences of well-respected artists and philosophers, and we became adept at spotting yet another 'blue plaque'.

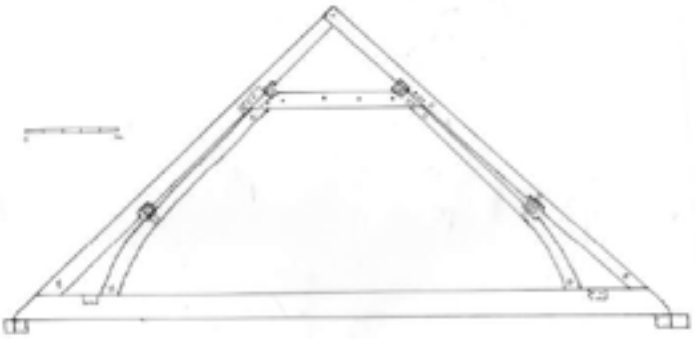
It was interesting to visit Knowle Barn, formerly an agricultural barn used from 19th C by Knowles & Sons builders firm as a depot, and recorded by OBR members earlier last year when it was being stripped out to convert to a dwelling. (Thanks to owner Craig Haller for allowing 30 strangers to tramp upstairs in his new home). Below is a 'before' photo as OBR members saw it in May 2014, and an internal 'after' view, something we as building recorders rarely get to see.

Before….

….and after **© D. Thynne**

Included below is part of the OBR report on the building, David Hughes' measured drawing of the roof truss which appears in the images above. Note the *cranked inner principals*, a modification which appears to have developed locally by the 18thC, giving relatively uninterrupted access in the roof space of the barn, with the added bonus of using reduced timber scantling without sacrificing strength.[1]

[1] Ref; Clark, David (2004) 'Cranked Inner Principals' in *Vernacular Architecture* **35** pp32-39



Cranked inner principals © D. Hughes

The next building we visited was 8 The Croft, with an early 18th C front but an older core. An intriguing building with some 'house history' research done by the owner, though we could not help feeling that a full OBR examination might have interpreted some of the conclusions differently.

8 The Croft front

Door latch detail in 8 The Croft © R. Farrant

Even more intriguing was the small unimproved building on its east flank; Donna Thynne and I accessed this later, via the garden of our lunch pub, as it formed a rear entrance at the far end of the pub garden. A through passage wide enough for animals, a stable and hayloft on one side, a single bay dwelling on the other, probably with an upper floor, though it was too dark to determine more.

Part of south elevation of untouched stable and house adjacent to 8 The Croft. Note the mounting block © D. Thynne

Moving round into St Andrew's Road, exactly opposite the church, we were able to pass through the 18thC front of Church House and walk through to the garden at the rear, where we were presented with a totally different view. I think I can see at least 10 phases of building in this rear aspect, most of 19th and 20thC

Church House front…

…and back
-how many phases do you see?

© R. Farrant

Shortly after this, we adjourned to The White Hart next door for a substantial buffet lunch to fortify us for the afternoon's programme of presentations about recent recording. Thanks to our guide Stella Welford, whose love of the village was very evident.

The Presentations

Yelford Manor

David Clark began with a report on Yelford Manor, an extensively timbered house near Witney, said to be the most picturesque house in west Oxfordshire and one of the few timber-framed buildings in Oxfordshire. See OR 63 for a fuller description and photographs.

When viewed the house was being renovated, it comprised a central hall with two cross wings. The fabric showed that the building had been altered extensively, and was once divided into three cottages and reconstructed in the mid-20th century by the Babbington Smith family. The earlier building comprised a hall with later 16th/early 17th C chimneys.

The house had a good plank and muntin screen in the cross-passage and a panelled parlour with a carved over mantle commemorating a marriage of the Hastings family in 1619. There were other good renaissance features in the room above the hall. This room and the upper rooms were all separate. Curiously the north wing had smoke blackened roof timbers, although it was not a hall, so it was presumed that it

was used for cooking. The curved wind braces in the roof gave a date of c.1500. Other evidence suggested that the wings were built independently of the hall, which was added a little later, but that the north wing was still used as a service wing. The hall was floored in the late 16th century, with the bay windows added in 17th century.

Meer's Parcel

Tim Peacock reported on Meer's Parcel, an inn in Blewbury.

The team surveying Meer's Parcel, Blewbury. © D. Clark

The house is on the main road running through the village east west, and it was being renovated when the team visited. All the plaster had been stripped off to reveal the timber frame which was boxed-framed on brick (replacing clunch, although some clunch remains in the house). Scaffolding on the exterior allowed a close inspection of the framing and from this it was possible to analyse the phases (see diagram). The building originated as a single bay (pink) with another bay added to the north (green). A two storey extension was then erected (blue) which later became the service end. The roofs of the single storey bays were raised but not until sometime later. The two end half bays were added last of all.

Diagram showing the building phases of Meer's Parcel. © T. Peacock.

The most notable feature of the eastern bay was a large hole in the floor, which appeared to have been a sealed cellar. The pub had a barrel roll and drain into the street. The sealed cellar was perhaps used as a cistern (there is a spring in the back yard). The room was commented on as being consistently cold.

Records from 1792 show that the pub was in the possession of a brewer called Spenlove from Abingdon. It was then called The Catherine Wheel. There was a sizeable coaching inn across the road from Meer's Parcel which probably catered for most of the major traffic going through the village. Meer's Parcel only had a small rear yard and despite the continual expansions probably only had facilities for lesser trade.

Garlands Farm

Heather Horner gave us a description of a semi-derelict farmhouse called Garlands Farm.

Garlands Farm, West Challow. © D. Thynne

The farm is on the chalk downs, close to the top of the downs, set among other farm buildings but is now semi-derelict having been left empty for ten years. Curiously the building was built very close to an independent enclave of Sparsholt Parish, the boundary almost abutting the back of the house.

The farmhouse had an early 19th century front with what was called a 'cheese room' which is unusual for Oxfordshire as they are not often seen. The rear of the farm house was very different, made of rubble limestone and some clunch with splayed windows typical of the 18th century. The cheese room had Flemish bond brickwork and fine penny pointing but this wall was surprisingly only ½ brick thick, covering an earlier Flemish bond wall. The interior of the cheese room had an inserted ceiling the beams of which bore no relation to the roof timbers above. The first floor space

showed the remains of supports inserted into the bricks for cheese shelves. The attic had lots of repairs and the walls were limewashed, oddly every truss was different.

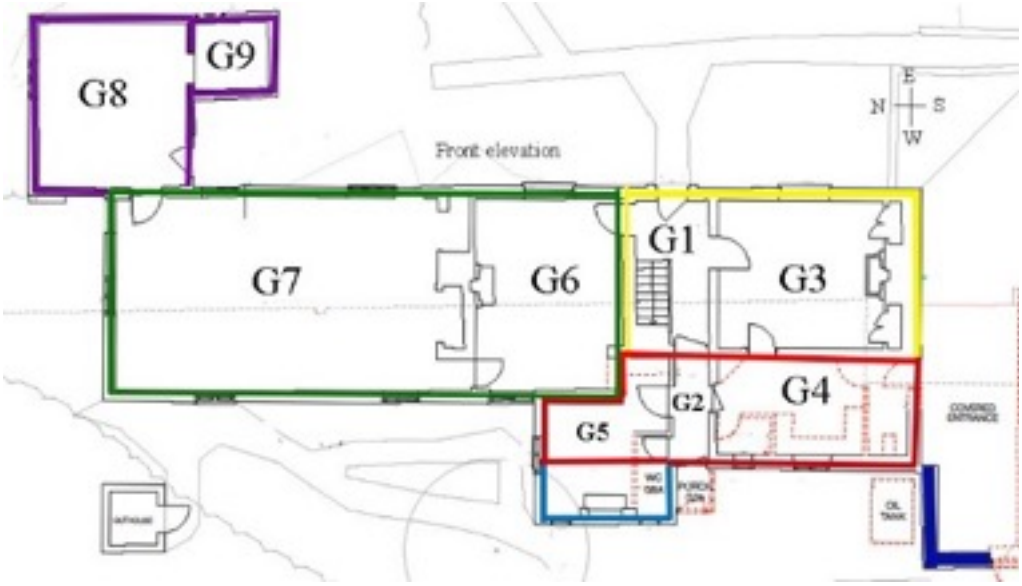
Shelf supports on the first floor G6/G7

© D. Thynne

The cheese room and other outbuildings.

© D. Thynne

Although the building had many changes it was thought that the cheese room was part of the Georgian range and dated from the late 17th C. This was a lobby entry house (G7/G6 green, see diagram). The rear range was then added (G5, G2, G4 pink) to link the house to service buildings to the south. This was later incorporated into the remodelled house c.1820 (with G1 and G3).



Plan showing suggested building phases of Garlands Farm. © OBR

Heather left us to think about the smart brick built privy at the rear of the house that had no apparent water supply although it had a cistern, and no method of drainage.

Chipping Norton

Paul Clark gave us an update on the Chipping Norton project (CNP) which has been in progress for two years. The CNP, funded by English Heritage with assistance from the OBR, are working to research and identify pre 1750 fabric in Chipping Norton and will publish their results in a book and VAG article. English Heritage are funding dendrochronology, administration and special research services at present for; burgage plot analysis (by Antonia Catchpole) and archive research (by Adrianne Rosen and Jan Cliff).

376 external surveys have been made identifying buildings worthy of further study. Of these 70 were revisited. All these buildings were then recorded, some to a greater degree depending on content.

The dendro. carried out to date, assessed 14 of the most promising buildings; of these 9 were suitable for sampling, which resulted in 3 successful cores with 6 pending. Of the successful cores the Guildhall dated from 1514 – 1520, the Chequers inn at the north end of the market, 1444-1476 and Market Street Cottages (lower part of the market/residential) 1444-1476.

The research done so far has already pushed the history of the town back. These early survivals are in and around the north-west end of the market place. The geology researched also showed that a spring line on the line of the market place was on a clay layer, dividing a limestone layer (above) and a marl layer in the valley. Burgage plot analysis showed that many of the plots in the market area dated to the late 12th century in the reign of Henry II.

Paul ended by telling us that no evidence of timber-framed buildings or clasped purlins have been found in the town, so appear not to be part of the traditional vernacular.

Ewelme Hundred houses

Simon Townley updated us on houses in Ewelme Hundred, namely Crowmarsh Battle Farm in Benson. (For reports on Haseley Court, and Great Haseley Manor please see OR 64).

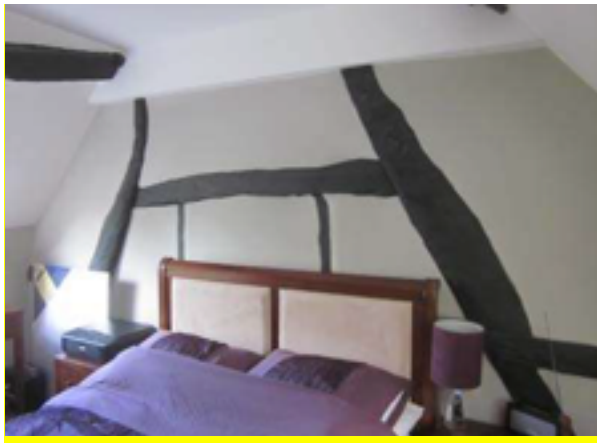
As its name indicates Crowmarsh Battle Farm was owned by Battle Abbey in Sussex. It had been recorded in the 14th century, when in 1362 it was leased out, and from then on the site was continuously tenanted until 1910. At some time the bulk of the medieval complex was demolished and rebuilt. Today the farm has a rendered front on brick and clunch fabric; it has 2 ranges, and is listed as 18th/19th century. Discovering a date for the rebuilding is tricky as much of the fabric has been reused. The roof has Queen posts of softwood with reused medieval timbers, some are trestle

sawn (pre 1530). The reused timbers could have been taken from the early medieval complex. The farm has a prominent and distinctive brick internal stack, which the bulk of the house has been built around. The sash windows are early, with flush boxes giving a rough date prior to 1709 when the law changed and flush windows had to be recessed. The Georgian front could have been rebuilt in the 1800 – 1820s when Thomas Newton lived there. There is a dovecot in the grounds which has a date inscription of '1684' and 'BS' (Barth Symes?) which perhaps could be the date for the rebuilding.

Chalgrove

David Clark gave us an overview of four houses recorded as part of the Chalgrove Local History Project. They comprise very small early houses:

i) 68-70 Mill Lane was probably a squatter cottage. It is a cruck cottage dating from 17-18th centuries and was probably heated from the start.



Cruck no.68 Mill Lane. © D. Clark

68 and 70 Mill Lane © D. Clark

ii) The Red Lion and adjoining Brook Cottage were very interesting. It is thought to be a priest's house dating from 1319 (the pub is owned by the Church even now). It is a cruck building of four bays with a stair tower and moulded corbel, with some replaced Baltic timbers.

The Red Lion.
© D. Clark

Red Lion: Baltic timber mark. © D. Clark

Red Lion: carved corbel © D. Clark

iii) Adjoining the Red Lion is Brook Cottage, a two bay hall that today is one room with an entrance and staircase in another bay. It was timber framed with an arched brace truss, and ad trestle sawn timbers with a later inserted stack and floor

Brook Cottage, High Street © D. Clark

Arched brace truss Brook cottage © D. Clark

iv) 98 High Street was a small three bay 17th century timber framed cottage.

98 High Street. © D. Clark

Ceiling at 98 High Street. © D. Clark

Hardwick house

David Clark also gave us a roundup of another recording of Hardwick House near Whitchurch, which turned out to be a very complicated house. Much had been demolished and replaced with later fabric.

Hardwick House © D. Clark.

The rear range was once a separate Dowager House, later connected to the main range. The south wing was destroyed in the Civil War (c.1660) although David thought some part of the original wing remained. The stair tower dated to 1719 and was probably for servants, and the gables were framed as gables from the start.

The best feature was the early 17th century plaster. Claire Gapper, a plaster expert, inspected the plaster and noticed that moulds had been taken from the older plaster and reused in the 20th century renovation making the pattern continuous (but not necessarily of the same quality). Other plaster ceilings dating to 1610-15 had plaster portraits thought to be of Jeroboam and a woman (yet to be identified). These were reproduced from moulds used in the ceilings in Canons Ashby.

20th century plaster, taken from a mould made from earlier plaster. © D. Clark

A portrait of Jeroboam from the early 17th scheme. © D. Clark

The fireplace in the great chamber on the 1st floor, had a crested pediment, naming Richard Lybbe (associated with the house 1526/7) and had 17th century panelling and decoration.

The house has been owned by only three families, the Lybbes, the Powys family from c.1660 and from 1909 by the Charles Day Rose family.

David also showed us the site on a LiDar map. LiDar is a laser sensor technology provided by the Environment Agency, that from the air gives more information about the landscape eg surface features, remains of buildings, trackways etc. The problem is he is not sure how to to interpret the resulting images! For more information go to: http://environment.data.gov.uk/ds/survey#/download.

The LiDar image of the Hardwick Hall site

Publications

John Steane gave us an outline of his recent book, co-written with James Ayres: "Traditional Houses of the Oxford Region".

Ken Hume gave the heads up of a book to be published in 2016, about the history of buildings in Checkendon written in collaboration with the Checkendon History Society. Members may remember the OBR visit to Checkendon in August 2014.

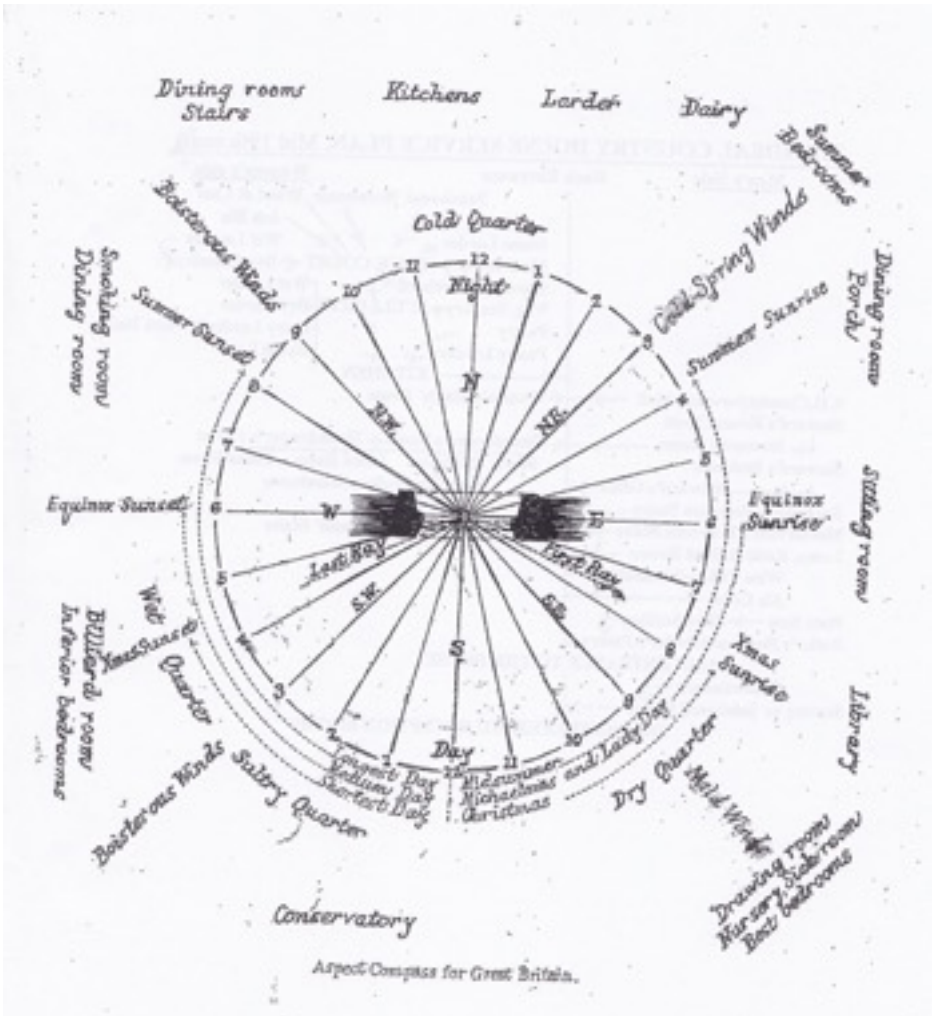
Heather Horner and Donna Thynne

OBR / OAHS Annual lecture

The title of this lecture was "Backyard to dining room: service rooms in the country house", and the lecturer, Peter Brears could not have surveyed the field more cogently or entertainingly. We should not have been surprised, as Peter formerly directed the city museum services in York and Leeds, and has spent the last 20 years as an independent scholar and consultant. He has worked on the service rooms of over 100 properties and his books *Cooking and Dining in Medieval England* and *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Stuart England* are the standard works on these subjects. He also has practical experience of historic kitchens, being the first person to operate those at Hampton Court Palace since 1737.

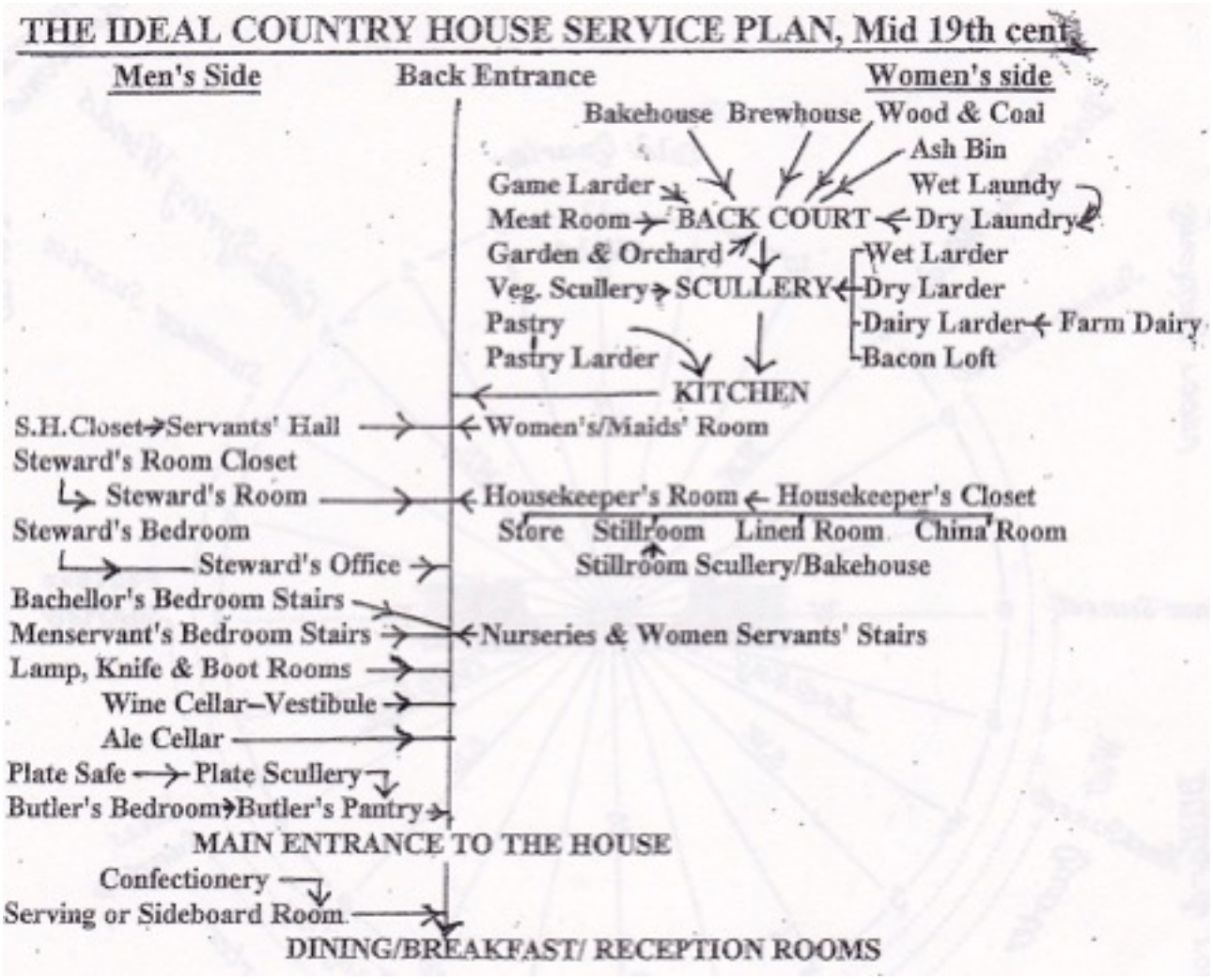
The Georgian and Victorian periods fostered an ever-increasing complexity in the preparation and service of food. Matched by growing investment in staff, structures and plant, highly regulated departmental arrangements were introduced into the service areas of country houses. The details varied according to the wealth and disposition of the house owner, but in the grandest houses the number of specialist service rooms and their staff could be bewildering.

Not surprisingly, if possible the location of rooms was matched to their physical aspect, summarised in Peter's 'aspect compass':



Room aspect compass
©P. Brears

Peter described the function and location of a bewildering number of rooms: game room, ice house, dairy, dairy scullery, laundry (wet, dry), linen room, brewhouse, bakehouse, sculleries (dairy, vegetable, still - for washing up), pantries (general, butler's), storage rooms (lamps, knives, boots, strong room), cellars (ale, wine), kitchens (general, housekeeper's, confectionary), and sometimes more. Then there were the rooms for key staff, such as the steward, butler, housekeeper and cook, all strategically located to enable them to control their functional responsibilities.



© P. Brears

Peter described the evolution of these arrangements from the Hanoverian Palladian fashion for separate but linked service wings (for example Ickworth) into the main house, often utilising the whole of the basement, with service stairs to keep the servicing of the household out of sight. Petworth House had so many servants they were housed in a separate building across a courtyard, linked by a spacious underground passage.

Separate from all this were the personal servants of members of the household and visitors. These were usually accommodated near their masters and did not mix much with the household servants, often dining with the housekeeper.

Peter provided a very different perspective on living from that we usually associate with the much more modest vernacular buildings we measure. But the basic principles of room location and function have general application, and who cannot resist the attraction of glimpsing into the world of Downton Abbey!

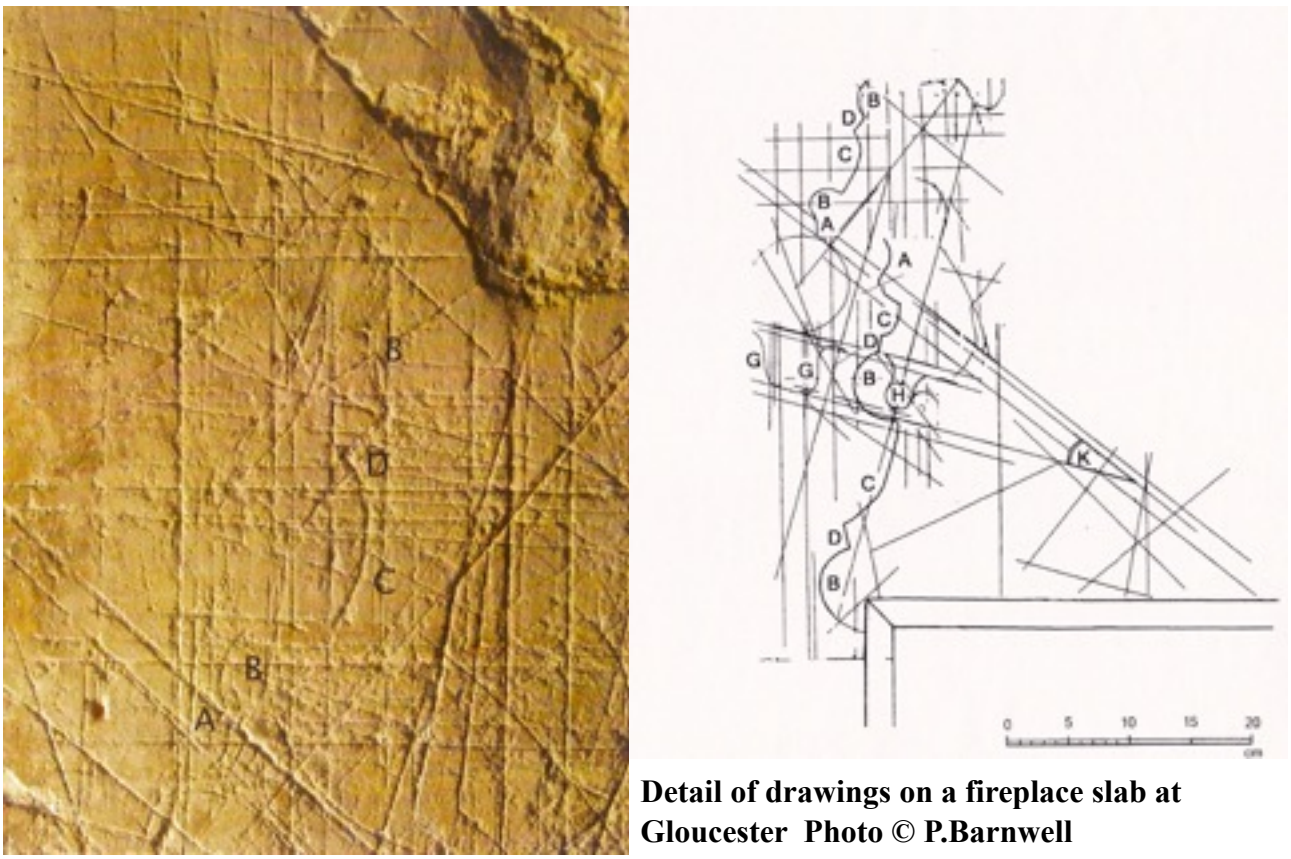
Richard Farrant

Book review. Arnold Pacey. English Architectural Drawing medieval Craftsmen and Design.

Privately printed. 46pp. 10 figs 2015

The study of English Gothic architecture has gone though three main phases. To begin with in the 19th century the main emphasis was on style. The Victorian Cambridge don Robert Willis here made a major, and so far unequalled analysis of many key medieval buildings. John Harvey, a century later, in his magnum opus English Medieval Architects (1954), exploded "the gratuitous assumption that medieval architecture was anonymous." Thanks to him we now know the names and outlines of the careers of most of the master masons. Arnold Pacey in this a second slender work on English Architectural Drawing has made a considerable contribution to the third phase, the study of the technology of building, which attracts attention in a D.I.Y age. He sheds some light on the methods used by medieval masons and builders. The evidence is exiguous in the extreme; he cites only about fifty examples in England compared with some six hundred in the rest of medieval Europe. Very few of the English drawings are on parchment, a greater number are on tracing floors or are inscribed on walls and individual stones using compass and dividers. Where stonework has been dismantled (in a medieval monastery like Jervaulx abbey) it is quite common to see setting out lines and curves marking the intended position of the next stones to be laid. In other places (such as Byland abbey) incised lines and curves come from a tracing floor above the warming house. They were needed, Pacey explains, to make templates, the flat wooden patterns (often beech or oak) to help the masons who cut in stone. Others seem to have been preliminary drawings part of the design process because they can be identified with surviving architectural features such as windows. Small drawings in relatively inaccessible locations such as triforium galleries were more likely to be the works of masons trying out design ideas; or teaching apprentices. Very few were done freehand; most were set out with compasses and a straight edge.

The book ends with a valuable short bibliography and a county-based gazeteer from which Oxfordshire is notably absent. This represents a challenge to O.B.R members to add to this fascinating aspect of the country's building history.



Detail of drawings on a fireplace slab at Gloucester Photo © P.Barnwell

John Steane

OBR 2014 accounts

At the AGM it was announced that completion of the 2014 accounts had been held up while Tim Peacock, the new Honorary Treasurer settled into his new role. They have now been finalised and appear as a separate page at the end of his newsletter, .with comparative figures for the previous year. Please note that they have not yet been subjected to independent examination; this will be done at the same time as the 2015 accounts by a new independent examiner.

In 2014 we began handling funds for the Chipping Norton project, acting as a payment stage for English Heritage, as it was then, or Heritage England as it has become. The figures here are significant, and as these are not OBR monies, the detail has been listed as a 'restricted' account, as is customary in these circumstances. When comparing with previous years figures the 'unrestricted' column should be used.

We see that roughly a third of the Chipping Norton funds remained at the end of the year. This was expected, as publication at the end of the project is expected to be a major expense.

Membership dipped very slightly from 2013, with corresponding change in subscriptions and donations. However, new memberships were up on the previous year, partially compensating.

Newsletter costs are down from the previous year for two reasons. The 2013 figure included some printing costs from 2012, and some payments in 2014 were mislaid by the payee's bank. The mislaid sums have been reissued, and will appear in the figures for 2015. The switch from printed to electronic newsletter means no further costs on this scale are anticipated in the production of the newsletter and the newsletter category will be dropped from future statements.

Web site costs include a hosting fee of £191.99. This is a regular outgoing, but is usually paid for two years at a time, to take full advantage of discounts. Hence the absence from 2013. The remainder is for professional changes to the structure of the site.

The web site becomes a major contact point for the OBR and requires maintenance in addition to hosting costs. Whilst maintenance was previously subsumed in "general admin" it is felt it should now be incorporated with hosting costs, becoming a total website costs category. This is now our regular communications channel and can be regarded as the successor to the newsletter costs.

Credits and debits for "meetings and visits" differ significantly from the previous year. This is expected, as the nature and venue of each event varies. Events are not intended to make a significant excess, and it will be noted that in 2013 there was an excess of £7.18, whilst in 2014 a deficit of £9.20. Their contribution to the final excess and to the total at bank is therefore minor in both years.

Overall, the OBR unrestricted funds show a small deficit of £115.69 for 2014, compared with the previous year's excess of £280.09. As this represents 1.6% of the total at bank, and does not appear to represent a trend, we are remain unconcerned. However, the change from printed to electronic newsletter is a major change for members and, whilst receiving many positive responses, may not be to everyone's satisfaction and may possibly result in a small loss of membership. Sadly, the cost of print (even at highly favourable rates) with the associated postage is prohibitive, and come to much for the OBR to sustain in future.

Tim Peacock

Forthcoming Events

O.A.H.S. WINTER LECTURE SERIES

Monthly, November to March 2016. See oahs.org.uk for details

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 on our website: www.obr.org.uk

Contact details

Newsletter entries should be sent to Richard Farrant (newsletter@obr.org.uk)

Copy dates are 1 March, 1 June, 1 September and 1 December.

Membership – Paul Clark (membership@obr.org.uk)
General – David Clark (secretary@obr.org.uk)
Webmaster – Barbara Creed (admin@obr.org.uk)
Website: www.obr.org.uk

OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

WITH COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR THE PREVIOUS YEAR

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

			2013	2014		
			TOTAL	Restricted	Unrestricted	TOTAL
RECEIPTS			£	£	£	£
GRANT	English Heritage (1)			4500.00		4500.00
NORMAL INCOME	subscriptions		1060.00		1025.00	1025.00
	bank a/c interest		7.81		11.11	11.11
	donations		560.50		539.00	539.00
	gift aid tax refund		223.75		248.53	248.53
	joining fees		65.00		75.00	75.00
	visits & meeting		1666.50		939.50	939.50
	training courses		0.00		0.00	0.00
		TOTAL RECEIPTS	3583.56	4500.00	2838.14	7338.14
PAYMENTS						
FROM GRANT	Chipping Norton project			2812.50		
FROM NORMAL INCOME	RUNNNG COSTS					
	newsletters		859.59		430.11	430.11
	CBA insurance		302.37		315.80	315.80
	visits & meeting		1659.32		948.70	948.70
	general admin. Including printer cartridges		265.69		514.74	514.74
	CBA affilliation fee		78.50		68.50	68.50
	equipment maintenance		0.00		0.00	0.00
	recording consumables		0.00		0.00	0.00
	training course costs		100.00		0.00	0.00
	web site fees and maintenance (2)		0.00		415.98	415.98
	VAG subs		38.00		20.00	20.00
	honoraria (3)				240.00	240.00
		sub-total running costs	3303.47		2953.83	2953.83
	EQUIPMENT		0.00			0.00
		sub-total equipment	0.00		0.00	0.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS			3303.47	2812.50	2953.83	5766.33
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS			280.09	1687.50	-115.69	1571.81

BALANCE

			2013	2014		
			TOTAL	Restricted	Unrestricted	TOTAL
			£	£	£	£
OPENING BALANCE AT BANK						
	CAF	current account	173.47		245.14	245.14
	CAF	deposit account	6562.07		7023.25	7023.25
	NatWest	current account	337.98		85.22	85.22
	NatWest	deposit account (4)	0.00			
OPENING TOTAL OF ALL ACCOUNTS			7073.52		7353.61	7353.61
CLOSING BALANCE AT BANK						
	CAF	current account	245.14		206.84	206.84
	CAF	deposit account	7023.25	1687.50	5413.05	7100.55
	NatWest	current account	85.22		1618.03	1618.03
CLOSING TOTAL OF ALL ACCOUNTS			7353.61	1687.50	7237.92	8925.42
CHANGE IN BALANCE AT BANK			280.09	1687.50	-115.69	1571.81

(1) OBR acting as payment stage for English Heritage.
(2) Previously "web site renewal fees".
(3) For long standing committee members (x2).
(4) Account closed.