

UPPER WHARFEDALE HERITAGE GROUP

THE UWHG KILNSEY PROJECT 2015 - 2020

BUILDING REPORT FOR: KB 08

CRAG COTTAGE– KILNSEY

NGR: SD 9738 6785

Survey date: September 2015



**Photographic Records 2016
Dendrochronology research 2017
Report compiled April 2019**

UPPER WHARFEDALE HERITAGE GROUP KILNSEY TOWNSHIP PROJECT

VERNACULAR BUILDINGS OF KILNSEY

BUILDING NAME: Crag Cottage

Building type: Dwelling

National Grid Reference: SD 9738 6785

Kilnsey Project building KB 08

UWHG Recorders: Alison Armstrong, Vera Brearey, Lynne Primmer and Ann Thake

Survey date: September 2015

DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

1. Building Type/Purpose:

Dwelling

2. Materials:

Walling is of blocky limestone with numerous tufa blocks possibly recycled from medieval buildings in Kilnsey, although there is some evidence of fresh quarrying of tufa from beds of becks near Jackson Close, e.g. Howgill Beck, possibly on the initiative of the owners, the Jackson family, during the second quarter of the 17thC. Quantities of tufa are found in the Old Hall and the field walls on Town Piece etc. The west gable of Crag Cottage has some sandstone quoins at the top. There are also a few other sandstone quoins, but most are of weathered crag limestone with little tooling. Sandstone roof tiles are probably from the Conistone quarries. Dressed sandstone is used for window and door surrounds. Some is sawn and 20thC in date but others are broad-tooled and c1800.

3. Exterior detail:

Frontage (see drawing) has mullioned 17thC windows but the front door surrounds are 19thC and of simple, squared sandstone. There are some small blocked-up windows, possibly fire or stair windows. There are other disturbances such as a slight ledge at first floor level that may represent a former roofline or a rebuild and straight joints running down the wall.

The **west gable** looks rebuilt (20thC?) but the roof pitch is steep. There are new roof coping stones but no kneelers.

The east gable is obscured by a modern extension but has a 20thC window in the gable overlooking the extension.

The rear elevation (see drawing) displays boulder foundations, exposed after soil was cleared to make a flat garden patio area. Boulder foundations are usually associated with buildings of pre 1600 date. The window and door surrounds are all 19/20thC stone with some c1800, re-used, with Georgian broad-tooling.

Plan type:

The house is of three bays, with the west bay possibly added. It has a lobby entry beside the chimney stack. The 19thC main doorway is probably a replacement of a 17thC one, in which case the house would have had a classic 17thC lobby entry. On the left, the lobby opens into the housebody (the living room). The parlour (best room) is on the right with the best window. Its fireplace may have backed onto the housebody fireplace and the stack, before the stair was moved to its present position.

The rear windows may be original openings, although with modern surrounds. They comprise another splayed window (originally 4 lights?) and a small window for a rear dairy. To the west of the housebody is a narrow room with no rear window.

4. Interior detail:

The housebody has a large arched stone fireplace, of a kind common in Craven, with sandstone voussoirs and an ogee moulding. There may have been some movement of the foundations, because it appears to be slightly leaning and, curiously, a section of stone with a joggled voussoir line has been inserted into the left side of the arch. The fireplace is similar to that in the Tennant Arms nearby. There, a reset 17thC fireplace is now in the ladies toilets, but originally from the housebody. (The Old Hall too has arched fireplaces.)

This fireplace appears to have been cleaned by tooling the surfaces which are unusually rough. The mullioned windows are similarly treated. There is a beehive oven inserted in one side of the fireplace. These are usually 18thC and belong to a time when wheat flour was available for bread and replaced the staple of oatcake.

The ceiling has two spine beams and, unusually, many close-set joists with chamfer stops, but they appear to be modern.

The adjoining west room is beyond a thick, battered wall and a joint in the walling shows that this room may have been added. It is narrow with a single (19thC) window at the front and a modern fireplace. It may have been a dairy or other service room although these are usually north rooms. It has many close-set joists as if the floor above needed to be weight bearing.

The east room has a larger and deeper mullioned window to the front to show its status as a parlour or private room. There was a splayed window at the rear too. The room has two spine beams but these are boxed in. The inserted stair, behind the fireplace, takes up some of the room space and may hide an older fireplace.

Upstairs. The modern stair runs up behind the chimney stack, emerging onto a narrow landing, off which are the modern bedrooms.

There are two roof trusses - one over the housebody and one over the parlour. (See drawings) The trusses follow medieval practice in being supported by short wall posts standing on shaped stone corbels. The wall posts and bases of the principal rafters are both mortised into a short stub-tie which is braced into a timber pegged to the post and the principal rafter.

The upper parts of the trusses are in a loft above the bedroom ceilings and need to be inspected through small trap doors in the ceilings.

At ceiling level a collar is bolted on to reinforce the structure, but there are original pegholes and mortice for the original collar. The truss has an upper kingpost rising from the collar to carry the ridge but what is also seen from the trap-doors is that the carpentry is very irregular because the roof is constructed from pieces of timber salvaged from one or more earlier structures. It could be that this earlier structure was on this same site since the walling has lines of heightening and the stonework of the windows seems awkwardly put together as if re-used.

On the timbers there are carpenters' scribed-on markings including a very large "butterfly" hewing mark.

DATING and INTERPRETATION:

6. Identifying the oldest part of the building and date

A first impression, judging by style, was that the reused timber may be 15thC (although dendrochronology, discussed below, showed that some dates from 1370). It may well be reused from nearby. The "chapel" building at Old Hall for example had two ornamental stone corbels inside, perhaps these timbers are from the chapel roof? The gatehouse c 1640 was partly demolished in the 19thC but this timber is older than that. The monastic courthouse, for which there is documentary evidence of a carpenter working in 1457, is also a possible source.

The size of the Old Hall floor plan and Crag Cottage are similar at 30mx5m so the medieval trusses may have been re-cycled from there.

The arched fireplace in Crag Cottage is late 17thC as are the mullioned windows, although possibly recycled.

7. Major extensions or alterations:

Uncertain. Was the Crag Cottage property built as a single-storey house since there are signs that it had a lower roofline? And was it later rebuilt using a medieval roof?

SETTING:

8 Orientation:

Faces south, though at an angle to the other houses.

9. Relationship:

Crag cottage is on the N side of the green or yard between a Victorianised Old Hall Farm (with 17thc doorways and datestone EH 1628) and the 17thC house now the Tennant Arms.

OTHER INFORMATION:

10. Initials/Datestones:

None seen. Old Hall Farm has a date 1628 EH (Edward Hartley who is in the Hearth Tax of 1672)

11. Oral information from owner/occupier:

The use of tufa gives damp problems.

12. Documentary Information:

The Hearth Tax 1672 has always been a puzzle as this house seems to be surplus to that list. Old Hall Farm in the yard below the Hall belonged to the Hartleys and EH is on a 1628 datestone there.

Report and drawings by Alison Armstrong

Drawings below;

- Front elevation.
- Rear elevations
- Plan
- Roof sketch

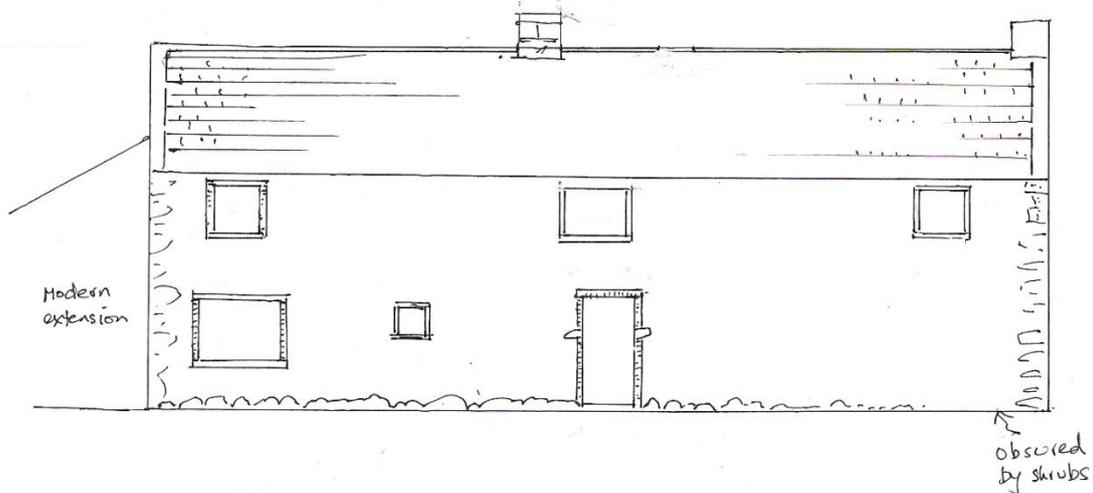
CRAIG COTTAGE, KILNSEY



25.9.2015 A.C.A.



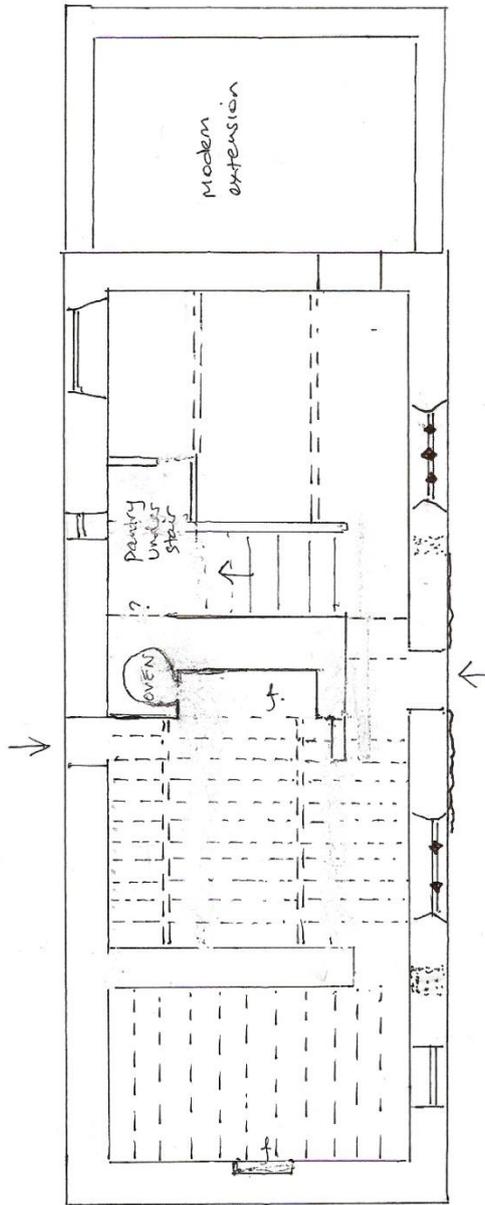
SOUTH FRONTAGE



NORTH, REAR ELEVATION

All windows and door look modern,
though some of re-used stone c.1800.

CRAIG COTTAGE



PLAN

Scale 1/100



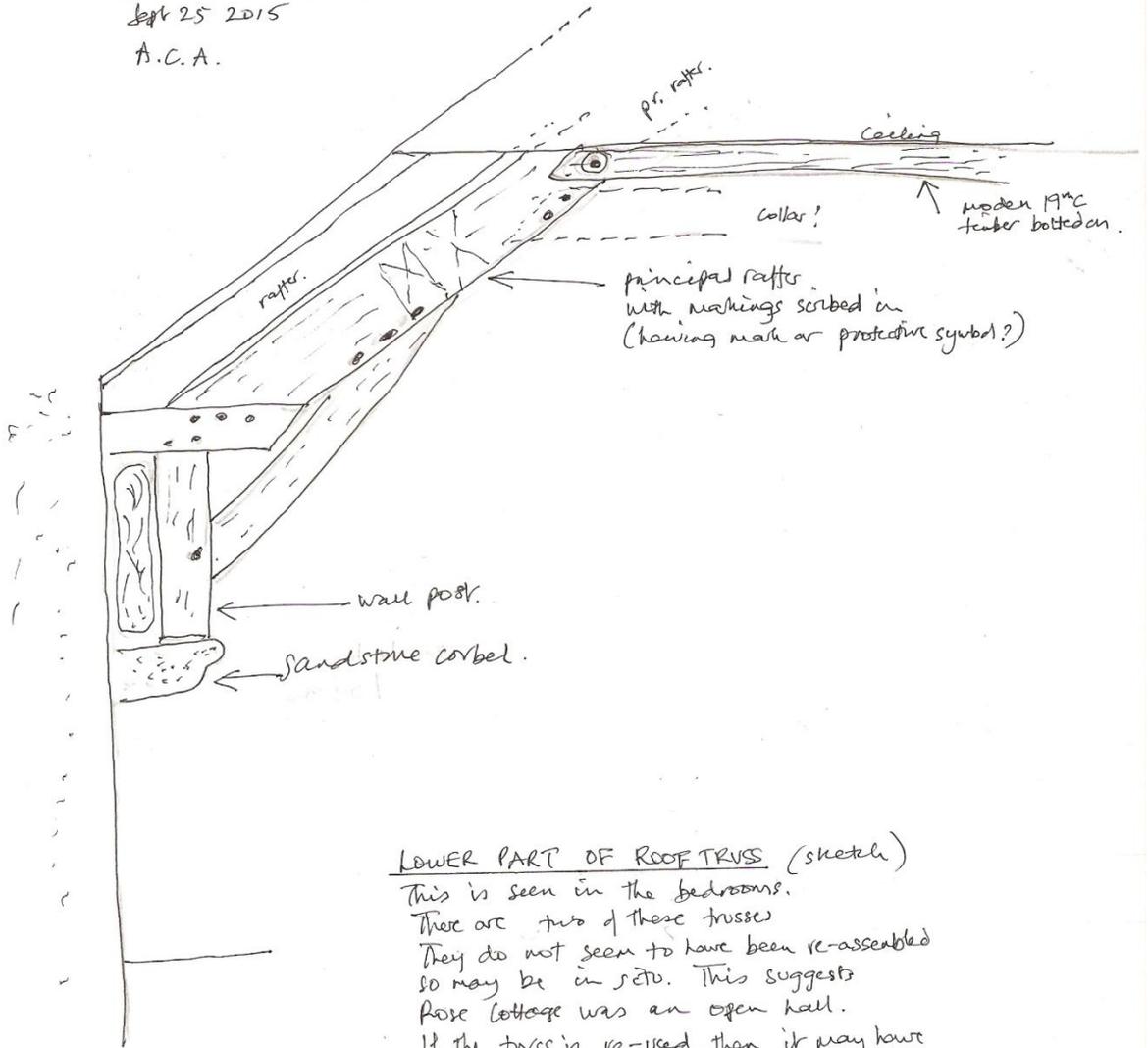
25.9.2015
A.C.A.

The housebody has a large arched fireplace with beehive oven.
This room and the adjoining end room (dairy/service room?)
have close-set joists but they appear modern.
Roof trusses look like re-used medieval or 16c.

Crag Cottage, Kilnsey.

Sept 25 2015

A.C.A.



LOWER PART OF ROOF TRUSS (sketch)

This is seen in the bedrooms.

There are two of these trusses

They do not seem to have been re-assembled so may be in situ. This suggests Rose Cottage was an open hall.

If the truss is re-used, then it may have come from the chapel building. This had 2 stone corbels for two trusses in it, when I looked some years ago. Or it could have come from the cowhouse in Kilnsey Old Hall as Wade was rebuilding it. Or it could have come from the gatehouse (making it 16th C rather than 17th C as I had thought?)

SUPLIMENTARY REPORT

ROOF TIMBERS:

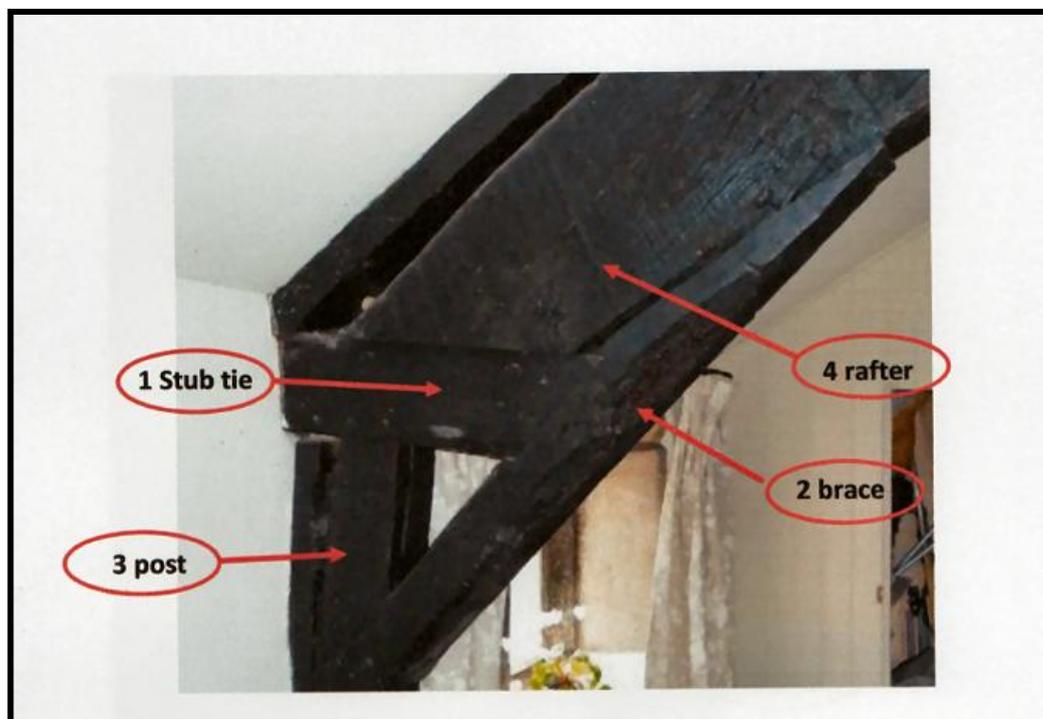
The owners of Crag Cottage generously allowed a second visit in order to investigate the roof space. This was done by photographing the timbers through the very small trap-doors at either side of the chimney stack.

The roof structure is composed almost entirely of re-used timbers, probably from a variety of other buildings. On the east truss (above the parlour) the upper king post and the south principal rafter, both have redundant mortices. The principal rafters of the west truss (above the housebody) end with the tenons leaning against an improvised upper king post. The south purlin at the west end of the building was identified as a re-used wall plate with close set rafter settings.

Many of the rafters have redundant joints but one is particularly interesting as it has once had a collar brace attached by means of a notched lap joint. Both Alison Armstrong and Arnold Pacey felt this was likely to be early 13th century. They sent a photograph of the rafter, without information about the building, to Dave Stenning of Colchester an expert on medieval timber construction and he confirmed it had a 13th century notch lap joint. He suggested it may have been made for a scissor braced roof; these were often used at that time over stone walled structures.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY:

In 2016 the Upper Wharfedale Heritage Group commissioned the Nottingham Tree Ring Dating Laboratory to sample and analyse the accessible timbers from the two roof trusses in Crag Cottage. Access was only possible to the south end of the east truss and to both trusses only below ceiling level.



A section of the East Truss – with the components named

It is a common feature of tree ring dating that some samples remain undated even when there appears to be sufficient rings for reliable dating and this proved to be the case for the south braces on both trusses.

East truss:

The rings of the stub tie measured from 1254 to 1370 with complete sapwood present therefore giving a felling date of 1370.

Although the wall-post had complete sapwood, the material was fragile and some was lost in coring. However the measured rings were from 1261 to 1349 with a similar boundary between the heartwood and sapwood to that of the stub tie, therefore the felling date for the wall-post is also about 1370.

The principle rafter had rings from 1164 to 1308 but no sapwood or even the heartwood boundary. However given the size of the timber and it's probable age of about 250 years when cut, the felling date is more likely than not, to be late fourteenth century, which makes it possible that this also dates to around 1370.

West truss:

The two stub ties in this truss possibly came from the same tree with combined measured ring dates from 1387 to 1445. Both have a heartwood/sapwood boundary of 1439 and the south tie has 6 sapwood rings. Given the usual 15-40 sapwood rings for an oak tree, this would suggest a felling date of 1455 at the earliest and 1480 at the latest.

The two wall-posts again are probably from the same tree, both have a heartwood/sapwood boundary of 1477 and combined measured rings from 1427 to 1483. Allowing for the likely number of missing sapwood rings, the tree was probably felled between 1493 at the earliest and 1518 at the latest.

The earliest ring on the north brace is 1026 and the latest 1168 but there is no heartwood/sapwood boundary therefore the tree could have continued to grow for many years after that. Whilst it is possible that it could have been felled in the late 14th century as the timbers of the east truss, it would have been 400 years old when cut which is somewhat rare. All that can be said is that the tree was unlikely to have been felled prior to 1185.

INTERPRETATION(based on notes by Arnold Pacey):

13th century timber:

The brace mentioned in the previous paragraph is the oldest timber identified by dendrochronology and the suggested felling date of some time after 1185 could perhaps be in the early 13th century. Reference has already been made to a re-used rafter apparently of the 13th century which may have been for a scissor braced roof over stone walls. There is also a re-used wall plate that could have been part of the same building. Whilst we cannot assume all three 13th century timbers came from the same roof, they imply a building of status such as a well built house or a church.

Was a nearby building of importance being re-roofed in the 17th century when Crag Cottage was being constructed? Alternatively, since Fountains Abbey had a grange at Kilnsey, were the timbers from one of the earlier buildings erected by the monastery?

14th century timber:

The standard terminology for describing medieval roofs is defined by the Council for British Archaeology in their booklet, *Recording Timber-framed Buildings*, Practical Handbook No 5, edited by N. W. Alcock *et al*, 1989. Based on their definition, the existing roof in Crag Cottage has two sling-braced trusses.

Dendrochronology dated the stub tie and wall-post of the east truss to 1370 and suggested a similar date for the principal rafter. There are no diagnostic details on these timbers to indicate the kind of structure they originally came from however they are characteristic components of a sling-braced roof truss. Could a truss of that type have been made in 1370? This seems hard to believe as sling-braced roofs are usually regarded as a later development but it is a possibility.

The modest pitch of the two trusses in Crag Cottage makes it likely that they were made for a relatively late roof of stone flags rather than thatch. Hence they could have been assembled in their present form in the 17th century when the cottage is presumed to have been built. However this phase of building could reflect the form of some 15th or 16th century roof as the wall-posts and sling braces are unusual for the 17th century. The 1370 structure for which some of the timbers were originally provided was probably quite different.

15th century timbers:

Dendrochronology gave a felling date between 1455 and 1480 for the stub ties of the west truss. Evidence for a building of this period at Kilnsey can be found in the *Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, vol. III, published by the Surtees Society, Durham 1918 (see page 28) This quotes accounts of 1456-7 which record Thomas Longley a carpenter being sent from Fountains to “Kilnsey Hall” to build a “camera” meaning perhaps a courtroom or just a solar.

Peter Ryder’s report on Kilnsey Old Hall mentions timbers with high quality mouldings re-used in the basement as boskins for cattle. However the timbers in Crag Cottage are roughly made so if they were associated with Thomas Longley’s work they would have been off cuts and not part of the main construction. The two wall-posts from the west truss spanned the period around 1500 but it is difficult to know what kind of structure they came from.

There are two alternatives for the source of the timbers:-

The collection of re-used timber could have come from a variety of buildings in the area such as the local churches and other medieval structures.

However since Crag Cottage is part of the complex associated with Kilnsey Old Hall it is possible that the 17th century rebuilding of the Hall released timber for re-use when earlier buildings on the site were taken down.

Thomas D. Whitaker in his *History of Craven* published in 1805 comments that “the walls of the courthouse were remaining” in 1600, which rather implies that it was the stripped down remains of the medieval buildings which survived then and that most fittings and good quality timber had been removed soon after the dissolution, so when Crag Cottage was built, it was buildings of secondary importance that remained to be cannibalised.

Conclusion: The occurrence of tufa blocks in both Kilnsey Old Hall and Crag Cottage is an indication that the cottage may have been at least partly built at the same time as the rebuilding of Old Hall. The stone corbels supporting the wall posts in the cottage also match some of those in the Old Hall.

It is striking how roughly the cottage roof was put together as if none of the builders were carpenters. This is particularly obvious in the west truss where the principal rafters appear to be posts from an earlier timber framed building with minimal re-shaping to fit the cottage roof. This reluctance to re-shape timbers suggests the components of this truss were inherited from an earlier roof, perhaps one giving dendro-dates of 1455-1480 or one likely to date from 1493-1518.

Whilst none of this can be firmly established it does give clues as to what buildings there were on the Fountains Abbey Grange sites in and around Kilnsey. These include an early 13th century building with a scissor-braced roof and another building (or an extension to this earlier one) erected in 1370. Other buildings including the courthouse were of the late 15th century and close to 1500 so perhaps Crag Cottage has off-cuts from the construction of these.

Pat Carroll

With very grateful thanks to Arnold Pacey for his interpretation of this building and for his constant support with the wider project.



Image i/d KB 08 P01

South Elevation



Image i/d KB 08 P03

West Truss – North End



Image i/d KB 08 P04

Hewing Mark - East Truss



Image i/d KB 08 P05

Stone Corbel - East Truss



Image i/d KB 08 P06

Upper King Post - East Truss

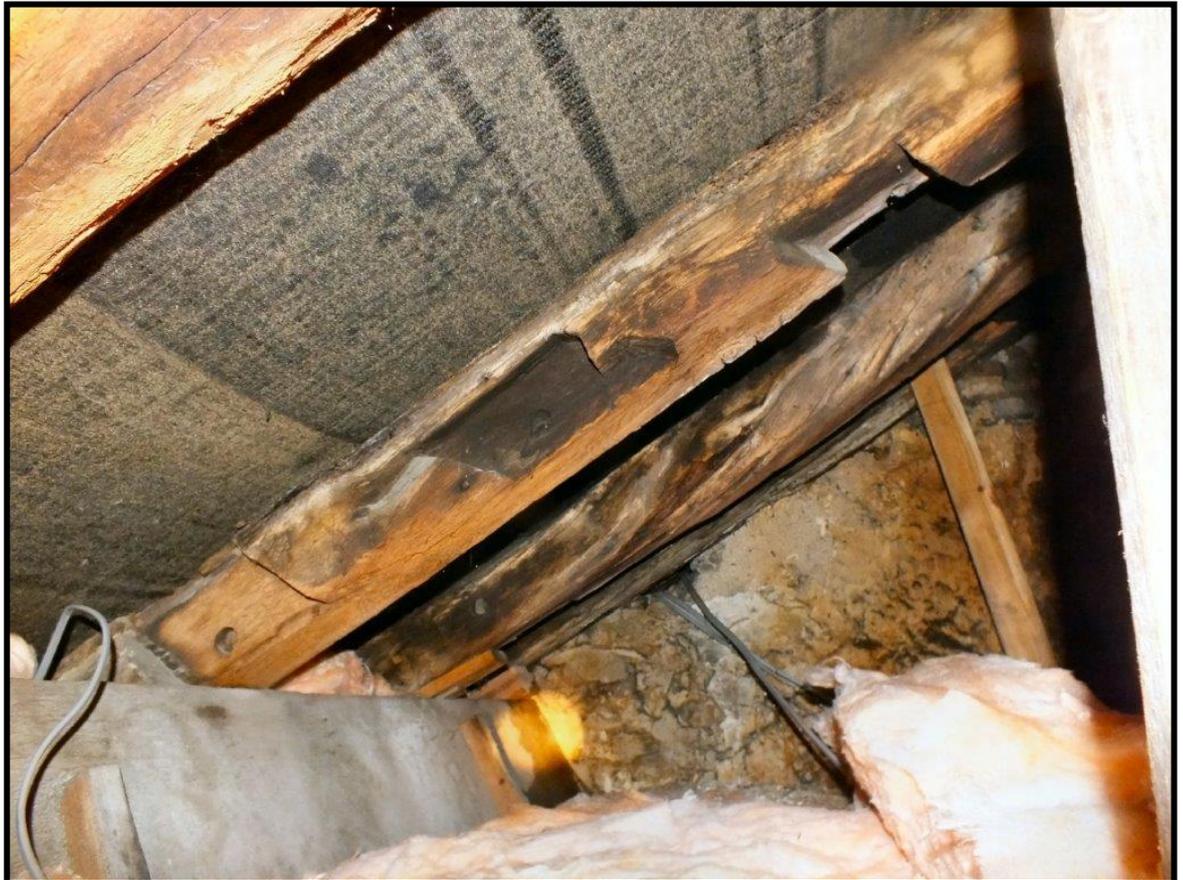


Image i/d KB 08 P08

Notched Lap Joint on Rafter

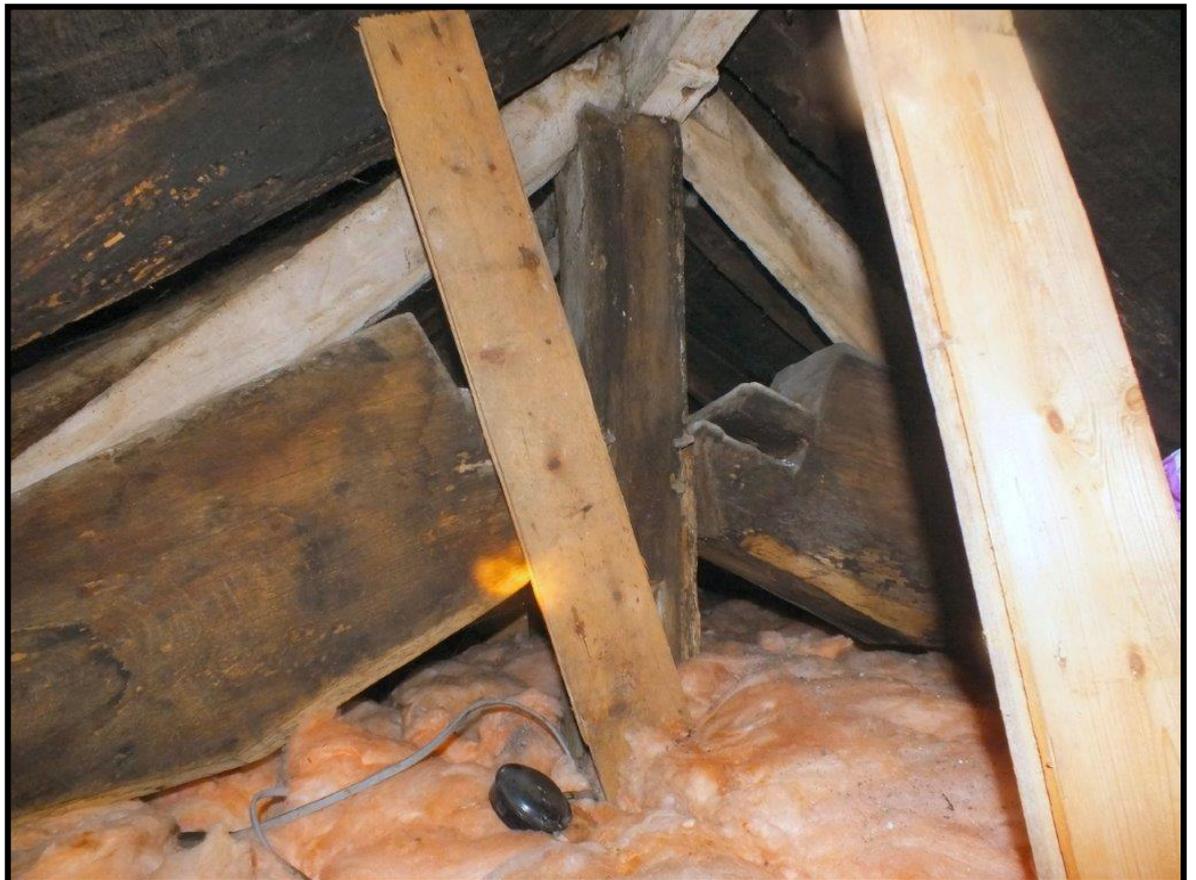


Image i/d KB 08 P12

Apex of West Truss

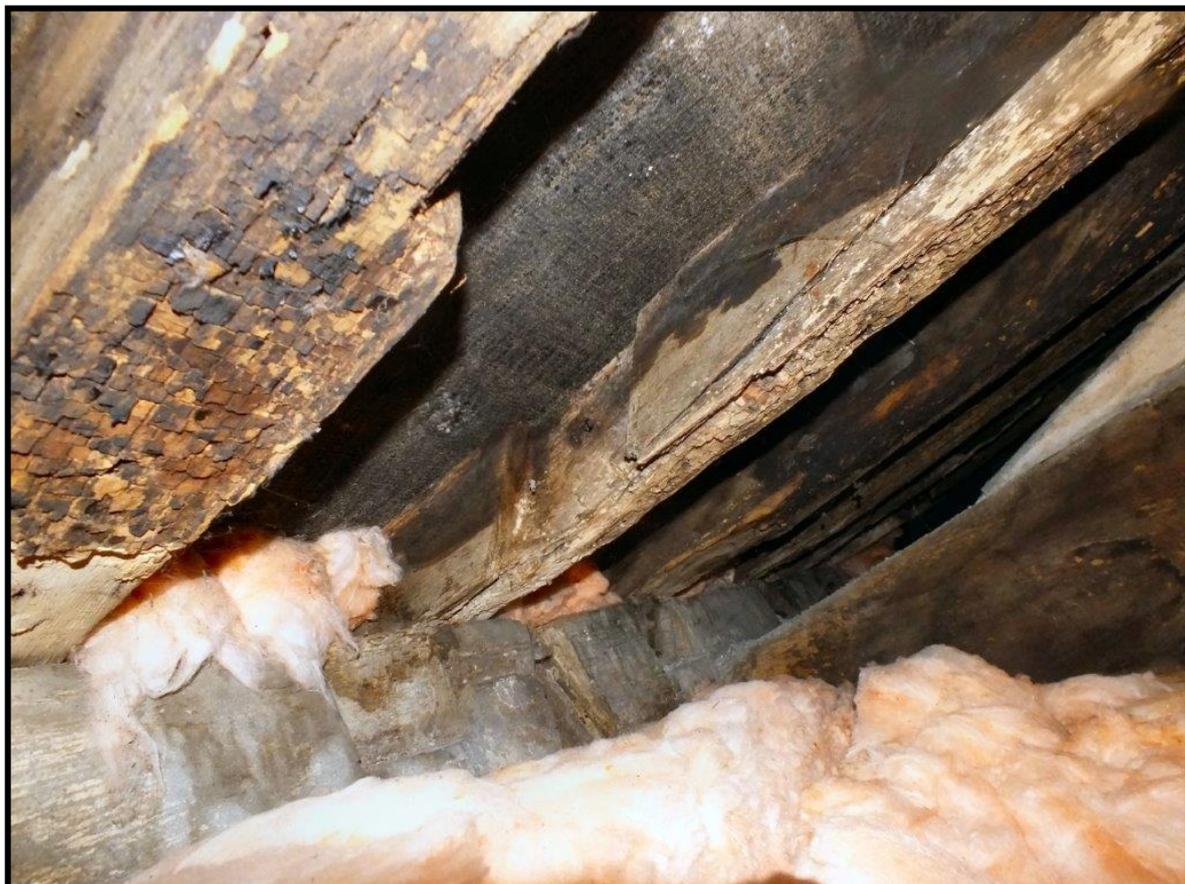


Image i/d KB 08 P13

Reused Wall Plate as Purlin

KB 08	Photographic register		Crag Cottage
Image i/d	Description:	Date:	Notes:
KB 08 P01	South elevation	26/01/2016	
KB 08 P02	East Truss south end	26/01/2016	Looking west
KB 08 P03	West truss north end	26/01/2016	Looking west
KB 08 P04	Hewing Mark east truss	26/01/2016	Looking west
KB 08 P05	Stone corbel east truss	26/01/2016	South end looking west
KB 08 P06	Upper king post east truss	26/01/2016	Top looking east
KB 08 P07	Upper king post east truss	26/01/2016	Bottom looking east
KB 08 P08	Notched lap joint in rafter	26/01/2016	E bay S side looking west
KB 08 P09	Re-used rafter E bay	26/01/2016	S side looking east
KB 08 P10	Re-used rafters E bay	26/01/2016	N side looking west
KB 08 P11	R-used rafters E bay	26/01/2016	E end looking east
KB 08 P12	Apex of west truss	26/01/2016	Looking west
KB 08 P13	Wall plate re-used as purlin	26/01/2016	W bay S side looking west
Photographs	Pat Carroll		

P J Carroll - Upper Wharfedale Heritage Group
April 2019