

VERNACULAR BUILDING 1-3

Scottish
Vernacular Buildings
Working Group

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VERNACULAR BUILDING 1

EDITOR

GEOFFREY STELL

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(REPRINT OMITTING BUSINESS NOTICES : 1981)

Alexander Fenton and Gavin Sprott

THE VERNACULAR BUILDINGS SECTIONS OF THE SCOTTISH COUNTRY
LIFE ARCHIVE, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES OF SCOTLAND.

The Scottish Country Life Section of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland has been compiling, in the course of the last 15 years, an Archive of information relating to all aspects of country life in Scotland. The Archive consists of 10 x 5 inch sheets and is arranged by subjects, each subject being broken down topographically by counties. At the time of writing there are approximately 50,000 entries, with an annual growth rate of 5000 - 6000 entries. About 10% of the whole Archive deals with vernacular buildings - i.e. over 5000 entries filling 33 files.

This section of the Archive, like the Archive as a whole, has been built up in order to provide data on the background history and range of regional variations in Scottish vernacular buildings in the countryside and villages. It is as much concerned with social and economic history as with architectural history, and in fact its primary aim is to contextualise the buildings, to place them in their functional setting within their environment, and to see to what extent they are themselves products of their context.

Material from all kinds of sources is included. The County Agricultural Surveys of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have been searched through and extracted, and the same applied to the Statistical Accounts of the 1790s and the 1840s, and to the publications of local societies. As time goes on, data from earlier and more recent periods is constantly being added.

Field research has been carried out in different parts of Scotland, and the resultant photographs and survey material has made the Archive stronger on certain regions than on others -

for example, the Northern Isles and Caithness, North East Scotland, Angus and Fife, parts of the Hebrides. Old photographs from all kinds of sources are also included, giving visual historical depth, and this is extended, through the use of the work of artists and illustrators, back to the seventeenth century. Any work based on the latter kind of source has, of course, to be done in the awareness of the possibility of artistic licence, which may reduce the value of the evidence. Such sources, therefore, must be subjected to stringent controls and checks, using documentary and photographic evidence for this purpose, where they are being used as a background to regional studies.

The results of special studies carried out by students are also available in the Archive, for example the record of farm buildings in Glen Clova, Angus, carried out by Ingval Maxwell, now of the Department of the Environment, and his later work on Functional Architecture, Hopetoun Estate, West Lothian, produced in 2 typescript volumes in 1974 following the grant of an RIBA Research Award. Another notable contribution to the Archive and to Scottish vernacular building studies in general comes from Bruce Walker of the Department of Architecture in the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee, especially in relation to furthering the survey and recording of existing clay walled buildings in the countryside and villages of East-Central and North-East Scotland. This has already greatly expanded our knowledge of such buildings and building techniques, as outlined in 1970 in A. Fenton, Clay Building and Clay Thatch in Scotland (Ulster Folklife 1970. 28-51). The results of Mr. Walker's survey of horse-walks attached to barns, and of their greatly varied roofing techniques, are also adding to the Archive's value.

An effort is also being made to piece together accurate details of house interiors - not only the general layout, but the details of fireplaces, fitments, furnishings etc. While the shell of older buildings may remain, the insides are much more ephemeral, and more drastically affected by changes in living habits.

Older photographic evidence from inside houses is difficult to come by, because of the obvious difficulties of indoor photography with the older equipment, and a particular effort is made to collect this evidence.

Since so much of the landscape of Lowland Scotland was altered following the very intensive agricultural improvements of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there are relatively few farm-buildings of any great age in Scotland. The majority date from after about 1770, and as far as housing for farm-workers is concerned, this scarcely goes back beyond the 1840s and is often considerably later. These are individual buildings standing on their own farms, but since their form was often created according to the interest of estate owners, either directly through estate employees or through employed architects, a good deal of regional variety remains, itself also functionally conditioned by the type of farming that the building served. Such buildings must, in Scotland, be accepted as being in the vernacular tradition, for this kind of reason. In the Highlands and Islands, however, much more survives of an older vernacular tradition in which buildings are integral parts of groups, whether part of a group of shieling huts for summer grazing in the hills, or part of the parent "wintertown". Since such buildings are parts of bigger units, they must be studied as such, just as flats in a block of tenements must be seen in relation to the whole building in which they are sited, and for this reason the Archive has been developing further sections in recent years on towns, villages and townships, to complement the entries on single-unit farms, and farm-worker housing, and other rural buildings.

In addition, there are files on a range of specific topics - ice-houses, kilns and mills, smithies and other craft workshops - which if added together bring the vernacular building element to over 15% of the Archive.

The Scottish Country Life Archive also works closely with the School of Scottish Studies of Edinburgh University, and the National Monuments Record (Royal Commission on the Ancient and

Historical Monuments of Scotland), and seeks to complement rather than duplicate the work of these bodies. In particular it will continue to strengthen those aspects relating primarily to the background social and economic history of vernacular building in Scotland, leaving the detailed architectural surveying to others.

Geoffrey Stell

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS
OF SCOTLAND (INCLUDING THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD OF
SCOTLAND)

Detailed descriptions and general discussion of selected farms, townships and shielings, among other building-types in the Lorn district of Argyll, will be found in the forthcoming volume 2 of the Inventory of monuments of Argyll due for publication later this year. A brief descriptive list of recent emergency surveys carried out by the staff of the Commission will also be included in the Second Report of the National Monuments Record also due for publication later this year, and members may be particularly interested in the entries relating to Inverness-shire. Some limited survey work in Wester Ross is in progress. Analysis and descriptions of rural buildings of traditional character based on surveys by the NMRS are contained in two recently published articles : Hay, G.D., The cruck-building at Corrimony, Scottish Studies, 17 (1973), 127-133; and Stell, G., Two cruck-framed buildings in Dumfries-shire, Dumfriesshire Trans. 3rd ser., vol. XLIX (1972), 39-48.

Bruce Walker

NOTES AND REPORTS ON WORK IN PROGRESS IN DUNDEE : 1974-1975

1. Detailed surveys completed for the following buildings:
 - a) Old Croft, Teangne, Isle of Skye
 - b) Horse Engine House, Pitairlie, Angus
 - c) Horse Engine House, Cossans, Angus
 - d) Horse Engine House, Nether Migvie, Angus
 - e) Horse Engine House, Little Powgavie, Perthshire
 - f) Horse Engine House, Commiestown, Kincardineshire
 - g) Horse Engine House, East Leys, Perthshire
 - h) Smoke House for Herring, Williamson Street, Gourdon
 - i) Fish House and old Granary, William Street, Gourdon
 - j) Corn Mill and Kiln, Mill of Peattie, Perthshire
 - k) Servants Accommodation, 2 Gayfield, Arbroath
 - l) Pig Crae, East Scryne, Angus.
 - m) Pig Crae, Sheds and Ash Sted, Mainsbank, Angus
 - n) Clay and Bool Cottage, (Rose Cottage), Urquhart, Morayshire.
 - o) Clay Cottage Ruin, Culforbie, Aberdeenshire
 - p) Clay and Bool Cottage, 20 Bogmuir, Morayshire.
 - q) Timber Lum, Netherbrae, Aberdeenshire.
 - r) Clay Cottage, Arnbog, Banffshire.
 - s) Clay Byre, Stewarts Place, Garmouth, Morayshire.
 - t) Timber Lum, Gartley, Aberdeenshire
 - u) Bothy Fireplace, Witton, Angus.
 - v) Cruck-framed Cottage, Strathtummel, Perthshire.
 - w) Game Larder, Glendye, Kincardineshire
 - x) Fishing Gear, Gourdon, Kincardineshire.
2. A detailed survey of the Bucket Mill, Finzean, Aberdeenshire is being carried out at present for the Country Life Section of the National Museum of Antiquities.
3. Building Reports have been completed for:
 - a) House, 15 King Street, Montrose
 - b) Cottage, Lomond View, Collessie, Fife.
 - c) Baldovie Farm Steading, Dundee.
4. Photographic surveys and notes have been completed for the following :
 - a) Some Skye House Types.
 - b) Mill of Aucheen Cottage, Glenesk, Angus.
 - c) Dalforth, Glenesk, Angus
 - d) Clay Cottages in Luthermuir, Kincardineshire.
 - e) Clay Cottages in Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire.
 - f) Over 200 Horse Engine Houses in Angus, Perthshire, Fife and Kincardineshire.
 - g) Street Frontages, Auchinblae, Kincardineshire
 - h) Typical Cottages in Gourdon and Johnshaven, Kincardineshire.

5. Process Analysis of the following :
 - a) Sma Line Baiting, Gourdon, Kincardineshire
 - b) Fish landing and Sales, Gourdon, Kincardineshire.
 - c) Fish processing, Gourdon, Kincardineshire.
6. Listing of Distinctive Building Types in Angus, Perthshire, Fife, Kincardineshire and Kinross-shire include :
 - a) Horse Engine Houses
 - b) Steam Threshing Mills
 - c) Water Powered Threshing Mills
 - d) Wind Mills
 - e) Doocots
 - f) Cornkilns
 - g) Lime Kilns
 - h) Ice Houses
 - i) Corn Mills
 - j) Lint Mills
 - k) Thatched buildings
 - l) Pantile roofs (outside Fife).
7. A Study of Clay Buildings in the Moray Firth and Area was completed and is at present being written up. (Thomas Ross Award - Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland).
8. Building Materials Distribution Survey in Auchinblae and Gourdon, Kincardineshire.
9. Street Frontage Survey, Auchinblae, Kincardineshire.
10. Water Power on the Rossie Priory Estate, Perthshire.

Most of this material has been or will be lodged with the Country Life Section of the National Museum of Antiquities, Queen Street, Edinburgh. Items 1f), 1g), 1h), 1i), 1j), 5a), 5b), 5c), 8 and 9 were carried out by 1st year students of the School of Architecture of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee as part of their course. Student assistance was obtained for items 1b), 1c), 1d) and 1e) from 1st year students, School of Architecture of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee. Item 10 is being carried out by James Reid as a final year dissertation at the School of Architecture, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee.

SCHOOL OF SCOTTISH STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
RESOURCES ON VERNACULAR BUILDINGS

While the School of Scottish Studies is a university research institution primarily concerned with oral tradition, it does house material relating to vernacular buildings in the Lowland, Highland and Island regions of Scotland in its Sound and Photographic Archives. In the Central Index reference is made as well to relevant information extracted from, or to be found in, printed and manuscript sources. Dwelling houses and farm buildings are the two categories best represented, although there is a certain amount of material on church and school buildings. The focus is rural rather than urban, and, for example, the houses of farmers, crofters, cottars and fishermen are considerably better represented than those of tacksmen and lairds. Topics touched on in the various Archive resources include construction techniques, terminology, features such as roofing, windows, drains, chimneys, fireplaces and box-beds, as well as related subjects such as moveable furniture and fences. In addition, there is supporting material on matters such as fuel and heating, trans-humance, living conditions, and the work associated with different types of structures.

The photographic Archive contains data from all the regions of Scotland. Included are illustrations from printed works of historical value, and photographs taken before the foundation of the School, such as the Werner Kissling collection, for which most of the original negatives are in the School's keeping. The bulk of the material in the Photographic Archive is, however, composed of photographs of buildings taken by members of the staff of the School or of other university departments. There are more exterior than interior views; in many cases, structural plans accompany the individual photographs. Types of buildings represented include dwelling houses, barns, byres, storehouses, dovecots, drying kilns, wind and horse mills, other outbuildings, and shielings. Plans of farm and village layout are also found. In some cases, there are photographs which show in detail individual features of buildings represented in the collection. Copies of

many of the photographs in the Archive are in the keeping of the National Museum of Antiquities, Scottish Country Life Section, and in the National Monuments Record of Scotland, and the School's Archive contains copies of originals in the keeping of these institutions.

ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

The material in the Archives of the School of Scottish Studies represents the product of research projects carried out by members of staff, and in some cases material has been deposited in the Archives under terms of restricted access. However, arrangements are made for qualified persons to consult archive material. Times may be arranged on application to Mr. Basil Megaw (Material Culture) or Dr. Alan Burford (Central Index). Material may not be reproduced without the permission of the Director.

Ingval Maxwell

PERSONAL RESEARCH

With the aid of a Royal Institute of British Architects Research Award a two volume report on the functional and architectural detail of farm buildings has recently been completed.

Following site visits some 28 farms in the West Lothian extent of the Hopetoun Estate were sketch surveyed, photographed, data recorded and compiled with an appendix of selected scaled plans and a chronological plan index from the Hopetoun Muniments.

The information was interpreted to reveal part of the complex formula which directly related the buildings to their initial and subsequent use and to the land.

The resulting analysis, although primarily dealing with a limited area, emerged with a wider acceptance and is considered to be the basis of an understanding of arable/stock farm buildings in their regional context.

A copy of the report is lodged with the R.I.B.A., Library and with the Scottish Country Life Section of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Following a suggestion from Dr. N.W. Alcock some consideration is being given to the possibility of compiling a Scottish cruck catalogue roughly along the lines of that produced for the Vernacular Architecture Group of England and Wales under the Editorship of Dr. Alcock. A questionnaire is being devised and a separate circular will be sent to members in due course.

This, of course, is only one rather specialised aspect of the work of this Group and members are invited to make suggestions for other cooperative projects that may be organised and produced through Membership of the Group. One of the main aims of the Group is to place investigators of Scottish vernacular buildings in touch with one another, and it is hoped that future issues of the newsletter will provide a general forum for members in which they can test any working hypotheses, invite comparison with the material of other members working on allied subjects in other regions and perhaps according to different academic disciplines. This first newsletter is largely a report on the work known to some of the Council of the Group, but members are asked to contribute to future issues brief notes on any interesting work in progress.

SCOTTISH CRUCK CATALOGUE - Present position 1981

A draft catalogue has been prepared by Geoffrey Stell and this is now being circulated to office bearers. A working paper on cruck framed buildings will be published later this year and members will be asked to contribute additional locations and descriptions. This working paper will be revised at regular intervals to incorporate any additional information that becomes available.

VERNACULAR BUILDING 2

EDITOR

GEOFFREY STELL

1976

(REPRINT OMITTING BUSINESS NOTICES : 1981)

Ingval MAXWELL

WORK IN PROGRESS : FARM BUILDINGS - INFORMATION SOURCES
AND METHOD OF STUDY.

We have perhaps in Scottish farm buildings the greatest wealth of untapped architectural details yet to be analysed. The following digest is intended to outline some basic sources of information which can helpfully augment field study techniques in the understanding of these structures.

To set the scene of the improvements era, General Roy's survey of Mid-Eighteenth Century Scotland can give an adequate picture when it is read in conjunction with the later County maps of cartographers such as Armstrong, Crawford, Forrest and Thomson. Complimenting this, on a well documented local level, the many land surveyors working for estates produced accurate plan details of enclosures as it was laid out. However, it is not until the mid-nineteenth century when the Ordnance Survey started work in Scotland that we have a complete detailed record of the Scottish agricultural situation.

When all available maps have been assembled for an area, comparative visual analysis of common landfall areas can sharply illustrate the sweeping changes of enclosure. Similarly, development of the steading building form can be noted when comparing the various editions of the large-scale Ordnance Survey plans. Subsequent comparison with present day map editions or vertical air photo coverage are equally revealing.

Graphically illustrating farming techniques, gravestones can be a basic source of information. In some small parish cemeteries in the Kintyre Peninsula and in Edinburgh's Liberton Churchyard, carved graveslabs can be found depicting commonplace farming scenes of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Complementing these, Stevens illustrates in line drawing technique, in his Book of the Farm other scenes of a pre-improvement nature. This information can occasionally be supplemented by early photography.

In addition to the fully recorded parish details in the various Statistical Accounts the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the County series "The General View of the Agriculture of" does much to describe local conditions prevalent at the time. The series also promoted better husbandry and stimulated the landowners' need to consult other references in the form of the various pattern books of buildings and details which proliferated during the early nineteenth century.

This background material can usefully support and complement field evidence. A field study technique correctly being used involves the sketching of the plan of the steading to establish functional relationships. Working on the basis that structural supports are required wherever eaves, gutters or valleys exist on a roof plan, the ground plan of a building group can easily be prepared if the roof plan is plotted first. Once blocked out, the sketch interior detail can then be infilled. Windows, doors, floors, columns, beams, roof trusses, fittings and other details can be readily plotted within the block-out areas. An interview with the farmer can produce basic information regarding acreage, cropping, manpower, stock and farm development. This material can then be used in a subsequent analysis when an area has been saturated by this type of survey approach.

Relating the material gathered to the acreage range of the farms, the results can either be tabulated or plotted graphically to show in general terms how building form and functional details relate to the extent of land farmed.

With the degree of unrecorded work still to be undertaken, this technique was evolved to achieve the gathering of the maximum amount of information in the shortest possible time. Although full of shortcomings, it can and does allow useful work to be undertaken.

Midlothian Farm Survey

Midlothian District Council are to be congratulated in their foresight to authorise a photographic survey of all farm buildings within their administrative area. The survey which is being organised by the Midlothian District Planning Department is intended to form a visual archival record of building form and details. Steadings, farmhouses and cottages of some 150 sites within the area are being photographed in the course of the survey which will take a number of months to complete. When finalised, a copy of the record is to be lodged with the Scottish Country Life Section of the National Museum of Antiquities to allow general reference of the material.

John Payne

MACKINTOSH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

The Mackintosh School of Architecture is relatively new, having accepted its first full-time students in 1970. Interest in vernacular architecture began in 1973 after Professor MacMillan was appointed to the chair.

After considering the field, it was decided that the school's activities should be concentrated on the vernacular buildings of western Scotland, both urban and rural, industrial and agricultural, ranging in location from Galloway to the Outer Hebrides. In 1974-75, the first four vernacular building related studies were instituted.

These were :

- 1) The detailed measurement and drawing of Kempleton Mill in Kirkcudbrightshire, undertaken as the first stage of a feasibility study for transferring the mill machinery to another location. Slides of the drawings of this water-driven corn-mill and its machinery were shown at the 1975 SVBWG conference.

- 2) The detailed measurement and drawing of a group of black houses at Garenin on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis, as the first part of the formulation of a conservation plan for these black houses.

- 3) The tenement study. This one-year study was conducted by a post-diploma student as the first stage of what is hoped will be a long-term study of all aspects of tenement buildings, many of which are within the field of vernacular architecture. The first year's work was concentrated on Glasgow where the tenement system was used and refined to a high degree.

- 4) A study of the indigenous domestic architecture of Scotland. This study was undertaken to define the field for future work on the subject at the M.S.A.

The work during the initial one-year research period was concentrated on setting up a framework for future study. Based on the premise that vernacular architecture is, by definition, an essentially local phenomenon, the study was focused on two main activity areas a) Investigation of a possible boundary system of vernacular zones, using overlay maps of the factors likely to contribute to the formation of local character, such as geology, rainfall, racial groupings, communications etc. b) Investigation of a classification system based on that set out by Brunskill, but altered and enlarged for Scottish use. The principal result of this has been the production of a record card system which is still under development.

In the future, it is hoped that similar projects will be carried out with at least one year in the School involved in a vernacular architecture related study each session, and that through these projects, the School will be able to contribute to the store of knowledge in the field of vernacular architecture.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE GROUP

Scottish members of the VAG are encouraged to contribute papers to Vernacular Architecture, the editor of which is Mrs. K.B. Hutton, 22 Clifton Green, York, YO3 6LN. The next meeting of the Group will be based on Ripon in April 1976 and will be considering the vernacular architecture of the North Riding of Yorkshire. Further details are obtainable from the VAG Conference Secretary, W.S. Phillips, Evergreen House, Jaspers Green, Panfield, Braintree, Essex.

Peter Hill

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR FERMTOUN STRUCTURE IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY GLENORCHY.

The documentation of the seventeenth century is very different to that of the eighteenth and the quality of the information it provides is distinctive. The records of the Baron Courts are the principal source, but additional material can be obtained sporadically from tacks and rentals. A series of documents survive describing the effects of a raid on the lands in 1654. These give considerable detail of the sizes and numbers of buildings on individual farms.

At the start of the seventeenth century the typical fermtoun consisted of four steadings. Each of these would have had a house, a byre, a barn and probably a kiln; kailyards appear to have been introduced as standard farm pertinents at about this time. It is probable that some of the structures stood independently and that others were joined as long houses. Size was recorded according to the number of roofing couples and the buildings were thatched with straw. Houses were generally of 2 to 4 couples and barns from 4 to 6. No details survive of flooring or walling. The laird paid for any new construction, but building maintenance was the responsibility of the tenants. Most of the evidence is provided by actions against outgoing tenants by their successors for the insufficiency of a holding's biggings. Compensation was almost invariably assessed in kind - so much meal, so much cheese and so much ale or milk. The buildings of the upland, pastoral farms were generally smaller than those of the lower-lying farms with more arable land.

This basic structure appears to have remained throughout the seventeenth century. After 1655 the number of holdings on pastoral farms was generally reduced and this appears to be reflected in the number of buildings on them. Kail-yards and head-dykes were firmly established in the first half of the century but there is no evidence of march dykes. Early crofts

were either associated with alehouses or were reserved for the use of estate officers. The number of ale-houses increased from 4 or 5 in 1615 to 7 or 8 at the end of the century.

By 1694, there was one corn-drying kiln on each farm. There were lime kilns at Auchallader Castle and Kilchurne Castle throughout the century: there is no reference to lime-burning on any of the farms. There was a smithy at Barchastellan and a Mill at Kinchrackine. In 1670, a new mill was built at Innergawnan: this appears to have been a horizontal water mill.

The documents rarely refer to shielings and provide no evidence of thier numbers or structure. Detailed information on the construction of shielings and fermtouns can only be gained by extensive excavation: documentary research will, however, suggest suitable areas to dig and provide a basic framework for interpretation.

Bruce Walker

WORK IN PROGRESS

1.0 Detailed Surveys completed of the following buildings :

1. Wrought Iron Bridge and Walled Garden, Balhary, Angus
2. Adelaide Cottages, Edzell, Angus (now renovated)
3. Cruck framed cottage, no. 28 Holding, Murroes, Angus (now demolished)
4. Doocot, Murroes, Angus
5. Ice House, Lunan House, Angus
6. Ice House, Woodston, St. Cyrus, Kincardineshire.
7. Ice House, Kirkside, St. Cyrus, Kincardineshire.
8. Ice House, Rockhall, St. Cyrus, Kincardineshire.
9. Ice House, House of Dun, Angus.
10. Ice House, Boddin Point, Angus
11. Ice House, Fishtown of Usan, Angus.
12. Ice House, Fisherhills, Kinnaber, Angus
13. Ice House, East Mathers, Kincardineshire
14. Elevation of East side of Erskine Lane, Dundee
15. Horse Engine House, Clayton, Fife
16. Horse Engine House, South Dron, Fife
17. Granary and Cart Shed, Muirhead of Pitcullo, Fife
18. Horse/Water Engine House, Kildinny, Perthshire.
19. Timberlum, Drumdewan, Perthshire.
20. Horse Engine House, Wellbank, Perthshire.
21. Mussel fishing gear, Rossie Island, Montrose
22. Part of Steading and Horse Engine House, Pottormie, Fife.
23. Part of Steading and Horse Engine House, Pitcullo, Fife.
24. The Bucket Mill, Finzean, Aberdeenshire.
25. Circular domed building, Laws of Monifieth, Angus
26. Byre interior Hillock Steading, Glenesk, Angus.
27. Byre interior Auchmull, Glenesk, Angus
28. Byre interior, Murroes Farm, Angus.
29. Shop front - 102-104 Alexander Street, Dundee.

2.0 Photographic surveys and Notes have been completed for :

1. March of Lunan, Angus
2. "Cottage" type tombstones in the Howff, Dundee
3. "Cottage" type tombstones in Errol
4. Some Dundee tenements.
5. Some trade symbols on tombstones in Angus & Perthshire.
6. Hillock Steading, Glenesk, Angus.
7. Auchmull Steading, Glenesk, Angus.

3.0 The listing of distinctive building types in Angus, Perthshire, Fife, Kincardineshire and Kinross-shire is continuing.

4.0 A preliminary survey of Dundee Tenement Plans have been completed by 1st year students, Dept. of Architecture, University of Dundee.

Most of this material has been or will be lodged in the Country Life Archive, National Museum of Antiquities, Queen Street, Edinburgh.

Items 1.1, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.22 and 1.23 were carried out by first year students of the School of Architecture, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art/University of Dundee as part of their course. 1.22 was directed by J. Browning and J. Olley and 1.23 by Martin Jones.

Michael Yates

EXCAVATIONS AT POLMADD, KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE 1975

This year saw the first season's excavation of the deserted 'farm town' settlement at Polmaddy, near New Galloway, Kirkcudbright. Of the many stone structures visible above the surface one corn-drying kiln, and the W. end of one building range were selected for examination. Neither structure was completely excavated and conclusions must therefore be provisional. The kiln was well preserved, standing 1.7 m. high with a base diameter of 5.8 m. There were two rough outer faces of boulders filled in between with rubble and poor local clay. The inner face was built of much smaller stones with their flat surfaces facing inwards, - gaps had apparently been pinned so as to present a smooth inner face to the kiln. The flue was built into the S. side of the kiln and has yet to be examined. On the N. side of the kiln is a kiln-barn enclosing an internal area 2.2 m x 2.3 m which had been paved with small flat stones. At a later date a field boundary wall was built over the N. Wall of the kiln-barn.

Only the W. end of the building was excavated and proved to have at least two phases. During the earlier period the building was longer, including an area 2.2 m x 3.0 m on the W. end. This end of the structure was associated with an earlier kale-yard wall and a threshold with an area of cobbles outside. The walling of this end of the building was well constructed with boulder facing stones and a rubble and clay core. At some time this part of the building was abandoned and the end wall reconstructed further E. This later phase was of inferior construction. During the later phase the S. wall seems to have slumped outwards and a revetment wall had to be added for additional support.

It is hoped to continue the excavations this year.

PUBLICATIONS

1975 witnessed the publication of a number of books on or related to the study of vernacular architecture in the British Isles. Of special interest to members of the Group is the volume by our chairman, Alexander Fenton, Scottish Country Life (John Donald Publishers Ltd., 8 Mayfield Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 1SA £6.50), which brings together the author's un-rivalled and intimate knowledge of Scottish farming life and processes, and is essential for an understanding of the environment in which many of our traditional rural buildings were constructed. With the printer is Scott Morton's Traditional Farm Architecture in Scotland (The Ramsay Head Press). As well as a descriptive text, the book will contain 130 of the author's own photographs of stone-built steadings and farm houses, particularly those on the Eastern seaboard and in the South-West. Other Scottish publications of 1975 included the second volume of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland's Inventory of monuments of Argyll; this volume contains descriptions of a selected quota of farms, townships and shielings in the district of Lorn.

Although not directly relevant to Scotland, the volumes recently published by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments (Wales) and by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) will probably be of interest to members of this Group partly for the ways in which the authors approach and describe their subjects, relating the buildings closely to geographical and social conditions : Smith, P., Houses of the Welsh Countryside (HMSO £25); Mercer, Eric, English Vernacular Houses (HMSO, £17.50). More modest in scale is Caoimhin O'Danachair, Foirgneamh Na nDaoine/Ireland's Vernacular Architecture (Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland by Mercer Press, Cork, £1.50) of which Bruce Walker writes : 'In this small book Caoimhin O Danachair, a lecturer in Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin, introduces the reader to Ireland's Vernacular Architecture with an excellent selection of 68 photographs illustrating a range of Irish building types

interiors and constructional techniques. Many of these illustrations will be of particular interest to SVBWG members as they show a number of parallels to constructional techniques found in Scotland.'

The attention of members is also drawn to Glen L. Pride's Glossary of Scottish Building (Famedrain Publisher Ltd. 1975) available from the Scottish Civic Trust at a cost of £3.95, plus postage. It includes a number of useful diagrams.

SSIA HORSE-GIN SURVEY

Informal links have been established with the Scottish Society for Industrial Archaeology and the Scottish Society for the Preservation of Historical Machinery, who share with us an interest in many building-types, and are at the moment engaged in a national survey of horse-gangs. Members of this group who are interested in participating in this scheme are asked to get in touch with John R. Hume, Dept. of History, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow G1 1XQ the editor of the SSIA Newsletter.

SCOTTISH CRUCK CATALOGUE

No progress can yet be reported on the compilation of a catalogue of Scottish crucks, but an attempt is being made to provide notes for contributors as a basis for a cruck survey. Hitherto unrecorded examples continue to come to light, and the recent discovery of a late derivative type of scarfed cruck in a cottage at Murroes, Angus (see notes by Bruce Walker) adds significantly to our knowledge of cruck distribution and seems to open up yet another area for investigation.

VERNACULAR BUILDING 3

EDITOR

BRUCE WALKER

1977

(REPRINT OMITTING BUSINESS NOTICES : 1981)

B. Joyce

THE COLOURING OF LIMEWASH IN THE DECORATION OF VERNACULAR BUILDINGS

Whilst studying the special qualities of the external surfaces of vernacular buildings I became interested in the various ways limewash was pigmented.

Not only is the subject interesting from an aesthetic point of view but the techniques often reveal fascinating insights into the social history of the area concerned.

Copperas

One of the most interesting techniques to come to light was the use of copperas or ferrous sulphate in Musselburgh and its environs. This is still occasionally used and Mr. A. Alexander, builder, of Musselburgh, who has carried on the practice from his father and grandfather, explained to me how, when the green crystals are added to slaked lime, the mixture turns green/blue and upon application orangy/brown. Copperas can be obtained by oxidising the iron pyrites contained in aluminous schists. It is known to have been obtained from the aluminous schists found in the coal measures of Renfrew and Lanark and may therefore also have been obtained from the Musselburgh measures. As it is one of the oldest known mordants it is reasonable to assume that, if produced in the burgh, it would have been used in the burgh's woollen industry and, if its use to colour limewash was a spin off from this industry it would suggest that its use today dates at least from the end of the Middle Ages when the industry went into decline.

Orchil and Corkir

The use of orchil in northern England to colour limewash as documented by S.O. Addey in the 19th century, would definitely seem to be a spin off from its use in the cotton and woollen dyeing industries. This dye was produced, in England, mainly from imported lichens. However, in Scotland a very similar dye was produced from lichens native to the country. It was called corkir - until 1758 - after which it began to be known by the

trade name of cudbear, since it then began to be produced in comparatively large quantities in a factory in Edinburgh and then in Glasgow. The dried and powered lichen was mixed with stale urine, which when evaporated, left a sweet smelling paste or powder which dyed wool a purple colour.

Addey said that orchil mixed with quicklime produced a blue colour. I know of no evidence that corkir or cudbear was used to colour limewash in Scotland but it would seem more than possible that it was.

This is necessarily an extremely abbreviated account of the use and possible use of two colouring agents. I would be pleased to answer any individual enquiries as best I can and, in turn, I would be most grateful for any further information on these or other colouring agents in limewashes.

*B. Joyce, MSc Dip. Arch., c/o Derbyshire County Planning.
Department, County Buildings,
Mattock, Derbyshire.*

Charles Hughes

APPLIED COLOUR ON BUILDING EXTERIORS IN SCOTLAND

Current research in the use of applied colour on Scottish buildings is being carried out in the Department of Architecture, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art/University of Dundee. The work concentrates on the humbler dwellings of the working classes, both urban and rural, from approximately 1750 to 1914.

Evidence from the early period suggests little use of applied colour in inland and highland areas with a more positive tradition in coastal areas. This concentration of applied colour round the coast may originate from trading relationships with the Low Countries and the Baltic, where a number of fine mediaeval "coloured" buildings still survive. A letter by Edward Topham, dated November 20, 1774, describes the town of Edinburgh in some detail before touching on the subject of colour:

"The merchants here also, as in France, have the horrid custom of painting on the outside of their houses, the figure of the commodity which is to be sold within; which in this place makes the oddest appearance you can conceive; for each story, perhaps, from top to bottom, is chequered with ten thousand different forms and colours; that the whole resembles the stall of a fair, presenting, at one view, the goods of a variety of shops. They are likewise remarkably fond of glaring colours; as red, yellow, and blue, on which the figures are painted in black. You would laugh to see a black quartern loaf directly over a black full trimmed perriwig of a professor, with a Cheshire cheese, and a rich firkin of butter, displayed in black greatness under stays, petticoats, and child bed linen".

Most applied external colour in lower class buildings was applied as limewash or harl with or without additives such as copperas, corkir or cudbear, tar oil etc. to obtain distinctive hues. The availability of lime from a local source was not so important as in the inland situation as materials were readily

transported by boat as is illustrated by the Rev. Dr. Barry in his History of the Orkney Islands :

"The inhabitants (of Orkney) mix this sand with lime brought from the Firth of Forth. They then make a heap of it until the next year after which time they plaster the outside of their houses with it, thus preserving much and long from the infurries of rain".

Fish oil and coloured sand were both used as colouring agents and both of these materials were also readily available in coastal areas.

Colour could also be influenced by custom and superstition. In the East Coast fishing communities the boats were usually painted black above the water line with a white cutwater, white and blue at the gunwale, a white mast with a blue top. A thin yellow line ran along both sides of the boat immediately above the upper rubbing strake and this line would be painted blue on the death of any member of the boat owners family and would remain blue during the entire period of mourning. This tradition still exists in many of the east coast harbours although the boat colours are now much more varied. A form of colour symbolism similar to the yellow/blue stripe may have existed for dwellings although no evidence has come to light at present. In these same communities green was considered an unlucky colour and bright green was not used on either boats or houses, although a blue/green colour was particularly popular early this century. This superstition lasted in Arbroath until the 1950's when the larger boats in the local fleet started landing fish in Aberdeen and observed that boats painted green appeared to remain fresh looking longer than the traditional black boat, and that the green colour did not appear to have any adverse effect on the "catch" or "luck of the boat".

Murray Jack, a partner in a firm of architects in Fife, states that there are isolated examples of chrome colours being produced by mixing fish oil with white lime. Fishing nets, lines and canvas were preserved by dipping them into boiling water containing wood bark and it is possible that this distinctive red brown colour could have been used to tint lime wash. Tar was

also used in fishing communities to "paint" boats, sheds, walls and even pantiled roofs on the Moray coast. This is necessarily a very short note on this subject, the investigation of which relies as heavily on human evidence and family tradition as on contemporary documentary evidence.

Specific questions or information on any aspect of the subject should be addressed to the author at :

Department of Architecture

Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art/University of Dundee.

Perth Road,

Dundee

David Murray

COLOUR IN WALLED GARDENS

One of the main functions of the walled garden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was to provide shelter; but part of the wall's utility also lay in absorbing heat during the day and acting as a radiator when the temperature dropped at night. Thus, for the plants grown against and close to the walls, the change from daytime to night time temperatures was spread over a longer period of time.

The colour of the walls therefore had to be considered carefully since a black wall would absorb most heat while a white wall would act as a reflector and therefore absorb less. Thompson observed that fruit trees grown against a black wall blossomed earlier than those grown against a natural coloured wall. However, plants stimulated in this way could be rendered susceptible to damage, should cold or sunless weather supervene. Consequently it was best that the walls, against which fruit trees were to be grown were dark in colour, but not necessarily painted black, the natural colour of brick or stone being dark enough to absorb the necessary heat. An exception to this general rule occurs when the wall was covered with glass, in which case the wall was always coloured white. Loudon observes: "... white is preferable, as reflecting light which is there obtained with more difficulty than heat".

(Gardening Encyclopaedia; 1826; 472).

David Murray

School of Architecture,

Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art/University of Dundee

Bruce Walker

WORK IN PROGRESS

Detailed surveys have been completed for the following structures :

- 1) Thatched cottages - Kirkinch, Angus.
- 2) Cruck framed cottage - Drumdewan, Dull, Perthshire.
- 3) Farmhouse, Flatfield, Errol, Perthshire.
- 4) Bothy, Mains of Edzell, Edzell, Angus.
- 5) Horse Engine House, Galfargie, Abernethy, Perthshire.
- 6) Steading, Flatfield, Errol, Perthshire.
- 7) Byre travis, Balthayock Mains, Kinnoull, Perthshire
- 8) Byre travis, Blindwells, St. Martins, Perthshire
- 9) Byre travis, Mains of Edzell, Edzell, Angus
- 10) Blacksmiths forge, the Smiddy, Eassie, Angus
- 11) Windows, the Smiddy, Eassie, Angus
- 12) Timber framed stone cheese press, Tighchragan, Weem, Perthshire.
- 13) Metal lever type cheese press, Tighchragan, Weem, Perthshire.

Photographic surveys with notes have been made of the following :

- 1) Cast iron structure, Tay Works, Dundee.
- 2) Cast iron structure, Camperdown Works, Dundee
- 3) Cast iron structure, Dens Works, Dundee
- 4) Cast iron structure, Larchfield Works, Dundee
- 5) 5, 6 & 7 Kirkstyle, St. Vigeans, Angus
- 6) Hilton House, Craigend, Perthshire
(a detailed survey has been carried out by James Reid, Knapp, Perthshire).
- 7) All the buildings on the SDD "List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest" for the Perthshire Parishes of : Clunie, Collace, Errol, Inchtute, Kinfauns, Kinnoull, St. Martins, St. Madoes, and Scone (for the Planning Department of the Perth and Kinross D.C. who are organising similar surveys of all the listed buildings under their jurisdiction).

Study of Estate documents, factors' records and plans of the estate buildings on the following properties.

- 1) Earl of Mansfield : Balvaird Estate
 Dornock Estate
 Graitney Estate
 Kenwood Estate (London)
 Limekilns Estate
 Logiealmond Estate
 Lynedoch Estate
 Ruthwell Estate
 Scone Estate

- 2) Earl of Strathmore : Glamis Estate

Most of this material has been or will be lodged in the Archive of the Country Life Section, National Museum of Antiquities, Queen Street, Edinburgh.

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, DUNCAN OF JORDANSTONE COLLEGE OF ART
UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

The attention of members is drawn to the following selected list of dissertation subjects being undertaken by final year students. On completion these will be lodged in the Art College Library.

- John Brewster : Farm Buildings on the Kerss Estate, Fife.
 Tom Drysdale : Harbours of the East Neuk of Fife
 Alan Edwards : Cruck framed structures in Dull and Weem, Perthshire.
 E. Kelly : Development of Auchmithie, Angus.
 Ian MacGregor : Burgh of Dundee in the 16 & 17 centuries.
 David Murray : Aspects of Environmental Control through a
 a Study of Ice Houses, Glass Houses & Fruit
 Stores.
 Tom Somerville : Lime kilns of Strathmore.
 George White : Dutch influence on the East Coast of Scotland.

S.V.B.W.G. PUBLICATIONS

The papers given at the Edinburgh Conference of 4 May 1974 were published in March 1976 as an unillustrated volume entitled "Building Construction in Scotland - Some Historical and Regional Aspects". The first printing of 500 copies is almost out of print and a second printing has been commissioned. The cost of this new printing will be £1.30 per volume including postage. Any member ordering copies before 28 February 1977 will receive these at the original price of £1.00.

The papers in this volume are as follows :

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| John G. Dunbar | : | The organisation of the building industry in Scotland during the 17th century. |
| Ian Fisher | : | Building - stone and slate : some regional aspects of Scottish quarrying. |
| Geoffrey Hay | : | Some aspects of timber construction in Scotland. |
| Alexander Fenton | : | Thatch and Thatching. |
| Bruce Walker | : | Some regional variations in building techniques in Angus, Fife and Perthshire. |
| J.S. Dent | : | Building materials and methods of construction, the evidence from the archaeological excavations at Broad Street, Aberdeen. |

A second publication, Orkney Threshing Mills, by Peter Leith and Sheila Spence is being issued free to all members with this newsletter.

A third publication, Clay Buildings in North-East Scotland by Bruce Walker is in the course of preparation and should be ready by Spring 1977. The cost will be £1.50 including postage.

Alexander Fenton

PUBLICATIONS

East Lothian Villages

In European Architectural Heritage Year, the Department of Physical Planning of East Lothian District Council produced an extremely attractive booklet on East Lothian Villages for the price of 50p. It consists of sketches by John Knight, with a text by John Gifford, and covers Aberlady, Athelstaneford, Dirleton, Garvald, Gifford, Innerwick, Oldhamstocks, Ormiston, Pencaitland, Saltoun, Stenton, Tynninghame. In each case a plan of the village is given, on which the buildings that have been sketched are marked. In this way location index and village plan are combined. Churches and doocots are included as well as mills and cottages and farms, the whole providing a visual index to an area where villages had developed earlier than in most other parts of Scotland. Similar studies from other areas would be welcomed.

Scottish Archaeological Forum 8

The forthcoming volume (Summer 1977) of Scottish Archaeological Forum deals with various aspects of industrial archaeology.

Contents :

- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Geoffrey Hay | : | Work of the Royal Commission and the National Monuments Record in the field of Industrial Archaeology. |
| Eamon Hyde | : | Local Authorities and Industrial Archaeology : an outline of the present position. |
| Douglas Hague | : | Scottish lights. |
| Bruce Walker | : | The influence of fixed farm machinery on Farm Building Design in Eastern Scotland in the late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. |
| Peter Swinbank | : | Wanlockhead : the maps, the documents, the relics and the confusion. |
| Peter Denholm | : | Pottery Excavations : their problems and products. |

The volume will cost approximately £2.00 plus postage. Further details (late spring) can be had from : Scottish Archaeological Forum, c/o 19 - 20 George Square, Edinburgh.

SCOTTISH VERNACULAR BUILDINGS WORKING GROUP PUBLICATIONS 1975 - 1981

- 1975 : Vernacular Building 1 O/P
- 1976 : Vernacular Building 2 O/P
- : Building Construction in Scotland : Some Historical
and Regional Aspects.
- 1977 : Vernacular Building 3 O/P
- : Clay Buildings in North-east Scotland
- : Orkney Threshing Mills O/P
- 1978 : Vernacular Building 4
- 1979 : Vernacular Building 5
- 1980 : Vernacular Building 6
- : Doocots of Caithness
- 1981 : The Hearth in Scotland
- : Working Paper No.1 : Commercial Ice House Survey.
- : Working Paper No.2 : Scottish Cruck Survey.
- : Vernacular Building 1 - 3. (Reprint).
- : Vernacular Building 7 (forthcoming).
- : Vernacular Building of Tayside (forthcoming).

