

Vernacular Building

Scottish Vernacular Building Group
Newsletter 4 1978



SCOTTISH VERNACULAR BUILDINGS WORKING GROUP

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Dundee & Edinburgh
1978

COVER :
Thatched steading on the croft at TOREDALE, KING EDWARD,
ABERDEENSHIRE. NJ 822604

Tom Burnett-Stuart

MODERN HARLING FOR 18th CENTURY BUILDINGS -
DO WE WANT IT ?

Let it ungrudgingly be proclaimed that the National Trust for Scotland and the Historic Buildings Council have preserved our architectural heritage in a remarkable way over the last few decades. Not only have they wrought marvellously themselves but by their example have encouraged others, both individuals and local authorities.

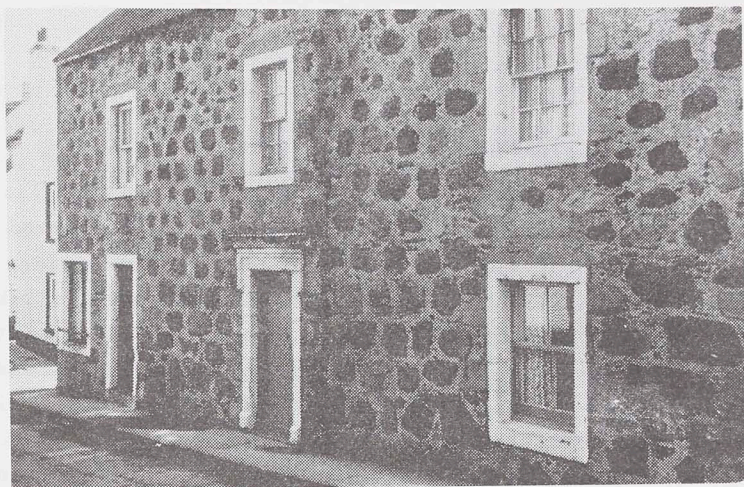
What must however be noticed is that in doing this work they have, probably unwittingly, created a distinct new style of appearance - the White-harled Look - in 18th century Scottish architecture. It is widely supposed that this appearance recreates the 18th century original, but a careful examination of old buildings soon disproves this. The danger is that the modern harling procedure practised by the N.T.S. and specified by the H.B.C. is becoming recognised as the correct and only acceptable way of restoring such buildings; it is neither correct nor desirable, and there are acceptable alternatives.

Harling itself has an impeccable pedigree, and has long been used as a surface treatment. Unfortunately harling is neither made nor applied in the same way as it used to be. Briefly, the old harling mix was made with burnt slaked lime, sand and natural shingle, whereas the modern version consists of hydrated lime, cement, sand and usually crushed stone chips (though there is little excuse for this). The old mix was used for pointing the joints and then built up by dashing to form a thin coat over joints and stone alike (in many cases the stones themselves had only a film of mix on their surface, which quickly wore off); nowadays, after pointing, a plaster coat of cement is applied and allowed to harden, followed by another coat on which the harl is dashed. The physical properties (burnt lime and cement mortar react in a completely different



way to moisture), the surface texture and the colour of the two treatments are not the least alike, and there is little reason for one to be passed off as the other. In the old method the burnt lime soon weathered to off-white and the shingle was quickly exposed, making the overall appearance a speckled brown or grey, not unlike porridge and equally suited to our ancestors' practical existence - none of the superficial Costa Brava white in those days.

An imitation of the old harling can be made, but it is difficult to make it look right both at close quarters and at a distance. However, there are other traditional finishes. Whether they date from, or were used at, the original building of a house is not always important, so long as they look attractive, and are not irrevocable; (modern harling is almost irrevocable, if conscientiously applied). Cherry-cock pointing (small pieces of slate or stone set into the pointing), sneck harling (where the harling is not full enough to cover the main building stones), and just ordinary pointing can be attractive alternatives if intelligent use is made of the modern materials. Such variety is quite in keeping with the Scottish building tradition, and it seems a pity not sometimes



to show off discreetly both the colour of the stones and the masons' skill in using them. Modern harling might well be covering up concrete block construction, as it does on every council estate in the country; indeed it is sometimes necessary in restoration work for this reason.

The untraditional nature of modern harling does not recommend its dogmatic acceptance in the face of traditional alternatives. Surely its worst threat to our heritage is that all our old villages, castles and country houses are being turned white - altering the character of our countryside in the name of restoration. In South-west Scotland there may be a tradition of white houses, but in the North-East and most other parts there is not. Good buildings like ours do not need overstating, and should quietly enhance their surroundings.

Research into the original finishes and appearances of 18th century buildings is much needed, as is experiment in the use of modern materials to reproduce those appearances. Let us hope that our national bodies will be more flexible in their approach to surface treatments, and will themselves look for alternative solutions; their understanding and co-operation is essential.

Grith Lerche

INVESTIGATIONS IN DANISH FARM-BUILDINGS

The study of Danish farm-buildings was started in the 1880's by Professor R. Mejborg, and a second project was prepared in 1910 by Jørgen Olrik of the Danish Folk-Museum and C.A. Jensen of the National Museum who inspired the architect H. Zangenberg to devote all his efforts from 1920 onwards to this subject. First and foremost his field research aimed at tracing buildings which could be moved to the Open-Air Museum (Frilandsmuseet), 7th department of the National Museum, earlier a branch of the Folk-Museum which is the National Museum's 3rd department. This research of material became rather heterogeneous.

When H. Zangenberg died in 1940 and J. Olrik in 1941 it was evident to their young colleagues, Axel Steensberg and Svend Jespersen, that the future research should be carefully planned. They made a team together with the two architects, Arne Ludvigsen and H.H. Engqvist, discussing different possibilities. At the beginning of 1944, Steensberg started a campaign in the press asking private firms for the necessary means for the 3rd investigation of ancient farm-buildings. Money was provided and Steensberg guided the research in Zealand and the small island of Bornholm in the Baltic in 1944. When it proved possible to raise a national interest in the subject, the necessary funds were allocated by the government to the museum every year until 1960, when the project stopped.

Through the persons involved the research project was very much a cooperation between the Folk Museum and the Open Air Museum.

From 1945, Svend Jespersen became the leader of the field research until his death in 1958. Together with

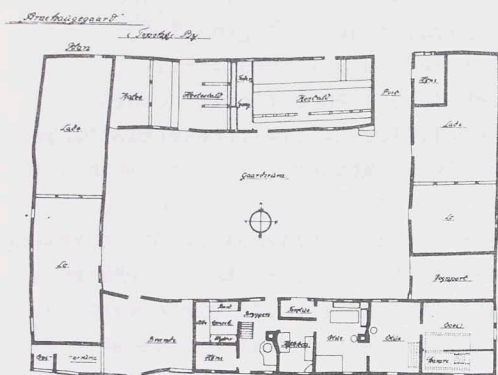
D. Yde-Andersen he drew up a directory for the research methods, building on previously made questionnaires and inquiries, and now that sufficient money was provided, the investigation could be carried out systematically, comprising smaller areas which Jespersen estimated could solve problems of diffusion of different traits especially in the planning of rooms in the living houses.

The main purpose for the research was, as said, to rescue information on the history of the Danish farm-house, which meant that in every region all the oldest well preserved buildings were systematically recorded, and it was thus farms and houses built before 1800 which were investigated. At a later stage in the research project some buildings from the first half of the 19th century were also dealt with.

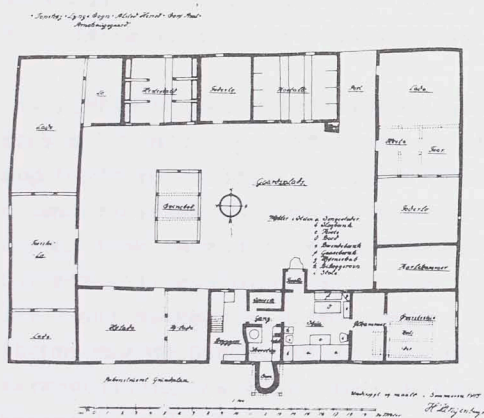
The actual registration work was done as a combination of photographing in entirety and details, measuring of a farm with plan, section, elevation, or doing sketches of the lay-out and measuring constructive details of special interest and the written recording of personal observations as well as recording the oral tradition about the buildings from the owners and local people. A study of the records in the archives which is a natural follow-up to recording was not for economic reasons included in this field work.

In summer 1944-45 most of Zealand as well as the island of Bornholm was examined. West Jutland was chosen for the 1946 campaign, in 1947 investigations took place in South West Jutland, in 1948 again South West Jutland as well as the eastern part of "South Jutland". In 1949, the islands of Laesø, Als and the central part of South Jutland and Sundeved were visited, Als, South Schleswig and the island of Rømø were studied in 1950. In 1951, Rømø and Als again as well as the NE of South Jutland and the SE of North Jutland. In 1952-53, East Jutland and South Schleswig, and in 1954, Djursland, Himmerland, Salling (all these localities are in Jutland) as well as the island of Samsø were examined. In 1955, Jutland

Ground plans of a farmstead in Topshøj, south-west Zealand, measured and drawn by H. Zangenberg in 1915.



Actual layout.

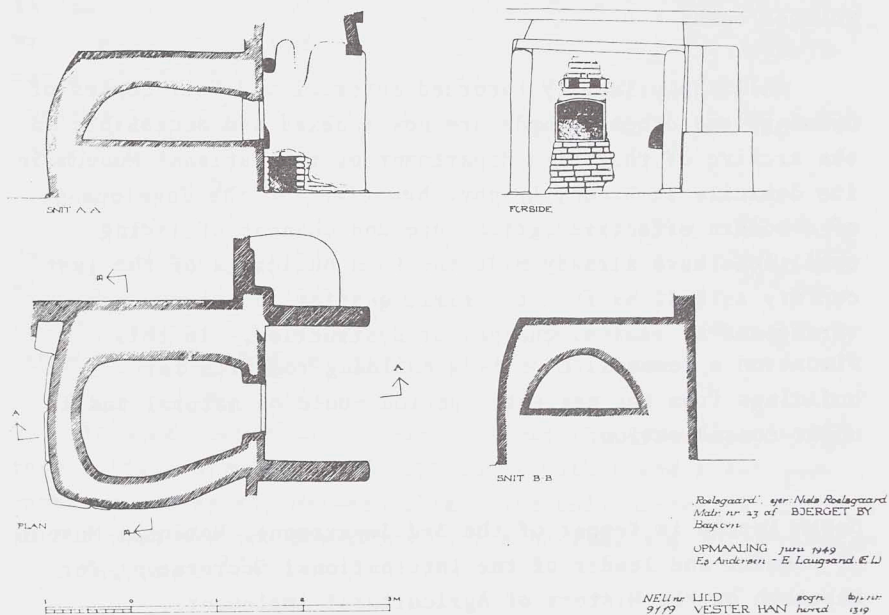


Reconstruction.

north of the Limfiord, South Schleswig and Lolland were dealt with. In 1956, Lolland-Falster and the rest of Zealand were finished, and the investigation in Funen started and continued until 1960 with the small islands south of Funen and Bornholm included for the second time. The farm building research-work stopped in 1960.

From 1946 to his death in 1958, Svend Jespersen directed the campaigns for the department.

The bread oven in a farmhouse in the parish of Lild, north-west Jutland, measured by Ester Anderson and Erik Laugsand in 1949.



The practical organisation for the field work

As mentioned there was a project each summer during which the chosen region was visited. Participants in these projects were a "museum team" of six persons. They operated in three groups each with two persons - one keeper from the museum, and one student. These groups found the old buildings, made interviews with special questions to the owners, for instance concerning the linguistic terms for constructional

details, chimney arrangements etc. A questionnaire as such did not exist. They also photographed and selected the buildings valuable enough to be visited by the next team, the architects, who measured and recorded plans, constructions etc. The team of architects consisted also of 6 persons divided into two groups, one with 4 persons, and one with two persons, always with a directing trained architect and some younger ones.

All the primarily recorded material and fair copies of drawings and other records are now indexed and accessible in the archive of the third department of the National Museum in its domicile in Brede, Lyngby. Now time and the development of a modern effective agriculture and changes of living conditions, have already made the farm buildings of the last century as well as from the first quarter of our own century threatened by radical changes or destruction. In this situation a resumption of farm building research for buildings from the neglected period would be natural and is under consideration.

Grith Lerche is Keeper of the 3rd department, National Museum of Denmark and leader of the International Secretariat for Research on the History of Agricultural Implements.

Literature :

MICHELSSEN, PETER: The Investigations of Old Rural Buildings,
p. 51-76 in : Dansk Folkemuseums &
Frilandsmuseet.
History and Activities, edited by Holger
Rasmussen, Nationalmuseet. Copenhagen 1966.

(This article is in English and includes all references to older relevant books and articles on Danish Buildings).

Bruce Walker

REPORT ON 2 NEW STREET, SHANDWICK, ROSS-SHIRE

This property was placed under a demolition order on 14 January 1977 by the Ross & Cromarty District Council. Mrs. Jane Durham, Scotsburn House, Kildary reported this to our president and managed to delay demolition pending an investigation into possible uses for the building. A survey was organised and carried out on 9 April 1977.

The property, a single storey cottage, forms part of a row of similar cottages at the south end of the village, and faces east over the main street and the Moray Firth ⁽¹⁾. The other cottages in this row have been modernised and now have internal water supplies and sanitary facilities.

In plan form this building follows the typical Scottish farm cottage arrangement of two rooms with a mid press and entrance passageway between them. The only unusual features in the plan are the positions of the hearths and the provision of a "hallan". ⁽²⁾.

This cottage has been built onto the cottage to the south and makes use of its gable. The apparent additional length to the north room as seen from outside, may be accounted for as the thickness of the north gable, making the two rooms identical in size.

The hearths are situated against internal gables dividing the rooms at each end of the cottage from the mid press, rather than in the more usual positions on the external gables.

The cottage has been subdivided to form two one-room units. The unit to the south retains the original entrance door, passage and mid press; the unit to the north has had

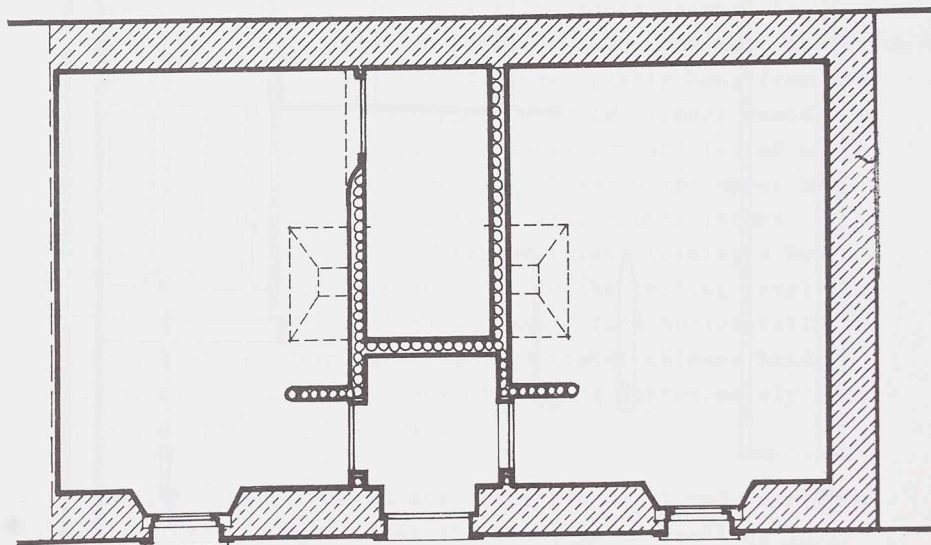
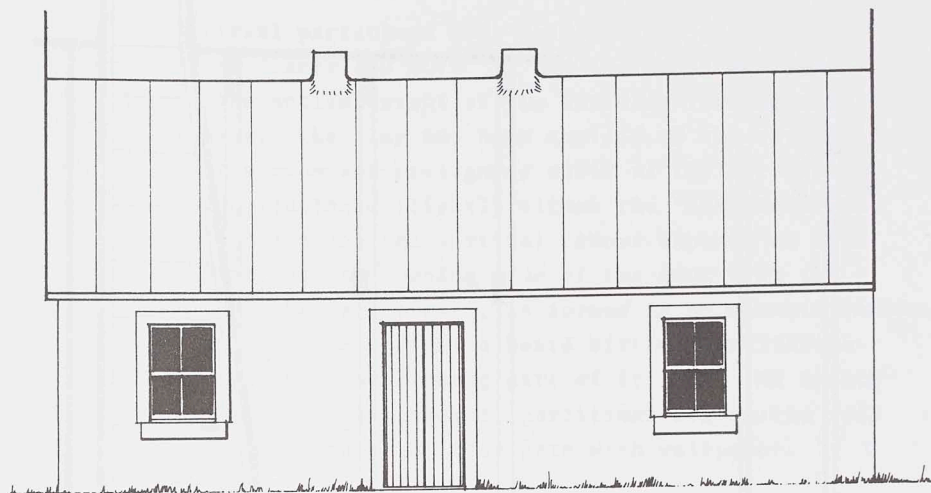
a new door slapped between the original door and the window, this door being protected by an external timber porch with a side entrance from the north. The original door into the north unit has been blocked up with a timber partition, and newspapers under the wallpaper on the south side of this former opening are dated 1935. This is possibly the correct date of the alteration as a Mrs. Vass, attending a meeting of the Seaboard Ladies Amenities Association on 22 September 1977 to discuss the future of the building, recalled her father building the timber porch some time before the outbreak of World War Two. A photograph of "New Street, Shandwick, from the west (south) in the 1930's" showing this cottage (with two timber chimney heads, thatched roof and without the timber porch or the second door) appears in a local history⁽³⁾.

In constructional terms the building is much more interesting.

The external walls are of dark red sandstone rubble, bound with clay mortar and finished externally with white limewash. The internal surface is also finished in the same manner but this surface is now wallpapered. There are raised red sandstone margins to the original openings and a small rectangular red sandstone cope at eaves level.

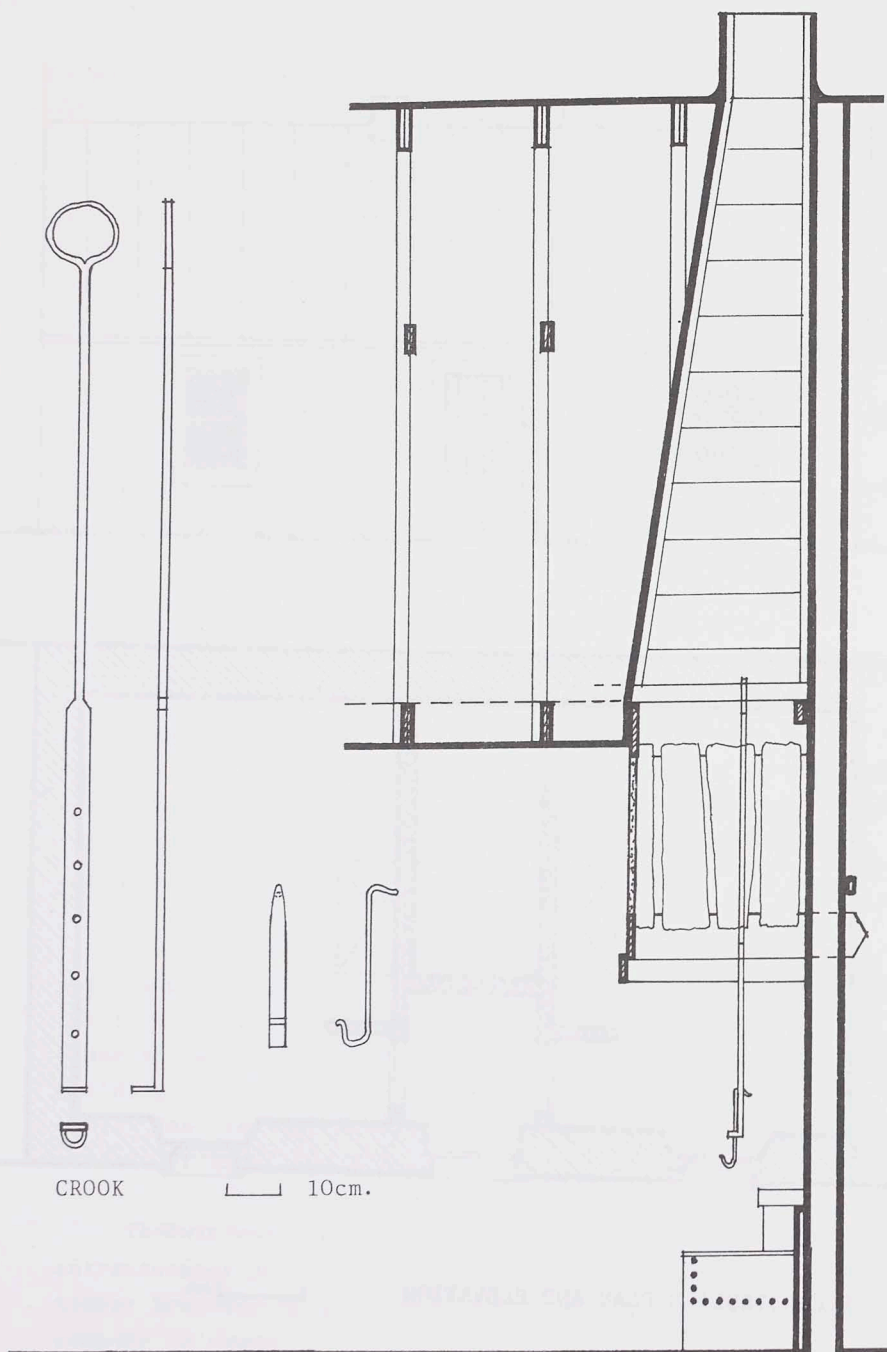
The roof is of sarking on closed timber couples at approximately 45cm centres and covered externally with black tarred felt laid from ridge to eaves. Some members of the Seaboard Ladies Amenities Association recalled that the building had been thatched prior to the present tarred felt roof. The beam filling between the roof couples of the present roof is of turf.

The windows are four pane case and sash timber and the entrance door is of vertical 'V' jointed tongued and grooved timber boarding in two leaves as is typical in early nineteenth century cottages.



RECONSTRUCTED PLAN AND ELEVATION

1 m.



SECTION THROUGH PREAS

_____ 1 m.

The internal partitions and 'hallans' are all constructed of 'cabers and mott',⁽⁴⁾ and the cross partitions are carried the entire height of the building forming thin internal gables. The clay has been applied to the vertical cabers from the room and passageway sides of the partitions, the clay being flattened slightly within the 'mid press' to form a key, but leaving the vertical cabers exposed on that side. The jamb, on the opening side of the door from the south room into the 'mid press', is formed in an unusual manner, the clay being tapered against a board sitting parallel to the line of the wall and forming part of it. All the smooth finished surfaces to the internal partitions are coated with white limewash covered at a later date with wallpaper.

The south room chimney is a type of timber canopy known locally as a "preas"⁽⁵⁾. The chimney in the north room has been replaced in concrete block. The south chimney is 123cm wide and projects 63cm from the caber and mott partition. This takes the form of a box 84cm deep partly hung from the ceiling joists and partly supported by two timber members driven between the cabers of the partition and linked at the outer ends with a trimming member. Between the upper and lower supporting members are fixed wide timber lathes (reminiscent of the sides of orange boxes) forming a key for a coating of lime plaster. Above the ceiling level the chimney is constructed of thin planks, laid horizontally on light timber supports tapering to a timber chimney head approximately 30cm square and projecting approximately 30cm above the ridge of the house.

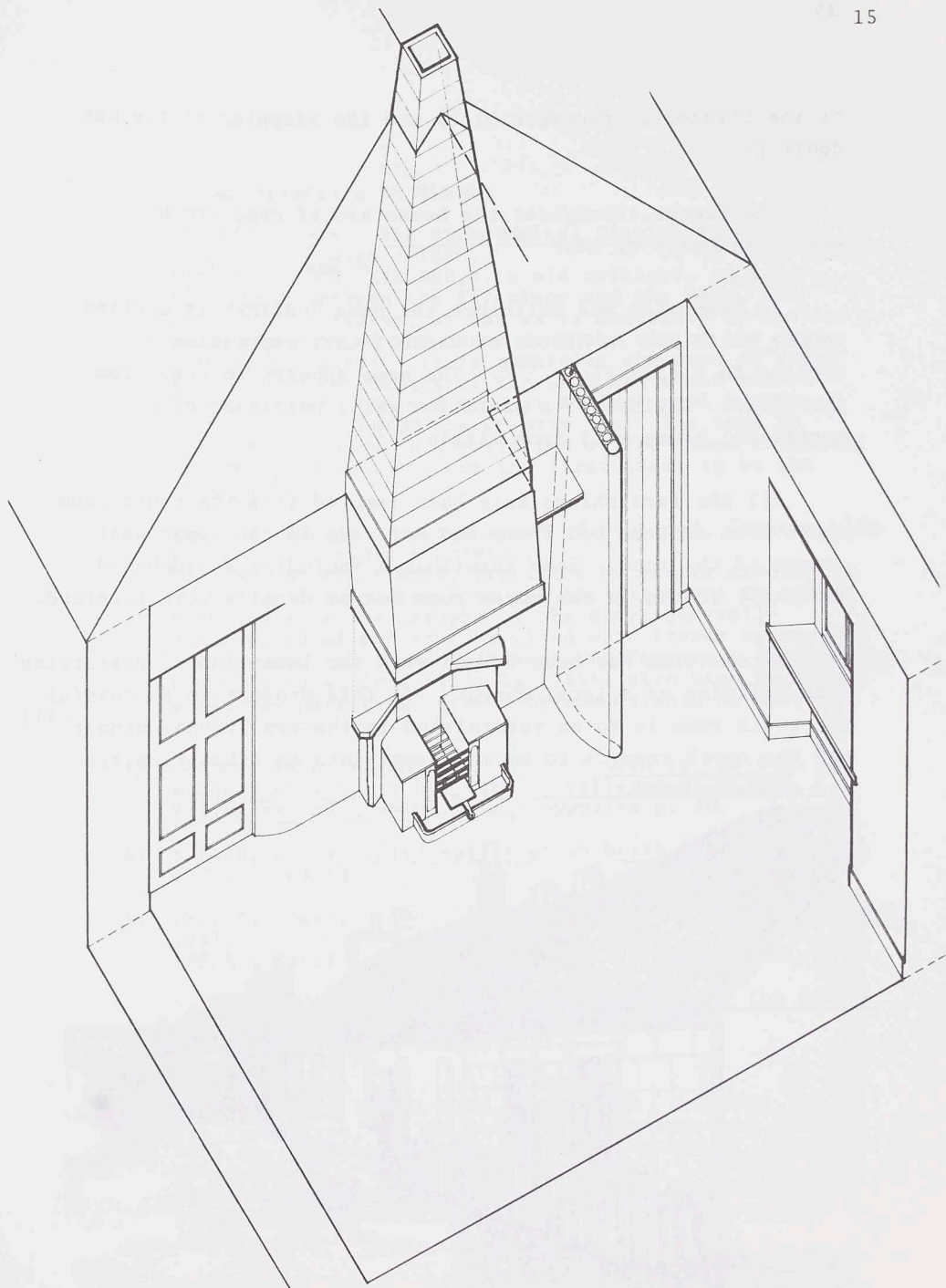
Within the timber chimney is a 6mm metal rod forming a rattle tree⁽⁶⁾ supported at the front on the ceiling joist from which the canopy chimney is suspended and at the back on a 17 x 3cm timber bearer running the entire width of the chimney and fixed back to the cabers of the internal wall. At each end of this bearer are blacksmith made nails, projecting slightly from the timber surface, and onto which is spliced a pièce of rope. The middle of this rope is now burnt away

and its former function is not clear but it may have had something to do with the practice of curing fish within the smoke of the chimney.

The hearth appears to have been constructed in two separate stages. The original hearth was possibly at floor level and was backed by a flagstone on edge. At each end of this flagstone tapered stones project to form a dished back to the fire area forming a barrier between the fire and the caber and mott partition. The present hearth is raised with cast iron firebars and cheeks supported between brick stands. It has been built against the original stone back, making use of its fireproof qualities.

A strap crook⁽⁷⁾ hangs from the rattle tree over the centre of the fire. The crook is 160cm long and 2cm wide from the rattle tree to within 70cm of its base where it widens to 4cm. At the top the strap is split to form a circular loop about 10cm in internal diameter through which passes the rattle tree. At the bottom there is a "D" shaped projecting foot, 3½cm from front to back and open in the centre to take the "gib" when in its lowest position. This "gib" is 28cm long by 3cm wide and is designed to support the pot or kettle over the fire. It tapers towards the top where it is turned back to form a hook which is located in one of a series of holes in the wider section of the crook and can thus be raised or lowered to suit the requirements of the cook, and the state of the fire. There is a small timber shelf between the canopy of the chimney and the "hallan".

The north room was not surveyed as the owner had not at that time granted access but it appears to have a similar layout. It has been altered considerably with the rebuilding



Axonometric projection of room containing the PREAS, the door behind the hallan leads to the entrance passage, the other door to the mid press.

of the chimney in concrete block and the slapping of the new doorway.

The floors throughout the house are of concrete but were originally of clay ⁽⁸⁾.

In Shandwick and Balintore the name "callow" is applied to the walls but in Hilton of Cadboll this expression is applied to a clay floor ⁽⁹⁾. The name appears to come from the Gaelic "Cailbhe" : a partition wall; wattle or clay partition; house wall from within ⁽¹⁰⁾.

All the furnishings have been removed from the south room apart from an iron bed frame and mattress in the south west corner of the room. Some furnishings including a sideboard and chair remain in the north room but no details were recorded.

A committee has been formed with the intention of preserving this building as a local museum. If this project is successful the south room is to be refurnished in the traditional manner ⁽¹¹⁾ and the north room is to be converted into an exhibition area and sales counter.



NEW STREET, SHANDWICK, FROM THE SOUTH, 1930's
 Drawn from a photograph (3).

NOTES

- 1) OS map reference NH 858749
- 2) JAMIESON, John : The Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language : 1880.
HALLAN, HALLON, HALLAND, s. In old cottages, an inner wall built between the fireplace and the door, and extending backwards, as far as is necessary to shelter the inner part of the house from the air of the door when it is opened. It is generally composed of stone and clay to the height of the side walls and brace. At this height the mud or "cat & clay" wall begins, and is carried up to the chimney top. The term is sometimes applied to a partition of this kind extending to the opposite wall, but the first seems to be the original sense.

National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Country Life Archives : Buildings General.

HALLAN : An inner wall, partition or screen erected in a cottage between the door and the fireplace to act as a shield from the draught of the door, generally constructed of mud or clay mixed with stones or moulded over a wood and straw framework (MacTaggart : Gallovidian Encyclopaedia, 1824, 251; Cai 1956) also used to denote a similar partition between byre and stable or byre and living room.

- 3) GORDON, Anne, MACDONALD, Jessie : Down to the Sea. An account of life in the fishing villages of Hilton, Balintore and Shandwick /nd/ opposite p. 40.
- 4) WALKER, Bruce : Clay Buildings in North East Scotland : 1977. 7 and 13-15.
- 5) DWELLY, Edward : The Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary 1941.
PREAS : Gaelic spelling of "press" (Cupboard, case).

HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND : Dictionary of the Gaelic Language : 1828.
PREAS : A press, a wooden case.
- 6) JAMIESON, John : op. cit. : 1880.
RANTLE TREE , RANNEL-TREE, RANLE-TREE, RAN-TREE, s. The crook tree, or the beam which extends from the fore to the back part of a chimney, on which the crook is suspended.
"Rannel-tree, cross beam in a chimney, on which the crook hangs : sometimes called a RANNEBAUK : North Grose's Prov. Gl.

- 7) Ibid.
CROOK, CRUKE, CRUCK, s "The iron chain with its appropriate hooks, by which the vessels for cooking are hung over the fire" S. Gl Surv. Nairn.
"The hook at the end of the chain is called the GIB".S.
 - 8) Information from Mr. Vass.
 - 9) Information from Seaboard Ladies Amenities Association at meeting of 22 September 1977.
GORDON, Anne, MACDONALD, Jessie : op. cit. : /nd/. 44.
 - 10) DWELLY, Edward : op. cit. : 1941.
 - 11) GORDON, Anne, MACDONALD, Jessie : op. cit. : /nd/. 44-47.
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MAIN STREET, INVERGAIR, GAIRLOCH

Scottish Educational Film Association : CROFTER BOY
by Thames and Clyde, 1955.

Janet McBain

SCOTTISH FILM COUNCIL. ARCHIVE PROJECT

The Scottish Film Council's Archive was established in November 1976 by the appointment of an archivist, clerical officer and technical assistant to staff the project. The material, which was to form the nucleus of the collection of film, had been accumulating on the premises for several years and had been acquired through withdrawals from the Scottish Central Film Library, from footage used in productions by Educational Films of Scotland and from copies of amateur films - activities which all had associations with the Scottish Film Council (or Scottish Council for Educational Technology, to use its newer name). Other material had been deposited by relatives of film makers, by commercial organisations and by individuals who wished to ensure the safe-keeping of their films. It was the footage from this 'public' sector that proved to be the most varied and we therefore decided to appeal to the public at large for 'old movie' of Scotland, whatever gauge, quality or subject. In addition, we began to circulate cinemas all over the country for films stored away in cupboards or lying forgotten in the projection box. These appeals, coupled with the publicity afforded by press, radio and television, who thought the venture newsworthy in its infancy, resulted in the acquisition of a variety of archive films. These include for example, several collections of locally produced newsreels, annual recordings of Dumfries Guid Nychburris Day in the 1930's, amateur footage such as film of the construction of the George V Bridge in Glasgow 1924-27, and commercial films dealing with the retail trade, jute manufacture and engineering.

At present, our priorities lie in locating and preserving archive footage in private hands, although we are also anxious to promote interest in the collection as source material. Given satisfactory physical conditions, archive material can be consulted on the premises and, under certain conditions,

can be made available for use in lectures or other situations. Obviously, each enquiry must be judged on its merits, as it would be irresponsible of us to put at risk the only remaining copy of a piece of archive film by lending it out for projection.

In addition to material on deposit here, we are also compiling a register of archive film held outwith the Council. As we have to rely on donations to augment our collection, it is not always possible to acquire films once we have found them. In cases like this, where the owner wishes to retain the footage, we borrow the film, shotlist it and keep a record of the content in our register. In this way, we can redirect enquiries for footage to other sources.

Archive film has great potential as a source of visual evidence. Like any form of documentation, however, some allowance must be made for influence by the originator. Newsreels have been held up as an example of how the camera can impart a bias.

With regard to the particular interest of the S.V.B.W.G. we would be only too happy to assist in the provision of visual material, be it of prefabs, tenements or crofts. It is not really feasible to summarise our film material which relates to vernacular building as it consists of odd shots of various buildings contained in several different films. We can supply information more easily in answer to a request for a certain type of shot, for example, 'crofts on Harris before the war'. If anyone has an enquiry, however vague or loosely defined, we would be delighted to hear from them.

Janet McBain

Archivist

The Scottish Film Council

16-17 Woodside Terrace

Glasgow

Harry Gordon Slade

ROTHIEMAY : AN 18TH CENTURY KILN BARN

At the Mains of Rothiemay there is an unusually complete kiln barn. Spalding makes two references to such a barn at Rothiemay in 1634. There is no evidence, however, to show that this barn is the one now standing. In 1741 William Duff, Lord Braco bought Rothiemay. On his way from Banff to Rothiemay, on all sides he saw smoke rising from the small kilns of the crofts and farms, and said : "I will mak a' these lums reek through ae lum (anglice "I will make all these chimnies smoke through one chimney"). It is said that the little barns were destroyed and the tenants were forced to bring their grain to be dried at Lord Braco's fine new barn.

The 1740's is an early date for a farm building of the sophistication of the Rothiemay barn, but Lord Braco was dead by 1763 and the tradition is strong that he built the barn soon after acquiring the estate. Nor is this the only formal estate building intended in the north-east of Scotland. Among the drawings at Craigston is the design for a new poultry house which dates certainly from before 1756 and possibly as early as 1746. A date as early as the 1740's may therefore be possible.

The barn is a slate-roofed stone building measuring 78ft 4ins by 20ft 2½ins externally, with walls of slurry-harled field rubble, or heathens with granite dressings. In the 19th century, when it went out of use as a kiln barn, a gardener's cottage was formed on the ground floor at the eastern end, and part of the same floor was partitioned off to form a game larder, but otherwise there has been little change.

The barn is divided into two floors, with a granary and threshing or winnowing floor below and a storage loft above, and the kiln. The kiln rises the full height and occupies a

quarter of the area of the barn, being 24ft square overall.

There are doors in the north and south walls, and the loft is reached by an internal staircase, originally of stone, and by a door in the east wall. Other original openings on the ground floor are four air slits, but the loft has eight windows, four in each of the long sides. In the upper walls of the kiln are three ventilation openings, 12in square.

To the east of the ground floor doorways is the granary and to the west, where the floor is some 12ins lower, is the working area associated with the kiln. The space between the doors was no doubt used for winnowing. The only original feature in the eastern half is an aumbry-like recess, 13ins wide by 19ins deep, in the north wall between the door and the ventilation slit. Its purpose is not clear, but it may have been used to hold a lamp. The ventilation slits are $9\frac{1}{2}$ ins wide by 9ins deep, the embrasures with canted jambs widening to 1ft 6ins on the internal wall. There is no rebate and the openings, which are 3ft 10ins high do not appear to have been secured by shutters. Each one was however protected by a vertical iron bar.

The two doorways are 6ft 2ins high and 3ft 6ins externally, widening to 4ft on the internal face. The external lintels are granite but the wall above each door is carried chiefly on three timber lintels. The doors, of which the one on the north side survives intact, are single-hung double leaf doors hung on the west side on iron pins, and each can be opened for its full width as a single leaf. If this is not necessary then the larger leaf, which is 2ft 2ins wide can be folded back, presumably to obtain some measure of draught control for winnowing. Of the south door, only the ironwork survives. The doors were secured by wooden draw bars, which however, presupposes that there was some-one inside the building to operate them. There is no evidence of the original nature of the floor in this or in the western end of the barn.

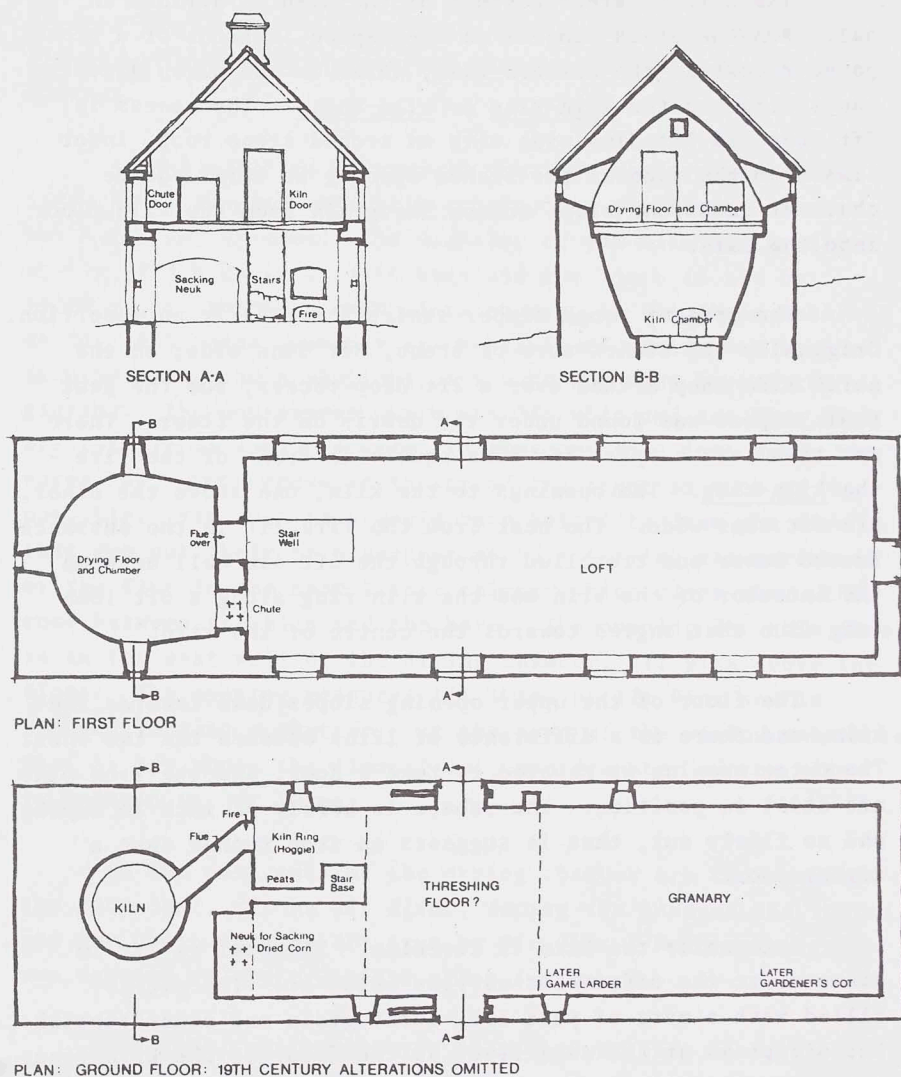


FIG. 1.

ROTHIEMAY: KILN BARN



The working area in front of the kiln is divided in half. On the south side is an open space in front of a stone paved recess in the eastern wall, while on the north side are the stairs and the kiln-ring or kiln-ingle. The recess is 3ft deep and 7ft 3ins wide with an arched stone roof. Inset 4ins from the face of the arched opening is 12ins square chute of sandstone slabs to run the grain from the kiln floor into the barn.

The present rough timber stairs are clearly an insertion. Originally the stairs were of stone, 3ft 5ins wide; on the north side they arched over a 2ft deep recess, for the peat fuel. A peat was found under the debris on the floor. There was then left a space 4ft 5ins square in front of the fire - the kiln-ring. The openings to the kiln, one above the other, are 2ft 9ins wide. The heat from the fire lit in the entrance to the lower one travelled through the 5ft 6in wall between the interior of the kiln and the kiln ring along a 6ft 10in long flue that angled towards the centre of the kiln.

The floor of the upper opening slopes down towards the kiln, and there is a difference of 12ins between the two ends. The outer opening is rebated to take a door, and the iron pins are still in position. The rebate is barely an inch in depth, and so finely cut, that it suggests an iron rather than a timber door.

Internally the kiln is circular. The bowl is 7ft in diameter at the offset but narrows below it. The pit is filled with a mass of peat ash, burnt grain and other rubbish. The offset is at the same level as the floor of the kiln ring, but is not continuous as it pierced by the internal opening of the flue.

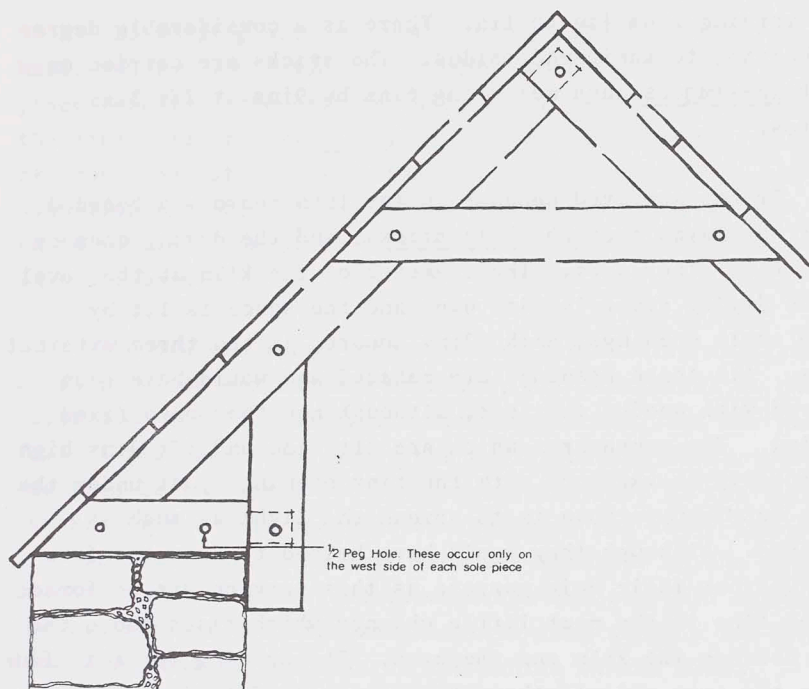
The drying floor is 8ft 2½ins above the off-set and is remarkably intact. It consists of kiln-sticks, measuring 2ins by 1½ins, laid on their broad sides, the gaps between

them varying from $\frac{1}{2}$ in to 1in. There is a considerable degree of charring to their undersides. The sticks are carried on six kiln-simmers each measuring 6ins by 9ins at 2ft 3ins centres.

It has survived because in the 19th century a boarded floor was layed over the kiln-sticks, and the drying chamber was put to other uses. The diameter of the kiln at the level of the drying floor is 14ft 6ins and the space is lit by three small openings, each 12ins square, in the three external walls. All these openings are rebated and would have been secured with wooden shutters, although now they have fixed glazing. The embrasures which are 2ft wide and 4ft 9ins high are totally at variance with the tiny openings just under the eaves but their purpose is to spread the light as much as possible. Although they would have helped to draw the fire this was not their main purpose as this service was performed by the flue in the neat little chimney which rises above the roof between the kiln and the barn. The opening for this flue is in the east wall of the drying chamber, 7ft 9ins above the floor. The opening measures 1ft 10ins by 1ft 9ins and is rebated to take a shutter. At the head of the window embrasures, that is 6ft above the floor level, the diameter of the kiln is reduced to 9ft 10ins.

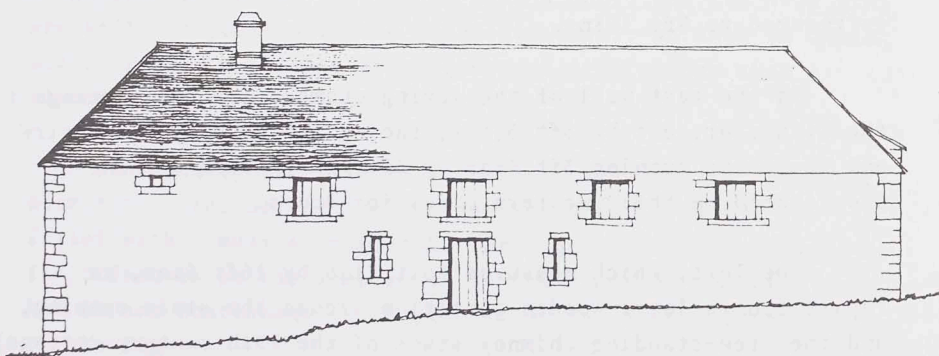
In the east wall of the drying chamber are two openings : the kiln door, 6ft by 3ft 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins, facing the head of the stairs and the chute opening 3ft 4ins by 3ft 9ins. Both openings are rebated on their western sides for doors.

The loft, which measures 55ft 7ins by 16ft 5ins, is (apart from a later wooden partition around the stair opening, and the free-standing chimney stack of the 19th century cottage) largely as it was built. The walls are covered with a rough lime plaster, and the eight windows, with splayed and rebated jambs, average 3ft 4ins in height and 3ft in width with the internal openings 3ft 10ins wide. The sills are all at floor



DETAIL OF BARN ROOF

12 0 12ins
SCALE OF INCHES



SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE AS FOR PLANS

FIG. 2.
ROTHIEMAY: KILN BARN

level, and the openings are checked with $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins rebates to take the wooden shutters. In the centre of the east wall is the sack door, 6ft $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins by 3ft, with rebated and splayed jambs. In order to give the door sufficient height the roof timbers have been framed to form a dormer with slate hung cheeks. The sack door and surviving window shutters are double-board - the outer face vertical and the inner face horizontal - the boards being secured together with iron nails.

To the east of the barn is a much altered 18th century farm house, which has been built so close as to prevent the passage of carts between it and the barn. This would suggest that the house is later than the barn : it is unlikely that the two buildings would have been planned in such a way as to make the sack door useless. The height above the ground, and the absence of any sign of a hoist make it likely that the sacks were meant to be loaded directly onto the carts.

The future of this barn must be a matter of concern to all who are interested in the early planned agricultural buildings of Scotland. Although derelict it is still structurally sound, and could be restored at comparatively little cost. It has no future other than as a preserved building, for conversion to any other use must of necessity destroy, or conceal its particular and peculiar qualities. In the great leap forward that the preservationist have made from the middle ages to the industrial revolution it is unfortunate that the vernacular and more particularly the agricultural vernacular, buildings of the 18th century have been all but overlooked.

I would like to record my thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Traquair of Rothiemay who made the barn available to me.

Bruce Walker

NOTES ON COTTAGES WITH CROSS PASSAGES IN INVER,
TAIN, ROSS-SHIRE

At the meeting of the Seaboard Ladies Amenities Association held in the Village Hall, Balintore on 22 September 1977, a Mrs. J. Vass of Shandwick reported the existence of a timber preas ⁽¹⁾ in a cottage at Shore Street, Inver owned by Mrs. Helen Mary Ross.

The house was visited on 23 September 1977. Mrs. Ross was in hospital and access could not be obtained, but a similar house also in Shore Street and owned by Mr. John Skinner, was examined ⁽²⁾. These two houses were the only two in the village where the timber preas is still used to vent the kitchen fire but external surveying throughout the village of Inver and the adjoining village of Skinner town, Tarbat Parish confirmed the position of this flue and its relationship to doors and windows as typical of the houses in both villages.

Most of the houses sit on an east-west axis and face south. The house is entered from the south into a cross passage leading to a door in the rear of the building. On entering the passage there is a door to the right leading into a bedroom at the east end of the house. This bedroom has a south facing window and a gable fireplace. In some of the houses examined there seems insufficient space to the east of the entrance to provide a bedroom and in these houses there may only be storage space off the passageway. At the north end a door to the left enters the kitchen. The fireplace is situated behind the west wall of the passage and a "hallan" ⁽³⁾ protects the fire from the draught of the door at the same time providing a seat for the beam that supports the front of the preas. The kitchen has windows to both the south and the north. At the corner of the kitchen diagonally opposite the door from the cross passage is the door to "the room" which also has a gable fireplace and a window to the

south. All the internal walls are of caber and mott construction⁽⁴⁾
 Mr. Skinner calls the support for the pot chain a "clo"⁽⁵⁾
 and the passageway he calls the "culach hole"⁽⁶⁾.

The house was formerly thatched which has resulted in an unusual memorial panel on the outside of this building. It is carved in two circular red sandstone panels one above the other, and each with a rope border, and reads "My Dog Thatch" : "Sept. 1947 - May 1961". It commemorates Mr. Skinner's dog "Thatch" so called because a lump of thatch fell from the roof and "christened" him when he was being carried into the house for the first time.⁽⁷⁾

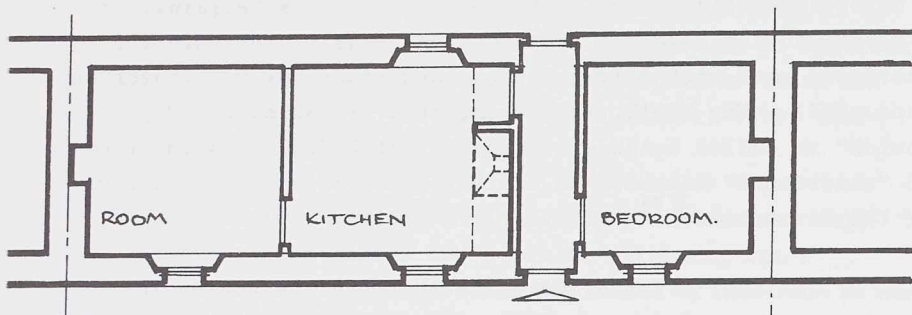
Mr. Skinner's father formerly thatched the house. The existing corrugated iron roof was put on by Mr. Skinner after his father's death as he had not learned the thatching technique.

A Mrs. Haddo (nee Skinner) reported that all the houses in the village had formerly been thatched with bent grass and clay and that there were clay holes outside the houses to supply clay for the repairing of the roofs. She also claimed that whin had been the main fuel with dry divots used at the back of the fire to keep it in. The internal finish to the house walls had been limewash applied direct to the clay surface. Wallpaper was introduced in the 1930's, the paper coming from a firm in Galashiels.

Inver formerly belonged to the Cadboll Estates and was sold in 1919. Each house at that time had about two acres of ground and most of the people were involved in fishing. There were also thirty-two small ponies in the village. Another method of augmenting the family income was the manufacture of bedcovers made by twisting scraps of material into thin rolls. These were then linked together with thin thread which was twisted through the rolls tying them together. Mr. Skinner still uses one of these covers on his bed, and a number of years ago, presented the National Museum of Antiquities with an anchor shaped object which was used in the making of

the covers.

The author would be grateful to hear of any other examples of cottages with cross passage plans or of any building types from which this particular plan form could have evolved.



NOTES

- 1) DWELLY, Edward : The Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary 1930.
PREAS : Gaelic spelling of "press" (cupboard-case)

HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND : Dictionary of the Gaelic Language : 1828.
PREAS : a press, a wooden case.
- 2) O.S. Map Reference NH 864828
- 3) JAMIESON, John : The Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language : 1880.
HALLAN, HALLON, HALLAND,s : an inner wall built between the fire place and the door.
- 4) WALKER, Bruce : Clay Buildings in North East Scotland : 1977. 7 and 13-15.
- 5) DWELLY, Edward : Op. Cit. 1930.
CLÒ : a nail, peg or pin.
CLÀR : board, plank, spoke.
- 6) Ibid.
CÙLAG - AIG s.f. : turf placed on the back of a peat fire.
CÙLAIBH AN TAIGHE : behind the house, or the back part of the house.
CÙLAIST : back place, back wing of a dwelling, recess, wall press, inner apartment of old cottages in Galedom
best room or "parlour"
- 7) SKINNER, J. : The first and last dogs of John the Wildfowler 1977. 1.

Joan Auld

SCOTTISH RECORDS ASSOCIATION

The Scottish Records Association was established in 1977. Its objects are "to arouse public interest in, and create an enlightened public opinion on matters affecting records; to disseminate information and to promote co-operation and the interchange of views upon matters relating to the custody, preservation, accessibility and use of records" and related source materials. It is hoped that the Association will help to establish better communication between owners, custodians and users than has been the case in the past.

A most successful launching conference was held in Edinburgh in November, 1977 on the general theme of Archives. Speakers were representative of the three groups, i.e. owners, custodians and users, and included our own chairman, Alexander Fenton. The 1978 conference will be held in Dundee and other activities are planned. Subscription rates have been set at £1.00 for individual and £2.00 for institutions, and membership has already reached about 300.

The aims of this new association may well strike a chord with members of the S.V.B.W.G. who may have had difficulty in the past in finding information on historical sources to back up their survey work. Further information and application forms can be obtained from the Secretary of the Association, Mr. C.A. McLaren, Keeper of Manuscripts, The Library, Kings College, Aberdeen.

Alexander Fenton

BOOKS OF NOTE ON BUILDINGS

Vernacular buildings vary in appearance from one country to another according to the materials of which they are constructed and the needs they are required to serve. Nevertheless, there are always common factors, but in order to appreciate what these are, especially when their translation into structural form appears different because of different materials, a wide knowledge is necessary. A reading of the literature from other countries may produce fresh perspectives in this and other respects. It is with this thought in mind, allied to the question of methods of approach in recording and analysing buildings, that the following list has been compiled. It does not try to be exhaustive, but refers to a selection of books that have significance for our purposes.

Karl-Olov Arnstberg Datering av knuttimrade hus i Sverige
(Nordiska Museet) Stockholm 1976. 314pp.

This illustrated handbook on the dating of corner-timbered houses in Sweden has an English summary (pp. 302-6), a glossary of terms, and a useful bibliography. The chapters deal with tools, building techniques, building types (dwelling-house, work places, animal - and store-houses), construction and decorative details.

According to a review by Arne Berg (Ethnologia Scandinavica 1977. 194-5), the book assembles the criteria by which log-buildings can be dated. The form of the exterior corner or "knut" is often used as a criterion, if all others fail. Berg points out that there are differences here between Sweden and Norway in the formation of the "neck" or "cheeking" on the side of the log. The practical effect is that Swedish forms have longer life-spans. There are few or no post-Reformation

examples in Norway. Arnstberg's conclusions, therefore, cannot be generalised, nor does he take much account of Norwegian or Finnish material. In general, each group of criteria is analysed thoroughly and presented with earliest and latest known occurrences, and an indication of the main period of popularity.

Arne Berg Norske Gardstun (Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning) Oslo 1968. 340pp.

This is a systematic study of farm-villages (or "fairmtouns" in the old sense of the word) in Norway, region by region. Though written in Norwegian, it has an English index of terms used in the illustrations. The latter are numerous, and are drawn by the author. Using photographs, maps and field surveys, he has constructed a series of isometric drawings in which the buildings in each farm-village can be seen in relationship to each other. To some extent the drawings are also reconstructions on the basis of information gathered from questionnaires and a total of about 250 informants. Only the basic forms are presented, with the intention of letting specialists in other parts of Europe see how these forms were localised or had spread. They are also related to the underlying social and agrarian systems. The book is capable of being widely used even without a knowledge of Norwegian.

Lasse Brunnström, ed., Ombyggnad och Restaurering av äldre byggnader och miljöer.
Studieförlaget 1976.

A book on the reconstruction and restoration of older buildings and their environments, based on the proceedings of a conference held in Umeå in 1974. It is in two sections, one dealing with theory, one with practice. Under theory fall contributions on the building as cultural history, older building techniques, legislation, and methods of financing. A historical

view of the subject is provided. The theoretical section deals with listing, the restoration of buildings and the restoration of towns. This well-illustrated book is used for student teaching in Swedish universities. Available from Studieförlaget, Box 386, 751 06 Uppsala I, Sweden.

Ove Hidemark, Elisabet Stavenow-Hidemark, Göran Söderström, Axel Unnerbäck, Så renoveras torp och gårdar. ICA-förlaget Västerås. 1974. 174pp.

In these days, empty buildings are being increasingly bought by town-dwellers who want a foothold in the country. Many are brought up to modern living standards without sufficient thought for environmental integrity. This book looks at the problem in Sweden and is a practical handbook to the restoration of old houses, especially farms and smaller buildings. The message of this well-illustrated book is :... "only carry out the most necessary repairs. Use if possible the same material and building technique. Then you run less risk of spoiling what is old and in itself worthwhile". A sensitively written and valuable book.

Alan Hjorth Rasmussen Stråtage Arkitektens Forlag 1966. 59pp.

This is a survey of Danish methods of thatching, with maps showing the distribution of the main types. There is an English summary, pp. 50-53.

Jørgen Rasmussen og Ole Meyer Gamle Teglev ærker. Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck. Copenhagen 1968.

A picture-book on old tile-works published by the Tile Industry's Technical Service, with parallel texts in Danish and English. It seeks to record functional buildings of makeshift character that are disappearing very quickly. In

type and appearance they resemble the older tile-works in this country, for example the one at Blackpots, Whitehills, near Banff, which existed from at least 1845 and has only now been demolished.

Axel Steensberg Den Danske Bondegård Forum. Copenhagen
1974. 187pp.

A survey of old farm buildings in Denmark from prehistoric times to the present day. It is a detailed, well-illustrated study of the major changes in the forms of buildings in relation to economic and organisational change. Regional variation within Denmark is also made apparent.

Axel Steensberg Gamle Danske Bøndergårde P. Haase &
Søns Forlag.
Copenhagen 1962. 173pp.

An illustrated survey of old Danish farmhouses with an introductory text (English summary 30-31) and annotations to each photograph. The period represented is c. 1750-1850. Denmark is divided into nine main regions for the purpose of this study.

Bjarne Stoklund Bondegård og Byggeskik før 1850,
Copenhagen 1969. 94pp.

A study of pre-1850 farms and building customs, well illustrated. Its purpose is to survey the study of old Danish farm buildings, including the history of the subject and the changing methods of approach. Construction and typology are also examined, and there is a chapter on the dwelling house as such.

Adelhart Zippelius

Das Bauernhaus am unteren deutschen
NiederrheinVerlag A Martini & Gruttenfien GMBH
1957. 206pp.

The author examines farmhouses on the German Lower Rhine, looking at their history, structural details, and types. Outbuildings are also treated, including octagonal horse-walks like those found in Scotland (p. 159), with similar forms of roof-timbering. Well-illustrated with diagrams and photographs.

The said Robert Douglass complained that as he had built new Houses for Thomas Proctor, James Thom and William Winder and that they have not thatched the same which is a prejudice to the master by the Rotting of the Roof wherefore its Enacted that betwixt and the first Day of Aprile next that the said Houses shall be thatched under such a penalty as shall be thought Reasonable

It was also Represented to the Maylie that there were more useless Inhabitants in the Colon of Inglesdon than there ought to be And after Enquiry its found that each plough in Inglesdon by old Custom should have two double houses and one half which furnishes five sheeters for each plough wherefore its Enacted that this shall be the Rule in all time coming And that no graft houses shall be allowed more from and after Whitsunday next Excepting William Gray and people who have been long Residents And provided to poverty and cannot claim privilege in any paroch
 Andrew Binnif Clerk

Joan Auld

HISTORICAL SOURCES FOR VERNACULAR BUILDING RESEARCH

In the S.V.B.W.G.'s Newsletter No.2, two writers drew the attention of members to some of the historical sources available for the study of vernacular building. Ingval Maxwell was concerned primarily with the printed sources, maps and plans which could be used to augment field studies of farm buildings particularly for 18th-19th centuries and Peter Hill indicated the useful documentary evidence to be found for 17th century buildings in baron court records, tacks and rentals.

Relevant documentary evidence increases in both quantity and variety throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and from the end of the 18th century is particularly characterised by the more systematic keeping of accounts which is one of the trade marks of the agricultural improvers. Much of this valuable material exists in private collections of estate papers some of which have been deposited in public repositories, particularly the Scottish Record Office and the National Library of Scotland. Information on these can be had from the printed catalogues of these institutions and updated from the lists of recent acquisitions printed with their Annual Reports. The S.R.O. also produces source lists on various topics including architecture. Information on collections deposited elsewhere, for example in university libraries, local record offices and libraries, can be found in the Historical Manuscripts Commission's List of Accessions to Repositories, which is published annually and also in the surveys of the National Register of Archives (Scotland).

The main function of the N.R.A. (S), however, is to locate and list records of historical importance remaining in private hands and the resulting surveys include material

which may be of interest to members of the S.V.B.W.G. The surveys are kept in the Scottish Record Office and some have also been circulated to the university libraries. As with the S.R.O.'s own collections, source lists, including one on architecture, have been produced which so far cover about two-thirds of the surveys carried out.

The notes which follow are intended to draw the attention of members to collections surveyed by the N.R.A.(S). which may have relevant material and an attempt will be made in subsequent issues of the Newsletter to keep members up to date with news of recent surveys. The notes have been adapted from the summaries of surveys published in the Keeper's Annual Report and from the architecture source list. All further enquiries and application for access to these private papers must be made through The Secretary, The National Register of Archives (Scotland), H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh.

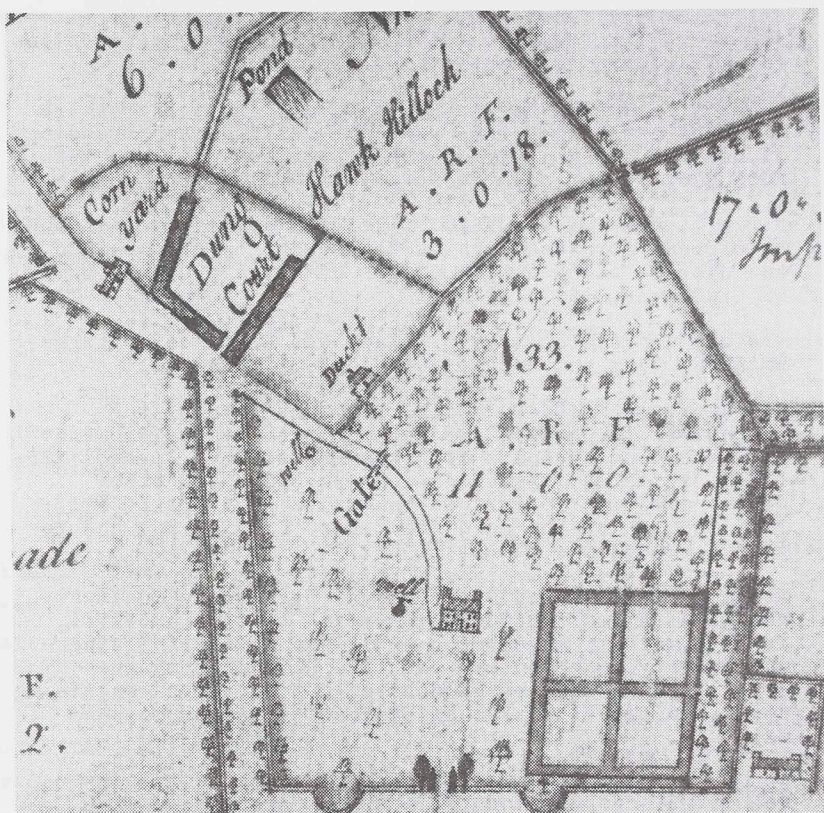
The author would be interested to hear of any hitherto unlisted collections which members may know of and such information should be addressed to the Archivist, University Library, Dundee.

Notes on N.R.A.(S). surveys

Several of the large collections of family muniments include a considerable quantity of material relating to vernacular architecture which would take up too much space to detail here. Of particular importance are the following :

- 0234 Duke of Atholl, Blair Castle; information mainly relating to Perthshire, mainly c 1730-1850. Includes plans.
- 0771 Macpherson-Grant of Ballindalloch; Banffshire, Inverness-shire, c 1790-1850
- 0776 Earl of Mansfield, Scone Palace; Perthshire, Dumfriesshire, c 1760-1840. Includes plans

Detail from plan of the Estate of GRANGE, MONIFIETH, ANGUS. Surveyor John HALDEN. 1771. (Bruce Hunter Manuscripts, Library, University of Dundee MS 17P/249).



0859 Douglas-Home of the Hirsell; Berwickshire, Lanarkshire, Angus, mainly post-1850. Includes plans from 1770, (copies in S.R.O.)

0885 Earl of Strathmore, Glamis; Angus, Perthshire, Aberdeenshire, from c 1655. Includes plans mainly late 19th-20th century.

0888 Marquis of Linlithgow, Hopetoun House; the Lothians, Fife, Dumfriesshire, c 1730-1850. (Survey continuing).

Smaller collections with items of interest include :

0247 Stewart-Meiklejohn of Edradynate, (Perthshire). Includes plan, estimate and specification of kiln, 1825-26 and valuation of meal and lint mill of Clunie, 1803.

- 0342 Maxwell-Constable of Everingham. (Deposited in East Riding County Record Office). Includes plans and estimates for farmhouses and farm buildings at Caerlaverock and Terregles, Dumfriesshire, 1820-32 and specifications for Blairquhan ice house (Ayrshire), n.d.
- 0607 Major D. Crichton-Maitland, (Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire Includes large number of plans of cottages and steadings on Houston and Neilston estates particularly late 19th-20th century but also including some from 18th century.
- 0616 D.P.H. Lennox of Woodhead. Includes specifications and some plans for steadings in Renfrewshire, c 1822-1826 and diaries and memorandum books of William Cunningham of Craigends, 1827-1852.
- 0656 Ardtornish Estate, Argyle. Includes plans of cottages, bridges, farm and estate buildings, 1872-1899.
- 874 Dr. Berry of Tayfield, Fife. Includes note of the dimensions for stable and barns, Inverdoval, 1749 and estimates and accounts for steading at Inverdoval, 1826-1827; estimates, specifications accounts and other papers relating to various buildings in Newport, 1713-1722 (house "at the cald wall") and c 1823-1861 and to Forgan school and manse, 1730-1755.
- 925 Erroll Muniments and Bannerman of Crimongate Muniments, (Aberdeenshire). Includes valuation of farm and byre, 1696; memoranda concerning houses in Turriff, Slaines and Delgaty, 16th century and farm buildings on the Erroll estates in Aberdeenshire, 1795; letters concerning fisher houses at Castle of Slaines giving sources of material, 1762.
- 1175 A.L.P.F. Wallace of Candacraig, Strathdon. Includes specifications of tenants' houses, Candacraig, 1820 and volume of estate maps and plans by George Stephen, 1816-1823.
- 1377 Mrs. M.B. Ogston, Banchory. Includes photographs of Broadstraik smiddy, Campfield smiddy and Auchlees farm, c 1890-1905.
- 1391 A. Farquharson of Finzean, (Aberdeenshire). Includes sketch plan and specifications relating to new farm buildings and repairs, 1892-1925; inventory of machinery in Finzean sawmill, 1844; inventory of buildings on Finzean lands, 1760-1795
- 1414 J. Stirling of Garden, Buchlyvie, (Aberdeenshire). Includes correspondence with William Stirling about farm buildings, 1830-1835.

Bruce Walker

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE COTTAGE AT ORCHILMORE,
MOULIN, PERTHSHIRE.

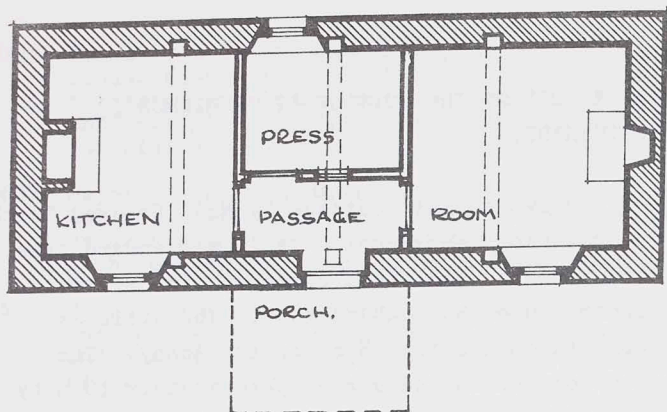
Attention was drawn to this cottage by Neil Grieve, Perth and Kinross D.C., Planning Department. It is a standard type single storey, two room and mid press cottage, with a two window facade, central door and gabled roof. The attic is floored, with access through a trap door in the lobby. The internal dimensions of the building are approximately 10 m by 3.5m, the rooms at either end being approximately 3.5m square.

The cottage is situated to the south east of the farm steading and to the north of the farmhouse and has a south-westerly aspect ⁽¹⁾.

The main features of interest in the cottage are the kitchen chimney and the remains of three sets of cruck frames, equally spaced along the length of the plan, forming four structural bays each approximately 2.5m wide.

The cruck blades, formed of timber roughly squared by splitting with the grain, can be traced down the wall to pad stones at the base. The upper portions have been removed, the blades being cut off at, or slightly above the present wall head level. The cruck blade on the south side of the central frame appears to have been removed to make way for the door. The external window to the mid press has been offset to the north-west to avoid the north blade of the same frame. The blades have been jointed at the elbow, the joints occuring just below the present wall head level.

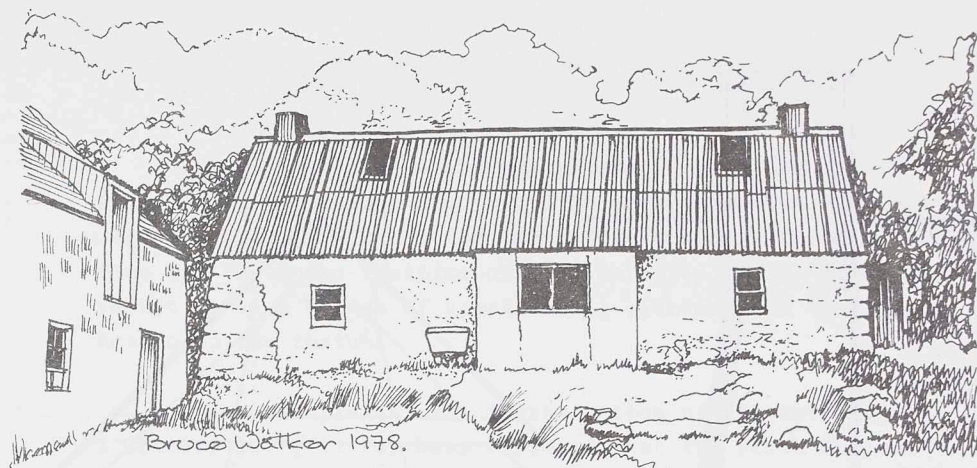
The kitchen chimney appears to be constructed entirely of stone from ground level to the underside of the attic floor, although a hardboard front on a light timber frame effectively covers the fireplace opening and chimney front through the entire height of the kitchen. This prevents examination of



SKETCH PLAN, showing position of kitchen chimney and cruck frames. — m.

the hearth, cheeks and flue construction and leaves a number of questions unanswered. The overall width of the chimney is approximately 110 cm and the projection from the gable at floor level, approximately 45 cm. At shoulder height this projection gradually increases to approximately 80 cm at the underside of the attic floor. There is no ceiling in the kitchen, the attic floor joists being exposed, but the small area on either side of the chimney projection is boxed in, hiding the construction where the floor is trimmed round the flue. The attic floor joists mainly comprise split logs but two scientific section joists do occur, three and five joists from the chimney front.

In the attic the chimney construction changes to a three sided wattle basket construction, leaning against the stone gable and tapering towards the top. At each side of this structure is a split log trimmer supporting the sides of the wattlework, the floor joist against which these trimmers rest supporting the front. In the centre of the chimney is another split log, or half-checked whole log, running from front to

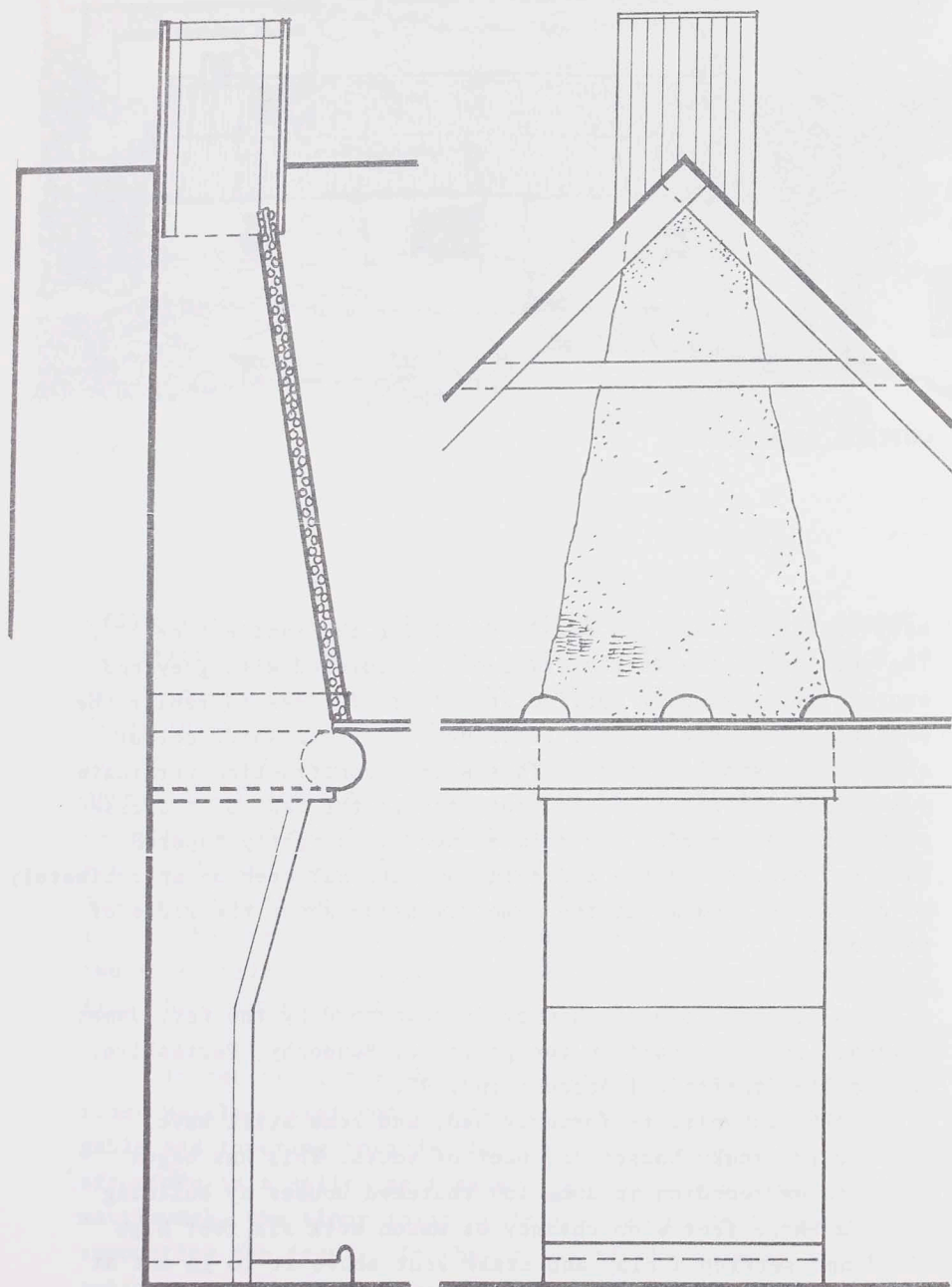


COTTAGE FROM SOUTH

back of the chimney and possibly forming the rattle tree ⁽²⁾. The outside of the wattle framework is covered with grey and brown clay, obviously applied at different times to repair the original clay coating, but it is now uncertain which colour of clay was applied first. This wattle construction terminates just under the ridge of the roof, inside the base of a dressed timber chimney head. The chimney head is slightly tapered inwards towards the top and forms an external opening approximately 60 cm square and about the same dimension above the ridge of the roof.

A similar form of chimney is described by the Rev. James Playfair in his report on the parish of Bendochy, Perthshire. in the Old Statistical Account in 1797.

"The inhabitants formerly had, and some still have, vile smoaky houses for want of vents. This has begun to be remedied in some low thatched houses by building a three feet wide chimney of mason work six feet high and setting a clay and stake vent above it to go out at the top. Three feet wide within every way : narrow



SKETCH SECTION AND ELEVATION OF LUM

— 1m.

vents of mason work being found to be dangerous in thatched houses"⁽³⁾

It would appear to the modern reader that the use of a timber canopy of any type would be more dangerous than the use of a stone flue, but the more efficient draught in a narrow flue can cause the ignition of soot deposits in the flue resulting in a stream of sparks being ejected from the chimney head onto the thatch.

Since the preliminary investigation of the cottage on 3 October 1977, it has been reported that the Perth Museum are contemplating the removal of the chimney to the museum as part of a job creation project. If this takes place, there will be the opportunity to carry out a detailed survey of the flue construction both before and during demolition.

This form of chimney emphasises the need to check within the attic space when dealing with projecting chimney breasts. The upper canopy can be used to convey the smoke to a stone chimney head standing on the gable, as is common in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire. This detail has also been recorded in Rait, Perthshire. The stone chimney head, associated with a stone chimney breast in the kitchen might lead an investigator to assume stone construction throughout.

NOTES

- 1) O.S. Map Reference NN 916636
- 2) JAMIESON, John : The Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language : 1880.
 RANTLE TREE, RANNEL-TREE, RANEL-TREE, RAN-TREE, s.
 The crook tree, or the beam which extends from the fore to the back part of a chimney, on which the crook is suspended.
 "Rannel-tree, cross beam in a chimney, on which the crook hangs; sometimes called a RANNEBAUK North Grose' Prov. Gl.
- 3) PLAYFAIR, Rev. James : Parish of Bendochy in OSA XIX p. 334.
 The Parish of Bendochy is about twenty miles south east of the farm of Orchilmore on an almost direct route.

Bruce Walker

REPORT ON A CANVAS AND PLASTER CANOPY CHIMNEY IN A
COTTAGE NEAR BALCHLADDICH, STOER, SUTHERLAND

The cottage stood on the north west bank of Loch Neil Bhain, to the east of Balchladdich School. (O.S. Map Reference 041303).

The last occupant was a woman who died in 1955 aged about 90 years. The cottage was left unoccupied and was derelict when visited by James Hardie, Burrelton, Perthshire in 1966.

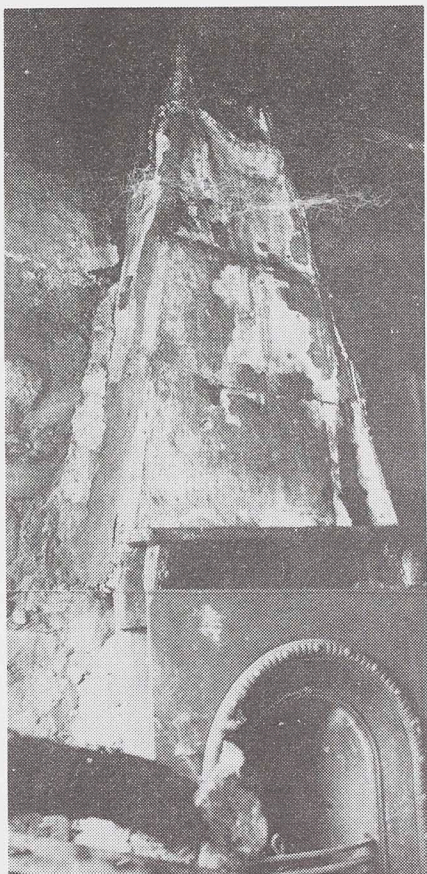
The cottage was single storied with a thatched roof and had the standard kitchen, room and mid press plan and faced eastwards over the loch. The kitchen was at the south end with the canopy chimney on the south gable. A box bed stood in the south west corner facing the fireplace. There were no other furnishings. The floors were of clay and the ceilings of calico pinned to the underside of sawn rafters. The internal partitions were of timber boarding.

The hearth contained a "register" grate and the chimney was constructed of pine saplings forming a tapered canopy terminating in a bottomless white enamel bucket which acted as a chimney pot. Over the pine framework was pinned canvas which had been dipped in plaster and applied wet. On drying the canvas formed a stiff case which had been white washed to present a neat appearance within the kitchen.

During the summer vacations of 1966 and 1967, the school was used as a hostel by visiting youth clubs who had subsequently "discovered" the cottage and completed its destruction.

The CHIMNEY

Photograph by James Hardie.



Mr. Hardie has kindly lent his photographic negatives of the cottage and chimney to the Country Life Section of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh who will be adding the prints from these negatives to the Country Life Archive.

NOTE : All information contained in this report was obtained from Mr. Hardie.

CONFERENCE

The 1977 conference was held at Elgin from 29 April to 1 May 1977 and was attended by fifty six members and guests. Very comfortable accommodation was provided at the Gordon Arms Hotel, and papers were given by Alexander Fenton (The Hearth), Nick Allen (Planned Villages in the Highlands), Ian Carter (Bothy and Chaulmer), and David Walker (listing of Vernacular Buildings). Members' papers included contributions by Tom Burnett-Stuart, Gordon Slade, Ingval Maxwell and Mr. Richardson, Planning Officer for Elgin District Council. The glorious weather added to the enjoyment of a well organised excursion, led by Mrs. Elizabeth Beaton, during which members saw Longhill Mill in operation and visited Urquhart doocot and village, the villages of Garmouth and Kingston, and the steading at Sheriffston. There was also time during the weekend to explore Elgin and its museum and to watch an interesting film made by Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art showing students carrying out a survey of Fettercairn, Kincardineshire.

At the A.G.M. held during the Conference, it was agreed that the annual subscription be raised to £2.00.

S.V.B.W.G. Membership

Applications for membership enclosing £2.00 annual subscription should be made to the Hon. Treasurer, S.V.B.W.G., 149 Strathern Road, West Ferry, Dundee, DD5 1BR (Telephone : Dundee (0382) 79484).

Articles and reports on work in progress should be submitted to the Hon. Editor not later than the beginning of August for inclusion in the following issue of VERNACULAR BUILDING.

