

STONE SLATE NATIONAL BRIEFING  
CASE STUDIES

1 Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Barn Conservation Project  
Kate Holcroft.

The barns and dry stone walls of the Yorkshire Dales form a unique historic farmed landscape that has evolved since at least the 17th century. The majority of the field barns were built between 1750 and the end of the 19th century.

Barns Project Conservation Officer There are 1044 field barns in Swaledale alone and a conservative guess of the number in the whole National Park would exceed 6000. Survey work has shown in Swaledale, Littondale and Wensleydale that over 70% of these barns will require repair work in the next 10 years to remain or return to being wind proof and weather tight. It is likely that this figure is representative of the situation across the National Park

Grant aid projects now exist in three dales to help farmers repair their field barns. Figures are given below to show the scale and success of the project but in brief:

The project has been running for a total of 9 years, has generated total of £1.77 million of conservation work and repaired over 300 field barns. Roughly 65% of that work has been on stone slate roofs.

The project started in Swaledale in 1989 with an annual budget of £54 000. The project has increased six fold in size, now including Littondale and Wensleydale with a total of £300 000 available in grant aid for the 1998-9 financial year. Funding comes from three sources; 25% from the National Park Authority, 25% from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, and 50 % from the European Community Objective 5b budget.

The scheme has important side effects.

- Almost £2 million of conservation work has been done, the vast majority of which is carried out by local builders and gets fed back into the local economy.
- It promotes and creates a demand for traditional skills such as stone slating and dry stone walling.
- The National Park Authority can dictate the use of stone slates on barns and can prevent them being stripped and sold for profit.

Policies on stone slates.

Stone slates in the Yorkshire Dales are in very short supply as elsewhere with just one small quarry that produces stone slates in the National Park. A number of policies are enforced as part of the scheme to help us manage this scarce resource -

The use of new stone slates is encouraged by the Authority grant aiding the difference in price between second hand and new ones by 100%.

Where second hand stone slates are to be used to make up a short fall, the Authority requires authentication of their origin in order to stop the stripping of stone slates from other buildings.

Where a barn has very few or no stone slates left on it, the Authority will grant aid a sheet roof going back on at a lower rate. This is seen as a temporary solution which will keep the barn wind and weather proof until such time as stone slates are in adequate supply. The whole roof structure is kept in situ and repaired as part of this process.

| Location      | Funding  | Barns aided | Walls repaired | Total cost    | Annual value 98/90 |
|---------------|----------|-------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Swaledale     | Y, EH, L | 250+        | 20 km          | £1.4m         | £115k              |
| Littondale    | Y, EH, L | 16          | 2 km           | £125k         | £35k               |
| Wensleydale   | EU 5b    | 34          | N/A            | £245k         | £150k              |
| <b>Totals</b> |          | <b>300+</b> | <b>22 km</b>   | <b>£1.77m</b> | <b>£300k</b>       |

Swaledale since 1989  
Littondale since 1994  
Wensleydale since 1996

Y = Yorkshire Dales National Park  
EH = English Heritage  
L = Heritage Lottery Fund  
EU 5b = European Union Objective 5b

## 2 The Cotswolds Hills Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme

Richard Appleton FRCA

This scheme is run by the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Welsh Office. There are similar schemes in many parts of the country and have existed for 10 years.

The Cotswolds Hills Scheme is four years old and covers an area about 40 miles by 10 miles. Its objectives are to maintain and enhance the landscape and wildlife interest especially of the traditional grassland. It includes provisions for maintenance of drystone walls and other historic features. It is a voluntary and farmers enter a 10 year land management agreement which includes an obligation to maintain their historic buildings.

Additional to the management scheme there are capital grants which provides aid for the restoration of historic buildings with traditional materials. These buildings must be agricultural: neither domestic buildings nor conversions of agricultural buildings to other uses are eligible. Initially the grant available was for up to 40% of the capital cost but this was insufficient for most applicants. Of 300 applications only 9 offers were taken up. Subsequently the grant was increased to 60% and by now 50 buildings have been renovated or are in the pipeline. This is still however, a comparatively small number out of the 730 farms which are now members.

There are two important influences on how successful the capital grants scheme will be: there is no use for these buildings within modern farming practice and the cost of roof renovations is high. In much of the Cotswold Hills farming is a marginal enterprise and often even with the grants it is impossible for the farmer to afford the 40% they would have to contribute.

Within the life of the scheme there have been four sources of traditional stone slates:

- Tetbury a good product but this quarry is currently without suitable stone.
- Brockhill these are made with a sawn edge which is visually unacceptable.
- French made locally from imported stone. These are heavier than some local types of stone slates and consequently cannot always be used because the roof structure cannot support their weight.
- Reclaimed We are very conscious that these often come from unscrupulous or even criminal sources and try to avoid their use.

Tetbury sell for about £108 per square metre; the other three are all about £80. (Brockhill have since changed the style of the edge dressing. 2002)

Some very good imitations are also available. The best example is made from 80 moulds so there is a good degree of randomness and there is a high standard of edge detailing etc.

In reaching a decision on what is to be used to re-roof a building we have some options. If the building is listed, those rules apply and we always support whatever the conservation authority decides. For unlisted buildings there is a discretion to use other suitable building materials where these are appropriate.

In practice we are often faced with a dilemma. A barn for example no longer has any practical purpose and the farmer cannot afford his share of the cost of renovations. So what do we do? Do we watch the building fall down? Do we compromise now and permit the use of a cheap imitation in the hope that one day it will be possible to roof it with real stone slates. Or do we encourage the conversion of the building with all the landscape implications of the introduction of gardens and Leylandii hedges?

## 3 Collyweston & The South Pennines

Charles Wagner English Heritage

In November 1996 the Roofs of England campaign was launched at Wirksworth in Derbyshire. This case study will look at what has happened since in two regions - Collyweston and the South Pennines.

### **Collyweston**

The Collyweston Stone Slaters Trust has been in existence since 1982. Although little progress has been made in establishing a source of Collyweston stone slates the Trust did halt the decline and prevented the complete disappearance of this important roofing slate.

The only source of new slates since that time has been thanks to David Ellis who, in 1982 realised that Cuckoo Lodge quarry at Duddington, which was being operated for construction aggregates, was working in the stone slate beds. Thanks to the willingness of the operators Bullimoores to allow David Ellis to remove log for splitting there has been a supply of new Collywestons for renovation work. Two other sources still exist; the Burleigh Pit at Easton on the Hill and Claude Smiths Pit at Collyweston.

In 1996 Listed Building Consent was sought to reroof the rear slopes of 20/21 St George's Square Stamford, a grade II\* listed building, with imitation stone slates and the surplus stone slates should be used on other buildings. English heritage recommended that all the slopes should be covered with real Collywestons.

During negotiations it became apparent that the four County Councils; Lincolnshire; Leicestershire; Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire and the six District Councils were all working to different standards for Collyweston roof conservation. This prompted the convening of a seminar in Stamford to exchange information on such issues as; how are roofs protected on unlisted buildings; what conditions are applied to grant aided re-roofing; what was being done to check the provenance of second-hand stone slates; where are roofs being lost?

At this time a further complication in the supply situation arose when an order was placed for new Collyweston slates to roof an extension to the Guildhall, London. This effectively took all the available new slates for the duration of the contract. There was local pressure to try to prevent this but as David Ellis pointed out log was being crushed at Cuckoo Lodge quarry and there was nothing preventing anyone from making new slates if they needed them.

In 1997 a Collyweston Conference was held at Burliegh House and at this time John Picken proposed a joint investigation with his Stonesfield project to investigate the frosting process.

In 1997 101 tonnes of log were removed from Bullimore's quarry for splitting and a further 21 tonnes to March 1998. Whilst this was going on Adam Farnsworth has compiled a list of everyone who has been involved with Collyweston slates in the past. From this all roofers and builders have been informed of the availability of log and five roofers or builders have taken samples for trials and another three have shown interest. Bullimoores have very generously offered to bury and store log to be taken as required.

During the last few months Chris Harris's Completely Stoned Company has taken log from underground with Rupert Farnsworth. This has gone to Sheffield Hallam University for geological investigation.

In spite of the slowly improving supply situation there was still no example of a new Collyweston roof in the region. The opportunity presented at Ashton Village near Oundle where an English Heritage / Northamptonshire CC Conservation Area Partnership Scheme used new Collywestons. This is now nearing completion by David Ellis and Shaun Cummings.

## **South Pennines**

When the work in the South Pennines was started it was against a background of no production, no entrepreneurs willing to try quarrying and a rapidly drying up supply of second-hand stone slates. In fact, most second-hand were coming from Yorkshire and were not appropriate for use in the region.

At that time Unthank Hall near Freebitch was being re-roofed and it was realised just what an impact such schemes would have were they to depend on second-hand slates. Several buildings would have had to be robbed to supply this scheme alone.

Since the publication of the South Pennine study public interest in quarrying has gradually improved. By the launch of the Roofs of England Campaign in 1996 one quarry at Fullwood Booth near Sheffield was able to supply riven stone for finishing by a local roofing contractor, Sellors of Bakewell, and other quarries are being actively investigated at Holmfirth, Reeve Edge, Wingerworth, Eyam Edge and Brampton/Freebitch. Other quarries at Kerridge have attempted stone slate production with mixed success.

This is encouraging, but actual production is still no further forward and at best it is unlikely that new supplies will come on line before late 1998 or early 1999. This has left some projects in a delicate

situation. At Bubnell Hall, following an unsuccessful Listed Building Consent Application the owner has an enforcement notice hanging over him which he cannot discharge because no-one can supply the necessary stone slates yet. A recently established Heritage Lottery funded Conservation Area Partnership Scheme in the Wye Valley will need careful management to align the supply with demand. This scheme which includes all roofs in need of repair and all which are known to have lost their stone roof in recent years will provide 40% grants for partial and 60% for complete re-roofing.