

Robert Groves

My family including my father Colin, mum Jean, sister Susan and grandfather Thomas Groves moved to Litton Hall in 1969 from Huddersfield when I was 12 years of age. Previously we'd had a caravan in the date at Fello Arncliffe Cote site since I was one year of age, which we had visited almost every weekend.



Angela Groves

I came to Yorkshire in 1978 and left my home at Beeches Hill, Bishops Waltham, in Hampshire to study at Huddersfield Polytechnic. I did not really intend to travel so far north. I was impressed by the course which I wanted to do, and there happened to be some vacancies at Huddersfield. I studied printed & woven textiles for 3 years and achieved a Diploma. It was during the course at Huddersfield that I met Robert who was an architectural student.

After the course at Huddersfield I could not get a job in textiles but I obtained work at Peter Blacks in Keighley as a shoe designer. I worked at Peter Blacks for 4 years during which Robert was continuing to qualify as an architect.

My name is Emily I am 12 years old, I live in
Linton at Linton Hall Barn, with my mum, dad and
Sister Fiona.

I am in year 8 at Upper Wharfedale School. Whilst
at school I enjoy athletics especially cross
country. My favourite subjects are Art, Design
technology and PE.

Out of school I go swimming I play the piano
visit my friends and enjoy cooking.

I like living in Linton but sometimes I get bored
because a lot of my friends live in Grassington
and Skipton. I go to the local youth club to
meet my friends, I enjoy going there because
we do lots of different activities.

About the family

My Name is Fiona and I am 10 years old. I go to Arncliffe School and get there by bus. I go swimming some weekends, and play around the village. I have one cat called Tiddlers and one dog called Bramble.

I have two guinea pigs called Addie and ginger nut, I also have a rabbit called floppsy and a hamster called Honey.

Aswell I have two gold fish.

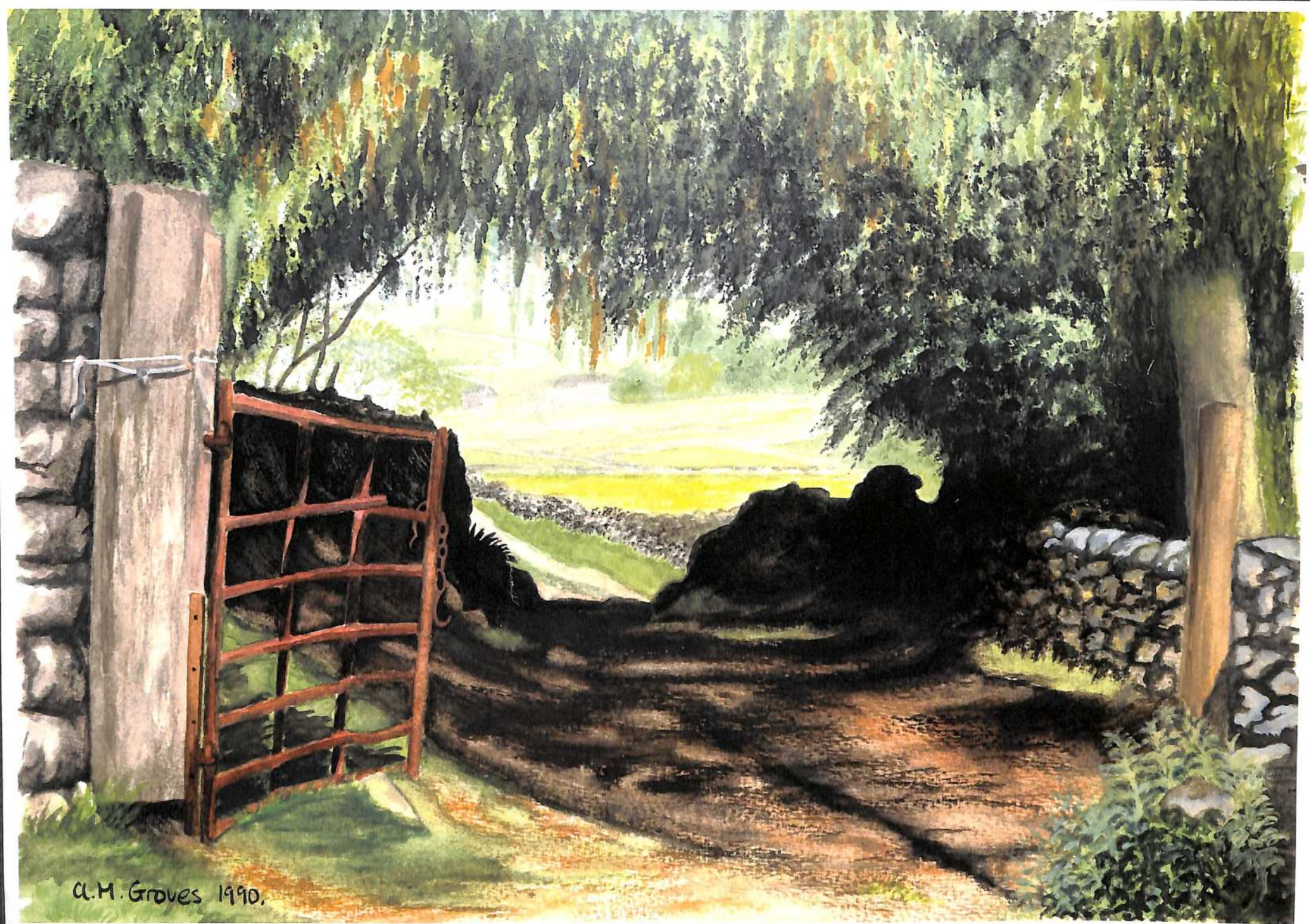
My hobbies are horse riding and cello.

I like all animals apart from some.

LITTON HALL BARN.

The Groves family are a family of four living at Litton Hall Barn. We are Angela & Robert with two daughters, Emily age 11 and Fiona age 10.

We converted Litton Hall Barn to a house in 1988 and moved in when Emily was 3 months old. She was born whilst we lived in the caravan at the rear of the barn. In 1996 we did further building work on the conversion and separated part of the dwelling to form a holiday cottage.



A.M. Groves 1990.

permanent caravans on the site then.

At that time Geoff Lund farmed pigs at Arncliffe Cote and it was through Geoff (who lived in a caravan at the bottom of Potts Beck in Litton) that we were introduced to Dennis and Eileen Lund at East Garth, with whom my sister Susan and I would stay with many weekends. Thus when we moved to Litton the change was not so great and came easily as I had plenty friends in the village at that time, all my own age, including Stewart and Stephen Lund, ^{and} Colin Chapman, Richard and Christine Emmott, Janet Pullan, Hazel Chapman, John and Philip Cressey.

The previous occupants and owners of Litton Hall (then a farm), had been Michael Thorman, son of the Arncliffe Vicar, and his wife who ran a Sunday School from Litton Hall. In the summer of '69 I recall helping the Thormans' bring their last crop of baled hay into Litton Hall Barn before they sold to my parents and left the village to move to Darley. I never imagined that 19 years later this barn would become my own home.

The barn at that time had a modern ^oshipp^en at the East end where the Thormans milked a large herd of all Jersey cows, which was unusual for the Dale as almost all other farms were milking Friesians. Milking has virtually ceased in the Dale now.

On my first day at Litton I recall that I spent the whole day helping the Lunds who were castrating lambs at ^Spirit^o Croft, in the old style of cutting out the testicles and collecting them in a bucket then sealing the cut with a hot iron. Eileen then cooked the sweet breads later as a delicacy in a cream sauce at West Farm. Eileen was later to become my stepmother. Helping on the farms in the village was my main out-of-

Spirit

school pastime, particularly at George Emmott's, Armistead farm, where I would help with the milking many nights during the week. Armistead farm at that time was a hive of activity and George always encouraged the many young helpers to work efficiently and gave us plenty responsibility, occasionally leaving you to carry out the whole milking operation on your own!

Hay time then was an immensely busy period, but always seemed enjoyable as a child, when we would stack hay high to the rafters in all the barns including the remoter out barns of Hebersides. I always struggled to appreciate why it was important to have to work so hard to push the final few bales right up to the ridge. Nevertheless I probably learnt a lot about barn roof constructions from making such close inspection of the roof timbers, which no doubt helped me in my later career as an architect.

At that time the Emmotts farmed a sizeable collection of land at New House farm, Halton Gill, Armistead, some land at Flatts, Stonelands and Sawyersgarth, Litton.

The methods of collecting the hay George used in the Spital Croft meadows, ^{Spittle} Stonelands Flatts and ^wSawyersgarth was by small wooden sledges dragged behind [^]tractors. I think these were old horse sledges onto which the bales were stacked and dragged into the barn which was all great fun at the time, racing round on tractors.

I was so enthused with the farming bug, that at about the age of 14 I started to buy and rear calves of my own for beef, having first converted the pig ^ysties at the back of [^]Litton Hall to calf loose boxes. These calves were kept until 18 months old and then sold. I recall the first bull calves I bought at Skipton Auction were about £7 each and I sold them at 18 months for £180 with a reasonable level of profit. I had to cease this practice in the late 70's when there was a serious price crash in the market. However to avoid incurring a loss I started to have my remaining bullocks slaughtered and jointed by an old butcher, Everet Moor from Hetton, who would come to Litton and butcher the carcasses three at a time in the barn, which I would then bag, weigh, label, freeze and sell by the joint or by the quarter animal. At that time my father worked at ICI at Huddersfield as Building Trades Co-ordinator (he had originally served his

apprenticeship as a joiner with ICI). His workmates were a wonderful outlet for my meat sales. Everet Moor the butcher normally just requested his butchery fee by taking a few of the very best cuts of the meat, which he believed to be the undercut.

Another activity which kept me busy as a child in the village, was helping my father in the small joinery workshop he had set up for himself in the western end of Litton Hall barn which had, I believe, been originally used as a coach house. When my father set up this workshop he found an old, good-quality coach lamp hidden behind a loose stone in a wall recess. We now have this fixed at the back of the house.

As a joiner my father was always in demand for making doors or kitchen units etc for locals. I would often help him mortise these and cramp and glue them up in the workshop, later to become my kitchen. My mother at that time was the school cook at Arncliffe.

In my school days my father and mother did much restoration of Litton Hall on which I spent many hours helping. Soon after I left school, still living at home, my father and new stepmother Eileen opened Litton Hall as a guesthouse. This was an enjoyable period for me at Litton Hall meeting the many interesting regular guests. One London family, the Taylors, later moved to Litton, another Dutch couple Hans Koppers and Ellen became well known characters as they visited the village so often, capturing a great array of quality black and white photo images of the Dale, they remain lasting friends.

In the section of our barn, next to the coach house was stabling for six horses with large sturdy pitch pine timber stalls framed into the matching floor beams over. These we moved when the barn was converted, re-using them as exposed timber divisions between the dining area and kitchen.

Above the stable and workshop and accessed from a now removed access door at the rear, was a room which I understand from Dennis Lund had been the sleeping quarters for some of the workers on Litton Hall farm, often Irish. Indeed when we came to

clean the barn out for conversion, an old straw filled striped fabric mattress was still in this loft. The old leather horse collars were still there too and these also had straw padding bound within a similar striped fabric. Dennis tells me he also recalls chopping wood in our barn workshop, when working at Litton Hall farm in the War and whilst doing this had the news broken to him that his brother had died in the war.

I attended Upper Wharfedale School, which I left at the age of 15 in 1973. I then took an apprenticeship as an Architectural Technician with Neil Hartley of James Hartley and Sons of Swadford Street, Skipton, a very old firm of architects with a fascinating collection of old blue prints in the attic. At that time our largest project was the Skipton Building Society headquarters behind the High Street.

During this period I also worked with Colin and Robert Chapman of Litton, on a weekend, which supplemented my income, often employed helping with the ploughing of grips into the moorland, including those between Litton and Hubberholme which at that time, I think, was supported by Government grants. Gripping now, I believe, is considered by the National Parks as being detrimental in some locations to the landscape, creating erosion problems. I believe there is Millennium Money available now to fill some of these in.

In 1981 when the guesthouse business had built up, my father took early retirement from ICI after 35 years service. However by 1978 I had left the village upon qualifying as a Technician and had returned to Huddersfield to study architecture full time.

I recall just before I left, that one of the jobs in the office being run by the job architect Richard Pearson, was the conversion of Cotesworth Barn in Litton This was a barn I was familiar with, as I had helped the Lunds there, on quite a few occasions that I can remember, pulling the calves of cows having difficult births. I think they calved most of their cows there. The builder who converted Cotesworth was known to be a great fan of heavy lunchtime sessions in the Queens, at that time run by Steve

and Val Appleton - no wonder then that the architect struggled to get the project satisfactorily completed!

It was many years later in 1994, that I later became personally involved with the then converted Cotesworth barn with my own practice, designing a first floor extension to the South side and a good deal of alteration and refurbishment within, for the new owners Wainrights.

I have also had the opportunity to work on many of the other buildings in the village, including Barn Garth, Armistead Barns conversion, Croft House Barn conversion, Croft Cottage and Croft Cottage Barn conversion, all of which have, in their own small way, made a contribution to the slow change in the village fabric and environment from what it was when I first came to know the village.

It was however, probably the Armistead Barn conversions that brought about the greatest social change, bolstering the number of young families in the village, which helped to secure the future of Arncliffe Primary School, as at that time the numbers were very low.

The above 5 new dwellings at Armistead were born out of an acute need at the time, for rented accommodation in the Dale, without which some local families may well have had to leave the Dale. A group of us in the Dale, principally driven by Janet Taylor, set about trying to find a site where this accommodation could be provided. The funding however, would only be available through a housing association, if a site could be secured at a price significantly below the market value, whether it be for general building land or the value of village barns, which at that time could have been sold for full development value.

Janet Beard made this possible with her offer of the 2 barns, the old farmyard, sheep pens and dipping areas at Armistead to Sanctuary Housing Association.

Personally however, *our* greatest challenge was my wife Angela and I converting Litton Hall barn on a shoe string budget soon after being married and living in a caravan at the rear whilst we did the conversion.

Visually one of the largest changes to our barn conversion externally, was when we stripped the asbestos sheets from the roof and re-roofed with second-hand slates from a mill being demolished in Elland.

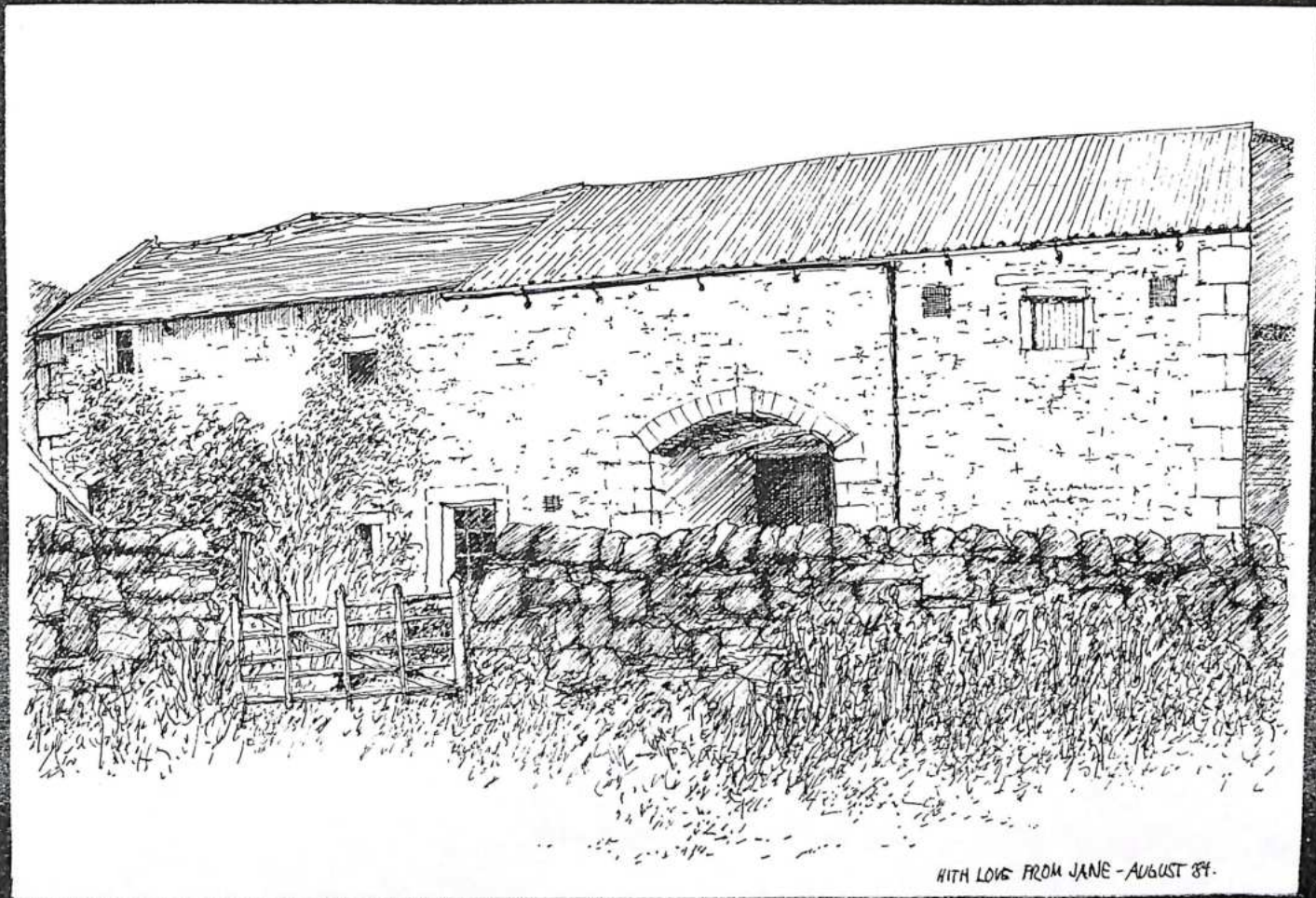
Many of the other materials we used in the conversion were also reclaimed materials from various buildings. The most interesting being some very large pitch pine and yellow pine beams from Haggas's Mill in Keighley, a sandstone barn arch from a farm in Pudsey, now reformed in the form of an Inglenook. Solid 2" thick teak boarding from large industrial doors in Huddersfield now reformed into two feature staircases, timber industrial dye press plates reused as balustrading. We re-used yellow pine doors from a house in the Lake District and two large panelled doors from a chapel near Hebden Bridge and some nice punched faced sandstone quoins from a mill on the Lune in Lancaster which were used for the balcony extension at the rear.

We moved into one completed end of the barn in August '88 when our first daughter, Emily was just 3 months old, soon to be followed in 1990 by the birth of our second daughter, Fiona. In 1996 we did further building work on the conversion and separated part of the dwelling to form a holiday cottage for letting purposes.

Emily has now moved up to Upper Wharfedale School and Fiona is still at Arncliffe Primary School in her last year. Angela's busy working as a self-employed gardener for a number of houses in Littondale and Upper Wharfedale as well as being a practising artist.

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I have an architectural practice, with offices in Settle and Lancaster, and am proud to say that this year, our practice John Moore & Partners, won the RICS 2000 International Premier Award for Regeneration Projects, with The Lodge Yard Redevelopment Project in Askrigg. This is a 3.5 million pounds, self catering holiday

complex, developed for the Holiday Property Bond and it was entered alongside other such notable contenders as Sydney Olympic Stadium, the London Eye and Tate Modern. We also had recent success winning a national architectural competition with the Yorkshire Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes, which was completed last year for the National Park.



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