

# THE BARN THROUGH THE AGES

Tree ring dating shows that the two of the barn beams date back to 1528

The Granary Restaurant and Farm Shop are opened in the restored barn

The Battle of Marston Moor

Caring For Life's work begins.

1528

1539

1644

1950

1980

2008

2012

Kirkstall Abbey was disestablished during the Dissolution of the Monasteries

The barns original stone tile roof collapses

The Little Granary Coffee Shop opens in the adjoining barn

The Barn stands high up on what used to be known as "Cukrigge Moor", a wild moorland area once owned by the monks of Kirkstall Abbey.

Following the dissolution of Kirkstall Abbey in 1539, the whole area was leased and at one point, the land belonged to Archbishop Cranmer. But by the latter quarter of the 16th century, the land was owned by a local yeoman, who built the massive dry stone walls around the farm and probably built the original timber-frame farmhouse.

The barn is deemed to be 17th century, although tree ring-dating, (dendrochronology), reports that two of its beams are dated 1528.

Back in the 17th century, the barn would have provided stabling for cattle, horses and oxen, initially in the area now providing a dining and play area for children, and the rest rooms! The central area would have been used to store straw or hay and for threshing.



During the Civil War, the barn may even have rung to the sound of the Parliamentarian men and horses, stabled together overnight in the old barn around the time of the Battle of Marston Moor in 1644.

As agricultural trends changed, the barn adapted with them, and at the beginning of the Second World War, the barn was full of Shorthorn dairy cows, providing vital supplies of milk in wartime. But the barn was suffering from the battering it received in each Winter's gales. Some of its wonderful oak beams being periodically exposed to the weather, and some of the ancient stone walls begun to bulge out. The barn was at risk, yet it still stood and provided shelter for cattle. But things were set to change dramatically for the ancient barn...

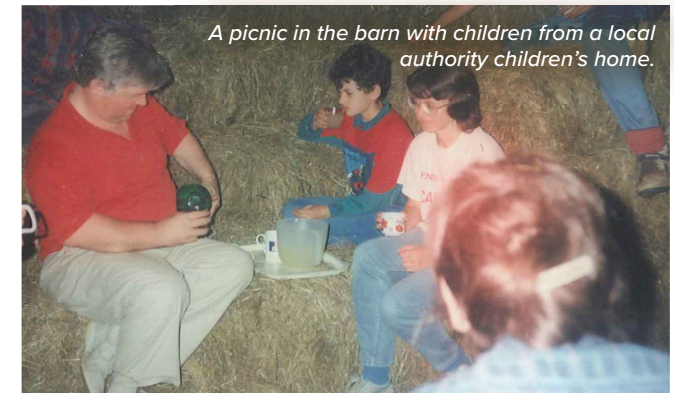
## CARING FOR LIFE

In 1980 Peter and Judith Parkinson and their young sons came to live in the farmhouse and from square one, their home, the little bit of land they had purchased and the old barn, were used to provide a welcome to people who were alone in life, needed supported employment or work experience, or just a chance to escape from the city and to enjoy the countryside.

*'Caring For Life was set up to share the love of Jesus with homeless and hurting people, to provide care, for life.'*

Visitors to the farm included children from a local authority children's home, managed by Esther Smith. Some of those children went on to become homeless and desperate when they left care, and so a charity was born.

As the charity sought to create sources of income, the barn had yet another change of use, when it became a miniature factory for casting plaster moulds which were then aged or painted, producing beautiful items which were much in demand.



Whenever exactly it was built, the aisled barn was built to last!



The huge foundation stones sit straight on the earth but have withstood the centuries. The massive oak posts supporting the beams were sat on stone to protect them from decay, and the stone tile roof, which was set in place with pegs, coped with howling gales right through until the 1950s when it finally collapsed.

As Crag House Farm became home to a growing number of therapeutic daytime activity projects for vulnerable young people, the barn always rang with rather loud pop music as the young people helped staff to bring in the hay harvest, stacking the bales high up to the beams.

Later, the barn became a Winter shelter for the farm's growing herd of Old English Longhorn cattle. On one memorable Christmas Eve, the temperatures were well below freezing, under a clear sky full of stars. The barn's lights were still on and the cattle rustled around in a deep bed of straw, some leaning against the old stone mangers, their breath forming misty clouds in the cold, with one really bright star shining right over the barn. It was a true 'nativity' scene.



But the barn was in distress; a few of the oak beams were dangerously rotten due to exposure to the elements at times, one side wall was leaning out. Despite many attempts to buttress up the walls and to keep the metal sheeting roof in place, its days were limited. The barn was now a Grade Two listed building, but the funds were not there to save it from disrepair and ultimate collapse.

Everything was to change. The Granary Café was opened in the adjoining 18th c barn in 2008, but it was soon evident that a much larger restaurant facility was needed. Planning began to rescue and restore the 17th c barn, turning it into what you see today! Thanks to an incredibly generous gift, an imaginative architect, a fearless foreman and some gifted craftsmen, the work went ahead.

The metal roof sheeting was removed and the exposed beams were left to be cleaned down by the elements.

For the first time, it was possible to see clearly the ancient beams. With amazing craftsmanship, a small number of beams which could not be salvaged were replaced with massive 'new' oak beams, hand sawn and crafted in the same manner as the original beams.

A terrifying moment came when the barn floor had to be dug right down and the stones under the posts holding up the roof beam structure also had to be dug out and replaced. The foreman took great care to source new stone from the very same quarry from which the original stones would have been taken. Then the former metal sheeting roof was replaced with reclaimed 17th c stone tiles, although as this roof was put on, the huge stone slates were held in place by modern light metal pegs.

The men who first raised the roof of the barn in the 1600s or maybe even earlier, working at height on the amazing, soaring beams and leaving in place their own marks which can still be seen, could never have imagined that the barn they were building to house livestock, store hay and thresh corn, would ever be turned to such a use.

*'The barn has been rescued, and through the Granary's profits, the barn is in turn helping to rescue some people who don't know where else to turn'*

As the engraving above the entrance door states:

*"Non Nobis Domine Non Nobis Sed  
Nomini Tua Da Gloriam"  
"Not unto us, O Lord,  
but to You alone be the glory!"*

\* See "A Farm in a Yorkshire Parish" by Don Cole

**For more information about the charity Caring for Life  
see our website:  
[www.caringforlife.co.uk](http://www.caringforlife.co.uk)**

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Charity Reg. No. 1174982



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# THE BARN'S story



*"If the barn walls and beams could speak,  
they would have so many stories to tell..."*