

Raymond Parker, formerly of Kisdon Farm above Muker

'I think it would be '61, yes, it must have been latter end of August, a really bad storm, and there was this big flash and bang, where we were milking and me mother, she was frightened of thunder and she came out to us and after this bang she said "*oh you'd better look out, I think that must have done some damage*" and when we looked out we could just see this building roof and smoke just coming out of it. **Q: And how far from the homestead was this?** 'About a hundred yards. So we went and thunderbolt must have gone in the top and it just like starting to burn, on top of hay mew, so, well, we went and tried to get some water but there wasn't much about and the strike had put the telephone off, so mother went down to Usha Gap to ring for fire brigade, which they came, but they couldn't really do anything. It just had to burn itself out.' **Q: This was after haytime?** 'Aye yes, it was full of hay, was t'hay mew'. **Q: small bales or loose hay?** 'Oh, all loose. I think there was a young calf in, put in for some reason, anyway we got it out alright, I don't know why we put it in there, we got it out and then...it was on evening, 5 or 6 o'clock when it got out a grand night, sunny fine night again. And there was a lot of people came up to look at it' **Q: So was it actually flames?** 'Oh aye. Walls kept standing, but all roof came in and all woodwork inside was all gutted out, it had to all be redone' **Q: That would be a big loss, all your hay?** 'Aye, yes, well, I suppose it wasn't same as if you'd got a big building where you put all your hay you know, it was just off a couple of fields that would be in that one, so it mebbe wasn't just as bad that way...we'd have to buy some extra hay (next winter), yes and we must have been like 4 or 5 stalls short as well somewhere. We must have worked round it somehow.' **Q: So the people from Muker came?** 'Aye, there was quite a lot came up to see. Trouble was, you see, there was no water up there of any quantity, so the fire brigade didn't bring a fire engine, just came in the land rover I think and they couldn't really do anything about it. **Q: Even if they had been able to hose the hay, it would have been ruined?** 'Oh aye, it would've been all ruined. It really might as well burn I suppose...might'a just have saved more of the building, but walls stayed up, they probably just pointed 'em up a bit. All the inside walls, after, few years after, bits of stones kept breaking off with being so hot...so it's lucky that it still stood.

Q: So, did your family repair it? ‘Well actually, it was just a rented farm then so just landlords that had to do that. They got it done straight away. You could still smell it though, for years after, oh aye, the smell was there.’

Q: Did you used to call it Lightning House? “No, it was Kearton cow’uss to us”

‘Well, we just put hay in them every summer, and then tied cattle up in winter. We’d used to just go round, twice a day. You were more or less going all day, you used to walk miles really. I remember when we went to school when younger...we had to fother some of t’cows on our way to school, so when father come round to water ‘em after, they’d drink better if they’d had a fothering of hay... by the time I was 12 or so I’d probably be milking ‘em afore I went to school. We milked up at home though summer, but through winter we had a building down at bottom, that we called Becksidies and we used to take cows down there and milk down there in winter, then we just had to take it across field to t’road, handier to get milk away’. **Q: churns?** ‘Oh yes. Had to pull them across field in a wheelbarrow to get them to the road.’”

(Adapted from the 25th October 2016 interview transcriptions from the Every Barn Tells a Story project by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority)