

Dorothy Brown (nee Clarkson), formerly of Scarr House, Thwaite

'This is Cow fields, we just used to call it Cows and it's just above the Buttertubs turnoff and then when you go about 3 miles up the road you come to a place called Banty, that steep hill...that's the experience of me tramping the hay in that cow'uss there...we just had the one barn and we used to have two mowing fields, but now I think it's gone to reeds...'

'The story about Banty that always sticks in my mind, the cow'uss, in haymaking time. It didn't matter what you were doing or how ill you felt at that point. One day I was feeling really grotty, and my father said, "*right, we have to get this hay in, it's going to rain*", and we went into the cowhouse. There'd be one of my uncles and my sister and I, and we had to tramp the hay down right to the rafters and it was hot, it was dusty. You didn't wear trousers, you had cotton skirts so the hay prickled your legs, it was horrible. I would say it was one of the most awful experiences of my life, really uncomfortable and just hard, because you couldn't breathe either and you had to cram as much hay in as you could to the rafters, so then when you'd got right to the last little bit and you'd got it then you could crawl out of the forking hole window and they'd help you down to the bottom. When you were feeling grotty like that it wasn't nice, and I'd be about 11 years old. . . . and you didn't have an option, your father said you had to do it, and my mum used to plead with him, as I wasn't very well, "*can't Dorothy go home?*" No, we have to get this in.'

' . . . and then the other thing that my cousin at Thwaite reminded me about was that a lot of couples did their courting in cowhouses. I don't really know anybody, but when I was a little girl they used to come walking up past our house. Of course there were no cars, you couldn't go and sit in a comfy car and have a cuddle, so barns were used for that...you'll have to find someone who's actually done it!'

"Oh, one of the things that happened when we were at Scarr House, which of course comes into today's world of health and safety, my sister had quite a nasty accident. She fell through the baux, in the cow'uss next to Scarr House, the one that's still there. Because you see, you had the stalls there for the cows, and the baux above so the hay was above where the cows were and in this case the cow'uss next to the house had some stairs up, and there was a

rather big trapdoor, and we used to play up there in the hay. One day, we had some friends, some evacuees that were living in Muker, and they came up to play and my sister fell through the trapdoor, she was about seven. Hit her head, got a big bump on her head but we hadn't to go to the hospital or anything.'

Q: What was below? 'Just muck, the cows were in the stalls here, and all the stuff would come out and run down this channel here and this would be just a dirt floor. But we got into bother.'

(Adapted from the 1st June 2016 interview transcriptions from the Every Barn Tells a Story project by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority)