

## **Richard Campbell formerly of Ravenseat Farm**

‘We called them barns (at Ravenseat), he (father from Littondale) called them barns, so we called them barns; and there was the Low Barn, and the High Barn and the Hoghills, which were the three outside barns. I can remember going on a night with a storm lamp in winter to feed the cows, and water them. And I went along to the Low Barn, to the Hoghills and back to the High Barn, then back home. That was the route.’ **Q: Every night?** ‘Yes, give them hay, and water...the river ran right past the Low Barn and we used to get buckets of water out of the river and tek them to the cattle and they used to drink it out of the bucket.’ **Q: How many cows?** ‘I think there was five in that barn and we used to have some up at Hoghills and there was some in what we called the High Barn, but the milk cows, we just kept a few milk cows for our own use, and they were at home, and I don’t remember having much to do with those but I remember going round the barns and feeding those cattle.’

‘The rabbits used to go into the hay in the Hoghills, we used to catch the rabbits. Me brother and I used to drag the hay out and find the rabbits and catch them, they used to burrow into the loose hay. **Q: Why did you catch them?** ‘Well, we’d eat them...rabbit pie, it were good, yeah. That was pre-Myxomatosis, we used to put our hand into the hole, if we couldn’t reach, we used to move the hay out of the way until we could.’

‘Especially in haytime, it was a family event. I mean, everybody mucked in, the women as well, I mean they had to break off to go and make the meals and they used to bring the meals out into the hayfield in a basket, and a can of tea. I remember me mother used to make fruit pies on a tin plate, and she used to send a whole pie and they used to go too when they were off walling at Crook Seal.’

‘We used to go across the field in a line...either turning it or strewing it or raking it up into rows to be swept, with the horse, to the barns. Then we forked it in, cause I was the biggest strongest lad, so I had to do it...it wasn’t so bad if it was good dry hay, but if it was a bit heavy, it was hard work.’

Most of it was used (through the winter), sometimes there was a bit left over, but there was never much left over.’ **Q: How many hay mews at Ravenseat?**

‘There was three; there was Low Barn which had hay in, aye, there was the Home Barn which we put hay in, and the High Barn, and the Hoghills, so there were four that we used for storing hay and you see, it wasn’t baled. We used to cut it with a hay spade and tie it up with string and then take it with horse and sleds to the sheep on the moor, which we brought down. Some of them, the ones that were furthest from the house, we used to bring down if it was talking of snow. And occasionally it would snow unexpectedly and the sheep would come down on their own some of them...they knew it was going to snow!’

**Q: There’s a lot of places that aren’t hay timed anymore because they’re too remote?** ‘No, a lot of the fields up there are full of rushes now, but they didn’t used to be because they were cut. If we couldn’t get it with a machine we’d get it with a scythe, and Irishmen used to go round the sides and do the gills and that. They’re just left now because they can get all they need without.’

‘We used to haytime at Keld Side, cos we had some land over there. We used to haytime that and store it in a barn there and we used to winter the hogs over there, and I went every day. Walked from Ravenseat to Keld Side and gave the hogs their hay and that, and walked back...a good two miles. And we used to have cattle in those fields at Keld Side, and if it was a really droughty summer we had to water them because there wasn’t any running water in the fields up there so we used to have a big sed pot in the corner of the pasture and we had two buckets and we used to go to the river and fill this sed pot up for the cattle and we did that on the way home from school. I remember one time, when I left Keld school, I went to Reeth for my last year and the last day at Keld some of us lads went home at lunchtime, we played truant in the afternoon and I watered the cows on the way back and Laurie Whitehead, who was doing the school car, was hay timing in the field and he saw us and he thought his watch had stopped and he came and got us, it was the middle of the afternoon.’ **Q: Did you get into bother?** ‘Yes’ [laughter]

**Q: Did you cut your own bedding up at Ravenseat?** ‘Yes we used to mow rushes and bracken and use it for bedding. Bracken was better. Rushes, when you spread the muck, it didn’t break up as good as bracken, bracken used to break up nice. We used to store it, we had like a baux, above, in the Home Barn and we used to fork it up into there.

**Q: Above the cows?** Yes, they were the milk cows. There was only two or three of them like, we just milked them by hand in those days.’

(Adapted from the 12th October 2016 interview transcriptions from the Every Barn Tells a Story project by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority)