



The 'Bonsall Field Barn Project' has been created to do something about the many derelict field barns in and around Bonsall. Although they look quite romantic as ruins, the truth is that after surviving the stripping of their roofs over the past 50 years, many are now being plundered for their stone quoins and lintels. It is only a matter of little time that these historic and important barns will be left to memory. We could be the last generation of people for as long as 300 years, to see them standing in their rightful places. They have

The barns were pieced together by hand with great skill, by men that were the forefathers of Bonsall's local families. They tell the story of Bonsall and a way of life that has spanned over twelve generations.

But to some, these barns are now just an eyesore, useless, a revenue. To others they are irreplaceable and rare, - humble, historical, architectural gems that are as important to Bonsall as Stonehenge is to Salisbury Plain. They have a magic and integrity, and walking the fields with them demolished and gone would feel like the very soul had been taken out of this special and beloved landscape.



'A recent series of studies by our colleagues in the National Trust have demonstrated the economic value – at the macro-scale – of high quality conserved landscapes, in terms of local jobs, tourism and inward investment. They have calculated, for example, that in rural areas 60% or more of employment in tourism is stimulated by *landscape quality*.'

**Finding a Future use for Historic Farm buildings**  
Sir Neil Cossons,  
Chairman, English Heritage



### Uses for the barns

Many people ask what future use do the barns have?

Barns that have their roofs intact are still used by cattle and sheep to shelter from the hot sun or driving rain. Hay, feed and farming implements are stored in them too.

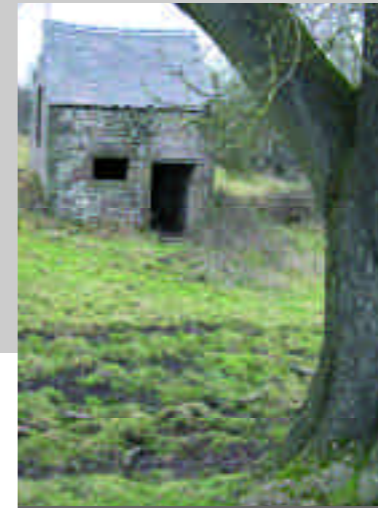
They are home to barn owls, bats, birds, small mammals and insects.

They are the focus for educational and history groups - the inspiration for artists and photographers, walkers and villagers. They also hold stories and memories, especially for the older generation.

The barns are a major part of the scenery along the **Limestone Way**. It is estimated that around 12,000 visitors per year either walk, holiday or cycle in Bonsall.

This helps the local businesses, which generates the local economy keeping village life thriving.

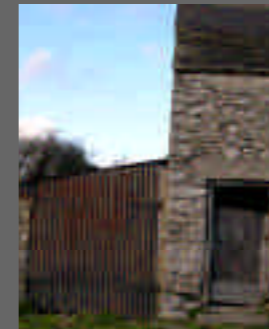
These visitors are attracted by the unique quality of buildings and the beauty of the landscape.



One or two suitable barns could be made into eco-friendly and environmentally sensitive camping barns.

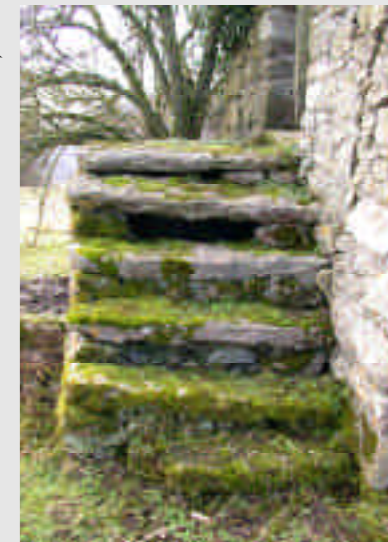
The Barn Owl Centre is interested in releasing breeding pairs of owls into suitable barns.

Local History Groups, schools and arts organisations are interested in educational visits .



THE BARNs ARE LITERALLY BUILT FROM THE EARTH THAT THEY STAND ON – FROM FOSSILS AND FLINT, LIMESTONE RUBBLE, BLOODSTONE, ANIMAL BONE, TUFA AND QUARTZ CRYSTAL. METALS WERE MOLTEN AND WROUGHT, HAMMERED INTO SHAPES TO MAKE STRAP HINGES AND LATCHES. TREES WERE CHOSEN, CHOPPED AND SAWN INTO RAFTERS AND NAILED ONTO HEFTY PURLINS. THE BARN'S FREEBIRCH ROOF SLATES BELONGED ONCE TO AN ANCIENT RIVERBED. THE AGE LONG RIPPLING OF WATER OVER STONE, CREATED THE SLATE'S DISTINCTIVE FOSSILISED TEXTURE. THESE HEAVY SLABS WERE PLACED IN DIMINISHING SIZES AND PINNED ONTO LATS USING STRONG OAK DOWELS.

THESE BUILDINGS ARE ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE ON A HUMANISTIC SCALE. THEY REFLECT A PERFECT HARMONY BETWEEN MAN, NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT.





### Minimal Investment. Major Return.

The inspiration for this project has been the Yorkshire Dales National Park Barns and Walls Conservation Project. It began with a local action group concerned about their crumbling barns and landscape. After five years and major funding from the Millennium Commission, the EU Initiative and Heritage Lottery, most of the one thousand and forty-four barns have been restored. It is now a magnificent and enchanting place to visit and walk. In the village of Muker there are as many as 100 barns in one square mile.

The Bonsall Field Barn Project is on a tenth of the scale but equally as necessary. From as little as £2,000 per barn, countless people and future generations will be able to enjoy these little field barns, whilst walking amongst the beautiful and well loved landscape in Bonsall.

email:- [office@bonsallfieldbarnproject.org](mailto:office@bonsallfieldbarnproject.org)  
web: [www.bonsallfieldbarnproject.org](http://www.bonsallfieldbarnproject.org)



#### The restoration of barns will have strict guidelines.

The objective is to restore/ repair as sensitively and sympathetically as possible. To allow each barn to retain it's authenticity and weathered appearance.

Re-use/ recycle materials wherever possible. Repair as much as possible. Use old ironmongery for latches and hinges. Iron guttering and downpipes. Use irregular size planks for doors, made out of reclaimed timber for authenticity.

Pointing to be left to a bare minimum – where necessary. To be recessed using traditional lime putty. Over-pointing can ruin a barn's character.

#### Roofs

The reason why most barns are in bad condition is because of roof problems . Originally their roofs were made up of stone slates.

They endured hundreds of years of use but fell out of favour during the past hundred years, when new roofing materials became available. Although Staffordshire Blue tiles look attractive on these roofs, they have to be regularly maintained. A fallen tile that is left over winter can soon start the timbers rotting and the roof will rapidly deteriorate. These reclaimed tiles are in commercial demand, very profitable and are easy to take off by thieves.



Bradstone Conservation Slate

#### A better solution is needed

Bradstone make a cast textured roof tile which is a replica of the original local stone slate. It looks very authentic, has anti-theft proofing, costs considerably less than stone and because it comes made to measure, is extremely labour saving.

They are also very low maintenance.

*The barn on this page and left, is the restored barn featured overleaf with the church  
The first Bonsall Field Barn Project restoration*

# Bonsall Field Barn Project



'...it is clear that widespread dereliction of these buildings or – equally – wholesale poorly-designed conversion, could irrevocably damage irreplaceable historic assets, could impair the quality of the wider landscape, and could diminish the appeal of the countryside for inhabitants and visitors alike.

Doing nothing therefore should not be an option'

Sir Neil Cossons,  
Chairman, English Heritage