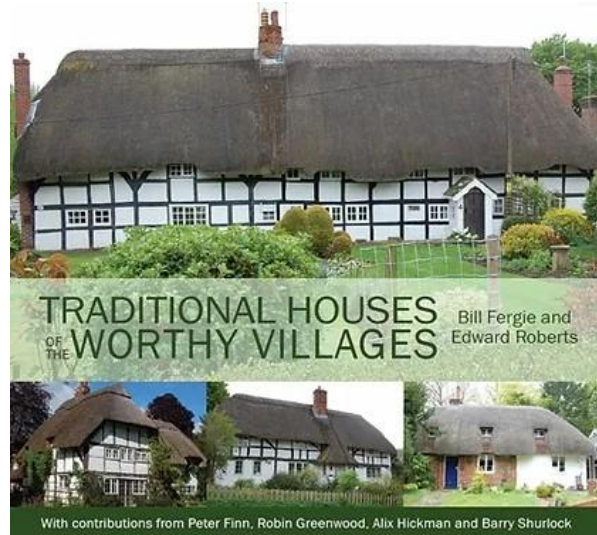
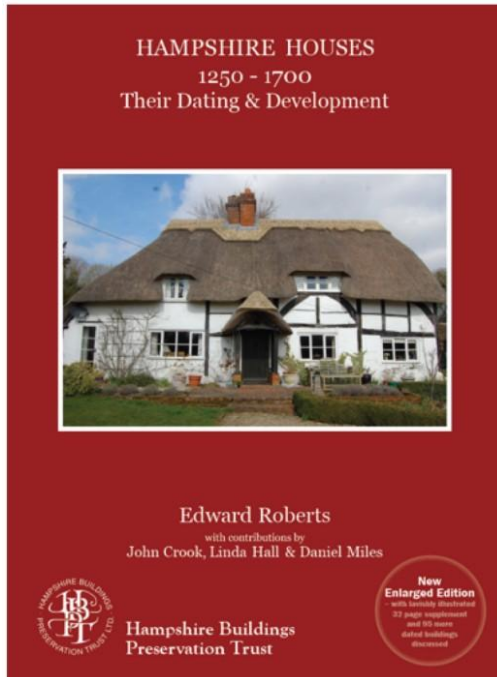


Meeting Report, 11 March 2023

Ruth Andrews

17 members met in Victoria Hall, Sutton Scotney, to hear Bill Fergie talk about timber-framed buildings in the Worthys. Bill is the co-author, with Edward Roberts, of two books, *Hampshire Houses 1250-1700* and *Traditional Houses of the Worthy Villages*.



The books are available from **Hampshire Field Club**
<https://www.hantsfieldclub.org.uk/sections/hisbuild.html>
and **Worthys Local History Group**
<https://www.worthyhistory.org/publications> respectively.

Research for the Worthys was carried out by the authors and the Worthys Local History Group. The study area covered four Hampshire villages in the Itchen Valley, which all have 'Worthy' in their place names, and have all been in existence since the Anglo-Saxon period. There are many timber-framed buildings, some of which originated as farmhouses, and nearly all are now listed. 25 buildings featured in the survey which took 3 years to complete, the final survey being interrupted by Covid.

Bill showed us plans and photographs of a selection of the buildings to illustrate developments in building style and technique, from open halls with a central fire, cross passage, and service area (which were often later sub-divided and floored) to buildings with internal fireplaces and wooden chimneys. The traces of these structures give vital clues to the dates of the buildings, together with the style of roof structure: crown post or queen post. Soot-blackened roof timbers also help to date a structure. He explained about the use of dendrochronology – and isotope-supported dendrochronology which is a very recent refinement of the technique. The ages of the oldest timbers ranged from 1406 in Headbourne Worthy Rectory through the 16th century to 1615 at Abbots Worthy, which is a very late date for the middle 3 bays of a larger property.

Bill explained that cruck- and box-frames often survive under later modifications. By the late 16th century in Hampshire open hall houses had evolved into fully floored and chimneyed transitional buildings. He mentioned that outward appearances can be misleading. The Cart & Horses pub in Kings Worthy has a painted date of 1760, but it was a farmhouse before that, and was remodelled in 1769 as turnpike road house. It has 1690s timbers internally.

Many thanks to Bill for his interesting talk.

