

Woodland Cruck Barn

Part 2 - "The Raising...."

by Ken Hume, Executive Trustee, The Oxfordshire Woodland Group

Following the article published in Woodland Heritage 2017 re building A Woodland Cruck Barn (Hume, 2017) work has proceeded over the past year at a steady pace with the cruck frame completed and the frame raised during leaf fall in November 2017.



The framing team worked one to two days per week generally trying to avoid inclement weather so that timber joints were kept dry to help avoid swelling and tightening of joints. It has taken about 18 months to make the framing floor, sills, three cruck frames and two long wall frames. After raising the crucks the roof wallplates, ridge, purlins, windbraces and rafters were framed in position. A three man team working full time could have achieved all this in four to six months.

The most important lesson learned during the framing process was the importance of the dedication and cohesion of the overall team. This was ably demonstrated during the frame raising.



The woodland site was carefully protected during construction to minimise the impact of disturbance or damage to the woodland flora and so the timing of bringing vehicles onto areas where blue bells are prolific was an important consideration.

Andrew Jarvis used his SWB 1958 Land Rover, fitted with a winch, to raise the cruck frames which combined with the rigging skills of Joe Currie ensured a slow safe raising of each cruck frame.



Once raised each cruck frame had to be rapidly stabilised by the application of temporary bracing to the sidewalls. On each side of the cruck frame being raised a two man team was present comprising Mark Griffin and Herbert Russell on one side and Ken Hume and Jeremy Hunter on the other. This ensured that the potential for three degrees of movement was carefully controlled. The whole process took a day starting at 09:00hrs and completed by 16:00hrs.



The OWG applied for a further grant from The Postcode Local Trust to buy an Ifor Williams trailer and a Woodland Mills mobile saw. This was approved in November 2018 with the trailer being delivered in February and the sawmill in May 2018.



Oxfordshire Woodland Group
Apr 2018

Originally we intended making over 5,000 Cedar or Larch shingles to cover the roof by traditional hand splitting however we have had to face up to various practical and scheduling constraints and so we have now decided that we will most probably make these on the mobile saw. If we make these by hand then we would need to find a good number of volunteers to help produce same or contract this out to a shingle supplier. There are also issues associated with splitting, stacking and seasoning shingles which has required us to fit a temporary tarpaulin roof which will remain in place for upwards of six months before the shingles can be fitted (Wilbur, 1992).



Oxfordshire Woodland Group
Feb 2018

In May 2018 the project will move forward to making, lath, roof shingles, plank cladding and internal joists and floor planks. This will be followed by 2nd fix joinery including doors, shutters and window frames.



Reading University visit to the cruck barn - Mar 2018

The cruck barn project has attracted the attention of Henry Russell OBE (*left*) who brought his Reading University class of building conservation students to see first hand how new - old buildings are put together. Herbert Russell M.Sc. (*yellow jacket*) is the lead carpenter on the cruck project and he led the visit explaining how crucks are made. Herbert is a graduate of the Woodland Heritage W2W course.



Oxfordshire Woodland Group - May 2018

Time to relax and smell the blue bells!



Contact details:

trustees@oxfordshirewoodlandgroup.co.uk

<https://twitter.com/OWGGroup>

Refs.

HUME, K. F., 2017. A Woodland cruck Barn. *Woodland Heritage*, 2017, 98-99.

WILBUR, C.K., 1992. *Homebuilding and Woodworking in Colonial America*. Old Saybrook, CT. USA : Globe Pequot Press.