

Notes made when the RHS were invited to inspect Smugglers Cottage whilst it was under going major re-roofing work in 2004.

The cottage built in the 17th century was built as a hall house and has evidence of smoke blackened interior thatch.

It then became 4 cottages - with an upper floor added to make them 1 up 1 down. Chimneys were added - one to the east (since capped and only visible within the roof space) and one double one to the west providing 2 fire places. The stone build at ground level was subsequently topped with cob for the upper storey.

Over the centuries the thatch had built up to 6 ft above roof timbers - and there is evidence of the existing east chimney having to be heightened.

On viewing the roof space, lime wash could be seen on eastern chimney wall and to roof timbers which must have been painted before top floor ceilings were added. There is also evidence of previous lathe and plaster ceiling. Some of the stays (tie-bars) were probably installed in the Victorian period. However the two on the south wall, which have been welded probably date to the 1950's, when the eastern extension was added.

There is some water reed showing within the original thatch - in the 16th century there was a practice of thatching the eaves first and then tucking water reed into spaces.

On the exterior south wall a lintel appears to have been lowered to make way for upper floor timbers, and there is evidence of a doorway showing in the wall.

Jacqueline Patterson