

ART. XIV.—*Crewgarth*. By W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

*Read at the site, July 10th, 1929.*

AN enclosure, marked 'Fort' on the map, sits astride of the road leading from Langwathby to Ousby, at nearly a quarter of a mile east of the boundary between Ousby and Melmerby. In plan it is not square, as such ramparted enclosures often are, but five-sided, somewhat like the so-called camp on Infell, Ponsonby. As at Infell, the ramparts are double; that is to say, the earth from the ditch is upcast on both sides.

This place was called Crewgarth when, in November, 1764, Mrs. Mary Adderton bought it from Mrs. Simpson and paid £6 as fine to Sir Michael le Fleming, the rent being 6s. Earlier than that it was named by Bishop Nicolson when he visited Ousby church in 1703 and took the wooden effigy for the portrait of a knight of St. John of Jerusalem. "The Tradition," he wrote, "is That he was an Out-law who lived at *Crue-garth* in this Parish; and that he was kill'd, as he was hunting, at a certain place on the Neighbouring Mountain which (from that accident) keeps the name of *Baron-syde* to this day. [For," he added, "all Great men were anciently called *Barons* in this county.]"

We ought to have, and we do have, a great respect for Bishop Nicolson; but this time he might have known better. Even Jefferson (*Leath Ward*, 254) dryly remarks that an outlaw was not likely to have a monument erected to his memory in the church. And yet, so curious a thing is tradition, there really was an outlaw living hereabouts a little before 1294, as tenant of Sarah Folcard (these *Trans.* N.S. xxii, 47) and perhaps the sensational

fact was remembered when the circumstances were forgotten. But what the Bishop might have known is that Baron-side means "borran side," for the grant of Robert de Robertby to Wetheral in 1236-39 (*Wetherhal* p. 292) was of "Borganeset," the seat or shieling among ruins of stones.

The name Crewgarth is not given earlier than 1703 (to my present knowledge) but John Denton in 1610 explained Ousby, anciently Ulvesby (usually misprinted 'Ulnesby') as the Habitation of Ulf (p. 120) who, he said, was one of three sons of Halfdan the Dane. How he got this pedigree he did not say (probably from a romance) but it is copied with their usual docility by all the county histories down to Whellan. It is much more likely that Ulf was Norse, because the ancient dedication of Ousby church was to St. Patrick, which argues a founder from Ireland, as at Heysham (N.S. xxiii, 288).

But the Norse did not build ramparts like these. Double-ramparted sites of this class are at Bromfield (the *curia* of 1227), Arthuret, Whitehall, Embleton and the Ponsonby Infell. It is a type which we have good reason to believe was usual for moated manor-houses in places where a motte-and-bailey mansion would have been too expensive for a minor lord of the manor, in days before stone pele-towers came into use; that is to say from the 12th to the 14th century. The ramparts (or perhaps only the inner one) would be palisaded, making what was properly known as a pele-garth. In the enclosure a hall would be built of wood, turf or clay-daubing, with stone footings to the walls—sufficient for what was then considered comfort; and the stockade would keep out wolves and Scots. There the lord and his family lived, called de Ulvesby until the manor passed through heiresses into other hands. For the descent see Mr. T. H. B. Graham in these *Transactions* N.S. xxii.

Mr. Graham does not discuss Crewgarth, but Jefferson in *Leath Ward* (1840) gave it a short notice (p. 259). He called it "vestiges of what appeared to be an ancient British fort," and said that an urn and several fragments of ruined walls had been found in it. The urn, not described, might have been anything from a Bronze age burial down to a medieval pitcher, and the ruined walls probably represented the footings of the medieval mansion. Jefferson was followed by others until our Society came here in July 1884 (these *Trans.* o.s. viii, 66) when the people of the farm adjoining showed stones found in levelling part of the outer rampart. One of these was the upper piece of a quern; another, a mortar; and a third puzzled Professor McKenny Hughes to say whether it was a celt or a natural pebble. A farm-servant told the party that a metal ball had been found, weighing 2 or 3 lb., but was lost. Chancellor Ferguson said he thought Crewgarth the site of an Anglo-Saxon or medieval moated grange; say 'medieval' and we agree. A quern and mortar (or perhaps creeing-trough) are likely on a medieval site. Celts turn up in many unexpected places, and a mile S.E. of this there seem to have been plenty on Skirwith moor. The metal ball hardly proves a siege with cannon; it may have been a weight. There is, indeed, no evidence that the place was British or Anglo-Saxon, but everything to show that it must have been the moated manor-house throughout the middle ages; superseded when defence was no longer required.

It has been noticed that in the outer rampart were found disused domestic articles, a quern and a mortar. This suggests repair of the defences at a late period. Now though Cumberland was fairly free, so far south, from Scots raids for a long while before the Union of the Crowns, yet just before the Union there was a recrudesence of trouble, not on any great scale, but

more like brigandage by small parties. The Holm Cultram records (p. 175) tell us that in 1593, Mr. Osmotherly, of Dubmill, and others of the Holm were carried off, with their goods, into Scotland for ransom. Mr. Tough in *The Last Years of a Frontier* (p. 275) notes a certain unrest on the Border about 1601; in July of that year the little son of the Sheriff of Westmorland, Thomas Salkeld, was seized by the Grahams, whose kinsman had been captured for horse-stealing, and taken into Scotland from Corby within three miles of Carlisle. Cumberland was certainly scared, and just then the Penrith people were repairing the dyke that was intended to protect them from the Scots. Ousby was probably feeling the scare, and this would be the reason for mending the defences of Crewgarth with any materials that came handy.

With 1603 the raids ended. Defence was needed no longer, and the desire for a comfortable home came in with James I. The old enclosure was turned into a farm-yard, for that is what Crewgarth means. The word 'Crew-yard' was used until lately in the north of England, according to the Oxford dictionary, and *garth* is the northern form of *yard*. Prevost's Dickinson gives 'swine-creuh' for a pigsty: the word is apparently the Irish *cró*, Icelandic *kró*, Shetlandic *krú*, English provincial *crew*, meaning a pen for sheep or cattle, as in Crew castle north of Bewcastle. The name therefore is not that of the manor-house in its prime, but of the place in its decay; and that is why it does not appear (so far as I know) before 1703, and even then the interest of the site escaped Bishop Nicolson, keen antiquary though he was.

There may be further finds at Crewgarth, but on the available evidence we may class it as a medieval peel-garth or defensible manor-house.

The field antiquities of Ousby parish, and adjacent

parishes, are not very thoroughly known. For instance, in the 13th century this manor was held in moieties; there were two mills, and there must have been two manor-houses. Where was the other?

On the ordnance map a 'fort' is marked, three-quarters of a mile E. of the church. There is also a Castle slack north of Crewgarth; it is mentioned in Robert de Robertby's grant already quoted, for he gave Wetheral (among other things) two acres on Borganes-set on the north, extending from Sunnive-gile (Sunnygill, the gill of Sunniva, a Norse woman by her name) to the dyke of 'Castlebec.' Details of this would be welcome.

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