

ART. XVII.—*Grange Hall*. By EDWARD P. FRANKLAND,
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Read at Penrith, September 17th, 1930.

THE history of this estate is very obscure. There are two properties in the parish of Great Asby known as "Grange," namely: Grange Hall, and Asby Grange, a few hundred yards higher up the valley. According to Nicolson and Burn one of these was the property of Byland Abbey, Yorkshire, which also owned the neighbouring manor of Bleatarn; the other was attached to the manor of Asby Cotesforth, which from the 15th to the 18th centuries belonged to the Musgraves.

Taylor (*Ancient Manorial Halls of Cumberland and Westmorland*) states definitely, though on what evidence the writer has been unable to ascertain, that Asby Grange was the property of Byland Abbey and that Grange Hall was attached to the neighbouring manor of Gathorn,* also partly in the parish of Great Asby. There is a hint of this connexion between Grange Hall and Gathorn in the armorial tablet at Grange Hall, considered by Professor Hamilton Thompson to be of Elizabethan or Jacobean date. The bugles appearing on it are much like those on the coat of arms of the Bellinghams of Over Levens, which is well displayed over the entrance at Gathorn Hall. We first hear of a Bellingham at Gathorn in 1597, and in the reign of James I a Bellingham of Levens purchased Gathorn from Sir Christopher Pickering of Ormside, whose family had its original seat at Killington Hall and had acquired Crosby Ravensworth† through marriage into the Threlkeld family. One may conjecture

* Once the property of St. Leonard's Hospital, York; but the existing hall, a fine early Jacobean building, is evidently the work of the Bellinghams.

† Gathorn is partly in Crosby Ravensworth. There is a piece of land near by called Pickering Close.

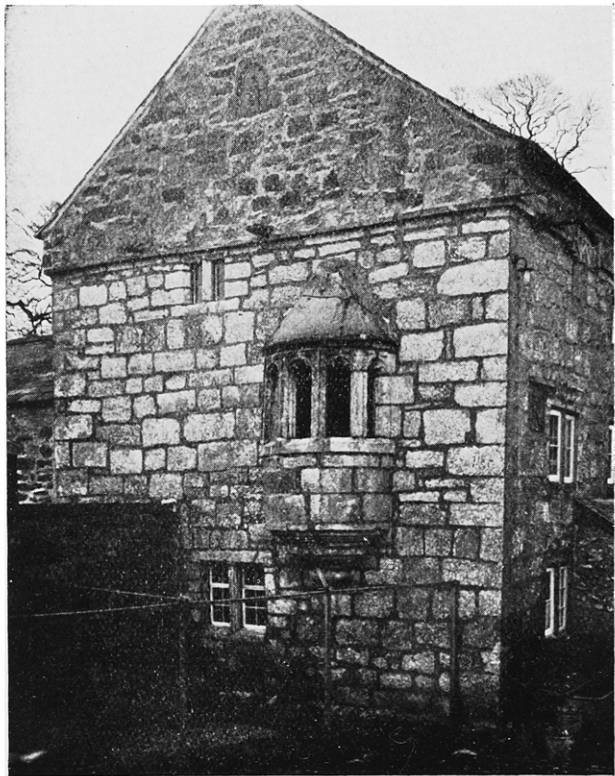
that Grange Hall was also Pickering property, acquired by the Bellinghams about the same time that they purchased Gathorn. Some evidence for this may be found in the rather striking architectural similarities between Grange Hall and Killington Hall, which is perhaps the only pele tower in Westmorland to which Grange Hall bears much resemblance.* Mr. Curwen assigns Killington Hall to the early 15th century, and Professor Hamilton Thompson is inclined to think that Grange Hall belongs to the same period.

The writer has not found any clues to the history of these manors at Asby Grange. Nicolson and Burn were unable to ascertain what family gave "Grange" to Byland Abbey, nor, apparently, to whom the property passed at the Dissolution. The existing buildings at Asby Grange are old, but possibly not older than about 1700. There are, however, rather extensive foundations on limestone rock in the field north of the living house, and on the hillside to the south is an ancient dyke with large stones in it, mounting towards the open fell. A similar type of earthwork can be seen near the eastern approach to the farm buildings, perhaps part of a fold.

DESCRIPTION.—Grange Hall is a large farm on the eastern slope of a valley descending towards the village of Great Asby, Westmorland. It stands over 800 feet above sea level on a terrace between two parallel limestone scars, the lower one falling abruptly to a dry gill, the sides of which are overgrown with trees. Owing to the courtesy of the tenant, Mr. Cleasby, and his family, the writer was given every facility for inspecting the place, and some of its peculiarities were pointed out to him by Mr. William Potter, of Sedbergh, who has lately been carrying out repairs to the structure. The writer's thanks are also due to Miss Alice Cleasby for considerable

* See Curwen's *Castles and Towers of Cumberland and Westmorland*, pp. 378, 379.

help with the plan. The living house is a tower-like building with basement (not vaulted) and two floors over. It measures approximately 50 feet by 25 feet, on a N.W. and S.E. axis. At 21 feet 3 inches from the ground is a plain hollowed cornice or cove carrying about 2 feet 6 inches of masonry along the N.W. side of the building (less on the S.E. side), and a gable at either end. Immediately above or below the cornice project a number of half moon or tubular stone spouts, which evidently discharged rain water from a flat roof or rampart walk behind a parapet. This parapet would seem to have been altered at some later date and possibly raised somewhat on the shorter sides to take the present gabled roof, but stone corbels intended to support an older roof more or less at cornice level can still be seen in the attics. The walls are from 3 feet 4 inches to 3 feet 9 inches in thickness and are faced with dressed sandstone, many of the blocks being about 2 feet by 16 inches in measurement. In the N.W. gable end is a large chimney, rising in stages, and said to contain an archway and brick oven on the ground floor, now concealed by alterations. On the first floor is a fireplace with obtusely pointed arch. On the S.W. side of the house, facing the gill, is a garderobe turret with a string course towards the top, which is several feet below the cornice. In the upper portion are two small openings, one circular and the other rectangular, which were until lately blocked up, but have been re-opened by Mr. Potter. Within is a shaft descending towards an outlet at ground level. There seem to have been two doorways, side by side, into the turret from the first floor of the house; both are now blocked up with rough masonry. No doubt the garderobe was formerly divided by a partition into two chambers each with its door and its opening for light and air. The lower portion of the turret has been widened to take a two-light mullioned window opening into the parlour, an alteration obviously made after the



Photos, by E. P. Frankland.

GRANGE HALL.

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garderobe had been abandoned and sealed up. A little to the right of the turret a stone spout projects from the wall a few feet above ground level. This was probably a lavatory drain. Further along this side of the house is a plain chimney breast, apparently coeval with the original structure, whereas that in the N.W. gable seems in its

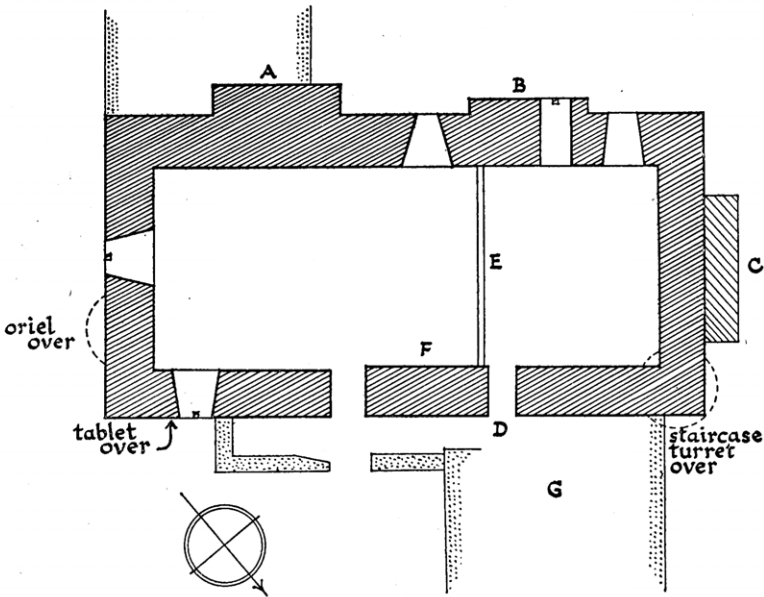


FIG. 1.—GRANGE HALL: 1 in.=16 ft.

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| A.—Original Chimney. | D.—Original (?) Doorway. |
| B.—Garderobe Turret. | E.—Oak Partition with Oak Doors. |
| C.—Later (?) Chimney. | F.—Oak Staircase. |
| G.—Later Wing. | |

Some modern accretions are omitted.

present form to belong to a later period. Beyond this chimney the S.W. front is covered by a roughly walled farm building.

On the N.E. front there is a wing, 18 feet wide and a storey less in height, used for domestic purposes and evidently of much later date than the main building. Opening into it on the first floor level is a chamfered

segmental archway, 6 feet 7 inches high and 8 feet 8 inches wide. The wall above the arch is only 2 feet 3 inches thick, and it seems almost certain that the wing here attached to the tower building takes the place of an older projection which may have contained the original entrance. Three large corbels in the wall to the left, ascending on a steep slant, possibly had some connection with the addition on this side. They look as though they had supported a penthouse over an outside stair. It is noticeable that the dressed cornice is missing above the gabled roof of the present wing, suggesting that there was formerly a wing or turret to the full height of the tower. There is a narrow segmental archway into the wing from the parlour on the ground floor, containing a good oak panelled door. The present entrance to the house is under a penthouse further to the S.E. and is probably of comparatively recent date.

The northern angle of the house is occupied by a semi-circular turret boldly corbelled out from the level of the first floor and containing a stone newel staircase. This is entered by a plain chamfered square headed doorway and leads to the attics through a doorway with a slightly pointed head and wider chamfer than the supporting cheeks. The stairs rise in the turret beyond this door, but have been broken away to allow of a lean-to roof. Originally, no doubt, the stairs gave access to the rampart walk.

It is remarkable that there are no stone partitions within the main building, and the existing oak partition is probably not on the line of the medieval one, if such existed.

There are a number of plain 17th-century two-light window openings, most of which retain their mullions and slightly curved headings within; but on the first floor, in the S.E. face of the house, is a mullioned oriel window with five square-headed trefoiled lights carried on a semi-



GRANGE HALL.

Photos. by Raven Frankland.

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circular base with mouldings and finial shaped into an elongated human head. A similar head with beard and pointed cap appears under an arched hood high up in the gable. The oriel is at present walled off from the room within. Above, and immediately under the cornice, is a small two light window with heavy mullion, apparently belonging to the original design. On the N.E. side, rising partly above the cornice, is a blocked two-light mullioned window with trefoiled, slightly ogee-shaped heads under a square hood, and on the S.W. side is a similar one of a single light. Both these windows have their splays completely walled up within. (A window in this style exists at Killington Hall with its head rising above the cornice). At a slightly lower level, superseding these early windows, are several 17th-century windows. These, with most of the other windows, the oak partition and three oak doors on the ground floor, and the oak staircase with balustrade to the first floor, very likely date from the time when the building was re-conditioned, the top of the staircase turret removed, the garderobe closed and the parapet gabled at either end to take the raised roof over the attics. Part of an armorial tablet carved on black stone remains in the N.E. wall of the house. Professor Hamilton Thompson describes this as follows:

“ I think that it would be impossible to apply exact heraldic terms to the carved panel, which seems to be emblematic rather than strictly armorial. The figure on the left appears to be a merchant's or some similarly distinctive mark—a Latin cross on a triangular base with a band round the lower part of the stem, and a round knob on the upper part encircled by a torse. The other figure certainly shows the remains of a slung bugle within an elliptical torse, and I think that the intertwined carving in the upper part may be nothing more than an exaggerated bow formed by tying the bugle strings*—if

* *Writer's note.* There are two stringed bugles on the shield, and if it were complete there would be room for a third.

it is not this I cannot explain it. Between the two figures there is an arrow head, above which there appears to be a low relief which I cannot make out. I should say that the date is probably Elizabethan or Jacobean: it does not look medieval, and I do not think that there is any allusion to Byland, but that the whole thing has a purely personal meaning. The Bellingham shield is Argent three bugle-horns sable, stringed gules and garnished or; but this device is not a shield, but either a crest or a badge, probably the latter."

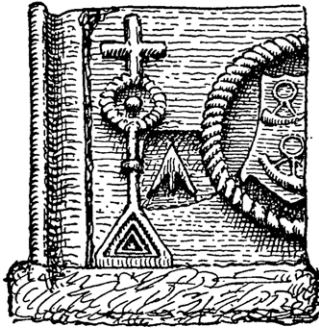


FIG. 2.—ARMORIAL TABLET AT GRANGE HALL.

From a sketch by Miss Alice Cleasby.

Evidently the tablet has no connexion with the Musgraves or the Pickeringings.

There are a few other points of interest about the buildings. A staircase step and newel can be seen in the wall of the barn; on the courtyard wall lies a dressed stone with curved cable moulding on one edge, and another dressed stone forms the ridge of the solidly constructed well house.

To summarize, it would seem that the main building with its cornice, newel stair, and Gothic windows, represents a large pele tower, probably of 15th century date, which has been extensively altered in the 17th century and further added to in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Mr. Potter has remarked that the valley between Grange Hall and Great Asby seems at one time to have supported a considerable population. On the scar north of the Hall are three hut circles, partly enclosed by a low rampart. Some lumps of red sandstone (?) were found in

the centre of one of them. Further on, Holborn Hill, a projecting height with tiers of limestone crags, is covered with a complex network of foundations containing large blocks of stone set on edge and rising several feet above ground level. A large stone hammer-head has been found here and is now in Mr. Potter's possession. This place is marked on the ordnance map as a "British Settlement," and there is another less conspicuous site of similar character on the opposite side of the valley. From their appearance one may conjecture that these settlements belong to the post-Roman or 'Cumbrian' period, but no systematic exploration has yet been made of them.
