

ART. XIV.—*The old tower of Lamplugh.* By Canon
S. TAYLOR, M.A.

Read at Barrow-in-Furness, July 10th, 1951.

THE present writer has discovered amongst the papers of his grandfather, the Rev. Walter Brooksbank, two small pieces of parchment which have clearly been cut from an estate plan made in 1778.¹ Walter Brooksbank was rector of Lamplugh during the fifties of the last century, and in that period he was guardian of his nephew, Walter Lamplugh Brooksbank, the heir and afterwards the owner of Lamplugh Hall and its estates, by virtue of his descent from the ancient family of Lamplugh, who had been lords of that manor since the twelfth century.

One of the two pieces of parchment gives the title of the plan, surmounted by the arms of Lamplugh in colour—or, a cross fleury sable. It reads as follows:—

A Plan
OF THE ESTATE
of
L A M P L U G H H A L L
C U M B E R L A N D
The Property
of
THE REVD. THOS. LAMPLUGH
Surveye'd
BY
Geo: Munkhouse
May 24th 1778

¹ A brief notice of the discovery was given in my "Daily life — and death — in 17th century Lamplugh", CW2 xliv 138f.

The Rev. Thomas Lamplugh, to whom the estate belonged in 1778, was at that time rector of Copgrove in Yorkshire; he was the great-grandson of Thomas Lamplugh, archbishop of York from 1688 to 1691, and son of the latter's grandson Thomas Lamplugh, canon of York Minster, to whom the manor and estates of Lamplugh had passed by the will, drawn up in 1732, of yet another Thomas Lamplugh, the last member of the ancient main line of the family.

The other piece of parchment, obviously cut from the same plan, and here reproduced as fig. 1, is a drawing of Lamplugh Hall, which also shows the old tower of Lamplugh—of which, as far as can be discovered, no other illustration exists.

The writer has in his possession an article written in 1880 by W. Dickinson of Thorncroft, Workington, who gives a description of the tower in the last stages of its existence. Mr Dickinson was a member of the ancient family of that name which, as he states, has for some centuries held part of its property by feudal tenure under Lamplugh Hall, and which still holds lands in Lamplugh parish. In the article under reference, Mr Dickinson is describing what he himself remembers and what he has heard from his father and mother; concerning the old tower of Lamplugh he writes as follows²:—

"The old tower was a bulky square building and stood high. Other buildings of less height were in part connected with it and all were roofless. From the uneven height of the towers it must have been higher and part had been thrown down and the battlements wilfully destroyed for the standing parts seemed sound and without cracks. It stood at the right hand of the entrance to the present farmyard and the long low stables for twenty horses with cowsheds &c., on the opposite side of the public road along the west side of the churchyard wall, were

² The paper which Mr Dickinson read to the Society at Egremont on 30 August 1881 was no doubt the version here reproduced; Chancellor Ferguson, printing it in CW1 vi 186f., made various editorial revisions, and omitted the sentence given in italics below.

mostly thatched. The walls of the tower were nine feet thick and so well cemented together that they had to be blasted down for the stones to be used in the erection of the new farm buildings. Thus was ruthlessly destroyed the finest old tower in this part of the country. The windows of the tower were few and small and none were near the ground on the exposed sides facing the west and north. There were loopholes and arrow slits in the walls at varying heights and all were very narrow. *A stalwart brother of one of the last of the Lamplughs was the only man known to have been able to kick a football over the tower when it was perfect and few, if any, could have sent a ball over it in its degenerate state when I knew it.*³ It is reported that the original hall stood where the garden now is and where terraces were formerly visible and it, of course, adjoined the tower. At the time previously mentioned the farm house, or more modern hall, was where it is now, having undergone several mutilations and alterations."

According to Mr Dickinson's article, as printed in CWI vi 186 f., the "time previously mentioned" was "during my school days of say 1808 to 1810"; at that date, therefore, if his memory was reliable, the original hall had been completely obliterated but the tower, less its battlements, still stood. But the Lysons brothers, in their *History of Cumberland* (1816), p. 130, say that the hall "is in a dilapidated state and has the remains of a square tower"; it is possible, indeed, that their information in this case had been collected some years before their book was published, but in 1842 Samuel Jefferson wrote in his *Allerdale Ward*, p. 87, that "no vestiges (of the hall) now remain", and that the tower had been taken down in 1821. It seems therefore that Mr Dickinson's memory must have been referring to a rather later period than he imagined. There is a family tradition that the hall was burnt down in 1810; a fire might account for the condition it was in when the Lysons brothers wrote about it, so this tradition may be a correct one, in which case the demolition of its remains may have taken place in about 1815, and of the tower (as Jefferson records)

³ See footnote 2, above.

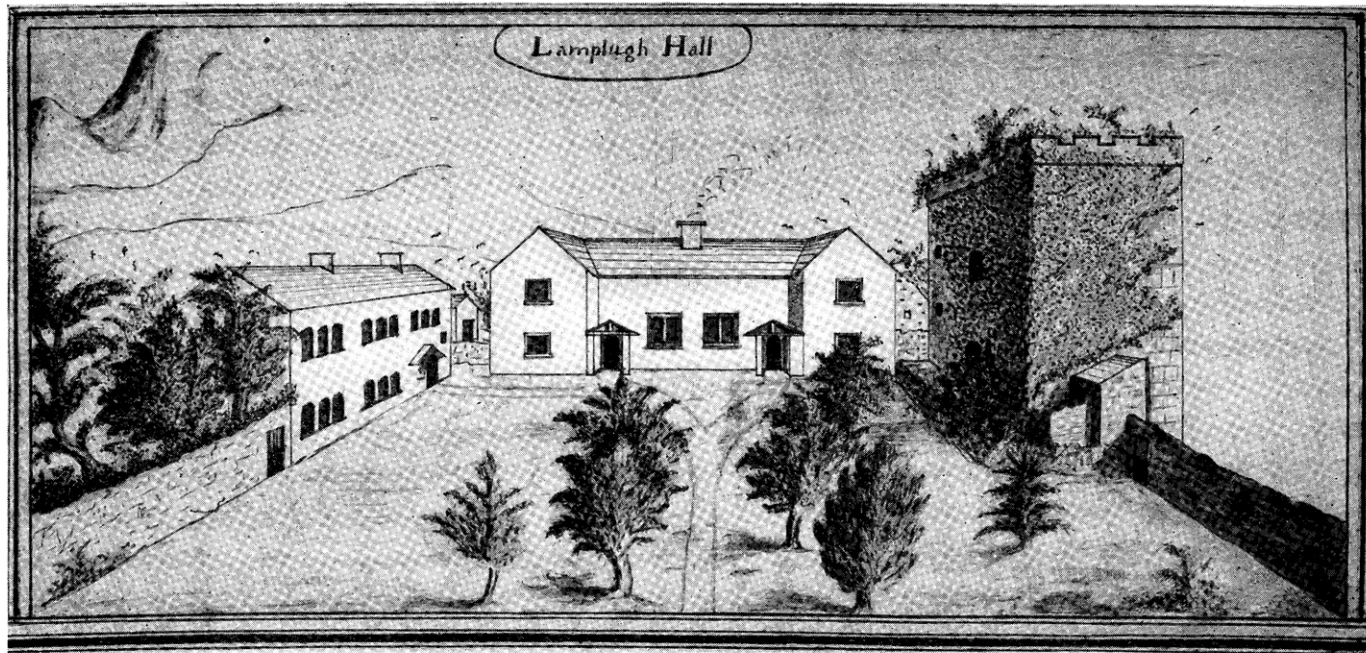


FIG. I.—LAMPLUGH HALL AND OLD TOWER, 1778.

in 1821: if so, Mr Dickinson's account must refer to a period between those two years.

The Lysons say elsewhere (p. ccvi f.) that "Lamplugh-hall cannot be of an earlier date than the beginning of the 16th century." As it is unbelievable that a pele tower can have been built as late as this, these words must refer to the central hall, shown in fig. 1, and not to the whole group of buildings. Now the gateway to this group still stands, with the date 1595 on it; as it can be presumed that in any extensive new building scheme the gateway would be the last part to be put up, there seems little doubt of the correctness of the Lysons' dating.

In this drawing, therefore, we have a fascinating glimpse of a West Cumberland Tudor manor house, built round a pele tower. Comparable buildings, but of a more ornate type, can be seen at Yanwath today or Sizergh (before the 18th century additions) in the illustration facing p. 258 of Mr Hornyold-Strickland's *Strickland of Sizergh*.

Lamplugh Hall, like many another ancient house, was unfortunate. The last of the Lamplughs to live there died in the middle of the 18th century. From then onwards for at least a hundred years no representative of the family to which the manor belonged lived in the parish. It seems probable therefore that, after the fire, both hall and tower were pulled down, as a prelude to the building of a new farmhouse, on the instructions of an absentee landlord then living in Yorkshire. It would be interesting to know if there are any records, from the earlier years of the 19th century, of the stones of these buildings having been used for the erection of buildings other than the farmhouse itself; it may not be without significance that, according to Whellan (p. 401), the rectory was rebuilt in 1822.

A representative of the Lamplugh family on the female side, James L. Brooksbank, is still lord of the manor of

Lamplugh. As to the tower itself, very little can be gleaned from the drawing as to the date of its erection or its architecture, but it is reasonable to suppose that, like Millom and other castles on the west coast route from Scotland, it was fortified and made a stronghold after the destructive raids of Robert Bruce in the early years of the 14th century.