

ART. XIV.—*The Fair at Ravenglass: with a note on the village cross.* By the Rev. CÆSAR CAINE.

Read at Carlisle, September 1st, 1920.

ON August 20th, 1208, King John, being then at “Kirkebi in Kendale” granted to Richard de Lucy, Lord of Egremont, a market at Ravenglass on Saturdays, and a fair yearly, on the Festival of St. James the Apostle, August 5th (old style).

The charter (Cart. Rot. 10 John, M. 3, no. 27) reads :*—
RIC. DE LUCY.

Johannes Dei gratia, etc. Sciatis nos concessisse et hac carta nostra confirmasse Ricardo de Lucy quod habeant [*sic*] singulis annis unam feriam apud manerium suum de Renglas duraturam per unam diem scilicet die beati Jacobi Apostoli et quod habeat unum mercatum ibidem qualibet die Sabbati. Ita tamen quod feria illa et mercatum illud non sint ad nocumentum vicinarum feriarum et vicinorum mercatorum. Quare volumus et firmiter precipimus quod predictus Ricardus et heredes sui post eum habeant et teneant predictam feriam et predictum mercatum bene et in pace libere et quiete integre plenarie et honorifice cum pertinentibus et libertatibus et liberis consuetudinibus ad hujusmodi ferias et mercata pertinentibus sicut predictum est. Testibus W. Comite Sarrisberiensis, W. Comite Warenn. R. Constabulario Cestrie, Hugone de Nevill. Gilberto filio Reinfr., Roberto de Curtenay, W. de Cantilupo.

Datum per manum H. de Well. Archidiaconi Wellensis apud Kyrkebi in Kandale xx die Augusti anno regni nostri decimo. †

* The Latin is very abbreviated, and is here presented in extended form.

† RICHARD DE LUCY.

John, by the grace of God, etc. Ye are to know that we have granted, and, by this our charter, confirmed unto Richard de Lucy that he hold in every single year at his manor of Renglas a fair lasting one day, namely, the day of the Blessed Apostle James, and that he hold a market in the same place every Saturday, provided, however, that the fair and the market are not a source of harm to neighbouring fairs and neighbouring markets. Wherefore it is our will, and we give definite instructions, that the aforesaid

Jefferson says that the grant was "in right of the haven there." The "haven" is also mentioned in this way by John Denton (*Accompt*, ed. by R. S. Ferguson, p. 19). But the charter does not name any such right or condition.

The fair is sometimes spoken of as being held on "the eve, the day, and the morrow" of St. James'. Hutchinson so states the case. But, this again does not appear in the original grant. The fair seems to have grown to a three days fair, from the one day granted in the charter.

Nicolson and Burn say the fair was held on St. George's day. This is certainly an error.

The Pipe Rolls of Cumberland (10 John) have this entry:—(quoted in *The Victoria County History*, vol. I. p. 403, col. 2): "Richard de Lucy one palfrey for having every year a fair, at his manor of Ravenglass, to last for one day, at the feast of St. James, and for a market there every Saturday, so that they may not be to the hurt of neighbouring fairs and markets."

This Pipe Roll, for the following year (11 John), shews that the fee of a palfrey had not been paid by Lord Egremont. There is an entry which reads: "Richard de Lucy owes one good palfrey for having a fair" (*Victoria County History*, p. 405, col. 1).

Sandford (MS. c. 1675) tells us that in his day St. James' Fair was "a grand fair of three days long, for all sorts of cattle especially, and other commodities from Ireland, the Isle of Man, and Scotland."

By the year 1796 the fair had so declined as to occupy

Richard, and his heirs after him, shall have the aforesaid fair and the aforesaid market on a tenure good, peaceable, free, quiet, entire, full, and honorable, together with the privileges, liberties, and free customs belonging to fairs and markets of this kind, as is aforesaid.

Witnesses: W., Earl of Salisbury; W., Earl de Warenne; R., Constable of Chester; Hugo de Neville; Gilbert, son of Reinfrid; Robert de Courtenay; W. de Cantilupe. Given by the hand of H. de Well, Archdeacon of Wells, at Kirkby near Kendal, on the twentieth day of August, in the tenth year of our reign.

again only one day. In that year John, Lord Muncaster, who held the manor under Lord Egremont procured a charter for

1. Two weekly markets, and
2. Three fairs of one day each. These fairs soon died out. Jefferson (1842) says they were unattended in his day. The fair on Aug. 5th was the only event which really survived, and it, at last, became merely a day of "sports" and was known as "St. Jam Races."

An important MS. now preserved at Cockermouth Castle, "The Survey of the Estates of the Earl of Northumberland before certain commissioners, the 8th day of May, xx year of Elizabeth, concerning the Lordship and Borough of Egremont," mentions the original fair as under the direction of the Borough of Egremont. The borough has "the rule of the Market, and direction of the order of the Fair at Ravenglass, which they now occupy and exercise."

The Survey also names certain privileges which belonged to the Burgesses when visiting Ravenglass for the oversight of the fair. "They have at Ravenglass in the meadows there, in the time of the Fair certain dales * or swarthes of grass for their horses with other duties."

The Borough Court of Egremont was very jealous of their rights in this respect, as the following protest, dated 1639, will show:—

To the Rt. Hon. our verie good Lord, the Earl of Northumberland. Humblie sheweth whereas a petition hath bene preferred to your honr. by John Hill for erectinge a market at Ravenglase :

We your honour's poore tennantes and Burrow men of Egremont, whose names are underwritten doe certifie that the market pretended to be at Ravenglase will be a great losse and hinderance to your honour's tennants and Burrow men of Egremont, for that we hold Twoe Market Daies in the weecke in Egremont, and two Faires, one at Ravenglase and another at Egremont from your honour :

* A.-S. word "dæl," meaning a portion of enclosed land.

Besichinge the Almighty God lonnge to continue your honour with happie daies for this your honourable care over us, we humblie rest in all bounden dutie.

William Antrobus.
 Thomas Murrey.
 Anthone Patrickson.
 Thomas Kelsicke.
 John Skelton.
 Leonard Robinson.
 Thomas Robinson.
 Michael Coltman.
 John Grayson.

The proclamation of the fair is interesting. The following copy was used in 1702 (temp. Queen Anne):—

THE PROCLAMATION FOR YE FAIRE AT RAVENGLASS.

Charles, Duke of Somerset, Marquis and Earl of Hartford, Viscount Beauchampe de Hache, Baron Seymour of Trowbridge, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and Knight of the Most noble Order of The Garter in right of Elizabeth, his Duchess,

Doe, in Her Majesty's name, straightly charge and command all manner of persons, resorting to this present Faire, to keep Her Majesty's peace :

Every Knight, upon paine, to forfeit £10; Every Esquire, upon paine, to forfeit, £5; and every other person and partaker, upon paine, to forfeit 40s.

And also doe charge and command all manner of persons, that have any manner of goods to dispose of, or sell, at the present Faire, now holden, that they, and every of them, dispose and sell the same in open Faire and Market, and not in corners, houses, backsides, or any other private places, upon paine and peril to forfeit the same, and doe charge all persons selling, disposing, or trading with any manner of goods or traide that they pay their toules, staliges, and accustomed dewes, usually due, and accustomed for the Faire ;

And if any person or persons, during the present Faire, be injured or wronged, let him or them soe injured or wronged repair to the house of W. Johnson in the towne, where the officers appointed for that purpose will be, who will heare their complaint, and see them relieved according to justice and equity.

God save the Queen
 and

The Lord and Lady of The Faire.

The following statement addressed officially to Lord Egremont in 1796 gives some interesting details as to the methods of the Fair.

My Lord holds the Fair at Ravenglass at the Feast of St. James, The Apostle, as mentioned in the Survey and receives Tollage, and Stallage for all cattle and merchandise sold, etc.

Upon holding the Fair the Custom is that the chief Bailiff of the Lordship of Egremont, attended by the Borough Sergeant, and Borough Bailiffs of the Borough of Egremont, and others, proceed from Egremont with halberts to a place called Bell Hill, being part of the common at Drigg, where they are met by His Lordship's tenants of the Manor or Forests of Kennyside, Netherwasdale, Eskdale, Mitredale, and Wasdale-head, who are obliged by ancient custom to perform that service. From Bell Hill they proceed to cavalcade to Ravenglass and proclaim the Fair. [See map, p. 251.]

At noon of the third day of the Fair * the same is discharged by proclamation and thereupon the Pennington family proclaim a Fair to be held that afternoon, and receive the Tolls, when horse races are made, that bring a concourse of people there.

But whether the Penningtons have a grant from Yr. Lordship's family for holding such afternoon Fair, and (or) whether it had first been set on foot by the Penningtons as a meeting for jollity and merriment I cannot make out.

The Stanley family have also immemorially held a Fair at Ravenglass yearly on the 24th day of May at which cattle and all sorts of Merchandise are sold and they receive Tolls. I presume the Fair has had a lawful beginning probably by grant from some of your Lordship's ancestors.

The "cavalcade" referred to must have been a very imposing sight, at times, when there was a good attendance of the tenants.

The lists of tenants show that there were nearly a hundred holdings from which people might be drawn. I will give the names for 1754. These will be interesting for several reasons, apart from the subject in hand.

KENNISIDE.

Anthony Dixon,
John How.

Thomas Patrickson.
Henry Dixon.

* The claim to the legal right of three days was retained to the last.

Thomas Bodle.	John Jackson.
John Lamb.	Joseph Rogers.
Dinah Moor, widow.	John Towerson.
Pennington Stephenson.	Thomas Walker.
Dame Fidler, late Gardners.	Thomas Hunter.
Jonathan Walker.	John Shepherd.
John Benn.	John Whiteside.
Joseph Crossthwaite.	Thomas Ponsonby.
John Sharp.	John Steel.
Matthew Jackson.	Wm. Steel.
Robert Shepherd.	Frances Robertson.
John Wood	John Shepherd of Drist.
Robert Shepherd.	William Steel, the Younger.
(Late Younghusband).	William Hall.

WASDALE.

Abraham Cuppage.	Joseph Jackson.
Thomas Newton, the Younger.	Edward Wilson, late of Sharp's.
Thomas Newton, the Elder.	Robert Wilkinson, an infant.
James Shepherd.	Henry Mossop.
John Myer of the Gap.	John Sharp of Harrowhead.
John Tyson of Strand.	John Bowman.
John Gunson, late of	James Shepherd of Dyker's.
Shepherd's.	William Leach.
William Nicholson, the	Mrs. Mary Pool.
younger.	William Tyson, Greendale.
Robert Shepherd.	Lancelot Porter, Gent.
Edward Myers.	William Tyson.
Henry Brag, late Nicholson's.	Margaret Porter, infant.
Thomas Sharp.	John Nicholson, infant.
Robert Dixon (of Daker-Stead).	Ann, wife of Tho. Sharp, late
	Gunson's.

ESKDALE.

John Tyson of Down in the	Edward Tyson.
Dale.	Thomas Tyson, of Roehead.
Henry Vicars.	John Tyson of Christ Clift.
Henry Dickinson.	Thomas Tyson of Foldend.
Nicholas Dickinson.	Nicholas Tyson of Hollings.
Mary Hartley, widow.	William Tyson, Infant.
Hen. Hartley.	John Viccars of Tayes.
Edward Hartley, of Paddock	John Viccars, Infant.
Wray.	John Viccars, Peel Place.

Thomas Hartley, Sch. House.	John Tyson of Christ Clift,
Henry Hartley, of the Mill.	late Viccars.
Henry Hartley of Spout House	Mary, wife of Miles Carter.
John Hartley.	William Viccars of Gillbank.
William Coupland.	Timothy Wilson of Howes.
Nicholas Nicolson.	William Roscoe.
John Nicolson.	John Wilkinson.
John Hartley, late Nicolson's.	Aaron Hunter.
Stephen Nicolson.	John Wasdale, late his father's
James Rassel, Infant.	Elizabeth Wasdale, widow.
Joseph Sharp.	Robert Fletcher.
Joseph Porter, Gent.	Lancelot Porter, Gent.
Thomas Towers.	William Atkinson.

Allowing for those who did not turn up, and those who were excused riding The Fair, it is probable that these people formed a considerable crowd in the old days.

In remote days the Foresters came armed with their bows, and carrying their horns, but in the degenerate days of recent times the "cavalcade" was preceded only by "two or three fiddlers."

There is good evidence that the Fair was very widely known. Among the Records at Cockermouth Castle there are several small memorandum books recording transactions at Ravenglass Fair. It would be no advantage to reproduce these in full, but a few abstracts will be of value, as illustrating the fact that people came here from far distant and very diverse places. The writing is bad, and the spelling is worse, the product of a man who spent his days among the cattle and knew nothing of commercial scholarship. I submit these abstracts:—

1703. "Joseph Wilson of Blind Coga exchanged a bay hoss for a bay hoss with John Dickson of Lamplugh." "Blind Coga" must refer to Blencogo, which lies $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south-west of Wigton.

"Phill. Layes of Cockermouth sold a Gray mair to John Dicksons of Oldhall." The last-named place must stand for Ulldale.

“ Will. Willson of Kearton sold to Edward Bateson of Kendall ; to Tiffin of Enerdale ; to Cassan of Brownrigg ; and exchanged a douned hoss for a bay hoss with Fra. Sanderson of Keswick.”

“ Ro. Chamers near Kendal byoth a gray hoss 6 yrs. old of Jo. Stocker in Casel Sorby.”

“ Will Tomson of Cockermouth byoth a gray mair of Thomas Barn near Wigton.”

Wigton, Kendal, Castle Sowerby, Ennerdale, Keswick, Blencogo—the mention of these place names in so brief an abstract is sufficient to show that Ravenglass Fair was known throughout the whole country, and was resorted to by persons from far and near. Schoolboys were infected by the enthusiasm for Ravenglass Fair. The scholars of St. Bees claimed holiday for this event. The claim was suppressed and the withdrawal is duly entered in the log-book of the school.

The payments for Toll were small. The following headlines of a Toll-book fully illustrate this :—

Towle taken for horsis 1703.

Hors sold, 4d.

Exchanged, 2d.

Again we have :

SALLT-COATS,* 1703.

A beast, 2d.

A pack, 4d.

A Fardall, † 2d.

A Dacre ‡ of leder, 6d.

The following sums, collected at Salt Coats, refer to the year just named :—

	s.	d.
Jo Dickson, twenty bease	3.	4.
John Head, Bease	0.	8.

* Salt Coats is an outlying farm on the marsh between Mite and Irt. The name (Salt-houses) is suggestive of salt making in the past. There is a ford over Mite from the village to Salt Coats.

† Fardel, Fardle, Fardil, Faddle, or as here—Fardall, a parcel of goods smaller than a “ pack.”

‡ Latin, Decuria—ten. Used as a measure of hides. “ Ten hides makis ane Daiker, and twenty Daikers makis ane Last.” (Skene). The variations in the spelling of the words are very numerous.

Thomas Baras, Sixteen Bease	2.	8.
Lanthy Branthat, Bease	9.	6.
Jo Reed, twenty Bease	3.	4.
Richard Hudson, fower bease	0.	8.
Joseph Fearon, eleven bease	1.	10.
Fardall	0.	2.
Six Bease	1	0.

£1. 3. 2.

I am also able to present a list which refers to the town street.

TOWN LAINE, 1703.

A beast, 2d.	A Pack, 4d.		
A Fardall, 2d.	A Daker of leder, 6d.		
A Boutcher, one beast		0.	2.
Edward Benson, 3 beast		0.	6.
James Jackson, 2 beast		0.	4.
Tho. Newton, 3 beast		0.	6.
James Forest, 2 beast		0.	4.
George Macherald 2 beast		0.	4.
Jose Verah 9 ,,		1.	6.
Roland Skales		2.	6.
John Wilson		1.	2.
Rob. Tyson		0.	2.
Mich. Grigg		0.	4.
William Bouthe		0.	2.
John Rigge		2.	4.
James Braythwt		2.	6.
Gawen Brayhwt [<i>sic</i>]		1.	4.
Rob. Patsigson [<i>sic</i>]		0.	4.
Rob. Kirnell		3.	6.
Tho. Suart		0.	4.
Rob. Bownas of Cockermonth		0.	8.
Daniel Cowyn		0.	10.
John Killery		4.	0.
Thos Roberts		0.	4.
John Shakley		0.	2.
Robert Eleretson		1.	4.
John Towers		0.	4.
James Eskdale		0.	2.
Thomas Gibson		0.	2.

Richard Wilkinson	..	..	..	..	0.	2.
William Robinson	..	..	..	..	0.	4.
Henry Lethem	..	..	..	..	2.	0.
Roger Whinfell	..	..	..	..	2.	0.
James Postletht	..	..	..	..	1.	4.
John Taylor	..	..	..	..	0.	8.

£1. 12. 10.*

A comparison of these two lists shows that the business at Salt Coats compared favourably with that in the central street of the town.

The popularity and activities of the Fair decreased before the end of the eighteenth century. The record for the year 1777 will illustrate this:—

1777.

Tolls taken at Ravenglass by Jonth. Bowman for the use of Mr. Jno. Benson, the 4th day of Aug., 1777.

Toll of yarn	..	..	..	..	0.	3.	2.
Toll of cattle	..	..	..	..	0.	13.	8.
Toll of Booths	..	..	..	..	0.	6.	0.

£1. 2. 10.

Disbursements

Mr. Stamper	..	..	..	..	15.	0.
Tollers' wages	..	..	..	..	6.	0.
Bread, Cheese, and Ale	..	..	..	..	2.	4.
Music and scales	..	..	..	..	1.	6.

£1. 4. 10.

Mr. J. Benson, 2s. debtor.

The previous year the Booth-tolls are given in detail.

TOLL OF BOOTHS TAKEN AT RAVENGLASS, AUG. 3rd, 1776.

Adam Carr	..	..	..	..	0.	4.
Osley Mason	..	..	..	..	0.	4.
John Macum	..	..	..	..	0.	4.
Ann Smithe	..	..	..	..	0.	4.
James Worthington	..	..	..	..	0.	4.
Christopher Mason	..	..	..	..	0.	4.

* A total is given for this year as £1 16s. 4d.

Edward Walker	0.	4.
John Jackson	0.	4.
Jas. Carr	0.	4.
Jane Ward		
William Hope	0.	4.
Ann Davis	0.	4.
James Shepherd	0.	4.
Francis Scott	0.	4.
Henry Taylor	0.	4.
Richard Hellon	0.	4.
Betsey Boadle	0.	4.
	5.	4.

Other facts point to the falling off of the Fair. For instance, the dinner in earlier days had always cost twenty shillings, equal to several pounds of our money.

In *Computa Quorundam Ministrorum* I find:—

1762. Expenses of the Fair dinner at Raven-			
glass	£1.	0.	0.
1692. Riding The Fair, Ravenglass ..	£1.	0.	0.
25-26th Q. Elizabeth (1583)			

Dinner at Ravenglass Fair. Allowed to Bailiff at Egremont out of Estate, £1. 1. 4.

But by 1800 a leanness had entered into this banquet, as well as into the cattle sales:—

TOLLS COLLECTED AT RAVENGLASS FAIR.

Booths, 4d. each	0.	15.	0.
For Cattle at Toll-bars	0.	5.	8.
For ditto at Town Lane End	0.	1.	4.
For ditto at Mite Bank	0.	1.	2.
For ditto at Salt Coats	0.	10.	6.
	1.	13.	8.
To the Toll of Yarn at 1d. per stone ..	0.	5.	0.
	£1.	18.	8.

CONTRA.

To 9 Tollers 8d. each	0.	6.	0.
To each 1 pint of Ale	0.	1.	6.
To setting Toll Bars	0.	1.	4.

To Isaac Smithe's boy	o. o. 8.
To they Yarn Tollers	o. 2. o.
To the tenants' allowance when riding the Fair	o. 10. 4.
To my extraordinary expenses	o. 5. 6.
To the scales	o. o. 6.
	<hr/>
	£1. 7. 10.

COLLECTED BY THE EGREMONT BAILIFF.

The allowance for refreshments to the tenants amounts to 10s. 4d.

A letter by Cuthbert Atkinson to his lordship, April 7th, 1800, accentuates the decay of the Fair:—

The Earl of Egremont also holds two Fairs at Ravenglass, usually on the 4th and 5th days of August. The first day there may be 50 or 60 head of Cattle shewn, and about 250 people! But no horses, sheep, or wool shewn. I have sometimes seen two or three persons that day from Kendal buying a little wool from the sheep farmers (but there is none shewn in the market, as I have said), and on the second day there are generally a few free-holders from Eskdale and Wasdale who are summoned to meet the Earl of Egremont's Bailiff from Egremont, to ride the fair (and nobody there—what I mean, my Lord, nobody there to do any business).

I proclaim (the fair) upon Ravenglass Cross, and then, I believe, the Earl of Egremont's Bailiff gives to every one of the people who attends, a pint of ale, and a cake, or something like that. Out of all this, I think I may almost venture to say that the Earl must be out of pocket. Your Lordship is always brought in debtor instead of creditor on your Fair days.

The statement that the Fair was proclaimed at the Cross is most interesting. As this was the central point of the Fair, it will not be an unwarrantable diversion to refer more at large to this feature of this ancient village. A little more than half way down the main street, and on the right-hand side, taking a southerly direction, there are some large stones forming part of the street surface, and almost entirely hidden by the asphalt of the road. These buried blocks mark the site of the

Village Cross. The stones are not easily examined, but I was able to satisfy myself that they are grey "granite," somewhat like the stone of Waberthwaite Quarry across the Esk. On the Rolls of the Borough Court of Egremont, preserved at Cockermouth Castle, there is this reference to the Cross:—

1774. By an allowance of 6s. 6d. paid him for removing and rebuilding the Market Cross in the Town Street of Ravenglass as per bill and receipt.

This so-called removal could not have been removal from a distant site, for some of the stones which have been taken away, or purloined from the present site at various times, on the testimony of old residents, weighed from 10 to 15 cwts. Six shillings and sixpence would not go far in removing such masonry any distance.

The question is suggested, was the cross removed from the centre of the street to the side?

But, the "removal" may refer only to the shaft, or possibly the cross itself. The re-building must have consisted of slight repairs. There is no doubt that the present site is, approximately, the site occupied by the cross in ancient days: see map, p. 251.

Jefferson (1842) states, "some of the steps of the market cross are still remaining in the street." About half a century ago a very large portion of the whole cross structure remained. A very old inhabitant has assured me that the cross was so perfect in his youth that he believes there were four all-square steps, and part of the pillar which tapered "like a cone," no doubt the result of a fracture. About that time many of the large loose stones were removed by Daniel Wallace, who kept the "King's Arms"—now "The Pennington Arms."* Later, about 35 years ago, Henry Lightfoot of Crank-

* There were formerly three inns. The other two were situate opposite each other at the end of the village street, "The Ship Inn," and "The Bay Horse," and are now occupied as private dwellings.

lands* (a farm which has now disappeared) removed more of the stones. They were deposited on the shore or river bank not far from the Mite Bridge. Some may still be there covered by waste and drift. After this second spoliation the steps, in part, still remained and were not infrequently occupied by neighbours smoking and chatting in the leisure hours of summer evenings.

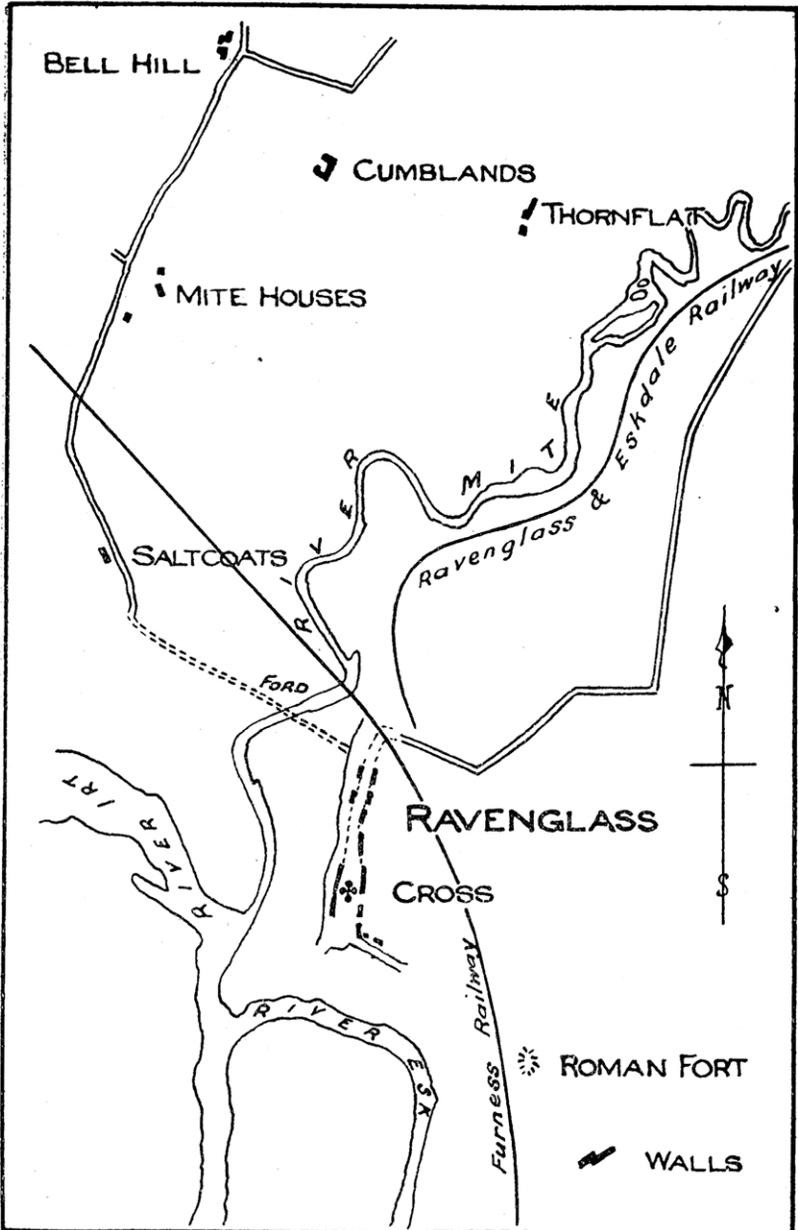
These steps were finally removed by men working on the roads about twenty years ago. Dr. Parker (1907) says they stood "until quite recently," and intimates that the remaining stones were not very large (these *Transactions*, N.S. ix., p. 79).

The age of the cross cannot be decided by the data at present available. It is mentioned in a charter of seven hundred years ago. One, Roger, gave to St. Bees "unum domum juxta crucem in Renglass" (Wilson, *St. Bees Reg.*, p. 475). There is no evidence that the cross was pre-Norman.

The cross, if only as a matter of historic and antiquarian interest, should be re-built on the old site. Such an object would be an ornament to the street, and would serve a high purpose as the symbol of the Faith of Christ.

I have said that the Fair degenerated into mere sports. These sports had one or two special features. A trotting contest took place on the fore-shore from the street end to Green Hill towards Eskmeals. This was the great excitement of the day. A blind-fold wheelbarrow race on the foreshore of the Mite, at the back of the village, was the favourite sport of the younger part of the population. Wrestling, of course, was on the programme, chiefly eleven-stone rivals.

* At the junction of the Gosforth or Whitehaven Road with the main road there were two farms. The one on the upper side of the road was Cranklands, and two cottages below on the Gosforth Road now bear the name. The farm on the lower side of the road was called Barrow.



Alexander Watt, Esq., J.P., of Muncaster has very kindly contributed the following note in a letter:—

Two yearly fairs were held in a very modified form, for about four years after I came to Muncaster in 1892, but without any proclamation or opening ceremony, and very little business appeared to be done. The "sports" were continued yearly in August, for either two or three years after the fairs were discontinued, after which the sports were transferred to the Muncaster Flower Show.

[I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the Right Hon. Lord Leconfield for permission to examine the documents used in writing this article.]
