

ART. V.—*Some notes on the Eskdale Twentyfour Book.*

By MISS MARY C. FAIR.

*Read at Carlisle, April 7th, 1921.*

I OWE much of the information from which this paper is prepared to a collection of notes kindly handed to me by the Rev. W. S. Sykes, one of our members and a former vicar of Eskdale, to whom I express gratitude for the ready assistance and interest he extends to me in my endeavours to carry on the work of elucidating the history of the dale.

The Eskdale Twentyfour Book is the name given to an award of the Jury of 24 Commoners of the Manor of Eskdale, Wasdalehead and Mitredale. The tenements at the South side of the river Esk are in Birker and Austhwaite, and do not therefore come under the jurisdiction of this Court of Commoners.

Two copies of the award at least are in existence in Eskdale; one (1) in the possession of Mr. Towers Hartley, and (2) a more recent copy in the chapel-wardens' account book dated June, 1840. There is also a note that the award [No. 1 (?)], was "copied from the original by Thomas Tyson of Borradaile Place Junr., in December, 1794."

No. 1 is written in a MS. book bound with brown paper; it contained twenty-four pages averaging fourteen lines per page; it is written in a very scholarly hand in good black ink.

The Award is entitled "A COPY RESPECTING THE COMON, ETC., BELONGING TO THE LSPP OF ESKDAILE, MITERDAILE AND WASDAILEHEAD"; it was apparently the award of a Jury of Court held in the

year 1659, draughted from the MS. of a previous award made in 1587, for the prologue states that a Jury was called upon on "7th October, '59, to consider the end and order of a former Jury, and to allow so much thereof as appears to be for the several disprofit of the tenants of the Sd. Manor, and to make new ordinances and byelaws for the better order and profit making of all the Common belonging to the said Manor."

This date, "7th October, '59" appears to be about the year 1659, for in the middle of the book is a signature, "ROBERT FISHER XTH DAY OF OCT. 1660" in a position apparently of a copyist of such decrees as have preceded.

The contents of the Award are :

1. Five penalties.
2. Jurymen of 1659.
3. Revised decisions with names of former Jury (that of 1587).
4. Sheepdrifts of Eskdaile.
5. Various controversies.
6. Cowdrifts of Eskdaile Tenants.
7. Holgill Ridding.
8. Date of original Jury (1587).

From the body of the award (much of which appears to be copied from that of 1587), we are able to identify the tenements of the Jurors who compiled the first award. In this list there are ten Jurymen out of sixteen belonging to Eskdale (three are omitted, illegible), whose names are given in the award as holders of tenements, so that it is evident that in the revision the old names are retained.

THE FIRST JURY (1587) AND THEIR TENEMENTS.

1. Nicholas Nicholson, Mitredailehead (?) (Now in ruins)
2. Henry Nicholson, Bakerstead. (Now in ruins).
3. William Nicholson, Low Place.
4. Nicholas Hartley, Langragreen. (Pulled down).

5. Henry Nicholson, Hollinhow. (Spelled "Holme How" in one place in the award.)
6. Thomas Fisher, Hollinghead.
7. Robert Jackson, Spouthouse.
8. Edward Tyson, Gillbank.
9. Thomas Dickinson, Harmot Hows. (Arment House, ? Hermit How).
10. Richard Tyson, Hollings.
11. Christopher Vicars, Bird How. (Now in ruins).
12. William Nicholson, Forester.
13. Nicholas Nicholson, Forester.
14. William Nicholson.
15. Nicholas Dickonson.
16. John Wastel (Wasdailehead).
17. Nicholas Wastel (Wasdalehead), Forester.
18. William Wastel (Wasdalehead).
19. John Fletcher senior (Wasdalehead).
20. John Fletcher junior (Wasdalehead).
21. Nicholas Stainton (Wasdalehead).

Two illegible and no clue to trace them.

After the Jury list of 1659 comes the entry "James Peirson, 7th Oct. '59." The names of the Jury are:—

1. William Sharpe.
2. Thomas Pearson.
3. Nicholas Hartley (of Bought 1665).
4. John Vicars.
5. William Moore (Hollinghead).
6. John Wilkinson (Mitredale?).
7. John Tyson (Borrodale Place).
8. Thomas Tyson.
9. Robert Fletcher (Wasdale).
10. Robert Hunter (Wasdalehead).
11. Thomas Wilson (Wasdalehead?).
12. John Braithwaite (Wasdalehead).
13. Robert Vicars (Wasdalehead).
14. Nicholas Tyson.

15. John Wastdale (Wasdalehead).
16. John Stainton (Wasdalehead).
17. John Vicars (of Taythes, *i.e.*, Taw House).
18. John Hartley (Mitredale).
19. William Nicholson (Bought, *i.e.*, Boot).
20. Nicholas Stephenson, sen.
21. Nicholas Stephenson, jun.\*
22. John Dickinson.
23. Nicholas Dickinson.
24. Richard Tyson (Hollins).

As well as those tenements which were occupied by Jurymen of the award of 1587 the following were in occupation at that time :—

*Low Holme.* George Porter, gent. The Porter family also were in occupation of Holgill Ridding and Porterthwaite. There are the foundations of another tenement visible above Lowholme, though I cannot trace any name for it unless it be Brow Yat. The spot where it stands is now called Rake Rigg. There are ruins of buildings in Porterthwaite Wood; also several bloomery sites and many charcoal pitsteads. The Porters are not mentioned in the Eskdale registers till after 1660.

*Yeat House.* Edward Woodend and Christopher Hartley.

*Randall How.* John and Robert Dickonson.

*Spout House.* Thomas Fisher and Henry Nicholson (three tenements apparently.)

*Borradaile Place.* William Hartley. (Now falling to ruin.)

*Bought.* Gilbert and Richard Hartley, and John Nicholson. (Boot is spelled Bought or Boghte in the registers and the XXIV Book: probably equivalent to "Bucht," a sheep fold. The Parish pinfold is here.)

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\* 20 and 21. Probably father and son; one of these two was at Brow Yat, the other at Mitredale head.

*Hows.* John Nicholson.

*Paddockwray.* Edward Nicholson.

*Christcliff.* William Wilson and Nicholas Tyson. The descendant of this Tyson family owns Christcliff to-day.

*Peel Place.* Nicholas Hartley and Nicholas Nicholson. (Peel Place was near the Woolpack. It has vanished.)

*A Close at Church.* Robert Wilson.

*Dawson Place.* Nicholas Wilson and Robert Tyson. (Dawson Place is now the Woolpack Inn. The tavern was formerly at Low Piet Nest across the river Esk on the line of a pack-horse road. This tenement is now called Penny Hill.)

*Whae's.* Henry Vicars and Robert Vicars. (Wha House. There is a ford across the Esk near here.)

*Tathes.* William Vicars sen., and William Vicars jun. (Taw House).

*Beckfoot.* No name of occupier. (Now the vicarage.)

In the portion of the Award which is evidently transcribed from that of 1587, there is an interesting entry: "And the said Tenants of Wasdailehead at *Beltan* time when they bring their Goods to the Moor, that they shall put them to Maidencastle, and the said Tenants shall daily when their Goods come back into the Fence, turn up again to the said Maidencastle upon the paying for every default—6d."

*Beltan Time* was the changing time in May. Ancient fire celebrations held at this time.

*Maiden Castle.* A rude enclosure beside the track leading from Burnmoor Tarn to Wasdalehead. There is a tradition that it was one of the signalling stations by beacon fires from Cocker-mouth to a point on the fell above Millom, by way of Black Sail Pass, Maidencastle, etc. Small pieces of charcoal have been found at the North and centre of the enclosure.

Another entry mentions the "highway." According to an old landowner still living in Eskdale this means the ancient pack-horse track (now almost lost in places), up Mitredale over Tongue Moor and into Wasdale. There is also the tradition that cattle came this way from Cockermouth, their hooves shod with tin plates to protect them from the roughness of the track, to go South via the ford across the Esk at Waberthwaite.

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