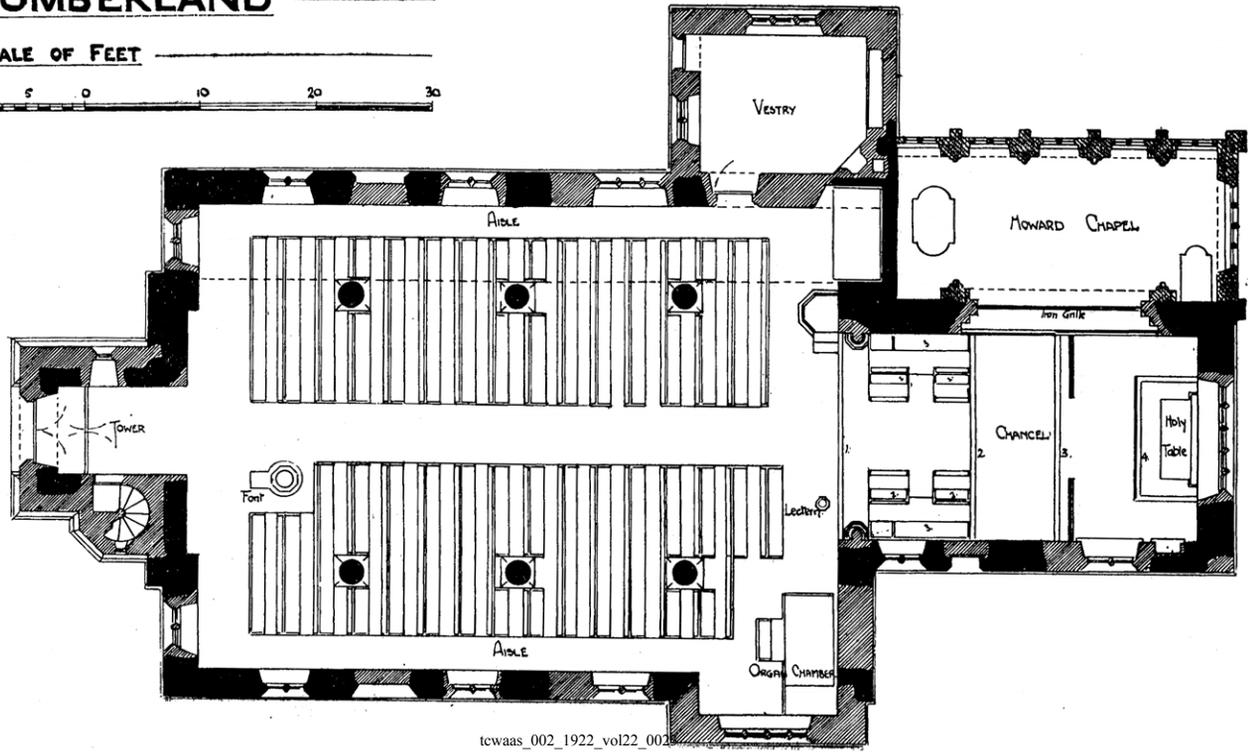
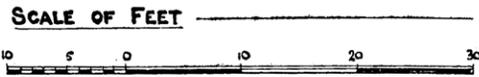


WETHERAL CHURCH CUMBERLAND



ART. XXI.—*The Church of the Holy Trinity, Wetheral.*

By J. H. MARTINDALE, F.R.I.B.A.

Read at the site, September 14th, 1921.

WHEN a church was first built on this site is lost in the mists of time. A church existed here at the end of the 11th century, before the Priory was founded, for its patronage was given to the new Priory in its foundation charter; but I don't think you can see any masonry of this early church to-day. It is quite possible that the first church may have consisted of nave and chancel only, as has been said; but I venture to think both aisles are of the same date, and this would give us a general plan as at present, namely, nave, aisles and chancel, all of about the 13th century. The windows are all later insertions, but the walls themselves are of this date.

It may help us to understand the plan and arrangement if I explain what existed before the last restoration, forty years ago.

The seats in the nave were arranged in blocks facing north and south, with four gangways on each side from a single centre aisle. The last three seats against the north and south walls were raised or stepped up. The north and south doorways, now blocked up, had the upper part glazed as large circular-headed windows. The two windows at the west end of the aisles were wide semicircular-headed windows of 18th century date. The aisles extended from the west wall to the east wall of the nave in one line. The *quasi* south transept is modern, though possibly built of old stone, and the four-light window in it may have been rebuilt from the same bay of the south aisle. The two-light windows in the north and south walls at the west end are in their original position; the others are

modern or may have been ancient dressing rebuilt. There was a three-light window in the east wall of the south aisle where the organ now stands, and beyond this was a vestry, covering the ancient priest's door and window in the south wall of the chancel. There was an external door to this vestry in the east wall and access to the church was by the ancient priest's door. The ceilings in both nave and chancel were flat plaster; that of the nave was at about the level of the present tiebeams and that of the chancel about the apex of the arcade. The opening between nave and chancel was a great gap the full width of the chancel, and the upper part filled in with lath and plaster; you can trace the outline in the plaster now. The Salkeld tomb was in the arch on the north side of the chancel, which was then walled up with a small door about where the gate is in the iron grille. The floor was level up to the altar steps.

The Tower internally was about the same size as at present, with very thin walls; and a straight flight of external steps across the west end of the south aisle gave access to the upper part. The east window was a most miserable three-light affair, with the sill so low that any one could look in from the outside. From what I have said, although I hold no brief for the restoration of 1881, I think you will admit there has been a little improvement.

Now as to the ancient work you can see.

The north and south doors with semicircular heads remain *in situ*, but are now blocked. There are two ancient windows (late 15th century) *in situ*, at the extreme west end of the north and south walls of the aisles. Some of the remaining windows are old, but have been refixed in new positions. The clerestory is about the end of 15th or early 16th century, and has been inserted in older walls.

The arcades have four obtusely pointed arches on each side, the arches simple splays of two orders, the outer one having splay stops before reaching the abacus of the

capital. The eastern and western columns on both sides are circular ; the centre ones are octagonal. All have very plain caps, not quite similar ; the bases are angle-splays working into a square, somewhat similar to those of the nave in Carlisle Cathedral. There are no corbels or responds to the end arches.

At the western end of the south wall of the chancel is a low two-light window with an inscription on its external face : " Pray for the soul of William Thornton, abbot." He was Prior about 1500 and was elected Abbot of St. Mary's, York, in 1530. Over the priest's door is the inscription " Pray for the soul of Richard Wedderhall." He succeeded Thornton as Prior about 1534. There are also fragments of external inscriptions on the mullions of the ancient windows in the aisles, and on one arch of the north arcade. There are no traces of an early tower ; probably there has only been a bell-cote, and the sanctus bell remains.

There is an altar tomb and fine effigies of Sir Richard Salkeld, of Corby, and Dame Jane, his wife, about 1500. The figures are in alabaster and have traces of colour. The knight is in plate armour with shirt of mail ; his head rests on the tilting-helmet, which has the Salkeld arms on the back. He wears a collar of roses and ss. Dame Jane also wears the collar of ss. and her arms, Vaux of Triermain, are on a shield. The inscription is famous and well known. The monument has been moved about, but was placed in its present position in 1882, as believed to be the site mentioned by Bishop Nicolson, though it was not anciently placed north and south, as now. There is in the Howard Mausoleum a very fine piece of sculpture by Nollekens. There was, in the old vestry, a fine almyer or press with very interesting iron-work, but this disappeared in 1882, and it is a blot on the work ; of this there is a sketch in the vestry. The then existing font was removed, and a few years ago was restored and given to a

mission room in the parish. There are several graveslabs and fragments in the church and yard, some of which have been discovered recently and had been used to form the steps to the platform of the churchyard cross. There are a large number of mason's marks on the walls.

The ancient plate consists of a pewter flagon and a silver chalice with no plate marks, rather similar to the one at Bewcastle.