

ART. XII.—*The Old Road at Caldbeck.* By the REV.  
C. E. LAST.

THIS old road is interesting because, first, its local name “the Street” suggests the possibility of a Roman origin, and, secondly, it appears at one time to have been the main thoroughfare from West Cumberland to the East and South. Also a study of its course has a bearing upon some disputed points in the boundary of Inglewood Forest.

The road runs direct from Hesket New Market to Parkend ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles S.W. of Caldbeck), passing  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile South of Caldbeck Church. At Parkend it forked, one branch going through Uldale to Cockermouth, the other climbing Fauld’s Brow in a direct course to the site of Old Carlisle. The Map shows the direct course of this road terminating abruptly about 1 mile short of Old Carlisle. But there is a road shown coming from Old Carlisle to meet it which also stops abruptly after a distance of about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. There is therefore only a small gap in this road which might well have been used by the Romans. On the other side, after passing through Hesket New Market, the road crossed the Caldew at Hesket Bridge, then turning sharp right followed the river past Bankend Farm after which it proceeded directly eastwards. As we shall see, after passing Bankend Farm, there was a branch going south.

It is important to notice that the road crossed the Caldew at Hesket Bridge (see the maps in Lyson’s and Hutchinson’s *Histories*), and not at Millhouse, as the modern road might indicate, because this has a bearing upon the identification of the Fords mentioned as boundary marks of the Forest of Inglewood. In the

document of 1300 the boundary of the Forest at this point is stated to be as follows, . . . to the place where Caldbeck falls into Caldew and so following the Caldew upstream to Brigwath; and so by the highway (*magnum iter*) of Sowerby to Stanewath beneath *Castellarium de Sowerby* (almost certainly Castle How); and so by the metallad highway (*iter ferratum*) ascending to Mabel Cross . . . etc." (these *Trans.* N.S. xxxiii, 19, also Nicolson and Burn, ii, 522). The perambulation of 1219 (these *Trans.* N.S. v, 43) is from the other direction," . . . and so by the highway to Mabel Cross near Sowerby; and so below the old Castle at Sowerby to Brigwath over the river Caldew; and so down to the place where the Caldbeck falls into the Caldew; . . . etc." Castle How is not marked on the inch map. It is a hill immediately above Bankend Farm and is reputed to be the site of an ancient camp. From it the name of Castle Sowerby is derived. Mr. Parker (*ibid.*, N.S. v, 40) identified Stanewath with the crossing of an old corpse road over the Gilcambon Beck near the Church of Castle Sowerby. But Mr. Graham (*ibid.*, N.S. xii, 185) quite reasonably raises the question whether that ford could be described as "beneath Castle How," and identifies Stanewath with Millhouse. Later however (*ibid.*, N.S. xxxiii, 20) he adopts Mr. Parker's theory and identifies Brigwath with Millhouse. There are obvious objections to this. Not even Millhouse and still less the crossing of the Gilcambon Beck could reasonably be described by anyone on the spot as "beneath Castle How," and so be identified with Stanewath. Also Millhouse cannot be Brigwath because it would be reached in the 1219 itinerary *before* passing below Castle How whereas it is expressly stated that Brigwath was reached *after* passing Castle How. When it is realised that the ancient road crossed the Caldew at Hesketh bridge, it is obvious that Brigwath must be Hesketh Bridge, the place where, going upstream, you would first meet the "magnum

iter." Next, the only place on the river where there could have been a crossing described as "beneath Castle How" is the crossing from Bankend Farm to Bankend Mill on the other side. This surely must be Stanewath. Shortly after passing it, an old track, marked on the large scale map, branches off to Millhouse, which must be the "iter ferratum." So the 1300 itinerary becomes perfectly intelligible. From Brigwath you follow the "magnum iter" as far as Stanewath after which you must turn right, leaving the "magnum iter" and following the "iter ferratum." If, on the other hand, you follow the 1219 route from the other direction, there is no need to mention Stanewath. The "iter ferratum" will bring you into the "magnum iter" which you will naturally follow past Castle How to Brigwath.

We see then that our old road is referred to in 1300 as a main road, that from the name Brigwath it must have had at an early date a bridge where the present Heskett bridge now stands, and that it proceeded due east from that point, while a branch went off S.E. past the site of Mabel Cross.

There is another reference to this old road in the document of 1219 (*ibid.*, N.S. v, 43). Unfortunately the passage in the document preceding the following quotation is illegible. ". . . to the bridge at Altelco (Haltcliffe) and so by the old King's road to the water of Alne (Ellen) by the Church at Ulvedale (Uldale)." Here our road, called the old King's road, formed the boundary between the Caldew and the Ellen of the extension of the Forest made by Henry II. It is difficult to believe that there was a bridge in those days where Haltcliffe bridge now stands. Possibly Heskett was then included in the Haltcliffe area, as it is now for local government purposes, and this is another reference to Brigwath.

That this road was at one time in frequent use is shown by the provision of a hospice at Caldbeck for distressed

travellers about the year 1118. Nicolson and Burn (ii, 134) give this account of it. "Out of Westmorland and the east parts of Cumberland there lying a highway through Caldbeck into the west of Cumberland, it was anciently very dangerous for passengers to travel through it who were often robbed by thieves that haunted those woody parts and mountains, thereupon Ranulph Engain, the chief forester of Englewood, granted licence to the prior of Carlisle to build an hospital for the relief of distressed travellers who might happen to be troubled by those thieves, or prejudiced by the snows or storms in winter." This hospice was dissolved round about 1230. Perhaps by that time, in spite of the hospitality offered at Caldbeck, travellers preferred other routes.