

ART. XIV. — *The dating of the County Gaol, Carlisle.* By D. R. PERRIAM.

*Read at Ulverston, April 1st, 1978.*

WHEN the prisoners were moved to the new County Gaol, Carlisle, in 1825, the press noted "there is great uncertainty as to the age of the old building".<sup>1</sup> This "great uncertainty" has remained for the last 150 years, so it is to establish the dates of the various buildings of the County Gaol and to give the reasons for the choice of sites that the following notes have been made.

County Gaols owed their existence to the Assize of Clarendon, which in 1166 "enjoined all sheriffs to ensure that in counties where no gaols existed, gaols should now be built".<sup>2</sup> Robert Troite, the Sheriff of Cumberland, rendered an account in 1167 for 11s. 8d., which had been spent in "conducting prisoners to York from Carlisle",<sup>3</sup> and this shows he had prisoners in his custody by that date. The first definite reference to the County Gaol in Carlisle was in 1172, when the Sheriff recorded that 53s. 4d. had been expended "in work at the gaol of Carlisle . . . by the King's writ".<sup>4</sup>

As the Sheriff was responsible for Carlisle Castle, and as castles already had dungeons which were possibly originally intended to accommodate prisoners, the ideal locality for the County Gaol was in Carlisle Castle.<sup>5</sup> The initial low cost of building the gaol is thus explained. Another reason was the fact that confinement in gaol was not originally intended as a form of punishment in itself, prisoners merely being detained until they were brought to trial. At regular intervals, the gaol was completely cleared at the "gaol delivery"<sup>6</sup> held at the Assizes by Justices on circuit, punishment being implemented immediately after trial, or prisoners being transferred to a larger gaol to undergo sentence for more serious crimes. Therefore, whilst the gaol in the castle needed to be secure, it did not require to be fitted for use by long-term prisoners.

The dungeon was not the only prison in the Castle, rooms and chambers being set aside when they were required for different categories of prisoners.<sup>7</sup> From documentary evidence, it is impossible to identify the exact location of these different prisons but the so-called "prisoners carvings" in a mural chamber in the Keep, may give one such locality.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the construction of the outer gateway at the Castle by John Lewyn in 1378,<sup>9</sup> which incorporated the first purpose-built prison, that the County Gaol can be identified as being separate from the other prisons within the Keep.

Had the Government been more aware of the condition of this gaol in 1529, they would not have exempted Cumberland from the Gaols Act of 1532,<sup>10</sup> which ordered the Justices of the Peace to survey their counties and to decide in what places it would be right to build a new gaol: "the thak of the said gate-house is theked with lead, which is in great part cut and gone, so that the rain comes through, and hath rotten the baulkes, wall plaites, dormants and floor under the same, and down through the vault into the prison, being the King's gaol of the shire of Cumberland".<sup>11</sup> Almost all the Castle was in the same state of disrepair by 1563<sup>12</sup> and it was some time before the necessary repairs were completed.

The condition of the Castle gateway was not the only reason that a new site was required for the County Gaol. By the beginning of the 17th century, imprisonment was becoming a regular form of punishment, but the gaol in the Castle was extremely small and not suited to the increasing pressures being placed upon it.<sup>13</sup> Another contributory factor was that the Sheriff's responsibility was being undermined by Acts of Parliament which placed increasing powers for the administration of the gaol in the hands of the Justices of the Peace, until eventually it was thought desirable to separate the gaol entirely from the Castle. The problem in looking for a new gaol site was the lack of finance; the only solution was to utilise a building already belonging to the Government which was not being used for another purpose.

Despite its recent construction in 1542, the Citadel in Carlisle had fallen into a state of decay by 1600<sup>14</sup> and was no longer contributing to the defence of the city. A building of such strength would have been ideal as a gaol, but the cost was at first considered prohibitive; "the Citadel to be left for use as a gaol, the charge for repairing the same £1,100".<sup>15</sup> Following a considerably reduced estimate in 1611, part of the Citadel was converted into the County Gaol; "we have surveyed the Citadel of Carlisle, £220 would be needed for repairs to fit for use as the common gaol. The timber of the roof is much decayed and so is the lead";<sup>16</sup> however no records for repairs to the Citadel can be found until 1639.<sup>17</sup>

With the impending danger of war in 1639, the Citadel was once more required for the defence of Carlisle; "there being present occasion to make use of his Majesty's citadel and castle of Carlisle for some special services of importance, we [i.e. the Council of War] are, by his Majesty's command, to require you [i.e. the Earl of Arundel and others] not only to give effectual order to the sheriff of that county presently to remove all the prisoners of the castle and citadel into some other safe place for the present, but also to require the sheriff and justices of peace to cause a rate to be made for erecting a new prison for the use of that county, so that the castle may still remain free upon all occasions for his Majesty's service".<sup>18</sup> This placed the Sheriff in an awkward position; "by yours of the 6th inst. you signify his Majesty's pleasure for the removal of prisoners out of the castle and out of the citadel of Carlisle. In the former there are none, nor have been this long time, but the gaol has been settled in the citadel these many years; neither is there yet any place of strength fit or safe to receive prisoners; so that although in obedience to your commands I shall most humbly submit in that particular or any other, yet I entreat you to move his Majesty for some respite until a convenient place may be provided for that purpose, which the justices of peace for this county are about, to whom I have imparted your letters in that behalf. I have at this present many prisoners in gaol, some upon executions for great sums, and others for murder and other great offences, so that I hope you will take into consideration the dangers that may ensue upon a sudden removal before a convenient place be provided".<sup>19</sup> During the period of respite that followed, the Civil War began and this prevented a new gaol being built. The conditions in the gaol rapidly deteriorated with the vast increase in the number of prisoners convicted for their religious beliefs after 1653.<sup>20</sup> George Fox was the first of many Quakers to be imprisoned in the County Gaol for their beliefs; "an order was sent to the gaoler to put me down into the prison amongst the moss-troopers, thieves, and murderers . . . a filthy nasty place it was, where, men and women were put together in a very uncivil manner . . . and the prisoners so lousy, that one woman was almost eaten to death with lice".<sup>21</sup> Fox gained satisfaction after his ill-

treatment, when two of his influential friends “came down into the prison to see the place where I was kept, and understand what usage I had. They found the place so bad, and the savour so ill, that they cried shame of the magistrates for suffering the gaoler to do such things. They called for the gaolers into the prison, and required them to find sureties for their good behaviour; and the under-gaoler, who had been such a cruel fellow, they put into the prison with me amongst the moss-troopers”.<sup>22</sup>

Conditions in the gaol had not improved by 1663, when John Banks was imprisoned as a Quaker; “. . . neither would he [i.e. the gaoler] suffer any of our friends to bring us any bedding, not so much as a little straw, so that we had no place to lie on, but the prison window, upon the cold stones, the wall being thick, there was room for one at a time”.<sup>23</sup> Eventually in 1684, the problem of the condition of the gaol could be overlooked no longer; “in the Cittadell The County Gaole is kept, which is very inconvenient, and a Prejudice to his Maj<sup>ty</sup>s Serrvice: S<sup>r</sup> George Jefferies Lord Cheife Justice of England att the last Assizes fined the County for not Provideing a better Gaole”.<sup>24</sup> The county were immediately obliged to find a more suitable building for the gaol and they did not have to look very far.

Close to the western tower of the Citadel was a barn or house and out-buildings which had been the “Gardying House” of the Blackfriars Convent, but by 1540 were “in the tenure of the chamberlain within the city, and taken up with the King’s ordnance and gunpowder”.<sup>25</sup> The reason for the buildings being put to that use was given in the *Certificate of Decays*: “there is not in the . . . castle any storehouse for the ordnance and munition; so as the same lieth in the town very dangerously for any sudden enterprize”.<sup>26</sup> Once a storehouse had been built in the Castle the “Gardying House” became the “warden house”, the residence of the warden of the Citadel. When the building was no longer required by the warden, it remained in the tenure of the Chamberlain who let it as a private house.

“In 1686”, according to the Rev. J. Wilson,<sup>27</sup> “a block of buildings which had formed the town residence of the Aglionbys, and which had previously been the site of an old conventual building of the Blackfriars, was purchased by the county and the property was converted into a prison”.<sup>28</sup> A complete rebuilding may have been considered but never carried out, for in 1688 Anne Taite petitioned the magistrates for the damage she had suffered due to the fence falling down between her garden and “the ground lately purchased for building the new Gaole”.<sup>29</sup> This building, frequently referred to as the “old County Gaol” (Plate I) in later years, was described by Jollie:<sup>30</sup> “the present building, situated at the head of English Street, is a mean edifice; but the court is commodious and spacious, being 85 yards by 36; a part of which is railed off for the use of the felons. The chapel was built in 1734.<sup>31</sup> There are five rooms for master-side-debtors and as many on the common-side; – two low rooms for felons, and two over these for females. There is no furniture belonging to the prison but what is found by the unfortunate persons confined there, who are allowed merely straw for their beds”.

By 1777 the gaol was in need of considerable repair: “the county gaol at Carlisle, for felons, has now undergone a thorough repair; the walls are raised and the stones strongly rivetted with iron”.<sup>32</sup> The increasing age of the gaol led to new proposals being put forward: “the magistrates for the county have had it in contemplation, these several years, to build a new gaol, in the castle-green: and have prepared a large quantity of stones for that purpose: a situation we cannot too much recommend; but from what reason the design is not forwarded we are not informed”.<sup>33</sup>

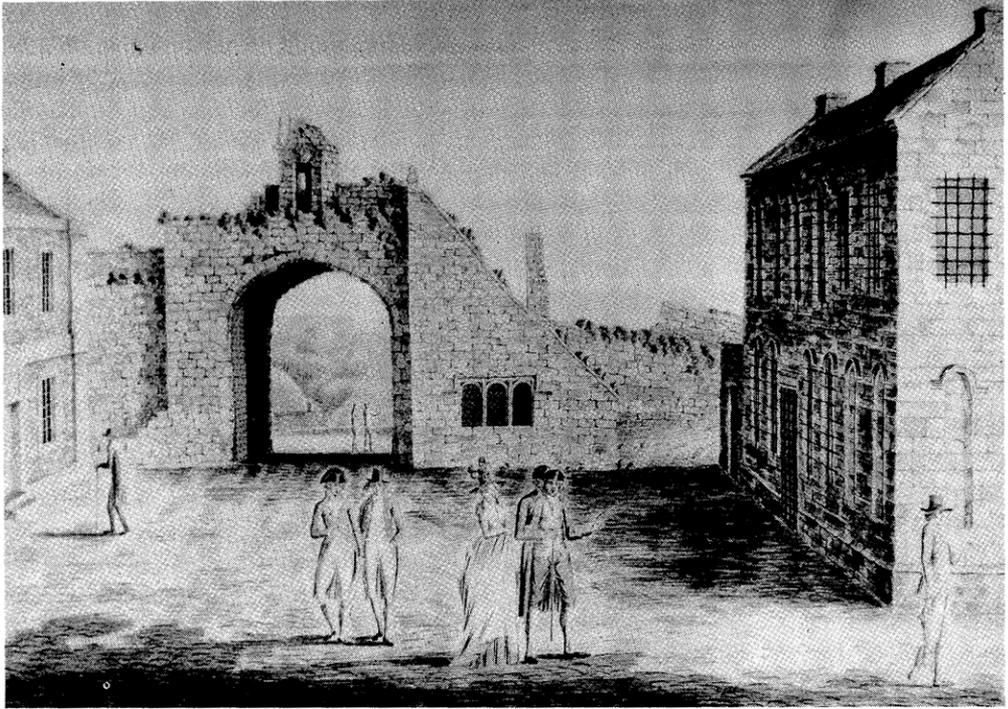


PLATE I. – County Gaol (right) c. 1792, from a watercolour of the English Gate by Robert Carlyle. (*Carlisle Museum and Art Gallery*).

The plans, however, were never adopted for in 1806 the press announced, “the county gaol is to be enlarged, as likewise the very spacious court yard for the use of the debtors”.<sup>34</sup> Jollie<sup>35</sup> was a little more explicit; “the County Gaol is old and much out of repair; and it has been for a considerable time past in contemplation to build a new one. The plan of a new erection is, we understand, in a state of considerable forwardness, in connection with the new buildings on the site of the citadel”. But progress in starting work on the new gaol was slow and this brought sharp criticism from those anxious for improvement. “Carlisle County Jail is situated nearly opposite to the new and magnificent Court-houses, with which it forms a singular and melancholy contrast. It is an old building, excessively limited in its accommodations, and unfit in almost all respects for the purpose to which it is applied . . . it is much regretted that the erection of a new prison should not have been a *prior* object of attention; but I am informed that *this* also is in contemplation. Certainly, measures cannot be too early taken to do away with an evil which is eating rapidly into the very vitals of the community”.<sup>36</sup>

At the summer Assizes in 1821 the County were “presented by the Grand Jury for insufficiency”<sup>37</sup> in respect of the County Gaol and this gave the necessary impetus for planning a new gaol. A committee was formed in February 1822, “for the purpose of selecting a site and plan for a New County Gaol at Carlisle”. Their first report in July 1822 recorded the choice of a plan submitted by John Dobson, the Newcastle architect, but when this plan was shown to Mr Orridge, Governor of Bury Gaol, he “gave his decided opinion that [the plans] were wanting in many points which are essential to the

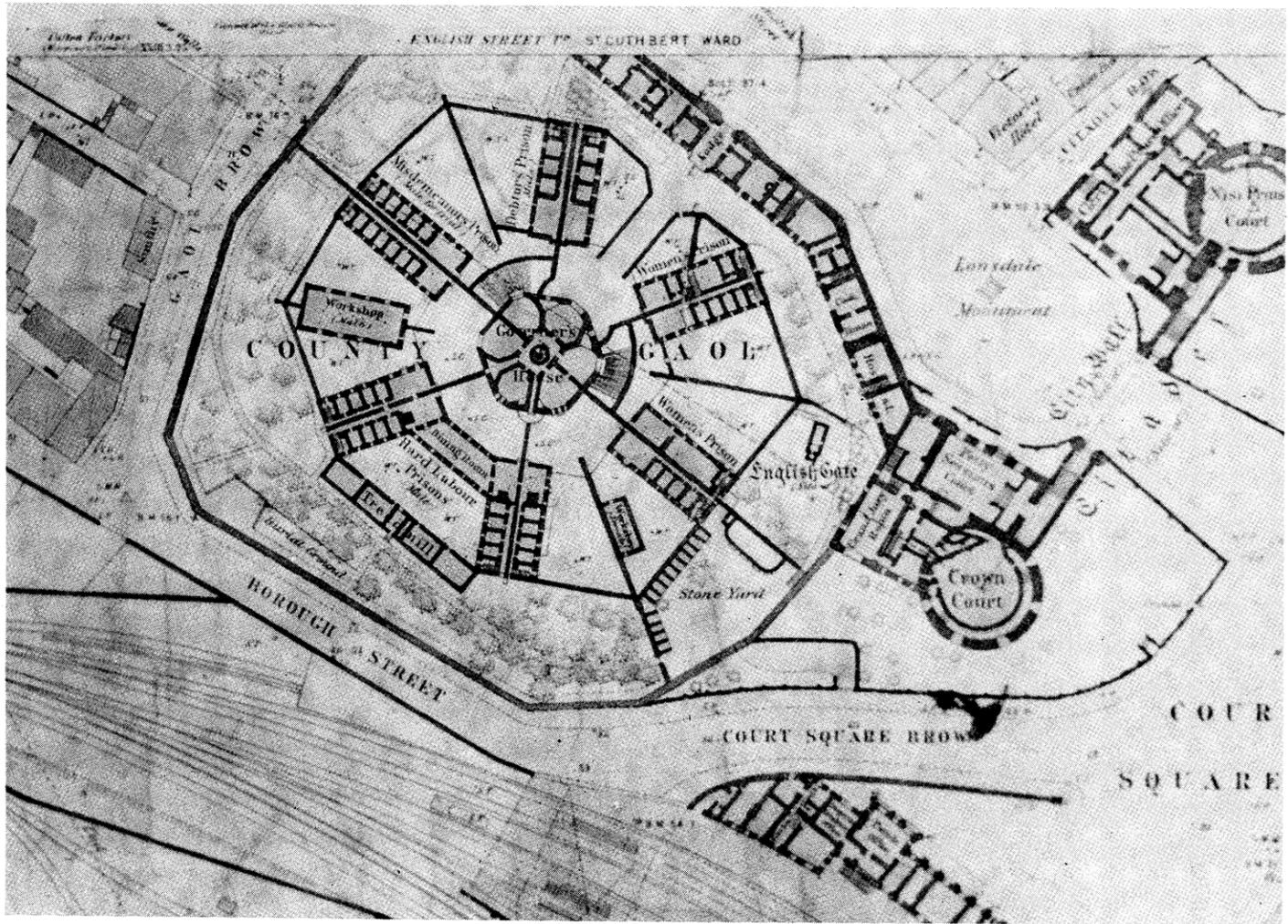


PLATE II. — County Gaol as rebuilt in 1827. From the 10' to 1 mile Ordnance Survey Map of Carlisle, 1866.

construction of a good prison, and he caused Mr Nixon [the County Architect for Cumberland] to draw an entire new set of plans".<sup>38</sup>

Work commenced on the new gaol on 24 March 1823, but Jefferson<sup>39</sup> describes the difficulties encountered: "the original architect of this well-contrived and commodious establishment was Mr William Nixon, of Carlisle, who formed his designs nearly upon the same plan as the gaol of Bury St Edmond's; but dying<sup>40</sup> before the buildings were half-completed, it fell to the lot of Mr C. Hodgson<sup>41</sup> to take up the very imperfect plans which his predecessor left behind him, for the remainder of the work; he introduced several improvements on the original designs, and received a high compliment from the committee for his ingenuity in planning, and his attention in superintending the progress of the work". By May 1825, the work was progressing well; "the prisoners were last week removed into the new gaol, at Carlisle, and on Wednesday, the workmen commenced taking down that long-standing nuisance, the old one, and it will soon disappear altogether, to make room for an extension of the street, and new erections more consonant with modern ideas of utility and ornament".<sup>42</sup>

A very good description of the new County Gaol (Plate II) and House of Correction was given by Jefferson:<sup>43</sup> "they were completed in 1827, at the cost of £42,534. 18s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. including the purchase of an acre and a half of land. The front of this building measures about 340 feet, it consists of a centre and two wings, finished with an embattled parapet, and relieved by a range of narrow Gothic windows, made to correspond with the court house, to which it is united.<sup>44</sup> The entrance consists of a beautiful pointed arch, with massive iron-studded doors, and what appears to be a heavy portcullis; the gateway is surmounted by an excellent clock. The interior of the building consists of a governor's house, from which radiate six prison wings, affording accommodation for thirteen classes of prisoners, with separate airing grounds, so planned and divided by walls and lofty wrought iron rails, that the governor and his assistants have, from their apartments, a complete view of the whole. The prison contains room for a hundred and fifty prisoners, and the space enclosed within the walls affords the means of extension for a much greater number should the increase of crime unhappily require it: there have hitherto been seldom more than ninety prisoners within its walls at one time. The whole is surrounded by a wall twenty-five feet high, constructed of red free-stone".

This new gaol had a very short history for the 1865 Prison Act demanded that "in every prison separate cells shall be provided equal in number to the average of the greatest number of prisoners . . . no cell shall be used for the separate confinement of a prisoner unless it is certified by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Prisons to be of such a size, and to be lighted, warmed, ventilated and fitted up in such a manner as may be required for health, and furnished with means of enabling the prisoner to communicate at any time with an officer of the prison".<sup>45</sup> The cell blocks constructed in 1823-27, did not comply with the new Act, so the gaol had to be extensively altered and a new single-cell block (Plate III) was built in 1868. This rebuilding was carried out under the supervision of Mr Cory, the County Surveyor, at the cost of £16,000, providing 112 certified cells for male prisoners and 52 for females.<sup>46</sup>

In 1877 a further Prison Act transferred the responsibility of the County Gaol to the Government and it became "Her Majesty's Prison, Carlisle". From this date, the future of the gaol hung in the balance and some of the reasons for this were given in 1900: "the policy of the Department has for some years been to remove prisons from centres of

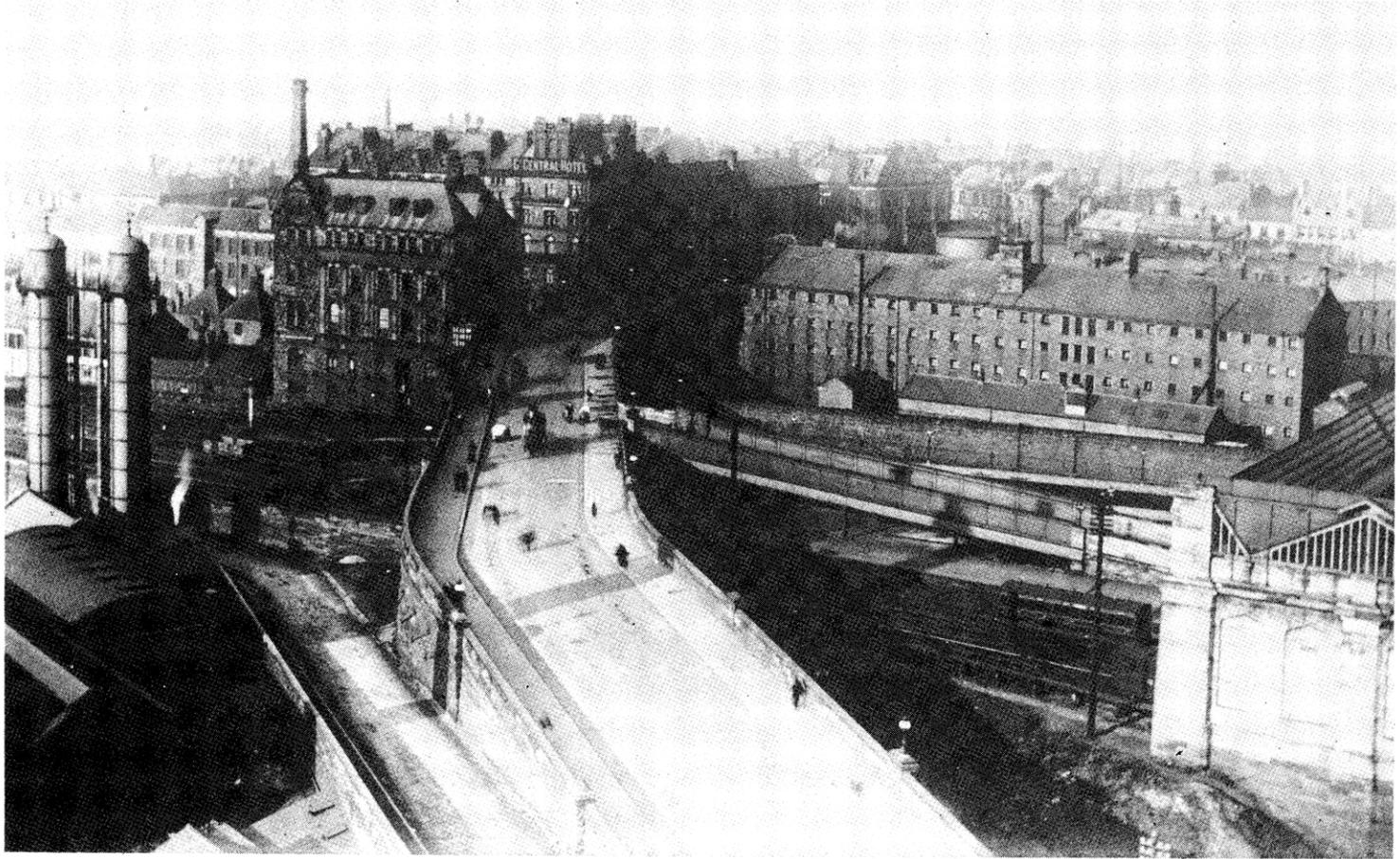


PLATE III. – County Gaol, single-cell block of 1868. (*From a photograph in Carlisle Library.*)

population, and, in the case of Carlisle prison, there are special reasons of considerable weight why effect should be given to this policy as speedily as possible. The prison is overlooked to a most undesirable extent by the buildings on the Viaduct, and the close proximity of the railway and gas works is objectionable from the health point of view. The Commissioners [i.e. the Prison Commissioners], it is said were at one time disposed to erect the new prison near Penrith, which is, perhaps, the geographical centre of the two counties; but this idea has now been abandoned, and they have decided that the gaol shall be built in the neighbourhood of Carlisle, which, besides the Assize town, is, by reason of its railway facilities, very readily reached from all portions of Cumberland and Westmorland. Sites on the London Road, the Wigton Road, the Dalston Road and Kingmoor have been inspected, and it is believed that a decision with regard to them will be arrived at shortly".<sup>47</sup> It was not, however, until 1922 that any decision was taken on the future of the gaol: "a sorely pressed Government is convinced that it is cheaper to remove prisoners from Cumberland to Newcastle and Preston for internment than to maintain a separate establishment at Carlisle for their custody. A few years hence, when monetary conditions are easier, the re-opening of the prison will be considered and in the mean time the building will remain the possession of the Government".<sup>48</sup>

After the closure of the prison it was thought ". . . the possibilities of its conversion to purposes other than punitive detention are exceedingly few . . . another suggestion is that the whole place might be razed to the ground in order that a new business thoroughfare, giving a better approach to the Viaduct, might be created, but this scheme is unlikely to receive the necessary financial support and the probability is that the prison will stand idle and empty for some time to come".<sup>49</sup> Whilst the buildings were not ideal, temporary office accommodation was made in part of the prison. "We understand that the Home Office has decided to hand over H.M. Prison, which has been closed for its original purpose, to the Ministry of Pensions for its local administration. The Governor's house will be used for offices, and the prison offices for a clinic for electrical treatment".<sup>50</sup> Other parts of the prison were used as offices for the Federation of Women's Institutes.

Agreements had been reached in 1877 that should the prison be disposed of by the Government, the County Council would have first option on the site. The County completed the purchase in 1926<sup>51</sup> and part of the property was immediately offered to the City Council in connection with certain road improvements,<sup>52</sup> namely the widening of English Street and the construction of a new road from Backhouse Walk to the Viaduct.<sup>53</sup> "The shops which bordered the corner of the Viaduct and the Carlisle Arms<sup>54</sup> were pulled down soon after the corporation had acquired the site. Then the street, after much consideration at the City Council, was decided upon, but the problem of what to do with the site remained. A new and commodious hall for the city and a complete suite of municipal offices were among the suggestions<sup>55</sup> . . . there remained the old Gaol wall, which some people urged should be allowed to remain, but at length this opposition was overcome and the Corporation decided to offer the site on terms for business premises".<sup>56</sup>

Two years passed while negotiations for the site were completed with Messrs. Woolworth and Montague Burton and, in July 1932,<sup>57</sup> the building plans were approved by the City Council. Work on the demolition of the gaol wall commenced in September 1932<sup>58</sup> and the new "Woolworth's Buildings" were completed in January 1933, followed by the Burton premises in September of the same year. The main single-cell block, which had miraculously survived the Bush Brow improvements, was left for use as a

warehouse,<sup>59</sup> but in February 1937 it suffered the fate of the other gaol buildings, when it was demolished for the construction of the S.M.T. Garage.<sup>60</sup>

### Conclusion

Surprisingly, there are still parts of the 1827 gaol which have survived to this day. Considerable lengths of the gaol wall are still standing, including a stretch facing English Street, on the corner of which public hangings took place until 1862. Immediately behind this wall are the buildings which housed the gaol hospital and cook house, now converted into County Council offices. A further stretch of wall runs from the western tower of the Courts, parallel to Court Brow, still standing to its original height of 25 feet and containing the filled-in gateway to the stone yard. The wall continues along Borough Street, but it was reduced to half its original height in the mid-1960s, to allow light into new County Council offices, which were being constructed in the former gaol yard. Part of the building which originally housed the treadmill, but which was later used as the "hanging shed" to contain the scaffold,<sup>61</sup> remained in use until 1973 as a garage for ambulances, when it was demolished to extend the County Council staff car-park. The dimensions of the single-cell block of 1868 are almost exactly reproduced in what was the old S.M.T. Garage, which stands on the site of the block. Remains of the foundations of the women's prison block can be seen beneath the County Council new offices.

Much more information is available on the history of the County Gaol, but the purpose of this article has been merely to date and describe the various buildings associated with it. It is hoped that in the future a much more detailed account of the gaol may be presented.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Tom Patten, whose meticulous research in the local newspapers has filled in many of the gaps in the later history of the County Gaol, and to Mary Burgess of Cumberland Newspapers, who successfully searched the newspapers for the date of the demolition of the single-cell block. I would also like to thank the staff of the Record Office, Carlisle, the reference staff of Carlisle Library and Lesley Webster of the Library of the Society of Friends, London, for answering my many enquiries. Finally, I would like to thank those people who read this article in its many stages and corrected my numerous mistakes.

### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 30 May 1825.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph B. Pugh, *Imprisonment in Medieval England*, 1968, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Pipe Rolls*, 13 Hen II, roll 22, m.2d.

<sup>4</sup> *Pipe Rolls*, 18 Hen II, roll 5, m.2a. Repairs for the gaol of 40s. are recorded in 1194, *Pipe Rolls*, 6 Ric. I, roll 9, m.1.

<sup>5</sup> "Beneath the keep are horrific dungeons, with fetter-holes at neck height, a flogging platform, and what has been called 'the saddest stone in England' . . . the licking stone . . . where a great groove has been worn by the tongues of generations of captives whose only water supply was the damp trickling down the stone", George MacDonald Frazer in *The Observer Magazine*, 3 November 1974, 32. An equally horrific description is given by P. N. Walker in *Punishment: An Illustrated History*, 1972, 76, "Carlisle Castle . . . had a dungeon containing a shelf a few feet from the floor where prisoners were manacled and chained by their necks. If they fell off, they hanged themselves". Both statements are based on legend and can have no

factual basis, because the “shelf” was intended as seating for prisoners: they were possibly manacled on their neck, or their ankles or wrists, the manacles being attached by a length of chain to the wall, allowing the minimum of movement. This restriction would not have allowed prisoners to reach the “licking stone” and this was obviously not their only supply of water. There is no evidence to suggest that there was a flogging platform, but this does not mean that prisoners were not flogged.

- <sup>6</sup> W. Whellan, *History and Topography of Cumberland and Westmorland*, 1860, 132, gives a history of gaol delivery at Carlisle. A more general account of gaol delivery is given in “The Northern Assize Circuit” by J. S. Cockburn, *Northern History*, vol. iii, 1968, 118-130.
- <sup>7</sup> During the Border Wars extra accommodation was required for prisoners of war, therefore in 1226 ten marks were spent on a prison in the Castle, *Pipe Rolls*, 10 Hen III, roll 70, m.3, and in 1299-1300 “houses” for Scottish prisoners were strengthened with iron bars on the windows, “Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobae”, by J. Topham, *Soc. Ant. London*, 1787, 76. This suggests that prisoners of war were kept separate from common prisoners, in a different part of the Castle.
- <sup>8</sup> This could have been the “pledge chamber” referred to in 1597, *Calender of Border Papers, 1595-1603*, vol. ii, 431. For description of pledge giving see *The Steel Bonnets*, by G. MacDonald Frazer, 1971, 166-7.
- <sup>9</sup> L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540*, 1952, 456. This gateway is sometimes referred to as de Ireby’s Tower.
- <sup>10</sup> 23 Hen VIII, c.2, s.1.
- <sup>11</sup> *Letters and papers of Henry VIII*, vol. iv, 2656.
- <sup>12</sup> Certificate of Decays of the castle, town and citadel, 12 June 1563, Cotton MSS, Titus F XIII, No. 29, British Library.
- <sup>13</sup> Temporary relief may have been afforded by the opening of the City Prison above the Scotch Gate, in the mid-16th century, which took in prisoners such as debtors who were normally confined in the County Gaol. A certain amount of confusion has resulted from documents referring to the “Gate Head Prison”, which was the City Prison, and the “Gate House Prison”, which was the County Gaol.
- <sup>14</sup> The reason for this is given in *Certificate of Decays, op. cit.*; “the great round tower, at the east end of the fort of the Citadel being paved with stone and sand upon the lead roof, was thereby so overcharged as that a great part thereof is fallen to the ground, and is very needful to be repaired”.
- <sup>15</sup> Cecil’s Memorandum, *Calender of State Papers, domestic* [hereafter *C.S.P.D.*] 1598-1601, 518. Evidence of the temporary use of the Citadel as a gaol is given in *Calender of Border Papers, 1595-1603*, vol. ii, 808, in a letter from Lord Scrope to Sir Robert Cecil; “free me from Mr Butler as soon as you can. I keep him in the citadelle and 4 men guarding him at my great cost”. Butler remained in the Citadel on a charge of murder from before 6 November to 26 November 1602.
- <sup>16</sup> Joseph Pennington’s survey, *C.S.P.D.*, 1611-1618, 20.
- <sup>17</sup> *C.S.P.D.*, 1639-40, 143, 3 December 1639, “warrant for payment of £500 to Sir Francis Willoughby to be by him disbursed in repairing the castle and citadel of Carlisle”. The necessity for these repairs is given by *Lysons*, xxiv; “there being an immediate expectation of the Scottish army entering Cumberland, orders were given for a strict watch, for preparing the beacons, and all other precautions against an invasion. The garrison at Carlisle was kept up till the month of October 1641, when pursuant to a treaty with the Scots, it was disbanded”.
- <sup>18</sup> *C.S.P.D.*, *op. cit.*, 304, 5 January 1639-40.
- <sup>19</sup> *C.S.P.D.*, *op. cit.*, 347.
- <sup>20</sup> No evidence has been found to substantiate the statement made by Samuel Jefferson in *History and Antiquities of Carlisle*, 1838, 288; “during the reign of the Stuarts, when liberty of conscience in matters of religion was so ill understood, the limits of the prison were contracted; but a great number of the Society of Friends being imprisoned here, the Society purchased a plot of the ground adjoining for the purpose of enlarging the prison yard”.
- <sup>21</sup> *Journal or Historical Account of the Life of George Fox*, 3rd edition, 1765, 102-3. Before his imprisonment in the County Gaol, Fox was kept “close in the gaoler’s house”, and this seems to have been a common practice. By paying the gaoler’s fees it was possible to obtain a private room and certain luxuries, but Fox refused such treatment and “told him, he should not expect any money from me, for I would neither lie in any of his beds, nor eat any of his victuals”.
- <sup>22</sup> Fox, *op. cit.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Journal of the Life of John Banks*, second edition, 1798, 51. Christopher Story’s testimony in this Journal, 22, records that this was not the only experience which Banks had of the County Gaol; “. . . and it being my

lot, with others of our meeting, to be committed to prison at that time [1684] . . . we found our dear friend John Banks, and Thomas Hall, separated from the rest of Friends, who were prisoners [in the gaoler's house], and put into a dark place, called the citadel, among the felons, something like a dungeon, where they could not see to work in a dark day, without candle-light".

<sup>24</sup> CW1, xiii, 177.

<sup>25</sup> CW1, vi, 143; but there is an uncertainty in that article as to the exact position of the "Gardying House". This is surely the "garner" or "Garning house", i.e. the granary or storehouse of the Blackfriars and not the "Guarding House", as has been suggested. Its situation at the southern end of the grounds of the convent would be similar to that of the Tithe barn in relationship to the Priory of St Mary's.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*; storing munitions in the Castle had proved disastrous " . . . there is in this castle an old dungeon tower, which in Lord Wharton's time was partly blown up, and marvellously cracked with gunpowder", *C.S.P.D., Addenda, 1566-1579*, 506. Understandably, gunpowder was kept well away from the Castle for many years after this event and the "Gardying House" was still being used over 60 years later "to repair . . . a house in the late Friary to keep the munition", *C.S.P.D., 1601-1603*, 451.

<sup>27</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 22 February 1895.

<sup>28</sup> City Chamberlain's Accounts 1688, CRO, confirms this as cullery rents were collected for "the New Gaole late John Aglionby Esq." John Aglionby would have vacated his town residence after 1676 when he rebuilt Drawdykes Castle as his country house. Further confirmation of the building originally being of conventual use is given in the *Carlisle Journal*, 26 May 1914; " . . . the County Gaol was a building to the north of the English Gate, and was believed to be one of the old buildings of the Black Friars, whose convent was suppressed about 1538".

<sup>29</sup> CRO Q/11/7/7.

<sup>30</sup> *Cumberland Guide and Directory*, 1811. More detailed accounts are found in *An Account of Lazarettos*, by John Howard, 1789, 200, and *Notes on a visit to some of the Prisons in Scotland and the North of England in company with Elizabeth Fry*, by Joseph John Gurney, 1819, 57-61.

<sup>31</sup> The Rev. J. Wilson, *op. cit.*, states, "an old barn which had been reserved by the Aglionbys on selling their town residence [was] purchased and fitted up as a chapel".

<sup>32</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 7 October 1777. Estimates and bills for repairs are in CRO CQ/AG/1.

<sup>33</sup> Hutchinson 1794, vol. ii, 681. According to the *Cumberland Pacquet*, 17 September 1788, the designs would have made the new gaol, with " . . . separate cells for each felon . . . one of the handsomest and most convenient prisons in the Kingdom".

<sup>34</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 7 June 1806.

<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Gurney, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 27 October 1821; the correspondent goes on to state, "the Magistrates have determined to rebuild our County Gaol, and likewise to erect a House of Correction . . . but the vast debt into which the county was thrown by the erection of Courthouses and Bridges is the cause why this very necessary work has been so long protracted".

<sup>38</sup> *Carlisle Patriot*, 17 August 1822. Only one of the original plans submitted can be traced, that of William Reid, a Glasgow architect, CRO Q/AG/5.

<sup>39</sup> *Op. cit.*, 287-8.

<sup>40</sup> *Carlisle Patriot*, 6 March 1824, records Nixon's death at the age of 64.

<sup>41</sup> The Carlisle architect, Christopher Hodgson, 1785-1849. From the date and provenance, it would seem that the plans in the Jackson Collection, Carlisle Library, A654, *1824 Plans of New Gaol at Carlisle*, are the work of C. Hodgson. They were given by J. Hodgson (brother of C. Hodgson) to C. J. Ferguson, who gave them to Carlisle Library.

<sup>42</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 30 May 1825.

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, 287.

<sup>44</sup> Matthew Nutter in *Carlisle in the Olden Time*, 1835, 30, states that this was not the only union between the courts and the gaol; "the new gaol . . . has a communication by a passage with the centre of the court, whence the prisoners can emerge from the gaol into the dock without the necessity of exhibiting them to the gaze of the public, or the danger of putting the means of escape within their reach".

<sup>45</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 28 November 1865.

<sup>46</sup> *Cumberland News*, 10 November 1951.

<sup>47</sup> *Carlisle Patriot*, 9 November 1900.

- <sup>48</sup> *Cumberland News*, 18 March 1922. The *Carlisle Journal*, 14 February 1922 gives a more detailed account of the closure; "Carlisle Prison is one of the eight prisons which are to be closed as the result of the Home Office economies, consequent on the Geddes recommendations, instructions have been received that the establishment is to be closed at the end of March. There is accommodation in Carlisle Prison for about 150 prisoners, but the average daily number confined there has been little over 30. Recently the female portion of the Prison was closed for purposes of economy. The nearest prisons to Carlisle are Newcastle where the female prisoners have been sent since they were excluded from Carlisle and Preston. However this arrangement did not last for very long; "owing to the closure of Newcastle Prison persons committed from Carlisle are now conveyed to Preston to serve their sentences", *Carlisle Journal*, 7 April 1925.
- <sup>49</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 24 March 1922.
- <sup>50</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 9 May 1922.
- <sup>51</sup> "The Government sold the Gaol and the ground on which it stands for the comparatively small sum of £16,000". *Carlisle Journal*, 9 July 1926.
- <sup>52</sup> "In addition to the 5,458 square yards of land offered by the County Council to the Corporation for the sum of £16,750 . . . the County Council agree to include in the sale, without extra charge, other pieces of land, making a total of 6,368 square yards, subject to the condition that such additional land is utilised for public street improvement solely", *Carlisle Journal*, 13 July 1926.
- <sup>53</sup> In the construction of the road from Backhouse Walk to the Viaduct "it became necessary to remove the remains of five bodies which had been buried within the prison walls and a Home Office Licence for the purpose was granted. The remains were taken from their graves near the west wall of the prison an hour before dawn on Tuesday, and were re-interred in unconsecrated ground in Carlisle Cemetery", *Carlisle Journal*, 27 July 1928.
- <sup>54</sup> This property had the nickname of the "Gaol Tap" and it formed an island between Blackfriars Street and English Street. The decision to acquire this site to widen the street was reached in July 1926 and the "Gaol Tap" was finally demolished in November 1930.
- <sup>55</sup> "But before this scheme could mature, the Government grant for such schemes was withdrawn", *Carlisle Journal*, 22 September 1933. The idea to use the site for building a new Town Hall was put forward by Mr. J. H. Minns in a letter published in the *Carlisle Journal*, 16 October 1926.
- <sup>56</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 27 January 1933.
- <sup>57</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 15 July 1932.
- <sup>58</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 9 September 1932.
- <sup>59</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 9 July 1926, stated, "it is proposed to retain the old prison building, which is a large substantially built stone structure, and it should be comparatively easy to convert it into a huge warehouse".
- <sup>60</sup> *Cumberland News*, 13 February 1937.
- <sup>61</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 29 January 1886, gives the reason for this: "in 1876, the scaffold was placed in an enclosed yard within the gaol; but since then new buildings have been erected upon the Viaduct from which a view can be obtained of that part of the prison. The High Sheriff has therefore determined, in order to secure that privacy which the Act of Parliament contemplates [Capital Punishment Act of 1868], to have the scaffold erected in the old treadmill shed, where a pit is now being dug in order to obtain the requisite 'drop'".