

ART. IX.—*Burneside Hall*. By the REV. G. F. WESTON,  
Vicar of Crosby Ravensworth, and Hon. Canon, Carlisle  
Cathedral.

*Read at Burneside Hall, July 8th, 1881.*

THE earliest mention met with of the Manor of Burneside, or as it seems to have been originally spelt Burneshead, is in the early part of the reign of Edward I, when it was in the possession of one Gilbert de Burneshead, who was sworn into the office of undersheriff of Westmorland about the year 1290. He was the last of the De Burnesheads who held the Manor. Its next owners were the De Bellinghams, a family springing from Tyne-dale, in Northumberland, to one of whom, Richard de Bellingham, Gilbert de Burneshead's only daughter and heiress, Margaret, was married. Seven of the De Bellinghams held the manor in lineal succession, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, during a period of something more than two hundred years.\*

What may have been the extent and importance of the manor, and what the condition of the hall, or manor house, under the De Burnesheads, it is not easy to say; there may be traces of the original building, but the main part of the Hall, as it now stands, must, from its details, have been built during the time of the De Bellinghams.

To the examination of the building let us now proceed. The main portions of the existing building seem to be of the fifteenth century. Whether any portions of a previous building can be traced I am not certain. If so they are to be found in the pointed arched doorways of the hall. These, for any details to the contrary, might have been erected in

---

\* Nicholson and Burn's "History of Westmorland and Cumberland," vol. i, p. 125.

the

the previous century; and I rather lean to the opinion that they were, since had the erection taken place in the 15th century, the tudor or four-centered arch, which is the characteristic form of that period, would probably have been found in the place of these pointed doorways. If this opinion be correct, then the tower will probably be of the previous century also. The absence of marked detail, indeed of any detail whatever in the tower, which has been entirely stript of its ornamental stonework, prevents one speaking positively; there would, at any rate, however, be nothing incongruous in the supposition, since a residence of this character would be, as regards the arrangement of tower and hall, in each century the same.

The hall was the principal chamber of the building, thirty, forty, or fifty feet long, or even longer, by about half the breadth. At one end was the dais, a raised floor of one step, extending across the hall, where was placed the long table, at which the lord and his family, and any distinguished guests took their meals. At the other end of the hall were the entrances into the kitchen, buttery, cellar, and other offices; these were screened off from the hall by a massively-framed oaken partition, often handsomely carved and enriched, about ten or twelve feet high, so placed as to form a sufficiently spacious passage between it and the end wall. This partition also further served as a screen to the entrance from without; or rather entrances, for there were generally two, opposite each other, one at each side of the building. The hall was lighted by windows, somewhat high up in the wall for security, the one lighting the dais end, being larger and of handsomer design, often recessed, forming what is called a bay or oriel window, one of the most picturesque features of these old buildings. The roof was exposed to view, of massive timber, ingeniously constructed, beautifully enriched with elaborate mouldings and carvings, and of high pitch; in the centre of which rose a little graceful spirelet, called the louvre, open to the air, as a means of escape for the smoke from the fire which burnt on a hearth in the middle of the floor, the fuel being large logs supported on andirons or fire-dogs. Beautiful and very perfect specimens of these noble chambers are to be seen at Oxford and at Cambridge, in the dining halls of the different colleges.

In the hall the lord and his retainers partook of their meals; the lord, as I have said, with his family and distinguished guests, at one side of the long table on the dais, the retainers and guests of inferior degree

degree at two long tables placed at right angles to the former down each side of the apartment. The hall was also used for the transaction of various matters of public business between the lord and his retainers. In it was held his royalty court or court baron; here too he received suit and service from his retainers; and here administered justice, according to the powers granted him from the Crown. In it, also, on the retirement of the lord and his family after the evening meal, the retainers passed the night, sleeping, without much change of dress, on the mattresses or quilts brought in for the purpose, and laid upon the thick covering of rushes with which the floor was strewn. The private apartments of the lord and his family communicated with the dais end of the hall by means of a narrow winding stone staircase. The first apartment reached was called the solar; it was built over a stone-vaulted cellar on the level of the hall, and its only approach was by the winding stair, at the foot of which, closing it from the hall, was a massive oak door, rendered doubly strong by cross bars of iron, or by a separate door of iron, ponderous bolts, and bars securing them from within. The solar was thus a chamber of great strength; proof against fire, and almost every other mode of assault. Above it was another chamber of the same size, reached by a continuation of the narrow winding stair:—and thus was formed that peculiar feature of the fortified residences of the gentry in this district, as well as of the border country generally,—the tower, also called the peel or pile. In it the lord and his family slept in security, and, indeed, at all times were safe against any ordinary attack. In cases where the house was besieged, and the outer defences were carried, the tower served as a refuge to which the defenders might retire, and hold out, perhaps, till succour arrived.

Such is a description of the hall, with its adjoining tower, in its earlier form. Such may have and most probably did exist here. Here may have been the stately hall with its open timbered roof, here the winding stair leading to the well-secured private chambers of the lord. But what we have at Burneside shows a modification of this earlier arrangement of the hall, which arose out of increasing refinement of manners. The lord, with his family and guests, as time went on and manners softened and luxury increased, dined apart from the retainers; a separate chamber therefore was needed for the latter. A withdrawing-room also became requisite for the ladies of the family.

This

This alteration of the hall is what we find here:—A floor is introduced some nine or ten feet from the ground. The lower part served for the use of the retainers; above is the banquetting hall for the family, twenty-five and a half feet by twenty-two. The fire-place in the east wall, with its two shields, would tell by their charges, could we decipher them, which unhappily we cannot, the lord and his lady, under whom these alterations took place.\* The windows and the old oak screen, brought up perhaps from below when the change was made, seem to point to the middle of the fifteenth century; glass was then costly, and it does not seem certain that these windows were originally glazed, they certainly were closed by wooden shutters, as may be seen by the rebate in the stone and the crooks on which the bands swung; and these may have formed, as was not unfrequently the case, down to and at that period, the only protection from the weather. A door pierced through the massive wall of the tower at the dais end, now walled up, gave the necessary communication with the lord's bed-chamber. A convenient staircase from the kitchen was now required, which we have, probably at this period, though its construction and details are poor in character. The withdrawing-room is found on the other side of the landing, over what doubtless was the kitchen. This chamber, though now divided, was of course originally one handsome apartment, about twenty-three feet by eighteen, and has had a beautifully ornamented plaster ceiling,† with a well-wrought cornice running underneath it, reminding one of the rooms at Levens, ornamented in a

---

\* Machel (vol. ii of his MSS., p. 410) gives drawings of seventeen coats of arms from Burneside Hall. The two last he numbers 16 and 17, and says they are in stone above the hall chimney. 16 he draws as a shield charged with a fess and a bordure; 17—a bordure alone, and of it he writes:—"17 may seem to have been the arms of John Machel in a border." But Machel's conceit in his own family name makes this doubtful.—R. S. F.

† The ceiling is worked in large quatrefoils, of uniform size and pattern, and within each of them that remains is a vine with leaves and grapes treated in a conventional manner.

precisely

precisely similar way. That the kitchen did exist (as I have pointed out) beneath it, is shewn, I think, by the massive wall—some five feet thick—fortunately revealed by a closet, which must have received the flue of its huge open fireplace, as well as afterwards that of the withdrawing-room and two other rooms. Out of the withdrawing-room (the doorway now stopped up) was a long chamber, twenty-four and a half feet by fourteen and a half. This I believe to have been the domestic chapel,\* and I come to this conclusion, partly from its shape, the ornamented window in the east wall, its oaken roof, but more particularly from some fresco decoration still visible on the walls. Although nearly obliterated I have been able to make out two figures with scroll work between, one of which figures, from a mitre on the head, seems to represent a bishop; the other (crowned), a king. The window at the east end is two lighted, similar in character to those in the hall, erected, doubtless, at the same time and by the same lord. For security's sake this sacred chamber has been constructed over a vaulted cellar. At one end a fire-place appears afterwards to have been introduced, built up against the wall.

At the head of the stairs is a small bedroom, some ten feet by eight feet, in which used to stand an old bedstead, having the date 1684 carved upon it, but whether any initials I cannot say.

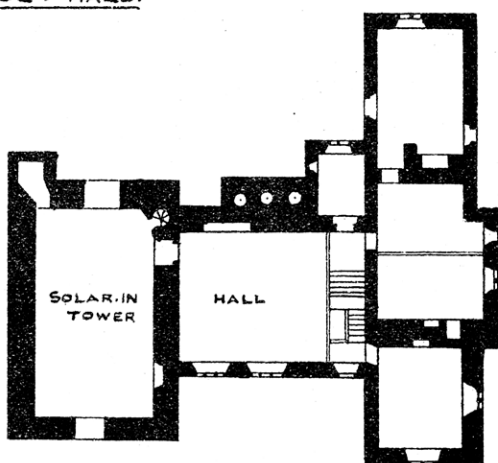
Returning to the hall we find at the dais end a door which communicated with the solar in the tower. This solar can only be reached now by a ladder from the outside. It must have been a fine chamber, some thirty-five and a half feet by twenty. The stonework of the windows has been entirely removed, and there are no other details from which a clue can be got to the period of its erection,

---

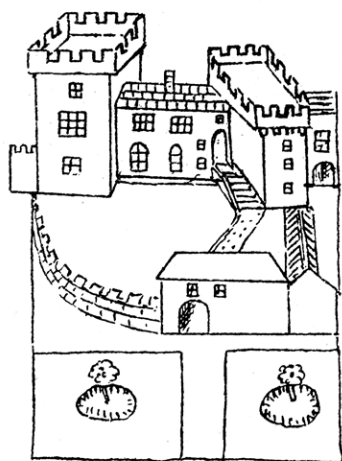
\* Machel mentions four rooms, (1) the hall, (2) the old parlour or dining room, (3) the new dining room, (4) the gallery. The hall, by the two shields in stone over the chimney-piece is easily identified with what Mr. Weston calls the banquetting hall.

unless

-BURNSIDE - HALL-



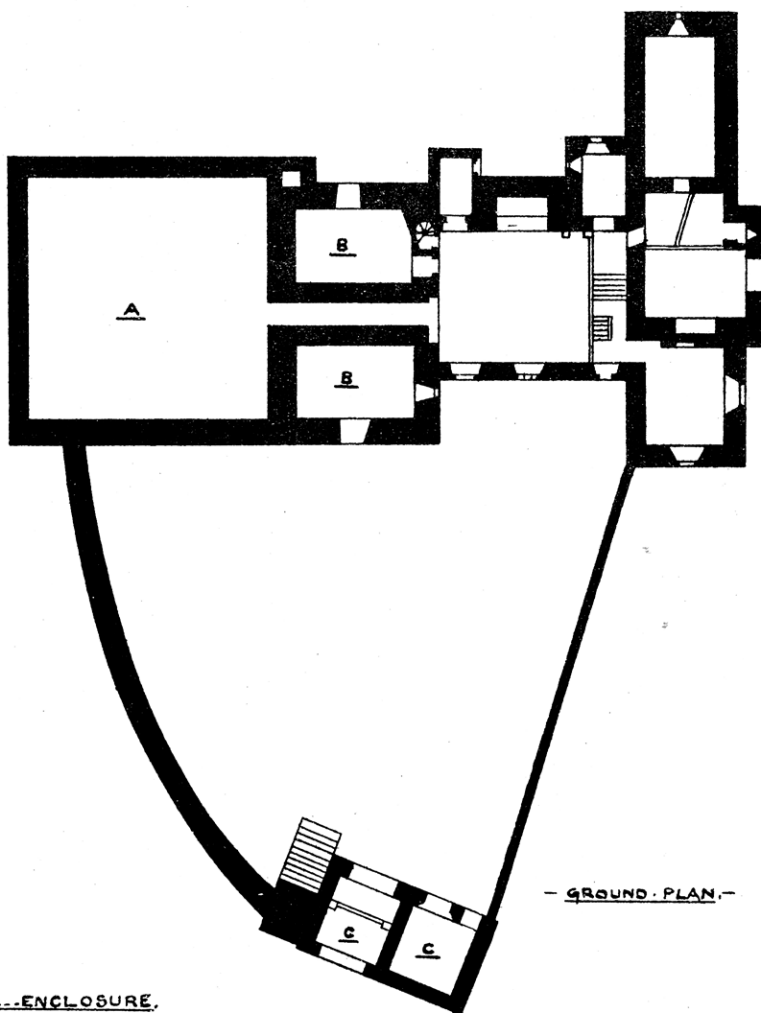
-FIRST FLOOR PLAN-



-ELEVATION-

*From Machet's MSS. Vol. II. cir. 1692.*

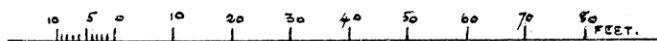
- BURNESIDE HALL. -



A...ENCLOSURE.

B.B. CELLAR UNDER TOWER.

CC THE BARNEKIN.



unless it be the fireplace, the arch of which, thrown over with rough rag-stones and finished with plaster or cement like that in the chapel, would seem to have been a four-centred one, and therefore of the fifteenth century. Above the solar is another chamber of the same dimensions, reached by a continuation of the winding stair, at the head of which are the remains of a little turret giving access to the flat leaded roof, with its protecting battlements so useful for defensive operations against a besieging enemy. Beneath the solar are two vaulted cellars divided by a narrow passage, all three communicating with the lower hall by well-wrought pointed doorways. That opening into the easternmost cellar is perfect, as well as that forming the entrance to the winding stair; but the other two have been interfered with by a modern fireplace, which has been inserted when the hall was divided into two rooms by a cross wall, and seems to have been constructed by removing the inner jambs of each door and allowing the other two to stand as the jambs of the fireplace. The original chimney was undoubtedly in the east wall, and a fine specimen of an open chimney, with its ingle nooks, it must have been, well able to do the double duty required of it, when the fireplace was inserted in the banqueting room above and the flue carried into the huge stack.

The double cellars with the passage between, under the solar, is somewhat unusual I think—one cellar only being generally found. The passage between gave access from the hall to what I judge has been a large walled enclosure some forty feet square.\* In this I should think cattle and horses may have been driven for additional security, and against the north wall of the tower there seem traces of a line of weathering as if a lean-to roof had been erected

---

\* The sketch of the hall given by Machel, vol. ii, p. 410, bears out Mr. Weston's conjecture. This enclosure is battlemented, and does not appear to have had an entrance into the court before the hall. Probably there was an external entrance on the north or east side. Cattle and horses could be thus secured within this enclosure, and attended to by the passage under the solar.—R. S. F.

against



against it ; there may have been a similar one on the other side of the court, two lines of sheds being thus formed, with a passage between, entered perhaps from without by a strongly-defended door. A similar court to this, with similar entrance from the building, may I think be traced in the interesting ruins of Lammerside Castle, near Kirkby Stephen. When this fine tower fell into a state of decay it is difficult to say. In fortified buildings of larger pretensions, the work of destruction is wont to be ascribed to the ruthless hand of Oliver Cromwell. To no such enemy, and in all probability to no enemy at all but time, is the work of ruin in the present case to be ascribed. The timber, though of heart of oak, would yield at last to the ravages of age. This might not occur till the advance of less warlike times rendered these strong places of refuge no longer needful ; inconvenient for use, too massive to be pulled down, the lead would be stripped from the roof, the hewn work of stone and perhaps the timber would be removed and used in more convenient additions to the building, or sold ; and the grim old walls would be left to stand and battle with storms and time as best they might.

The only portion of the house not yet noticed is the south-west wing. This is not in its original state ; the original wall seems from the foundations (now covered up, but which I remember some years ago), to have been nearly two feet thicker than the present one ; this would probably be one of the offices connected with the kitchen which it adjoins.

One portion of the old building, however, yet remains, to which I must draw your attention, which renders it a particularly valuable specimen of a border gentleman's residence, inasmuch as few, comparatively, still retain it—the outer wall of enclosure, called the Barnekin, with its entrance gateway. Of this, Machel,\* who saw it in 1692,

---

\* MSS. vol. 2, p. 410. "20 July, 1692.—Burnaside Hall. A pleasant seat upon a plane at the foote of an Hill wch rises wt an easy ascent like a woman's Bust.

says,

says, "There was a moat, with a lodge and battlements, through which the ascent was." Of the wall a small part only, but without its battlements, is still standing. The gateway, however, with its massive oaken gates, the porter's room on the ground floor, and the guard-room above, is in good preservation. This wall, with its entrance gateway, formed the outer defence of every such residence, sometimes further strengthened by a moat outside. The gates secured, and the walls defended by a number of resolute well-armed men, protected by the battlements, an attacking force might be kept at bay for a considerable time, if not repulsed altogether. The time thus secured would avail for making the necessary arrangements for defence within the house, to which the defenders would retire if these outer works were carried by the foe.

A graphic account of the taking of one of these strongholds is given in Nicolson and Burn's History of Westmorland and Cumberland, vol. i, p. liii, from a manuscript narrative by Sir Thomas Carleton, of Carleton Hall, who conducted a foray into Scotland under the Lord Wharton, warder of the West Marshes:—

"Considering (he says) Canonby (a place in their possession) to be far from the enemy, . . . I thought it good to practise some way we might take some hold or castle where we might lie near the enemy, and to lie within our own strength in the night, where we might all lie down together and rise together. Thus practising, one Sandee Armstrong, son to ill Will Armstrong, came to me and told me he had a man called John Lynton, who was born in the head of Annerdale, near to the Loughwood, being the laird Johnston's chief house, and the said laird and his brother (being the Abbot of Salside) were taken prisoners not long before, and were remaining in England. It was a fair large tower, able to lodge all our company safely, with a

---

And has as I guess been called Burnay from the Burne or Brooke that runneth by it And the place Burnaside from being at the side thereon. There is a Court with a Lodge & Battlement through which you ascend into the Hall when I met wth some coates of Arms & wth more in the Dineing room & parlour But wth most in the gallery. Before the Court is a large pond Intercepted with a passage or Causway up to the gate & on either side is a Little lland a Tree planted in it." These are Machel's own words.—R. S. F.

barnekin,

barnekin, hall, kitchen, and stables, all within the barnekin, and was but kept by two or three fellows and as many wenches. He thought it might be stolen in a morning at the opening of the tower door, which I required the said Sandee to practise, and as he thought good, either myself to go to it, or that he would take a company and give it a priefe(trial), with as much foresight to make it sure as was possible; for if we should make an offer and not get it, we had lost it for ever. At last it was agreed that we should go with the whole garrison. We came there about an hour before day, and the greater part of us lay without the barnekin; but about a dozen of the men got over the barnekin wall, and stole close into the house within the barnekin, and took the wenches and kept them secure till daylight. And at sun rising, two men and a woman being in the tower, one of the men rising in his shirt, and going to the tower head, and seeing nothing astir about, he called on the wench that lay in the tower, and bade her rise and open the tower door and call up them that lay beneath. She so doing, and opening the iron door, and a wood door without it, our men within the barnekin brake a little too soon to the door; for the wench perceiving them, leaped back into the tower, and had gotten almost the wood door to, but one got hold of it that she could not get it close to; so the skirmish rose, and we over the barnekin and broke open the wood door, and she being troubled with the wood door left the iron door open, and so we entered and won the Loughwood, where we found truly the house well purveyed for beef salted, malt big (barley), havermeal, butter, and cheese."

Here we have the barnekin wall which the assailants, being unopposed, found no difficulty in scaling. Here we have the fair large tower, the hall, kitchen, and the stable (if I am right in my conjecture), all within the barnekin. After scaling the barnekin wall the men stealthily approached the house, and being unperceived, entered it, and secured the two or three women who alone were in that part of the building. It is a wonder that women thus surprised did not make a sufficient outcry to alarm the men who were in the tower; however, it appears they did not, for the latter slept on undisturbed, and one of them at sun-rising, ascending to the top of the tower to reconnoitre, and finding no cause for alarm, gave orders for the opening of the tower door, the one, no doubt, communicating  
with

with the house at the foot of the winding stair, in order that the other women might be called. For security's sake, the door here was double, the outer one, next the hall, being of massive oak, the inner, a strong framework of crossed iron bars such as may still be seen at Dalston Hall, Cumberland. When in the act of opening the outer door, the men, who must have remained all this time excessively quiet, sprang from their ambush, intercepted the closing of the door again, overpowered the poor girl, whose presence of mind seems to have failed her, and prevented her closing the inner iron door, and so got possession of the tower; or, victualled as it was with an ample store of provision in the cellar (to which the winding stair gave them secure access), it might have defied any efforts of the assailants to take it.

This interesting specimen of a border stronghold continued to be occupied by the Bellinghams till somewhere about 1525. It was then sold by the second Sir Robert Bellingham to Sir Thomas Clifford, who, according to Sir Daniel Le Fleming's papers, sold it to one Fitzwilliam, who again sold it to Machell of Kendal. Machell sold it to Robert Braithwaite of Ambleside, and this brought the family of Braithwaite to Burneside, in which it continued, as it had previously in that of the Bellinghams, for seven successive generations, when it was sold about 1750 to a Mr. Thomas Shepherd. He seems to have sold it again piecemeal; one part of the demesne, including the Hall, to Christopher Wilson of Bardsea; another, called Cowan Head, to Lady Fleming, and the manor to Sir James Lowther. Christopher Wilson settled his portion of the estate upon his daughter Sarah, on her marriage with John Gale, Esq., of Whitehaven, from whom it descended to their son, Wilson Gale, who succeeded, by will, to the property of his cousin, Thomas Braddyll of Conishead Priory, and therefore took the surname and arms of Braddyll. The Burneside Hall estate thus fell into the hands

hands of the Braddyll family, in which it remained until the year 1842, when it was sold to John Brunskill, Esq., of Lambrigg Foot.

---

## APPENDIX.

---

Machel gives drawings, partially tricked and partially supplemented by written description, of seventeen coats of arms at Burneside Hall:—

- 1.—Described below in Machel's notes.
- 2.—Being Braithwaite impaling Williamson.
- 3.—Braithwaite impaling Bindloss, viz., quarterly per fess indented and per pale Or and Gules; on a bend azure a cinquefoil between two martlets of the first.
- 4.—Braithwaite (differenced by a crescent) impaling Benson, Argent, on a chevron sable, three cross crosslets Or.
- 5.—Bradley, sable a fess and a border engrailed, in chief a mullet between two cross crosslets Or, impaling Braithwaite.
- 6.—Benson (ut supra) impaling Braithwaite.
- 7.—Briggs (Barruly, Or and sable, a canton of the first), impaling Braithwaite.
- 8.—Braithwaite impaling Dalston, a chevron engrailed between three daws heads, no colour.
- 9.—Braithwaite impaling Lawson, as in Machel's notes below.
- 10.—Lamplugh, Or a cross fleurie sable, impaling Braithwaite.
- 11.—Barton, as in Machel's notes below, impaling Braithwaite.
- 12.—Salkeld, vert fretty argent, impaling Braithwaite.
- 13.—Brisco, three greyhounds current (no colours), impaling Braithwaite.
- 14.—Askough, as in Machel's notes below, impaling Braithwaite.
- 15.—Braithwaite impaling Penruddock, as in Machel's notes below.
- 16.—A shield having a fess and a border.
- 17.—A shield with a border.

Machel's drawing of No. 1 show it in an oval compartment with the date 1628 under it. He also shows the coat "marked 2" as in an oval; the inscription seems to be "Braithwaite Williamson," which is indicated rather than given. The oval is filled up with foliage, and what at first sight seems a crest, like a flower pot of ferns, but which is only ornament. Machel's notes are as follows:—

"1. The I is in the new Dining Roome, Gules a chevron Argent charged with 3 cross-crosslets sable & in chief for distinction of a second House a Crescent Or. The bust a greyhound seiant Art collar Or Leased Gules by the name of Braithwaite. All the rest (except the 2 last wch are in stone above the Hall chimney) are in the gallery window, and have all compartments about them & Inscriptions under them like the coate marked 2 wch is Braithwaite impaleing Williamson who Bears Argent Between 3 Trefoils slipt a chevron engrailed charged with 3 crescents Or,

Or. The 9th Braithwaite impaling a Quarterly coat whereof the 1st & 4th Argent a chevron between 3 martlets Sable by the name of Lawson 2 & 3 Barry of six Arg. & Az. 3 Annulets in chief of the 2nd by the name of Lawson. The 11 Barton bears (if this be right) Quarterly 1 Ermine on a fess gules 3 annulets Or—the 2nd Paly of six Arg and vert, the 3 gules between 2 Bends or & ar 3 Lioncels pt arg the 4 gules a chevron Art charged with 3 hurts inter 3 fleur-de-lis Or. The 14 is Sable a fess or inter 3 horses sistant argent by the name of Askew. The 16 (*sic* in Machel) Impaled with Quarterly 1, Gules a ragged staff Argent 2 Sandford a Bore's head Or. 3, Sable 6 Annulets Or perhaps Lowther. The 4 a fess between 3 martlets. The 17 may seen have been the arms of John Machel in a Border. Taken 20 July 1692.\*

In the margin are the following notes :—

“In the old Parlour or Dineing room are ye same wth the 3 & 9th upon the wainscot And the same with the 1st in Plaster with a Crescent & the year of our Lord 1641.

In the Hall upon smal Diamond quarries of glas are two coates the same wth the 1st charged with a Crescent.

And also the same with the coat marked 3 wavy for its Crest a Demy Horse Couped with a Ducall flourished Collar Azure Belonging Bindloss of Borrick.”

The coats of arms can be assigned to their owners. No. 2 is that of Robert Braithwaite, of Ambleside, who was the purchaser of Burneside, and married Williamson. No 3 to 7 are those of his two sons, Thomas and James, and three daughters. 8, 9, 10, and 11, of his grandchildren by his eldest son Thomas. 12, 13, 14, of his granddaughters by a third son Gawen. 15 of his grandson Gawen by his second son James. [See St. George's Visitation of Westmorland.] The coat of arms in plaster is not in existence.

---

\* Nos. 16 and 17 are now mere whitewashed blanks, one of which has a line across it fesswise.