

ART. VII – *St. John's Well and Chapel, Skelsmergh: their location and present condition*
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MANY references in early volumes of these *Transactions* refer to Cumbria's holy wells, some of which had probably been used originally for the pagan worship of water, which also played an important part in their rituals.¹ In 1893, R. C. Hope drew attention to customs such as well-dressing which he claimed was a survival of the practice of making floral offerings to placate water spirits. He also wrote that heathen Norsemen sprinkled new-born babies with water in a ceremony called *vatni ausa* (the scoop for water)² and he reported wells dedicated to Norse gods; Woden (at Wanswell, Glos.) and Thor (at Burnsall, Yorks.).³ Thus, it might be expected that a major function of christianised wells would be baptism to help displace earlier pagan beliefs. Dedicating the well to a saint might also have helped in the conversion process.

The manner in which this was perhaps achieved appears to be contained in advice directed by Pope Gregory to Bishop Augustine in the seventh century. He believed "that the temples of the idols in England should not on any account be destroyed" but Augustine was to smash the idols, sprinkle the temples with holy water and set up altars in them to enclose holy relics. "We ought to take advantage of well-built temples by purifying them from devil-worship" and re-dedicating them. In this way he hoped that "the people (seeing their temples are not destroyed) will leave their idolatry and yet continue to frequent the places as formerly, so coming to know and revere the true God".⁴

Eventually churches were built near many of the wells though too often the old literature does not sufficiently define the degree of nearness. At Aspatria the well was "at the church", while at Caldbeck, Greystoke, Irthington, Melmerby, Mungrisdale and elsewhere it was just "near the church". At St. Bees it was "near the site of St. Michael's chapel at Chapel How", apparently over 150 yards from the chapel. At Brampton the well was "in the churchyard", at Kirkandrews-on-Eden it was "in the churchyard [and was] supposed to have been used for baptisms", while at Castle Sowerby it was "in the vicarage garden".⁵ To overcome such vagueness, uncover fresh evidence, correct errors, and report on the present condition of the county's holy wells, J. Taylor Page checked the literary sources, studied the topography of each site, and dowsed for evidence of hidden springs and watercourses.⁶ He deduced that roughly half of the Anglican churches with Catholic origins stood above springs "always in the earliest part of the building on the original site of the first church or at the junction of the chancel and nave of the earlier ruins if they are nearby". In other cases he identified a well nearby.⁷

Whether saints actually preached at the sites dedicated to their name or whether the dedication arose from a cult revival is open to question.⁸ However, for purely practical reasons it would have been advantageous to preach at wells because, in outlying areas without markets, the local sources of clean water probably attracted more people more often than other sites. This article will concentrate on just one site where a ruined chapel was seen to have been built directly over a stream, within

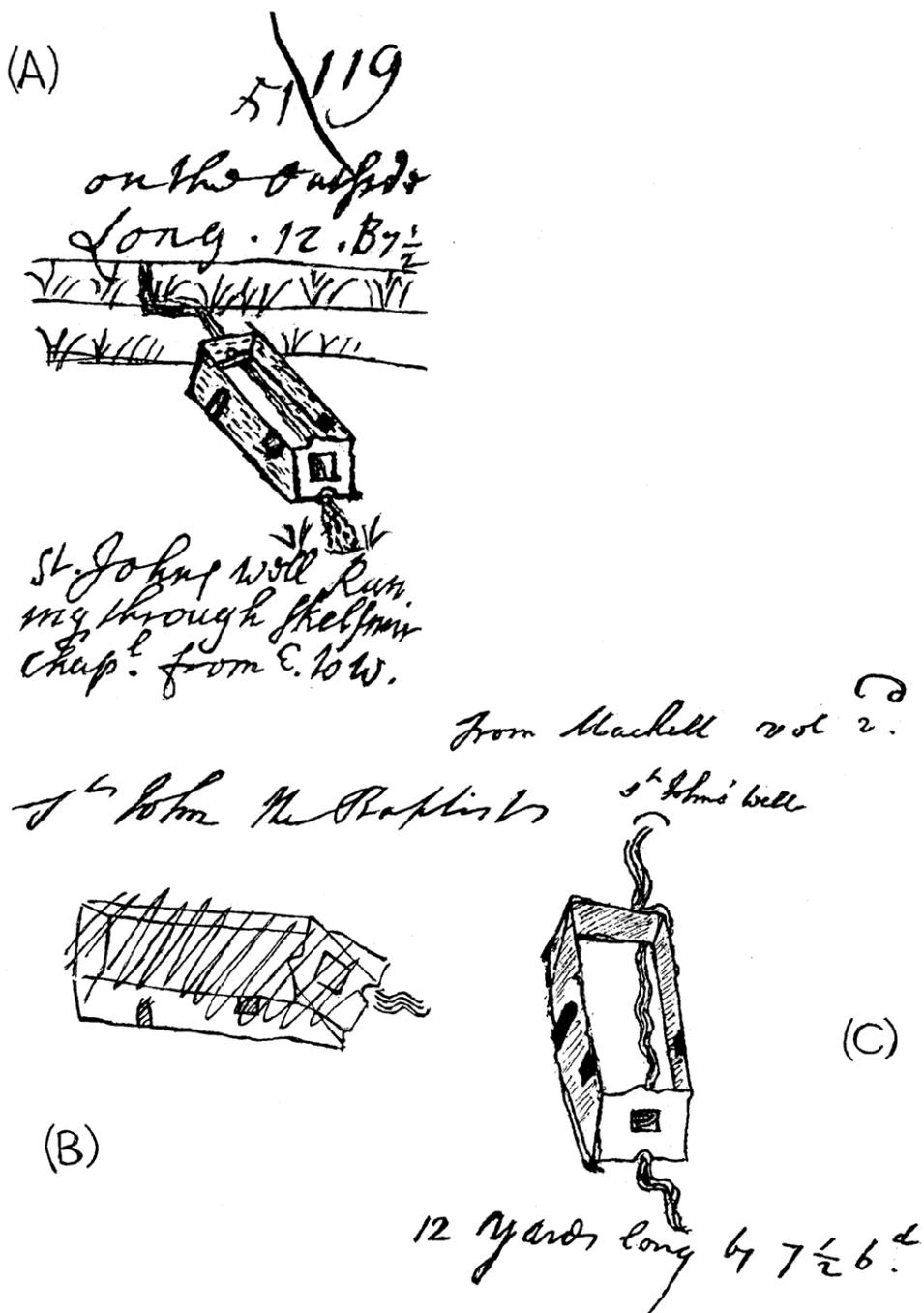


FIG. 1. (A) Part of Revd Thomas Machell's marginal note (enlarged) showing the dimensions of St. John's chapel with the beck flowing through, apparently near the south wall. This left more uninterrupted floor close to the north doorway (Source: CROC, Machell Mss, ii, 119). (B) and (C) Two 19th century sketches by John Hill copied with partial success from Machell's original. Clearly, Hill was not happy with his first attempt (Source: CROC, Hill Mss, ii, 161).

five yards of its source. Such clear examples are rare but this one was missed by Taylor Page and, apparently, all earlier commentators except for Revd Thomas Machell who saw its ruins in 1692 (Fig. 1).⁹

Some False Impressions

Comments in these *Transactions* referring to St. John's well and chapel at Skelsmergh, two miles north of Kendal, can be shown to be misleading. In 1883 an excursion report about Skelsmergh Hall claimed that "a burial place at one time existed here" and then, by paraphrasing Nicolson and Burn's version of Machell's words,¹⁰ declared that a chapel, with a stream running through it, had stood there. The report then stated that "No trace of the chapel or its foundations now remains, and it would appear that soon after changing owners and coming into the hands of Mr Crowle extensive repairs and alterations were made", as if these were responsible for its demise. The Dallam estate papers show that Thomas Crowle of Whittington, Lancs. paid £2,520 for the Skelsmergh and Cunswick estates in 1721 after John Leyburne forfeited them for his part in the 1715 rebellion. In 1724, Crowle sold Skelsmergh to Daniel Wilson of Dallam Tower for £1,821.¹¹ If the chapel had been repaired by Crowle during his three-year ownership it ought to have survived for 160 years. As it did not, his repairs were probably confined to the Hall and could have used stones from an old chapel or other buildings.¹²

In 1884 Edmund Venables studied church dedications. In a list of parishes in Carlisle diocese he noted "Skelsmergh, W[estmorland] (Rebuilt after being long ruined), St. John Baptist".¹³ If he was not misled by the 1883 report, he misinterpreted the entirely new building of Skelsmergh church on a fresh site in 1871, at a cost of £1,378 10s.,¹⁴ for supposed repairs to the ancient chapel. An article on lost churches in 1899 recorded only that "There was a chapel of St. John the Baptist at Skelsmergh" but it did not test the truth of the earlier remarks.¹⁵ J. H. Palmer's book on old Westmorland farmhouses relied heavily on the 1883 report and repeated its errors, including 1680 as a (wrong) date of Machell's visit.¹⁶ Palmer declared: "A chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist and a burial ground were formerly near the dam behind the farm" at Skelsmergh Hall. He gave no evidence to justify his claim, reworked Nicolson and Burn's version of Machell's remarks and concluded: "There is, however, nothing remaining today".

In 1997, a visit to Skelsmergh Hall easily located the dam behind the house. It is large enough to have supplied power for occasional corn milling for the former manor house. The dam itself is now breached, but the area behind is boggy and overgrown. There is no surface inflow. The water appears to come underground from Skelsmergh Tarn, half-a-mile to the north, to a tank which now supplies drinking water to the Hall, farm, and some nearby properties. As reported, there is no trace of a chapel or burial ground. This is not surprising, for the site in no way matches the details of Machell's 1692 observations which will be examined shortly. This suggests that both the 1883 report and Palmer were wrong to suppose that St. John's chapel was so near to Skelsmergh Hall and that neither writer actually checked Machell's own words against the site.

The errors were compounded in 1986 when the Sites and Monuments Record (no. 4049) put the chapel site at SD 531 964 on the northern edge of Chester Hag

wood beside the lane leading from Burton House to Tarnbank¹⁷ (Fig. 2). An inspection of that site found just three large boulders set in a line as if they had been part of the foundation of a building, presumably an out-barn serving remote fields. As that site is also incompatible with Machell's description, an alternative must be found by following his actual words closely.

Locating St. John's Chapel (Figs. 1 and 2)

Machell's description is in two partly repetitious passages from volume two of his manuscript notes on the history of Westmorland and Cumberland.¹⁸ The relevant parts of these can be combined advantageously. Some significant topographical clues have been highlighted in italics. As he rode *south* from Selside during the summer of 1692, he "went down the Hill, *Crossing the Roade twixt Kendal & Penrith* to Skelsmer chapel Dedicated to . . . John Baptist . . . It is . . . fallne to decay, the walls thereof only Remanes, But som[e] yet liveing Remember it covered". He noted that St. John's "well springing at the *East [end] of it . . . Runs quite Through the chaple into the Highway which Leads from Garth Row to Kendall . . .* It was standing about 50 years agoe and the Rannell of the water was planked over and some seates Remaining in the Quire, But has not bin used in the memory of man". An informant (Thomas Gilpin of Skelsmergh Hall, a farmer aged seventy) recalled seeing "The Great Bible . . . And an Image of St. John with a Great Long beard". In marginal notes, Machell added "Raspberrys and maidenhair grow out of the walls" and he noted that, on the outside, it measured twelve yards long by seven and a half yards broad. Significantly he drew in the margin a small sketch of the chapel's ruins with the stream running through (Fig. 1a). His comments suggest that the chapel was still in use at the start of the Civil War, but that it may have been neglected for some time previously.

Machell stated: "No House ever Belonged to the chaplane *nor* [was there any] *chapel yard*" for burials. The latter remark directly contradicts those of Parson and White,¹⁹ the 1883 excursion report, and J. H. Palmer. Machell noted that "the People neglecting to repair their Chapel repaire to the Mother Ch[urch]".²⁰ He commented that "The Bellinghams Kept a Court Baron formerly . . . at the Chappel",²¹ but the decay had caused them to be held "at any of the tenants houses. The Manor House is Skelsmergh hall $\frac{1}{4}$ m[ile] *S[outh]*" of the chapel.²² Evidence of the chapel's use for property transactions exists in a deed of 24 February 1585/6 by which Edward Braban gave up his interest in Hutterbank (Otter Bank) to his brother Christopher. Two payments of £3 6s. 8d. were to be made at "St. Johns Chappell in Skelsmergh" at Pentecost and Martinmas and then Edward was to receive 50s. there every half-year during his life.²³

Although Machell underestimated the distance from the old chapel to Skelsmergh Hall,²⁴ his words show that it was north of the Hall (not south of it like the 1871 church, and lay *west* of the ancient high road to Scotland, on a lesser routeway leading from Garth Row to Kendal. The Skelsmergh Inclosure Award (1829) shows that from Otter Bank northwards to beyond Watchgate, the present A6 was a new alignment to achieve gentler gradients.²⁵ It was built in 1822 with steep new access roads to Garth Row.²⁶ The old road passed Otter Bank barn into what is now a large lay-by, up what has become a private road, to join the narrow road behind Strawberry Bank. It passed straight over Skelsmergh Fell to High Thorn and

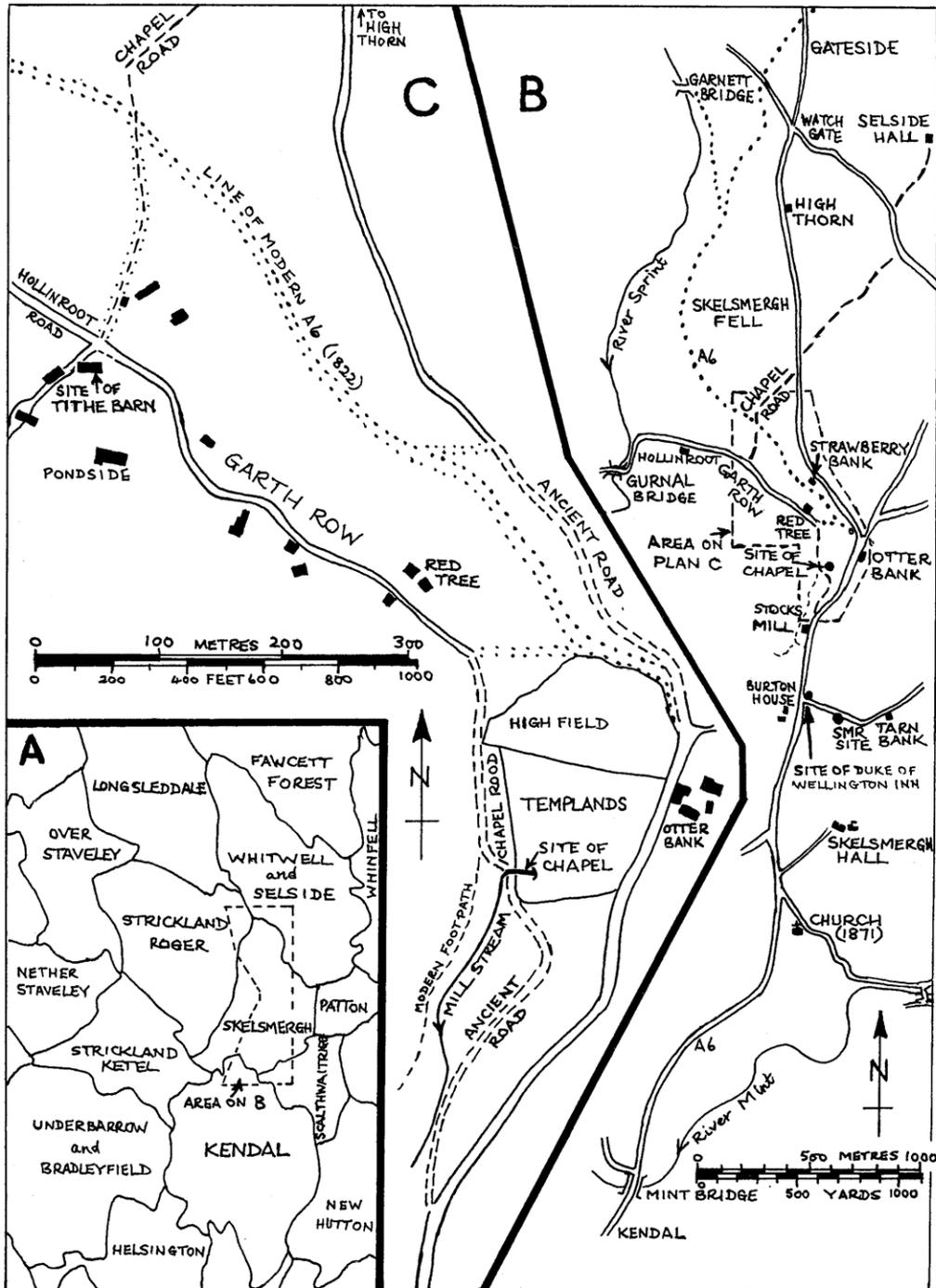


FIG. 2. (A) Parishes near Skelsmergh; (B) Locations near the main Kendal-Penrith road in Skelsmergh; (C) Features used to locate St. John's chapel from Machell and other sources.

Gateside hamlet. Access from that part of the road to Garth Row was by way of "Chapel Road", a four-foot-wide trackway leading directly from Selside. This was Machell's route. It met "Hollin Root Road" by the former tithe barn²⁷ whose site at SD 526 975 is now occupied by *Thornleigh*, a house built in about 1890-1910. This detail and the topography suggest that Machell's highway from Garth Row to Kendal did not join the Kendal-Penrith road until well below Otter Bank.

The 1836 Corn Rent map and schedule for Skelsmergh²⁸ show two very significant field names, Chapel Rood (plot 215) part of Red Tree farm in Garth Row, then owned by John Mount; and Templands (plot 216), a steeply sloping pasture which became part of Otter Bank farm in 1690.²⁹ Chapel Rood is a long, narrow, flat area on the east side of a footpath from near Red Tree to Stocks Mill. The path has been diverted west of the mill leat to avoid an old ford, which is now obstructed by an unhinged gate that assists only access to water for animals in adjacent fields. The old route is shown on the Corn Rent map. It crossed the ford to a well-defined terrace which runs round the eastern boundary of a flat field until it is obstructed by a later wall and hedge. Beyond this a well-graded track about six feet wide, with a man-made cross-section, leads to a narrow gate beside the A6 fifty yards north of Stocks Mill. Thus, the track avoided the steep rise to Skelsmergh Fell and was part of the road skirting south-west of it to Strickland Roger via Gurnal Bridge. It illustrates the narrow, often rough, Cumbrian roads reported by Celia Fiennes in 1698.³⁰

Close to Chapel Rood and about twenty yards east of the ford, at SD 5305 9708, the mill stream issues from the bottom of a cliff in a deep, tree-shrouded hollow eroded into the steeply sloping Templands. It flows west under the boundary wall, crosses the old road and then turns sharply south towards the mill. The site *exactly* matches Machell's topographical clues and is compatible with his sketch of the chapel. This suggests that the field name was corrupted from "Templelands". Plans of Otter Bank farm dated 1840 and 1895 actually label the site as "St. John's Well".³¹ Mr and Mrs Bowe of Otter Bank know the hollow by that name but were unaware of the associated chapel. It is about 750 yards north of the SMR's supposed site (Fig. 2b).

Site Survey (Fig. 3)

A preliminary survey of the hollow was undertaken in May 1997 to map it and search for possible remains of the chapel. Along the south side of the stream there are two short straight lengths of stonework which do not quite line in with each other. The detail between them is obscured by a large ash tree and undergrowth but the stones are sufficiently well set to have been part of an old building at least ten yards long. Most are only a single stone high with some gaps trampled by cattle seeking water, but in two places they are nearly two feet high. Between the two lengths of wall a low spread of stones slopes down northwards almost like a ramp and seems to have been carefully laid. It projects about a yard into the beck and, in plan, has angles of about 90 degrees at the east end and 45 degrees at the west end. Assessment of its form is hampered by vegetation. As the wall stones continue to within three yards of each other, over-stepping the flatter ends of the 'ramp', they probably join under the ash tree (Figs. 3 and 4). The north side of the beck has a

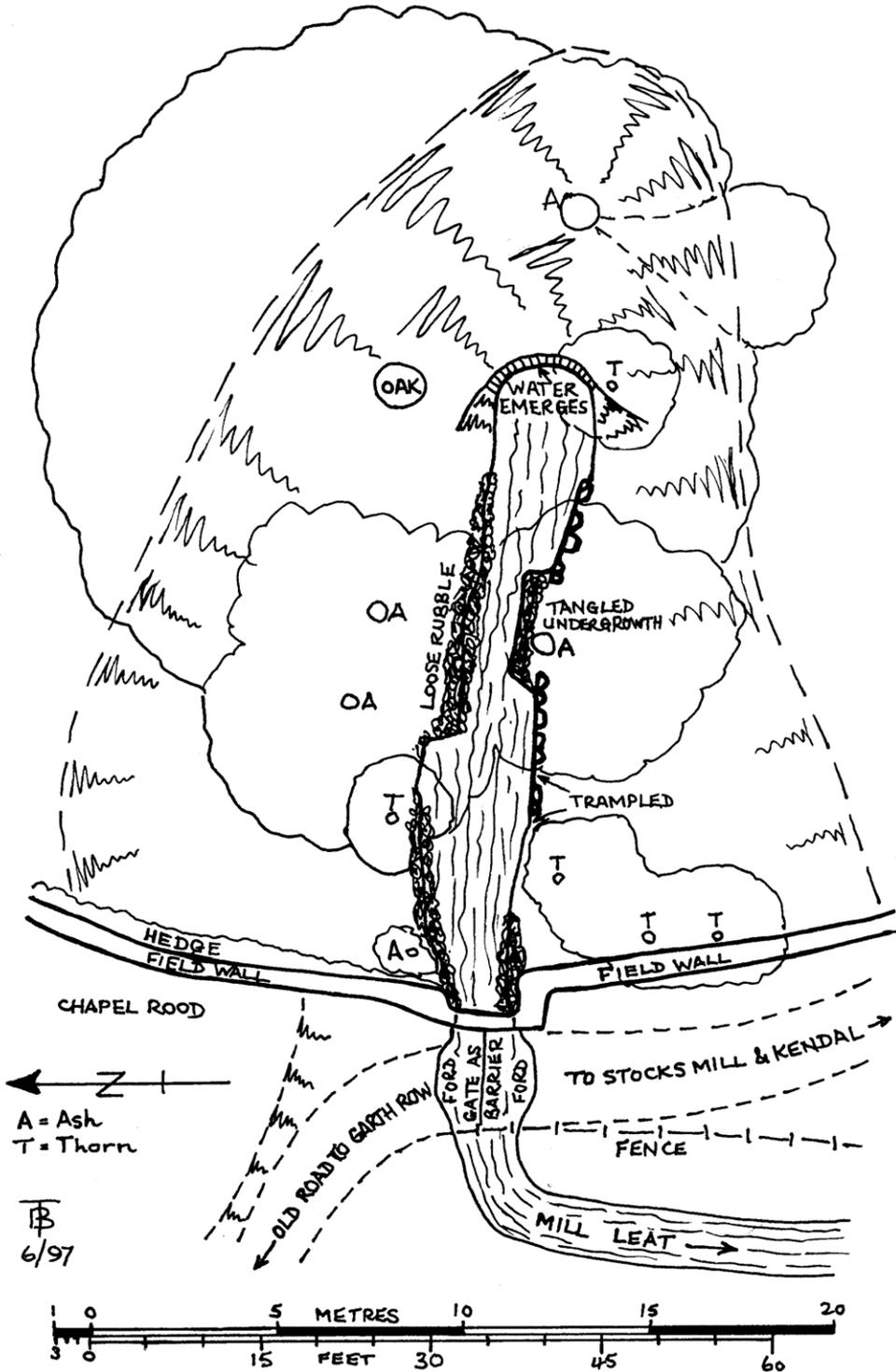


FIG. 3. Preliminary survey of St. John's chapel site, Skelsmergh.

spread of loose rubble but no clear sign of a wall, probably because of prolonged erosion.

Interpretation and Discussion (Figs. 1 and 4)

In view of the convincing evidence that this was the location of St. John's chapel, it seems likely that the stonework was part of that building. If so, and bearing in mind that Machell drew the chapel straddling the beck, the stones could represent the inner face of the chapel's underfloor structure on its south side. As the building was 7½ yards wide, the outer face of the south wall could be from a yard to about five yards south of the inner face depending on how centrally the chapel was set over the beck. If Machell's sketch was a good likeness, under two yards would be probable. As the chapel was twelve yards long, the existing work suggests that only the thickness of the two gables cannot be accounted for. This might help to fix the chapel's position along the beck to within fairly narrow limits. The end walls would be carried over the water on strong lintels or small arches as suggested by Machell's sketch. Perhaps undermining caused the gable walls to collapse before the sides.

Machell's sketch clearly shows a large square west window facing the old highway rather than an east window which would have been dominated by the bank above the spring. He showed a small window towards the west end of both side walls and a north door towards the east end. Behind the east end, Machell drew vegetation on a representation of a steep bank that he made straight rather than curving very sharply. After the building collapsed, many of the stones might have been taken on packhorses along the old road to Garth Row or Stocks Mill for re-use in buildings or field walls. No documents have been found to support this suggestion but, as there are no signs of an entrance into the Chapel site from the roadway, that boundary wall should post-date the chapel's demise and probably includes many of its stones.

The mis-alignment of the south wall lengths raises a possibility that, if the north wall of the channel was straight or a mirror image, the beck could be constricted by the tapering masonry. It probably flowed over part of the stone 'ramp' near the chapel's mid-length, then widened again thereby lowering its level under the nave. If several floorboards were removable the constriction could make it easier to dam the stream and raise the water level³² when needed for baptisms by partial immersion.³³ A ramp could ease access for the participants in a position between the quire and nave to meet the mutual needs of the congregation and priest. This would be compatible with the importance of baptism in Christian belief and rituals and with a common location for holy wells deduced by Taylor Page.

Support for this suggestion seems to be available in features of the Gosforth Holy Well, excavated in 1901.³⁴ It was enclosed by rectangular walls, a yard less in both length and width than St. John's chapel. The well was a basin of stonework, four feet across and 2½ feet deep which contained a spring of clear water. It was sited about half way along the building's length, mid-way between the long axis and the north wall and opposite to a south doorway. W. G. Collingwood observed that that building's symmetry suggested that it was purposely built to enclose the well and it was "of a kind not elsewhere known in our district".

He remarked that in Cumberland the only other well "to have been built in and roofed over in ancient times" was at Castle Sowerby but his information was vague.³⁵

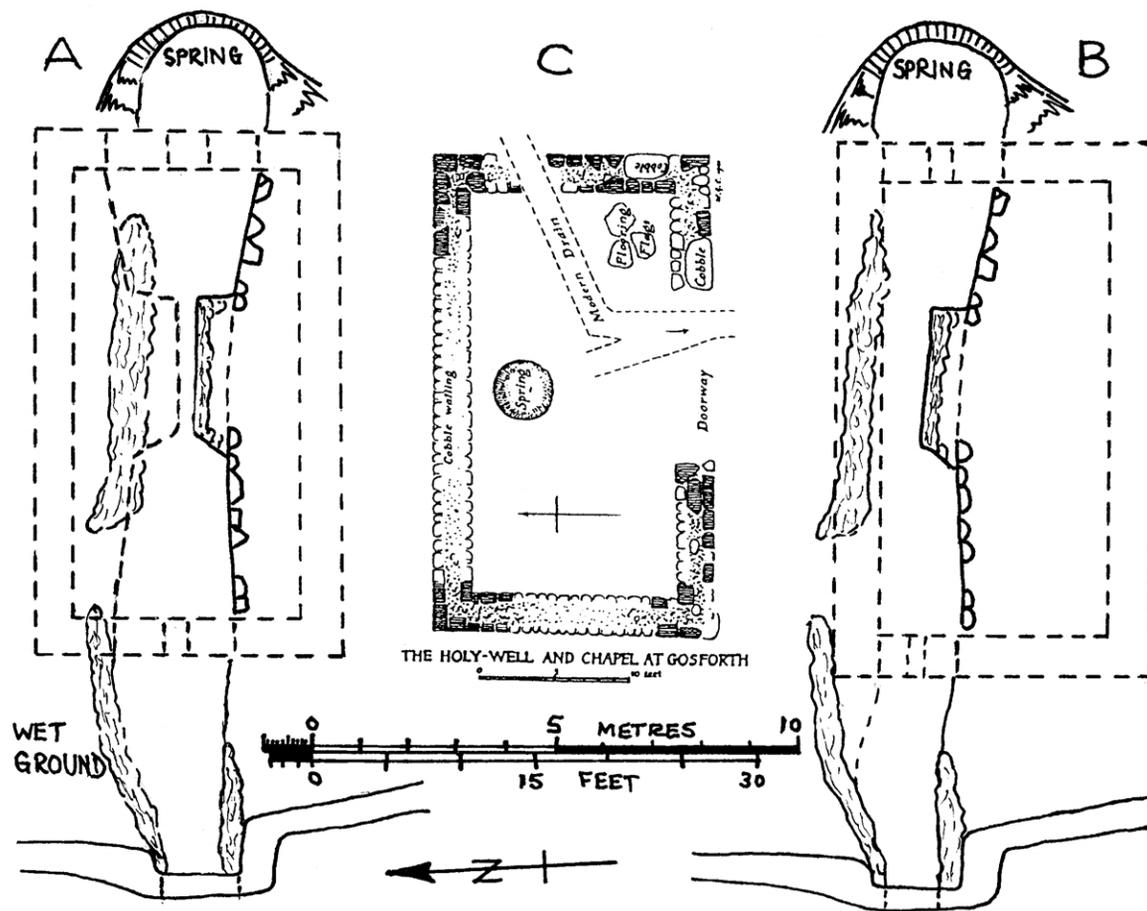


FIG. 4. Two possible suggestions for the position and arrangement of St. John's chapel. (A) With the chapel centred over the beck; (B) With the suggested baptismal area close to the mid-point of the north wall, as in the Gosforth Holy Well; (C) a plan of which has been reduced to the same scale. Excavation is needed to test the validity of these and other possibilities such as in Fig. 1.

It is sited in the vicarage garden about 200 yards from the church. J. Taylor Page judged it "much later" than the church and found it "completely out of use and so thickly overgrown that it is a struggle to uncover it".³⁶ He rejected it in favour of a hollow, near the church gate, into which a drain empties from the direction of the church. In July 1997 the drain was dry and the hollow's water stagnant. The hollow is not a spring but a soakaway for storm water which runs off the approach road.

Arrangements not unlike Skelsmergh exist elsewhere. For example, west of Keld chapel near Shap, in the garden behind Spout House, clear spring water flows from a pipe. After heavy rain the water overflows and runs down the garden path which leads to the spout from near the middle of the chapel's *west* gable. In 1899, Revd J. Whiteside reported "At the west end [of the chapel] is a well, now covered in, which may have been dug for the use of the chantry priest".³⁷ J. Taylor Page did not include Keld chapel in his study of holy wells but if the water flowed from under the chapel, it probably emerged at a narrow, blocked doorway in that gable. The unbonded joins inside are 3ft high and 3ft 10in apart. Outside, the jambs are only two feet apart and simply chamfered, the left jamb is represented by one stone, and the right jamb by two stones above floor level. All the work above these stones seems to have been rebuilt, probably as part of the chapel's conversion to domestic use before 1792.³⁸ The jambs are probably of the same age as those of the main north doorway, the quoins below eight feet high and the four side windows, three of which have a mason's mark . The building is said to be late fifteenth century.³⁹ Outside, the chapel is a yard longer but of the same width as St. John's, Skelsmergh.

At St. Oswald's church, Kirkoswald, a well lies outside the west gable wall. It is accessible through a hole in a sandstone slab set about a foot above the ground, and also through a doorway at the bottom of seven stone steps. Damp marks on the wall suggest that the water sometimes reaches about eighteen inches deep, but in July 1997 it was less than two inches deep. After dowsing the site, Taylor Page⁴⁰ noted that it is:

. . . fed from the waters of a spring that issues from the nearby mound on which stands the church bell tower. The church has quite clearly been built over the stream at the east end. The water runs the length of the church below its foundations to the present well house at the west end. . .

With water running the length of the church, there is an obvious parallel with Skelsmergh chapel. The church *Guide*⁴¹ outlines several phases of structural development starting about 1130 A.D. The clearest signs of that phase are in the bases of the chancel arch up to chancel floor level. Above this both the arch and chancel were rebuilt at various times, as were the nave and aisles. The difference in floor levels between the nave and chancel amounts to four full steps and is noticeably greater than most churches. This reflects a marked difference in original ground levels and might suggest that an even earlier structure reached only as far as the present chancel's west end, above the break of slope. A spring beneath the west wall could easily have been channelled westwards as the nave evolved across the lower ground.

At Caldbeck, about sixty yards west of St. Kentigern's church, a well is named after that saint. It is sited in the south bank of the river just west of a stone footbridge at NY 325 398. From a dowsing survey, Taylor Page decided that the water issues from a spring under the church itself. If so, it runs under a wide path

from which rainwater may also feed the well. The arrangement is sufficiently like the other examples to suggest that Skelsmergh chapel represents the clearest evidence for a group of churches and former chapels that were built over water courses which issue from their west end. At St. Michael's, Arthuret, a well is sited half way down an escarpment west of the church.⁴² Cleared and excavated about 1964, it is approached down six well-worn stone steps and is built of stone with an arched canopy over a basin. It was believed to date from 1609 when the church was built, but the spring must be ancient and is compatible with the evidence already discussed.

Claimed links between many presumed holy wells and an associated church are not all so convincing however. At Castle Sowerby the well in the vicarage garden is one such, while that close to the church gate should be dismissed. Similarly, claims for a chapel and well just behind Skelsmergh Hall cannot be substantiated by available evidence. The supposed well-house on the north side of the graveyard at St. Michael's, Skelton, is no more convincing. A water source was not seen and the building is used for graveyard maintenance. It might be argued that continuous use for other than the original purpose might destroy more clues than did the three centuries of total neglect at St. John's, Skelsmergh, but visits to other sites, such as St. Kentigern's church, Mungrisdale, also failed to find any trace of a well despite contrary claims.⁴³

It seems likely that strong religious beliefs and enthusiasm for folk traditions may encourage some to "discover" holy wells even when the evidence is distinctly tenuous. Thus, despite the stimulating work published by Taylor Page, a full sceptical study of all supposed holy wells in Cumbria is needed. Any classification must include the quality of proof, as well as detailed attention to the physical relationships between the well or spring and its associated church. That is beyond the scope of this article. A first step could be a full excavation of the Skelsmergh site by properly skilled and equipped archaeologists. As the land rises on both sides of the beck, any remains of the south wall's outer face might be exposed by fairly shallow digging, and its distance from the existing wall should depend on the former position of the chapel's centre line, as suggested in Figures 1 and 4. Since Machell stated the chapel's size, finding the south face should fix the north wall position, while an outer corner should decide the chapel's east-west extent. Alternatively the wet ground near the suggested north-west corner of the chapel might have hampered extension further west.

The existing stones suggest rubble walls of a quality perhaps no worse than at the old church at Farlam,⁴⁴ but their thickness is unknown. It is likely that nothing above the foundations has survived, but excavation should remove some uncertainties raised in this interpretation. Digging should have a minimal impact on the landscape and farming of the site as only some scrub and one ash tree would need to be removed. The incompatibility between Machell's comments and those of later writers on the presence of a burial ground near the chapel could be tested by a geophysical survey of Chapel Road, the most likely site. The tested quality of Machell's description seems to favour his statement.

Now that the correct chapel site has been found, the SMR must be amended and steps taken to preserve the site from further decay. Without Machell's detailed description, the site would have been almost impossible to identify. If his

information on other parts of Cumbria is as valuable, it is essential that the stalled project to transcribe, edit and publish all of his notes should be given highest priority by the Society.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Richard Hall for advice and encouragement, and to Margaret, my wife, for surveying assistance and constant support. Mr L. H. Thwaytes of Appleby gave helpful advice on the Machell and Hill manuscripts. Mr and Mrs Bowe of Otter Bank gave useful information and access to the chapel site. Mr and Mrs Bagot made relevant Levens Hall documents available and Sarah Clarke of Stonesfield deduced a convincing explanation of *vatni ausa*.

Notes and References

- ¹ W. T. McIntire, "The Holy Wells of Cumberland", *CW2*, xlv, 1-15 provides a useful summary of the background ideas drawn from R. C. Hope, *Legendary Lore of the Holy Wells of England* (1893). Hope's remarks on 26 wells in Cumberland were based on items in the *Penrith Observer* written by Revd J. Wilson of Dalston. Hope noted only two wells in Westmorland (Kirkby Stephen and Patterdale); plus Humphrey Head (Cartmel, Lancs.).
- ² *Gyldendals Ordbøker* (Oslo, 1961). In transcribing runic Norse to Roman script the 'i' after *vatn* was probably used to represent the dative 'for'. In modern Norwegian the 'a' ending of *ause* represents 'the' (advice from Sarah Clarke).
- ³ Hope, *op.cit.*, pp. xiii-xvi. He noted a Swedish superstition that spirits defeated by Christianity took refuge in rivers.
- ⁴ Summarized from J. Taylor Page, *Cumbrian Holy Wells* (1990), 4 (publ. North West Catholic History Soc., Wigan) quoting Bede, *History of the English Church and People* (London, 1896).
- ⁵ See, for example, W. T. McIntire, *op.cit.*
- ⁶ J. Taylor Page, *Cumbrian Holy Wells* (1990), *passim*.
- ⁷ The late Mr Page's research notes are now at Cumbria Record Office, Kendal (hereafter CROK), WDX/1196.
- ⁸ H. L. Widdup, *Christianity in Cumbria* (1981), 12-19.
- ⁹ J. M. Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback* (1963), 98-101, CWAAS, Extra Series, xix. Ewbank offers a very readable account of Machell's comments but, in coping with an often difficult text, made many more editorial changes than were necessary.
- ¹⁰ *CW1*, vi, 203; N & B, i, 123.
- ¹¹ CROK, WD/D/SK/1.
- ¹² By a lease of 25 August 1722, Crowle rented Skelsmergh Hall (formerly farmed by Thomas Hayton) to Benjamin Gilpin of Old Earth for nine years at £82 10s. a year. No specific repairs were mentioned, but Crowle retained just the Hall Chamber in which a bed was to be set up for his own use. (CROK,WD/D/SK/1).
- ¹³ E. Venables, "Dedications of . . . Chapels of the Modern Diocese of Carlisle", *CW1*, vii, 118-49, esp. 145.
- ¹⁴ J. F. Curwen, *Records of Kendale*, iii (1926), 140.
- ¹⁵ W. G. Collingwood and J. Rogers "Lost Churches in the Carlisle Diocese", *CW1*, xv, 288-302.
- ¹⁶ J. H. Palmer (Ed., W. T. McIntire), *Historic Farmhouses in and around Westmorland* (1944), 110.
- ¹⁷ SMR details kindly supplied by Bette Hopkins of the Planning Division at County Hall, Kendal.
- ¹⁸ CRO, Carlisle, Machell Mss., vol. ii, 119-20 and 406-10.
- ¹⁹ W. Parson and W. White, *Directory of Cumberland & Westmorland . . .* (1829), 654 seems to be the first source to claim the former existence of a burial ground at St. John's, but did not locate it clearly.
- ²⁰ Holy Trinity church, Kendal.
- ²¹ Before his death in 1580, Thomas Bellingham of Levens Hall bought nine tenements in Skelsmergh from James Leyburne. The Bellinghams retained them until 1688, when James Grahme bought them

- as part of the Levens estate. W. Farrer, *Records of Kendale*, i (1923), 158; R. S. Boumphrey, C. R. Hudleston and J. Hughes, *Armorial for Westmorland and Lonsdale* (1975), 139 CWAAS, Extra Series, xxi. Chapels were used for many secular purposes, as when merchants met in the old (1642) Whitehaven chapel to discuss proposals to extend the pier on 15 October 1678 and, after ringing the bell, sea captains met to decide whether to accept new freight rates for coal on 27 November 1684. CRO, Carlisle, D/Lons/W, Tickell letters box 2; 378 and box 4; 232.
- ²² In the original, Machell seems to have altered $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$.
- ²³ CROK, WD/AG (addnl), A.2586. The document's endorsement is wrongly dated 1595.
- ²⁴ It should have been three-quarters of a mile.
- ²⁵ CROK, WQR/I/24. Route confirmed by Thomas Jeffrey's *Map of Westmorland*, surveyed in 1768.
- ²⁶ B. P. Hindle, *Roads and Trackways of the Lake District* (1984), 143-5 and figs. 6.3 and 6.4. Drafts of several proposed road layouts are preserved in CROK, WD/Big, plans.
- ²⁷ Plot 41 measuring five perches was awarded to W. W. C. Wilson of Casterton Hall "in right of the messuage and tenement called the Tythe Barn" immediately south of plot 41.
- ²⁸ CROK, WQ/R/C/19.
- ²⁹ CROK, WD/AG (addnl) A.2586. Deed of 30 Jan. 1689/90 by which Edward Grayson of Garth Row sold Templands and High Field to Nicholas Braban for £26. The fields had been a part of Spout House farm in Garth Row, owned by Grayson's deceased father-in-law Allan Gilpin.
- ³⁰ *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (Futura, 1983), 221.
- ³¹ CROK, WD/AG/box 160. Both maps labelled the field as "Sink Lands", a name which would be more appropriate to "Low Bank" field 250 yards east of Otter Bank farmhouse where a stream disappears underground, suggestive of a limestone stratum or a fault in the underlying rocks.
- ³² As in preparing a sheep-dipping dub like that on Black Beck (NY 493 029) above Wads Howe, Longsleddale.
- ³³ Immersion whereby only part of the candidate's body was submerged in the water which was poured over the remainder. The practice still occurred "as late as the 16th century" and is "still permitted in the RC Church". F. L. Cross (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1957), 681.
- ³⁴ W. G. Collingwood, "Report on Excavations at the Holy Well, Gosforth", *CW2*, ii, 77-83. Also C. A. Parker, *The Gosforth District* (1904), 55-7 (Michael Moon repr., 1986).
- ³⁵ Based on R. C. Hope, *op. cit.*, (note 1) and T. Lees, "St. Kentigern and his dedications in Cumberland", *CW1*, vi, 334; later noted briefly in F. B. Swift, "The Parish and Church of Castle Sowerby", *CW2*, lxxiii, 171.
- ³⁶ Taylor Page, *op. cit.*, 12.
- ³⁷ J. Whiteside, "Keld Chantry", *CW1*, xv, 142-4.
- ³⁸ Title deeds show that domestic use lasted from before 1792, when Richard Lowis of Wetsleddale sold his dwelling house, peat house and garden "know[n] by the Name of the Chapel at the High End of Keld" to Ann Topping. In 1813 she sold to Jane Topping whose husband sold to Job Abba in 1843 when James Lambert was the tenant. In 1871 it was conveyed to a later Richard Lowis. (CROK, WDX/32).
- ³⁹ Brief history displayed in the chapel. Eventually the chapel was bought by Sir S. H. Scott who presented it to the National Trust in 1918. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments *Westmorland* (1936), 205a, judged the chapel as sixteenth century, perhaps based on the style of the east window.
- ⁴⁰ Taylor Page, *op. cit.*, 15.
- ⁴¹ Available at the church, price £1.
- ⁴² C. G. Bulman, "The Parish and Church of St. Michael, Arthuret", *CW2*, lxxvi, 187-8 and plate viii.
- ⁴³ In researching his manuscript study of about 140 "Holy Wells of Cumbria" (seen at CROK), Joseph Prow also failed to find the alleged well at Mungrisdale despite its inclusion by W. T. McIntire in "The Holy Wells of Cumberland", *CW2*, xlv, 1-15.
- ⁴⁴ I. Caruana, "Excavation on the Medieval Church of St. Thomas, Farlam", *CW2*, xcii, 126.

