

ART. III.—*Sizergh, No. 2.* By JOHN F. CURWEN.

*Given at Kendal, July 11th, 1888.*

**S**IZERGH stands in a pleasant situation on the road to Milnthorpe from Kendal, surrounded by a small but well-wooded park; the main turnpike road runs through the park as in the case of Levens, where the house is on one side of the road and the park on the other.

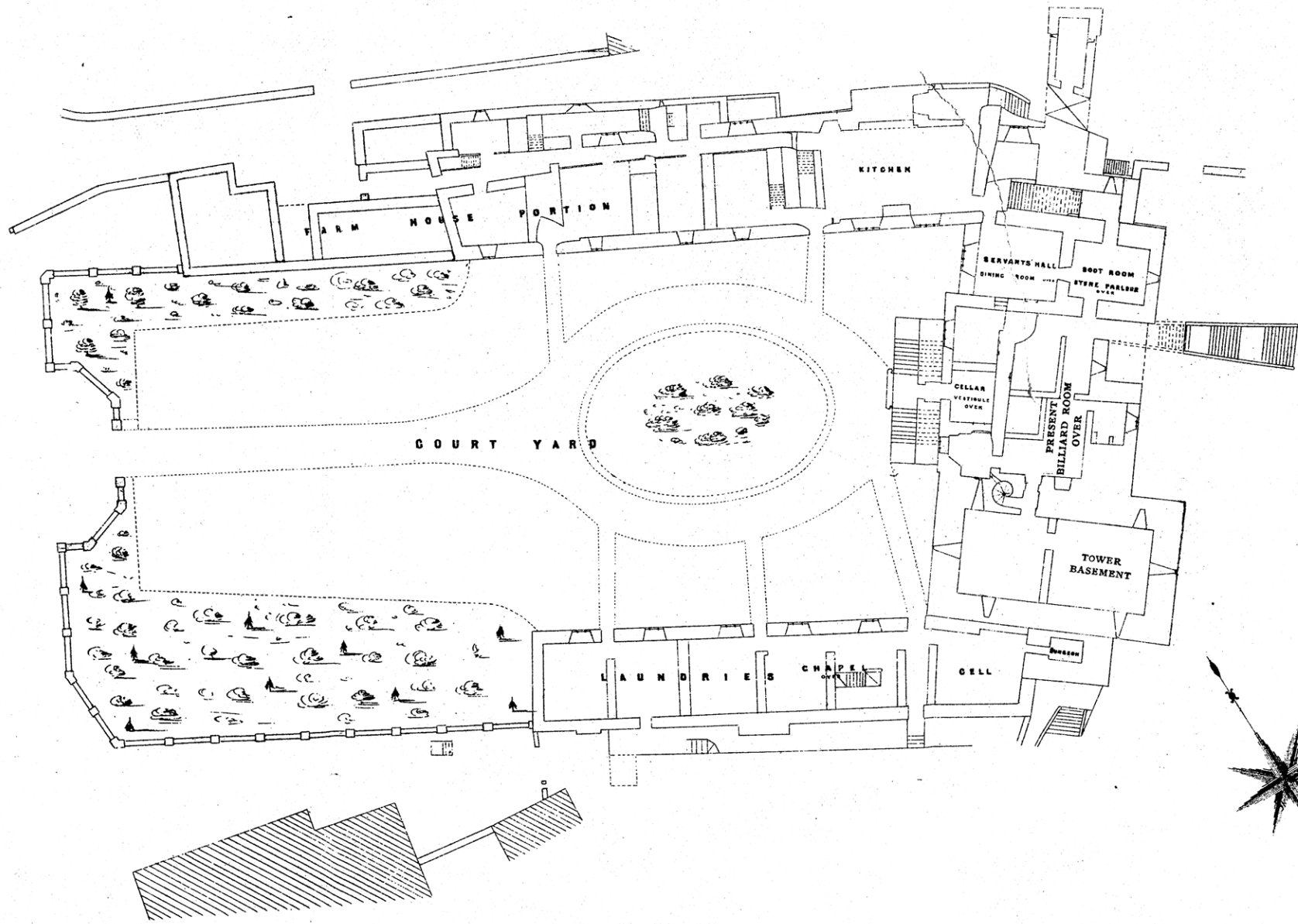
By far the oldest part of the building is the great tower, of the erection of which it is said no records remain, although it is generally attributed to Sir Walter Stirkland, in the reign of Edward III., when he procured from the King a licence "to enclose his wood and demesne lands on this estate and to make a park here." This supposition is supported by the architectural decorations corresponding exactly with those in use at that period, particularly the large sculptured shield of arms within an ornamental niche with pinacles and crockets on the N.W. side of the tower, bearing quarterly 1st and 4th billetee, a fess indented, D'Eincourt: 2nd and 3rd three escallop shells, Strickland.—The shield is represented in a pendant position, under a helmet crested with a full topped holly bush, which was first borne by Sir William Stirkland Knt., the son and heir of Sir Robert Stirkland, Knt, who in the reign of King John or Henry III. married Elizabeth the only daughter and heiress of Ralf D'Eincourt, and his wife Helen, the daughter and heiress of Anselm de Furness. This piece of sculpture is an early instance of the quartering of arms and a curious example of preference given to the heiress with whom the family had become allied, the arms of D'Eincourt being placed first, a circumstance which often occurred at that early period of heraldic art. Next in order of age

to

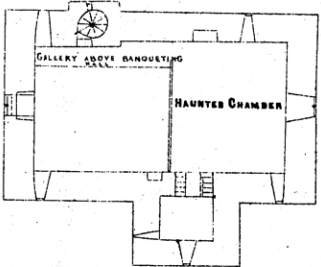
# Sizergh Castle

WESTMORLAND

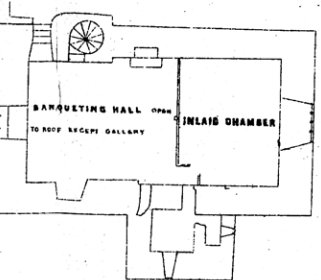
1888



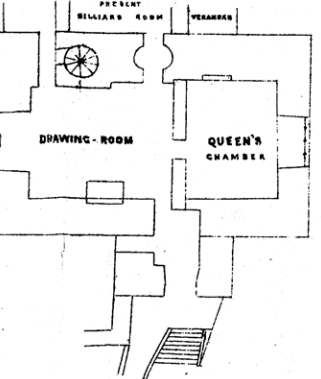
*Tower 3<sup>rd</sup> floor*



*Tower 2<sup>nd</sup> floor*

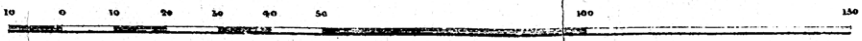


*Tower 1<sup>st</sup> floor*



*A. Hoggarth.  
Sunderby  
July 1888*

SCALE OF FEET



to this tower are the foundations and cellars beneath what was once the old hall, probably erected in the 15th century; and later still, say in 1558, were built, probably by Sir Walter the Cavalier, the Elizabethan wings which form two sides of the quadrangle.

The great tower is embattled and is of amazing strength, the walls and floors that divide the several stories being of great thickness and solidity, displaying a lavish use of materials in their construction; the beams are particularly remarkable in this respect being only some 15 inches apart and yet some from 9 to 13 inches wide by 12 inches deep. The tower measures 60 feet deep at its base by 39ft. 6in. wide, and with the exception of the sculptured arms and two trefoiled cusped windows adjoining, is absolutely devoid of string course, plinth, or ornament.

On the south west side of this main tower is a smaller one, which rises above the embattled parapet of the larger one and forms a turret. This turret measures 20ft. 6in. deep by 12 feet projection from the great tower: upon the lead flat roof is the date 1749, and also the S.

initials T. E. associated with the three Strickland escallops. This of course will refer to the date when the roof was renovated. The winding staircase to the top of the larger tower also terminates in an embattled turret on the N.E. angle. The other part of the hall is more modern and it would appear from West's abstracts of Sizergh deeds (1778) that Walter Strickland, before his death in 1569, had rebuilt all the house on the outside of the tower and modernized the tower windows. The first alterations made in the house after this seems to have been by Thomas Strickland, grandfather of the present squire. In 1778 he altered some windows, but at a later period the central portion adjoining the tower was taken down and a more commodious house built

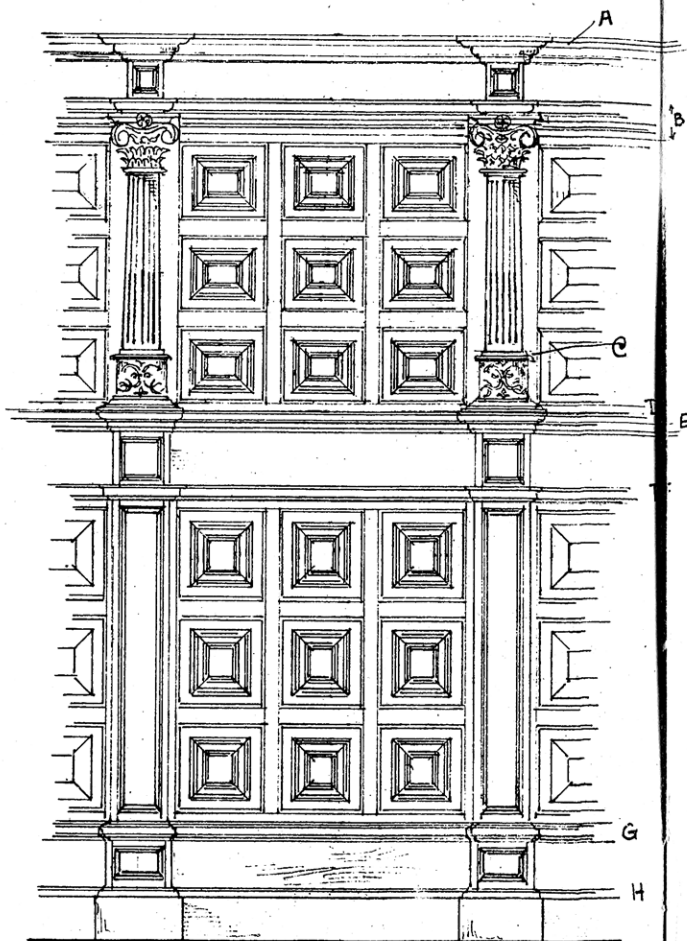
built on the old foundations. The general block to day consists of irregular buildings jumbled together without meaning or design, and yet has a most picturesque appearance. Grown gray with age and sheltered by trees of ancient growth, with numerous massive chimneys and beautifully open carved oak scroll-work barge boards in the many gables, the whole constitutes an excellent subject for the artist. It is not surprising when we read in his letters to Dr. Wharton, that the poet Thomas Gray, was powerfully impressed by its fine situation and antique appearance, when on his tour to the lakes—he visited Sizergh on Oct. 9th 1769.

Behind the main building is a large square courtyard, 180 feet from side to side and enclosed on three sides by the buildings of the mansion. Still further behind to the west are situated the farm buildings and stables where the old hen-runs and cock-fighting lofts are still preserved, relics of a now tabooed pastime.

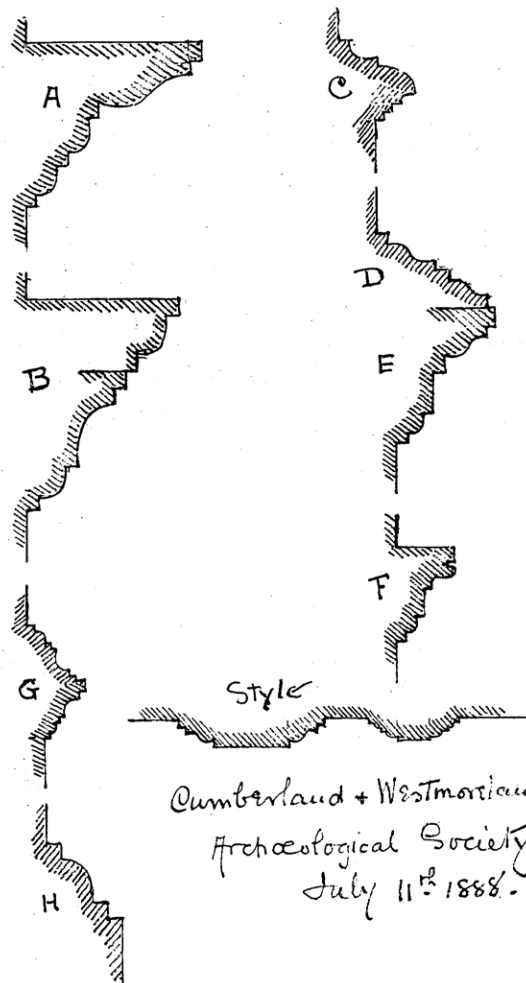
In the garden front a double flight of steps leads from the garden terrace to a balcony opening direct into the hall, and from here a very extended view to the southward is gained, which takes in a large range of varied scenery bounded by the distant ridges beyond Lancaster.

The interior is richly and elegantly furnished. There is scarcely a room of any importance in the hall that is not decorated with a rich chimney-piece, and does not contain a profusion of exceedingly curious carvings of the arms and quarterings of the Stricklands and their alliances, together with their supporters, the bull and the stag; the escallop shell, the heraldic badge of the family is frequently repeated with the motto "Sans Mal" and other devices, chiefly armorial. These carvings, all of which are of great merit and some of them of rare beauty and originality, are of the time of Queen Elizabeth, in whose reign Walter Strickland, esqre., the then owner, refitted the greater part of the rooms. Sizergh also possesses

Sizergh Castle Panelling in Drawing Room



12 0 1 2 3 4 5 FEET



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 INCHES

Cumberland + Westmorland  
Archæological Society.  
July 11<sup>th</sup> 1888.

J.F.C

possesses some of the very finest wainscoting work to be seen anywhere, all nearly of one period namely from 1563 to 1575, differing in pattern in every room, and in most wonderful preservation.

In the basement of the great tower are two capacious barrel-vaulted cellars: the external wall is 7 feet thick in the thinnest part and is pierced with six loop holes widely splayed within. These cellars are entered through a 6ft. 6in. thickness of wall by two massive low cavetto moulded circular headed doorways, rebated to receive the oaken doors, in the jambs of which there remain the holes for the old draw-bar bolt. Midway between these doors is another pointed arch doorway giving entrance to the circular stone staircase in the N.E. angle. The pointed doorway between the two cellars is worthy of notice for its beautifully moulded jambs and label mould. In one of these cellars there still remain some of the quaint old sack bottles bearing the Strickland shield of three escallops.

Mounting up through the circular stone staircase in the thickness of the wall a door opens on the first floor into the drawing room with the Queen's chamber behind it. This floor must originally have been the great Hall when the peel stood alone, but in later times about the 15th century, when the adjacent hall was built for better accommodation, it seems to have been divided by a cross wall resting upon a partition wall beneath, in order to form two private apartments for the lord of the manor.

The drawing room, as the apartment to the N.W. has now become, is remarkable for the richness of its ancient carved oak wainscoting with solid moulded styles and rails of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and also for its beautiful chimney of the *cinque cento* period. The jambs represent curiously carved caryatides bearing baskets of fruit and flowers upon their heads, and above, the woodwork is divided by pilasters into three panelled compartments

ments, the centre of which is occupied by a well executed carving of the Strickland quarterings bearing date 1564. The fireplace is, of recent date and out of harmony with the more ancient part above. The room is spoilt by its modern sash windows. The walls are adorned by many valuable portraits of the Stuarts, particularly those of James II and his Queen, and of Charles II, [said to be a Vandyck], given by James himself to the family. There hangs also on the walls the privy purse of Catherine Braganza, wife of Charles II.

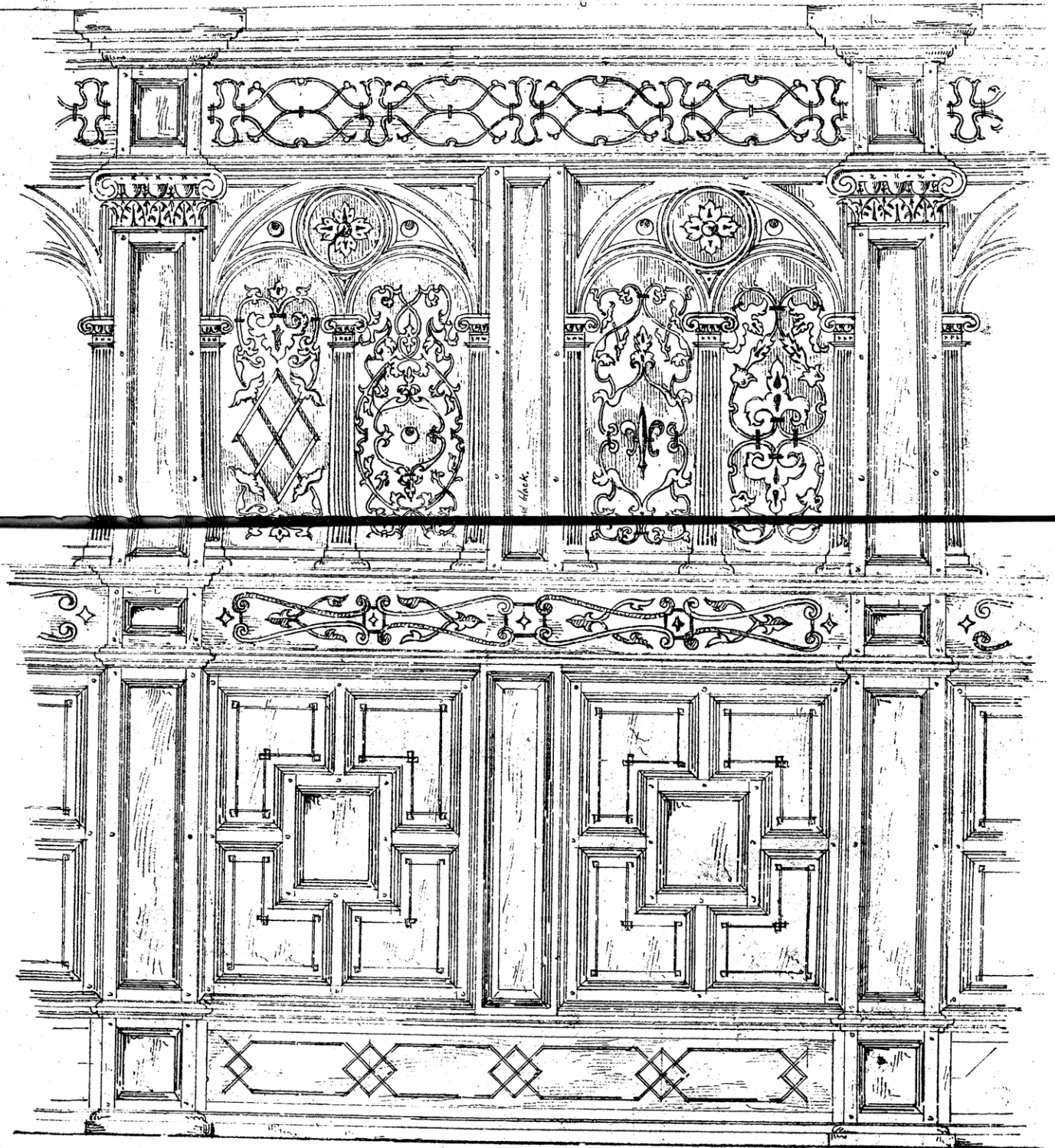
The Queen's Chamber is so named after Catherine Parr, Queen of Henry VIII, who is said to have resided here sometime after the King's death—probably on a visit—which is very possible, but the arms over the chimney piece, which are commonly supposed to commemorate this lady are those of Queen Elizabeth, with the red dragon as the supporter, with the date 1564(?), and with the motto "Vivat Regina." The ceiling is adorned with pendants, and the walls are hung with Gobelin tapestry of peculiar beauty and richness. This tapestry was taken from the Bishop's palace at Namur, about the end of the 17th century and given by Bishop Thomas Strickland who held that see, to the family.

Again ascending by the circular stone staircase a door opens on the second floor into what is now called the banqueting hall to the N.W., and beyond the inlaid room to the S.E. This so called banqueting room, which was no doubt really the Lord's Chamber, contains nothing of special interest, beyond its trefoiled cusped window, its large fire place of the Tudor period, and its oak floor fastened with wooden pegs. The ceiling and floor above have been taken down.

The "Inlaid Room," as it is called, contains some magnificent specimens of veneering in wood: the panels and wainscot work are with wonderful labour and exactness variegated with holly and fossil oak in curious arabesque

Sizemore Castle -  
 Bay in Panelling of Inlaid Chamber.

Enriched Plaster Ceiling.



Scale 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Feet

John F. Lewis. 1888.



besque devices ; they are untouched by decay, and the colours as fresh as when new. From West's Abstracts of Sizergh deeds (1778) it would seem that this room was finished after Alice Strickland's marriage with Sir Thomas Boynton *i.e.* *post* June 15, 1573, and *ante* March 31, 1574, and it is said that an apprentice served his time of seven years upon the work. The room is the only one of its kind found in this part of the country. The stucco ceiling is richly ornamented with geometrical moulded ribbing converging on a boss and pendant. The spaces between are filled in with coats of arms, fleur-de-lys, and acorn foliage. This room has a very beautiful paneled and canopied door, and an exceedingly massive and handsome bedstead, the detached pillars being quaintly carved and very elaborate, supporting a canopy with a shield of the Strickland and D'Eincourt arms, bearing date 1568.

Out of these two rooms lead two small apartments into the smaller tower. These are the garde-robe, and another room, where is shewn a trap door, vulgarly supposed to be a vertical drop into a dungeon beneath, an idea which breathes of strange stories of secret violence in the days when might was right.

Again, ascending the winding staircase a balcony above this banqueting hall is reached ; but from the existence on this level of a fireplace, a cusped window, and projecting corbels, it is evident that the whole space has been once floored. The balcony, which is modern, leads to the ghost chamber on the S.E. side of the tower, and immediately above the inlaid room. The real interest in this room lies in the bared and massive beams mentioned before which space the little distance from wall to wall, some 24 feet ; very curious too is the reveal sunk in the top of these joists for the parallel boarding. The roof, although comparatively modern, is a very good example of open timber work. The stone stair then continues up to the lead roof.

The

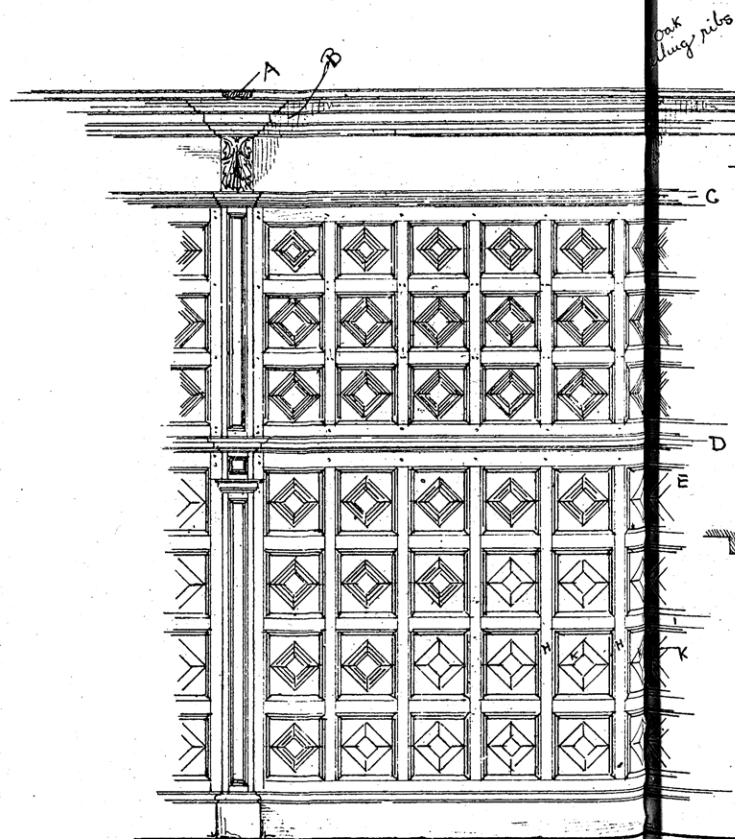
The servants' hall is situate in the more modern building on the ground floor, and has some very curious wainscoting; there is a pediment over the doorway into the boot room which is worthy of close attention. This boot room, measuring 19ft. by 14 ft., has a barrel-vaulted roof, and is surrounded by walls 5ft. 6in. in thickness, which may indicate in former days there once stood a small guard tower at this eastern end of the hall to defend the old low and pointed arched doorway that still exists and which may probably have been one of the principal entrances.

Above the servants' hall on the first floor and facing the N.W. is the dining room. This room which is both spacious and lofty has been beautifully ornamented with a rich ceiling of carved oak, in the usual stucco pattern, but it has been cruelly marred with whitewash between the ribbing. The walls are also covered with carved oak wainscot in a remarkable chaste and simple style. Here also is a carved oak chimney piece bearing the date 1567 and having on a shield quarterly 1st, Strickland, 2nd, D'Eincourt, 3rd, Neville with a mullet for difference, 4th, azure a cross botony, or, for Ward :—supporters, a stag collared and chained, and a bull with a mullet on his breast. Particular notice should also be taken of the beautiful sideboard in this room, and the many good family portraits on the walls. Leading out of the dining room is the smoking room, which is wainscoted with the linen pattern mould.

Behind the dining room, facing S.E., is the stone parlor, which has a fine stucco ceiling, and a fireplace of rich Westmorland marble, procured upon Mr. Strickland's estate, near Hawes Bridge. It also contains a few paintings, principally of horses. The floor is paved with black and white stone in diamond pattern.

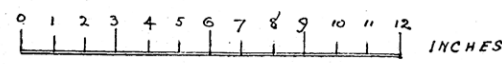
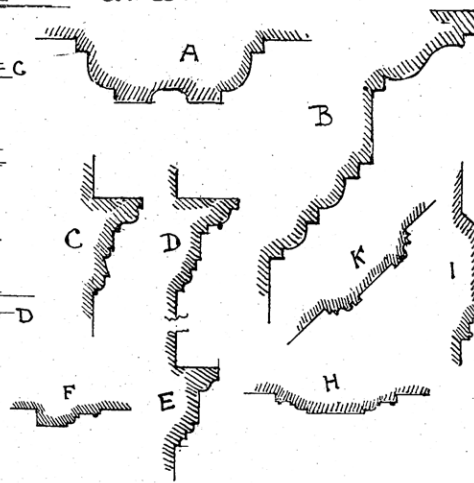
The billiard room is a fine room opening on to the balcony on the S.E. side and hung with some exceedingly valuable

Sizewh Castle - Panelling in Room.



Oak  
Dug ribs

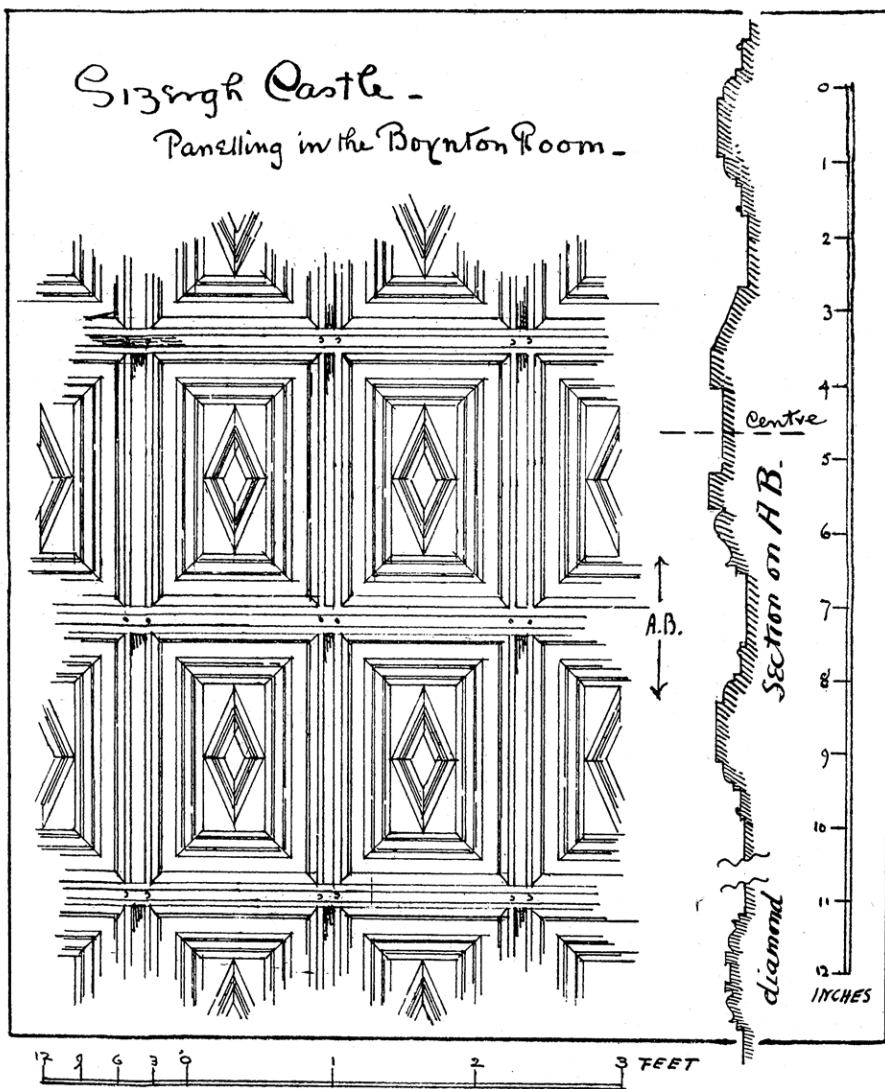
Cornice.



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Archaeological Society.  
July 11. 1888.  
J. F. C.

# Sizemgh Castle -

## Paneling in the Boynton Room -



valuable and ancient family portraits. In front of this, on the N.W. side, is the present vestibule, with its walls covered with gobelin tapestry in good preservation, probably sent as a present to the family from the Stuarts during their exile in France. The subjects represent the history of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and the grouping of the figures is remarkably good, and the whole work beautifully executed.

These two rooms now occupy the site of the old banqueting hall proper. This old hall was very unfortunately modernized and subdivided about the year 1770, and for a long time remained unfinished. Its original form however is described thus:—"The room extended to both fronts having nearly been a square of 40 feet. The principal entrance was at the east corner of the N.W. side and on the same side were two deep embayed windows, and opposite on the situation of the present door was a vast fireplace with a moulded stone arch."

Upstairs on the second floor the only two remaining rooms of any interest, are the Boynton room, named after Lady Alice Boynton, widow by 1st marriage of Sir Walter; and the Byndloss room; the former having some very good wainscoting, with diamonds in the centre of the panels, and a carved oak chimney piece filled in with figures and scrolls and a quartered shield bearing the date 1575; and the latter room a chimney piece brought from Borwick Hall bearing date 1620. In this room, too, should be noticed the marvellously beautiful holly bush carved in oak on the front of the bed.

In the west wing is the private chapel. The remainder of the wing, once called the barracks, is now used on the ground floor as a laundry, and upstairs as a carpenter's shop.

In the east wing are the three kitchens. No ancient baronial hall could be complete without its ample kitchen, and accordingly we find Sizergh in this respect well supplied.

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supplied. This important adjunct to hospitality is of large dimensions, measuring some 40 feet by 21 feet, with an enormous fireplace, in which no doubt was once placed an old fashioned and most capacious cooking apparatus, which has now given way to the modern range. Except a few rooms which are still retained by Mr. Strickland, and a schoolroom upstairs, this long wing is given over to the farm house.

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