

ART. XXI.—*Notes during the Restoration of Whicham Church.* By the Rev. W. SLATER SYKES, M.A.

Communicated at Kirkby Stephen, August 29th, 1901.

WHICHAM, *alias* Whitingham or Whittinghamton, is one of the three parishes on the Cumberland coast mentioned in Domesday Book, surveyed under Yorkshire; it was spelt Witinghā, and had four carucates.

The church is situated at the foot of Black Combe. On one side it is bounded by a narrow gill and on another by a deeply sunk road, together forming an angle protecting the back—the position giving an idea that at one time it may have been employed as a temporary hold in case of sudden raids, such as that in which the rectory was burnt by the Scots A.D. 1322.

The early importance of the place seems witnessed to by the fact that it lay upon the road called by Hutchinson “the High Street lying on an old Roman road.” This road crossed the valley about half-a-mile below the church near a point where at a later time salt-works* were erected.

It is stated that the church was given to St. Mary’s, York, thus:—

Whittingham, value £20. Patron Ab. of S. Mary’s, York. The Church of Whittingham was given by Reyner the Sewer to Ab. of S. Mary’s, York.—MS. Eb.

This statement is copied by Drake, also by Nicolson and Burn, and by Hutchinson, who call this man Reyner the Fewer or Fewar. John Denton, however, mentions another donor:—

* “(1) William the son of Hugh gave land in Millum adjoining the salt works; (2) Adam the brother of William, Lord of Millum, confirmed the donation of the Church of Millum, the salt works below Lairworth with 4 acres of arable land adjoining.”—West’s *Antiq. of Furness*, App. xi. (48) 62.

Godard de Millum, second Lord of Millum, gave the Churches of Butle and Whittingham and all the parishes between the river Eske and the Parish of Millum to the Abbey of S. Marie's of York.—An Accompt., &c., Tract Series C. & W. A. & A. S., p. 12.*

Hutchinson, quoting *Ecclesiastical Survey*, 26 Henry VIII., gives the value of the benefice as £8 13s. 11d.

Mr. Harper Gaythorpe, F.S.A. (Scot.), has kindly given

* Mr. W. N. Thompson of St. Bees kindly supplies the following notes on the grant of Witingam and Bothle:—

Godard's charter is as follows:—"Know ye that I have given and confirmed to God and the Abbey of St. Mary at York and the church of St. Bega the churches of Witingam and Bothle with the two manses and the whole of the parishes and tithes pertaining to the said churches for the souls of my father and mother and of all my ancestors and for the safety of my own soul and of my wife Matilda's and of the soul of my lord William, by whose advice and assent I have made this donation, to wit, on the day of the Dedication of the Church of St. Bega in the presence of lord Thurstin Archbishop of York,—specially, to provide lights in the said Church. Witnesses: Thurstin Archbishop, William son of Ranulf my lord, William Archdeacon [of Richmond?], Rinald my lord's chaplain, Rainer, Walther, Ketell, Odard, Richard, and many others."

This grant of Godard's is also mentioned in the charters of William Meschin and of his son Ranulf.

The date is in the time of Archbishop Thurstin and of William Meschin. Thurstin was archbishop from 1119 to 1139; and if William Meschin was dead by 1134, when his son Ranulf is said to have founded Calder Abbey, then the date of Godard's charter will be 1119-34.

Who this Godard was we learn from another charter, whereby William Corbeth and Dionisia his wife grant and confirm to God and St. Mary of York and the church of St. Bega and the monks therein the church of Witingham "sicut Godardus de Boieville eam eisdem donavit." He was, it would seem, the second lord of Millum.

The rectors of Whicham and Bootle would pay an annual pension to St. Bees, while the advowsons would belong to St. Mary's, York, to which St. Bees was a cell. Abbot Robert de Harpham (1184-89) fixed this pension in the case of Whicham at ten shillings, and we find that this was the amount being paid by that church at the time of the ecclesiastical survey of Henry VIII.

In the time of Abbot Clement (1161-84) the benefice of Whicham was in two medieties, one being held by Gil-Andreas of Witingham and the other by Richard, son of William Corbeth. They paid pensions of three and two shillings respectively. Later we find these medieties in the possession of Richard de Boivilla and Alan de Caupland. Alan was to pay five shillings a year. What Richard paid does not appear, but Alan, who had the reversion of the other mediety, was to pay a pension of ten shillings on coming into the whole.

The Corbeths appear to have been lords of Whicham about this period. A confirmation-charter of theirs has already been noticed, and in 1187, by "final concord" at Carlisle, Radulph Corbeth quitclaimed to the abbot of St. Mary's, York, and the prior and monks of St. Bees the advowson of the church of Hwittingham.

To the above notes by Mr. Thompson it may be added that Reiner the Sewer, steward or dapifer of Ranulph de Glanville, sheriff of Yorkshire, rendered the accounts for Westmorland in 1177 (*Pipe Rolls of Cumberland, &c.*, ed. Hodgson Hinde, p. 162), and that Reiner was named in the York MS., perhaps because he was better known to a York writer than Godard "dapifer."—ED.

me several interesting details from the Chester Diocesan Registry showing its value at later dates:—

ANSWERS TO INTERROGATORIES, 1705.

Whitcham al: Whittingham in the Deanery of Coupland, County of Cumberland and Dioc: of Chester, a Rectory. Is worth about £45 p. ā. Com: Anis: is Situate in a Village, in no Corporation or Markett Town; is more than two hundred miles distant from London.

per Rob: Crompton R^r. *ibid.* May 16. 1705.

BISHOP GASTRELL'S ACCOUNT, 1714.

Whicham al. Whittinghamton. Certif. £49. 13. 03. viz. Glebe 10^l. Tyth-Corn 21^l. wooll & Lamb 10^l. Hens & Geese & Surp: Fees 2^l. East. Dues 2^l 5^s. Prescrip. for Tyth-Corn above Beck & a Miln 2^l 3^s 9^d. Comp: for all Tyths of Whicham Hall 4^l 3^s 4^d. Prescrip. for Tyth-Corn of Compston Ground 3^s 4^d. Rent of Compston Tenem^t 3^s 4^d. Ded. pens. to St Bees 10^s. for Bread & wine 18^s. Syn: 1^s 4^d.

Certif. an 1717 Tyth Corn 20^l. East. Dues 1^l 10^s. Comp: for Tyths of Whicham Hall 4^l 5^s. Prescr. for Tyths above Beck & Miln 2^l 4^s. Ded. for Clerk's Wages 10^s. for Bread & Wine 1^l. Patron Mr. Pennington.

Whellan, in 1860, said it was worth £160, and there were 75 acres of glebe.

After the dissolution of the monasteries the patronage was held by Sir Hugh Askew, whose family belonged to Lacra in Millom. He presented a rector (name not given) in 1544, but after his death his widow married one of the Pennington's of Muncaster. So we find a Mr. Pennington patron in 1717. Later it was sold to Lord Lonsdale.

The church, which is dedicated to St. Mary, is a plain rectangular building about 64 feet long, of the usual west-coast style; devoid of proper chancel, and possessing a bell-gable instead of tower. The oldest architectural feature seems to be the south door. It is early Norman without ornamentation, but many of its stones are deeply grooved with marks which, I suppose, were made by sharpening arrows when archery was a village sport.

The church is built of the local stone, slate, interspersed

with sea cobbles, and the window mullions and coigns of St. Bees red stone. The mortar in places contains many fragments of pecten shells. In the east wall clay has been used instead of mortar.

The old windows have all disappeared, or if *in situ* are covered up with the rough cast with which the walls are heavily coated. On the south and west the old windows were replaced by very clumsy imitation of Gothic work, cut out of solid blocks of stone.

Several attempts have been made from time to time by way of improvement to the church:—

(1) No date. The church was ceiled, maybe for the sake of warmth; but it involved the blocking up of about two feet of the east (Tudor) window, which was done by shortening the mullions.

(2) There is a date 1702* cut upon one of the stones of the Norman doorway, which is supposed to indicate the date of the porch which, till this year, sheltered the approach to the church.

(3) In 1858 a north transept was added, new windows inserted, and several repairs made. The windows already referred to are probably indicated.

On another occasion the rector was anxious to possess a new vestry in place of the wooden screen in a corner which formerly served. But when he approached an influential parishioner on the subject, he was informed that the parish would prefer "a new priest instead."

There is also a note made in the vestry book about an alteration to the singing pew.

1822. Memo:—That in the year 1821 in consequence of an order made by the Bishop at his extraordinary Visitation of the Diocese in the summer of that year, the Singing Pew was removed from the North East corner of the Church to the North West corner. And that with my permission first obtained two neat pews were erected in the said North East corner entirely at their own expense and for their own accomodation by M^r Isaac Kirkbank of Cumstones Hall

* Mr. Gaythorpe reads this as 1704.

and M^r Thomas Brocklebank of Sylecroft both of whom till then had been destitute of such accomodation in Whicham Church.

Signed June 1822. Alison Steble.

Memo:—That in 1858 the two Pews above referred to were out of order and leave was given by the undersigned Rector to Mr. W. B. Walker of Sylecroft whose family occupied the former, and to M^r J. Kirkbank whose tenants with others were accomodated in the latter, to repair the same.

Signed 1858. Geo. Wilson, Rector.

In 1894 the Rev. W. P. Ingledow was appointed to the living, and ever since then has quietly and steadily been leading up to a thorough restoration of the church, under the supervision of Messrs. Austin and Paley.

The alterations are to include proper spacing for the sanctuary by removing the two pews already mentioned. A rearrangement of the seats will provide a better position for the pulpit, and for the organ and choir. The east window is to be heightened 18 inches, and the church new ceiled. A perpendicular window will be placed in the west end instead of the one of 1858, which is inserted to the west of the porch on the south wall; and a new porch and vestry are being built.

There have been very few discoveries of archæological interest, and it was a pity more excavation could not have been made inside the church, especially at the east end. The following is a list of what has been found:—

A mural decoration was discovered by the workmen under a layer of mortar and several coats of whitewash on

	leade hz (not into . . .)
	hz fr(om evil . . .)
	=====
	=====
	=====

the south wall between two windows. The colours were red and ochre and black, but so very dimly outlined that it would have been impossible to photograph them. It

1746.	instit.	William Smith (Scott ?)	List in Register.
1794.	„	Robert Scott	
1804.	„	James Satterthwaite	
1814.	„	Alison Steble	
1832.	„	Alex ^r Scott	
1847.	„	George Wilkinson	
1865.	„	John Mordaunt Lowther	
1874.	„	James Taylor	
1894.	„	W ^m Pelisier Ingledow.	

The date on the first stone has probably been recut. The registers give two entries :—

1701. Dec. 4. was buried John Compton.
 1702. Feb. 3 bur: Bridget wife of Robert Crompton, Rector.

I am inclined to prefer the latter, as the tradition connects the stones with rectors of Whicham. But the inscription is almost hopelessly defaced.

The third is Mr. Robert Crom . . . The register gives the date

1720. Jan 13. Robert Crompton, Minister, buried

This seems to be the more probable. The first named Robert Crompton is not given in the list written in the register book, and the second of the name is not in any other list that I have seen.

I may say in conclusion that, whilst the people of Whicham are to be congratulated in the possession of what will be a very comfortable and pretty place of worship, I think it is a matter of regret that more effort has not been made to examine a site which, in my opinion, would have been of great historic interest.