

ART. XXIII.—*The Holme Cultram Chapels.* By FRANCIS GRAINGER.

IN the autumn of 1899 the late Chancellor Ferguson suggested that in the following year some effort might be made to gather further information as to the exact site, and, if possible, by digging to trace the size and formation of these chapels. Unfortunately, the Chancellor's lamented death prevented the visit he purposed making to the lost sanctuaries of this district.

ST. ROCHE.

After consultation with Mr. T. H. Hodgson, F.S.A., it was decided to try what the spade would reveal at the most likely site—the chapel of St. Roche. There is very little evidence of this chapel in the parish records; it must have been ruined in the early part of the sixteenth century.

The dedication is given as 1327. The only mention made of this chapel in the parish documents is in a manuscript bearing the date 1580, entitled "Acredales letten by Mr John Chew and his fellow Deputie the xxvi^d daye of Januarie in the xxii^d yeare of Queene Elizabeth ano. 1580." The "acre-dales" were divided into four "rivings," named Rosecross, Gill, High Flatt, and Whinny Rigg; and extended over the whole of the hilly portion of the present townships of Holme Abbey and Holm St. Cuthbert's. They were in reality the common-field land of this district. In Rosecross "riving," which lay to the west, occur the following entries:—

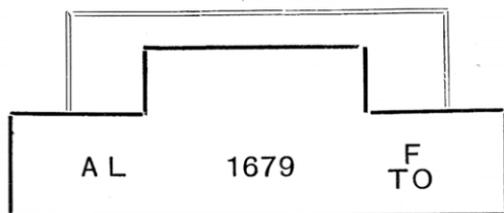
Robert Watson John Bigland Mathew Devis W^m Osburne one acre
of the Sunside of Stephen Ridall in God's house.
Rich Parker and Anth^o Challenor one acre in God's house Law.
Plasketlands and Stephen Ridall 2 acres at St Rooke's Cross.
Guddihills one acre in God's house next themselves.

God's-house-Law is a sandy elevation, dignified in this somewhat flat country by the name of "hill," and stands south-west of the field marked in the Ordnance Survey as the site of St Roche's Chapel. Plasketlands still cultivate their "acre-dale" as in the days of Good Queen Bess. The "dales" are, however, now enclosed; they are known by the numbers 689, 701, and 789, and measure 3.344 acres, 3.677 acres, and .569 respectively, bearing silent witness to the variable nature of the old English "acre." Mr. Pape, the owner of the nearest farmhouse at Goodyhills, had the information from his grandfather that about the end of the eighteenth century part of the chapel was then standing, somewhere near the hedge of No. 789, now known as the "Wilderness"—a piece of rough ground covered with bushes of blackthorn and wild apple trees, which tradition assigns as the burial ground of the chapel, although the Ordnance Survey marks the spot in the field adjoining to the west (No. 688 on the map).

In the beginning of September John Natrass, the sexton of St. Cuthbert's Church and an experienced drainer, began to dig in No. 701. Four trenches were dug running north and south and two long trenches crossing at right angles, practically covering a level piece of land which was thought a possible site for the chapel. Nothing was found here, the subsoil not having been at any time disturbed. Next, a trench was cut on the north of the traditional burial ground running east and west, this being crossed at intervals of 18ft. by cross trenches. Nothing whatever was brought to light until the last cross trench was being dug, when a series of rough sandstone blocks were met with about 6in. below the surface, running due north and south. The adjoining field into which the rubble foundation ran is considerably higher than the "Wilderness," owing to having been under the plough, and with a considerable rise to the north-west the rains of centuries have washed down the sandy soil,

so that the foundation was buried some two feet deep. The sandstone slabs continued for a distance of six feet ; further than that they could not be traced, neither with repeated searching could any other portion of the walls be discovered. Owing to the nature of the ground it seems probable that the fragment discovered is a portion of the east wall of the chapel. The distance from the west hedge, which runs north and south, is 18 feet. Prior to the enclosure of the commons in 1812, a piece of rough ground unenclosed led to the highway, which runs some two hundred yards from the site ; and, on the improvement and formation of this and other highways, some hundreds of tons of gravel were led from the field immediately adjoining. Possibly the evidences of the burial ground were thus removed, for a diligent search with the spade over the whole of the " Wilderness " gave no evidence that the subsoil had been disturbed for the purpose of interment.

The paucity of building-stone in Holme Cultram has contributed in no small degree to the demolition of any traces of the past. Plasketlands consisted at the dissolution of the monasteries (1538) of four tenements, situate about one mile west of St. Roche. One of these farm-houses is in ruins, and as the field in which the fragment of building was found belonged to this holding, I thought it possible that the stones of ruined St. Roche might be found there. The house bears on the lintel of the doorway, below a dripstone, the following inscription :—



Anthony Langcake owned this tenement in 1700, and as a family named Ostell held the adjoining tenement a few

years earlier, I hazard the guess that Anthony Langcake built this house at the date mentioned on his marriage with Frances Tordiff. Many of the doorways in the outbuildings are furnished with heavy lintels roughly carved. Did these come from St. Roche's? There are many large squared blocks of sandstone, which are unusual in buildings of this description; and I believe we may safely conclude they were brought here from the chapel. Only on one stone is there any sign of carving, but this is in such a mutilated condition that one can only guess as to its former use.

A few months before my visit, some boys, in turning over a stone trough which had been in use in the buildings, discovered that the trough had been carved out of the effigy of an ancient warrior. The fragment measures 3ft. 6in. long by 1ft. 4in. in breadth; the head and legs are missing, as is also the right arm. The left arm and thighs are covered with chain armour, and the sword belt is distinctly seen. The figure has originally been of life size, and is carved out of a piece of grey sandstone. Did this also come from the chapel, or has it been brought from the abbey? The latter was the opinion of the Rev. G. E. Gilbanks. I venture to think it came from the chapel. The distance from the abbey is six miles, and 230 years ago it would be no joke, with the boggy roads and rude carts of the day, hauling this block to its present site. St. Roche was evidently an unpretentious building, and it seems somewhat improbable that a soldier should find his tomb there.

It seems probable that the exact size of St. Roche's Chapel and its graveyard will never be exactly known. The name of the French saint, however, is effectually preserved in the modern church of St. Cuthbert's, which has been since its foundation commonly known as "Rouke's," and the name seems likely to endure although the building from which the name is derived has long ago disappeared.

The same reason which has obliterated this chapel holds good also of two other chapels in Holme Cultram.

ST. CUTHBERT'S.

About one and a half miles south of St. Roche's, situate half a mile south-west of the hamlet of New Cowper, are two fields numbered 1464 and 1446 (Ordnance Survey), and containing together over $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land. These are marked on the Ordnance and locally known as "Chapel Hill" or "Chapel Fields," and are of freehold tenure. The southernmost field, No. 1464, is marked in the Ordnance Survey as the site of St. Cuthbert's Chapel.

In the survey book, made at the dissolution of the monastery, occurs the following entry:—

Item. There is a chapel called St. Cuthbert's Chapel with two garths containing one acre in the occupation of Richard Stanley hermit there with a little moss thereunto belonging.

In the examination of witnesses as to the death of Abbot Irebye of Holm Cultram occurs the following passage:—

Itm Ryc Stanelaye says on his boke othe and ony man hurte dane Mathew Deveis or gaffe ony occacon to his dethe by y^e way of posonnyng y^t was dane Gawen Boradell becawse of grete desdeyn y^t he hadde to y^e said dane Mathew for his p^mcion whiche was agayne y^e said dane Gawen Boradell meynd and y^t y^e said Ryc Stanelaye takes oppon hym on his boke othe as a trewe cresten man may do.*

Gawen Boradell was not punished for what looks on the evidence a clear case of poisoning. On the other hand, powerful friends obtained him the abbot's chair. It is not surprising that Stanley thought himself better as a hermit at St. Cuthbert's Chapel than under Abbot Boradell at the abbey.

* S.P., Henry VIII., vol. vi., 988.

The site is well chosen for a hermit's cell. Stanley's dwelling lies on the outskirts of the parish, to the north-west stretches a flat range of country now drained; but three hundred years ago an impassible quagmire stretched right away to the Solway. The "little moss" where Stanley dug his peats lies in front of the chapel; it is still of freehold tenure, and the influence of cheap foreign imports has again relegated the surface to its original ling. In 1572 Stanley seems to have been gathered to his fathers, for St. Cuthbert's Chapel is included in a number of other items known as "the cottage rents," and so continued until 1649. The rental 4s. is still paid as a fee-farm rent by the present holder of the New Cowper tenement, of which this forms a part.

I believe the site is correctly marked in the Ordnance Survey. About midway between the east and west hedges, and near to the north fence, a large number of freestone chippings seem to mark the site. Although the cultivation of 200 years must have obliterated all trace of the foundations, in the farmhouse of which Chapelhill forms a part I found abundant evidence of ancient stones. There are three massive stone lintels to the doorway of the house and other buildings carved in the same manner as those at Plasketlands. There is an example of the same class of doorhead at Abbey Town. In the passage separating the dwelling-house from the byre is an ancient door of oak, the boards of which are fastened to the battens with a series of oaken pins with large square heads. The upper and middle rows are almost perfect, but the lower row has disappeared. The size is 5ft. long by 3ft. 2in. broad, and would fit the large stone doorheads already mentioned. Probably this door came from St. Cuthbert's. Near the entrance to the farm kitchen, built into the wall about eight feet from the ground, is the Chambers' coat of arms—three cinquefoils and the chain boar. The stone measures 17in. in height by 24in. in breadth. If this came from the chapel it would seem to

indicate that Abbot Chamber's building was not confined to the abbey, but extended to St. Cuthbert's, and possibly to the other buildings in his manor.

In the yard of the farm is a carved sandstone block—I think a holy-water stoup. It measures $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. on each side, and is 7 in. in depth. The edges are chamfered, and the cavity, which is round, is about 5 in. in depth. Lying near this stone is another of grey sandstone, which also seems to have been used for ecclesiastical purposes. This chapel, no doubt, gave the name to the “quarter” or “township.”

In the *Inventory of Church Goods* in 1552, printed by the Rev. H. Whitehead, occurs the following entry:—

Chapell of St Cuthbert.
It^m on vestment on gret
bell one litell bell.

It seems evident from this entry that Richard Stanley performed the offices of the church, at all events up to the death of Holme Cultram's first rector.

ST. JOHN'S.

Skinburness Chapel was situate on the neck of land which terminates in Grunepoint, the site being marked on the Ordnance Survey on field No. 14—the fourth field in number from the Grunepoint. The site is now under the plough, and has been for generations. There are, however, several chippings of sandstone to be seen in the south-west corner of this enclosure, and possibly the spade might discover some trace of the foundations. Chancellor Ferguson told me that certain excavations had been made here, but that operations were abandoned because of the large number of interments met with, the burial ground having probably been used long after the chapel had ceased to exist.

This chapel was granted by Bishop Halton in 1301, closely following on the grant of Edward I. to the abbot

of Holme of Skinburness as a free borough. The disaster which befell Edward's seaport some two years later put an end to the short-lived prosperity of Skinburness, and it is doubtful if the chapel was much used except for purposes of burial after the church of Kirkby John (Newton Arlosh) was built to replace it.

Although in the sixteenth century the chapel burial ground was part of the demesne lands of the abbey, it is now of copyhold tenure, and is attached to the farm now occupied by Mr. Hill and belonging to the Skelton family. In a lease of July 11th, 24 Elizabeth (1582), to John Tiffen of various properties, granted by letters patent of January 4th, 9 Elizabeth (1567), to Christopher Mathew, the following paragraph occurs:—

Ac totam illam capellam vocatam Sainct Johnes Chappel de Groyne, ac unam acram terre eidem spectantem annal. redd. viginti denarios."

In the list of the watches on the West Marches made by Lord Wharton in 6th year of Edward VI., 1553, as given in Hutchinson, the entry occurs:—

Skyburneyes and Pellathow to keep watch from the Estcote to St John's of the *Green* (evidently a printer's error for *Groyne*).

St. John's, Newton Arlosh, has had a more fortunate career than the early dedication at Skinburness. The privileges granted to Skinburness three years earlier were conferred on Kirkby Joan—the name being changed to Newtown-in-Arlosh, the Newtown on the Marsh; the grant from Bishop Halton describing the new site as in the "fields of Arlosh." The rights conferred on the new seaport seem never to have been exercised; probably the estuary commenced to silt up about this date, and with the death of Edward the importance of this district as a base for Scottish expeditions seems to have terminated.

Soon after the great Plantagenet's death the establishing of St. John's, Newton Arlosh, brought the Holme

within the jurisdiction of the See of Carlisle; and in return the abbot of Holme was granted "all tithes great and small predial and personal"—the excuse being that the abbot "was so impoverished by hostile invasions and robbery of Scotts that you may not till your lands after the wonted fashion, but rather urgent need doth compel you to give them up to be tilled of others." The sacred edifice, therefore, was built to serve both as a place of worship and castle of defence. The salary assigned to the "secular minister" was to be four pounds, out of which the bishop was to be paid half a mark as an acknowledgment or cathedraticum—"one half on the next convocation day of Allerdale after the Passover and the second portion on the next convocation after the Feast of St. Michael," and forty pence was to go to the archdeacon for procurations. The tithes then granted proved a source of trouble—first, between the abbot and his tenantry, ending in the tithe being added to the rental, the lands being still known as "cursed lands;" and, after the dissolution of the monastery, between the tenants and the tithe farmers—the tenants affirming in 1602 "that the chapel or church of St. John was never made use of by the abbot nor by any since, but only for a show to deceive the people that they might have tithe corn and hay."

It is probable that service was performed here, at all events, until the death of the first rector, for in the *Inventory of Church Goods* in 1552 there occurs the following:—

Chapell of Newton
 It^m on chalis of silv^r
 1j vestements
 a small bell, a sacryng bell.

Perhaps the chalice is one of those now preserved at Holme Cultram. The neglect of the latter part of the sixteenth century left its marks on St. John's. The tenantry allege in 1610:—

That 20 years since the chapel of Newton Arlosh did decay; the door stood open; sheep lay in it. About 15 years since the roof fell down, and the lead was taken away by some of the tenants and converted into saltpans, and within this memory nothing but the walls of the chapel of Skinburness did stand.

The burial ground continued to be used by the residents near the church, and in 1844 the church was restored and resumed its present appearance. As this was the first parish church in the district, the manor is described in Quarter Session minutes as "Abbey Holme, *alias* Holme Cultram, *alias* Newton Arlosh."

The case of the tenants in the tithe suit of 1610 affirms that "this parish is 10 miles long, 5 miles broad, greatly inhabited; had four chapels—Newton Arlosh, Wolsty, Skinburness, and Saint Cuthbert's, and the abbots' parsons always for these tithes maintaineth these and divers services in them on Sundays and Holy-days, and taught their children." In another document:—"These chapels are severally 3 miles from Holme Cultram Church, and always the abbots maintained chaplains to say divine service in them, and Newton Arlosh was a parish church."

WOLSTY CHAPEL.

The fourth chapel mentioned in this document is that of Wolsty. No other mention is made of this building, which in all probability was inside the walls of the castle. No mention is made of the chapel in the Survey of 1572, although "the hall, the chamber at the end thereof, the evidence house, the kitchen, peathouse, byer, and stable" are mentioned. Probably the same reason which led to the ruin of St. Cuthbert's and St. John's Chapel, and the decay of the abbey itself—the want of proper supervision from the distant Oxford University and the decline in religious life, which was characteristic of this period—rendered the question of the repairs of the chapels a matter in which neither Lord Scrope nor the tenants felt

disposed to trouble themselves. The spade may possibly in the future trace the foundations of this chapel.

ST. CHRISTIAN'S.

The "Rental" of 1538 contains the following entry :—

Item.—There is a chapel called St. Christian's Chapel with a little garth containing half an acre of ground now Hugh Stamper keepeth the same."

Rent—Nil.

Hugh figures in the list of witnesses to be called against Abbot Carter for his complicity in the Pilgrimage of Grace.* He and his son after him seem to have occupied the position of bailiff, and possibly the chapel was his perquisite. There is no other mention of this building in any parish document, but in 1649, in the description of the Grange of Sandenhouse, which is now divided into the farms of Kingsidehill, Sandenhouse, and the Wheat Sheaf Inn, Abbey Town, mention is made of a Chapel Close, Chapel Lane, and Chapel Garth. As there is no mention of St. Christian's Chapel, I venture the opinion that it stood in or near Chapel Garth. This garth still exists, and is numbered 180 Ordnance Survey, the area being .505 acres. I think the chapel probably stood in the south-east corner of the field numbered 162, just north of the garth, which adjoins the tidal waters of the Waver, and is bounded on the north by a small rivulet which here empties into the river. A public footway, which leads from the hamlet of Brownrigg to the church, adjoins the site, and was known at the Reformation as Spellgate Lane. It seems a wild desolate spot to select for a chapel, and it would, in the unsettled days of border warfare, be exposed to the Scottish raiders.

* S.P., Henry VIII., vol. xii., part i., 1259, ii.

ST. THOMAS'.

One other chapel is mentioned in the manor papers. In the lease previously mentioned the entry occurs :—

Ac unam aliam chappellam vocatam Sainct Thomas Chappell, unum hortum, unam domum vocatam le Bedhowse, et unum stabulum situatum et existentem prope Molendinum ibidem, annal. redd. sexdecem denarios.

A similar entry occurs in the " Rental " of 1538, and in 1649 the entry :—

St. Thomas Chapel.—All that demolished Chappel called St. Thomas Chapell scituate in Abbeytown now in the tenure of Peter Bell and a little backside.

1 acre. Rent 3/4.

The Bedehouse.—All that house called the Bedehouse with a backside thereunto belonging, containing by estimation one perch, scituate in the Abbey Town, now or late in the tenure of W^m Chambers, and a little stable scituate near the Abbey Mill in the tenure of John Cormalt. Acre $\frac{1}{10}$. Rent 6/8.

After 1649 these entries cease in the manor rolls, and the rental seems to be now paid by the Earl of Lonsdale. The abbey mill was situate on the left of the road leading to the Abbey House Farm, and continued to be used as such until the drainage schemes for deepening the Crummock and Waver rivers 50 years ago tapped the source which supplied the mill race.

In the plan of Furness Abbey a chapel is shown at the extreme south of the monastic buildings, and the dedication to St. Thomas would apparently indicate that the building here adjoined the infirmary ; if it existed on the Abbey House Farm all trace seems to be lost. As it adjoined the mill, it is possible that a piece of ruined wall on the right of the road to Abbey House, with the original stones still *in situ*, may be the remains of St. Thomas' or the bedehouse. It is scarcely likely that the chapel stood nearer the abbey itself, for the millhouse stood north of

the mill, and the house adjoining, which, on the same plan as at Furness, would occupy the site of the dorter of lay brothers, bears the date on the doorway 1604, or nearly half a century before the last entry in the parish papers. St. Thomas' Chapel was thought worthy of the yearly rental of sixteen pence. An exhaustive search in the vicinity of the abbey might bring to light the exact site of St. Thomas', but the continual use of the monastic buildings as a quarry for 350 years renders any important discoveries somewhat doubtful. The farmhouse and buildings at Abbey House are of comparatively modern construction, and are largely built out of the remains of the abbey. Probably the stones of St. Thomas' dedication will be found in the somewhat ignoble position of sheltering the farmer's live stock.
