

ART. XI.—*Royal Arms in the churches of the Diocese of Carlisle.* By B. L. THOMPSON, F.S.A.

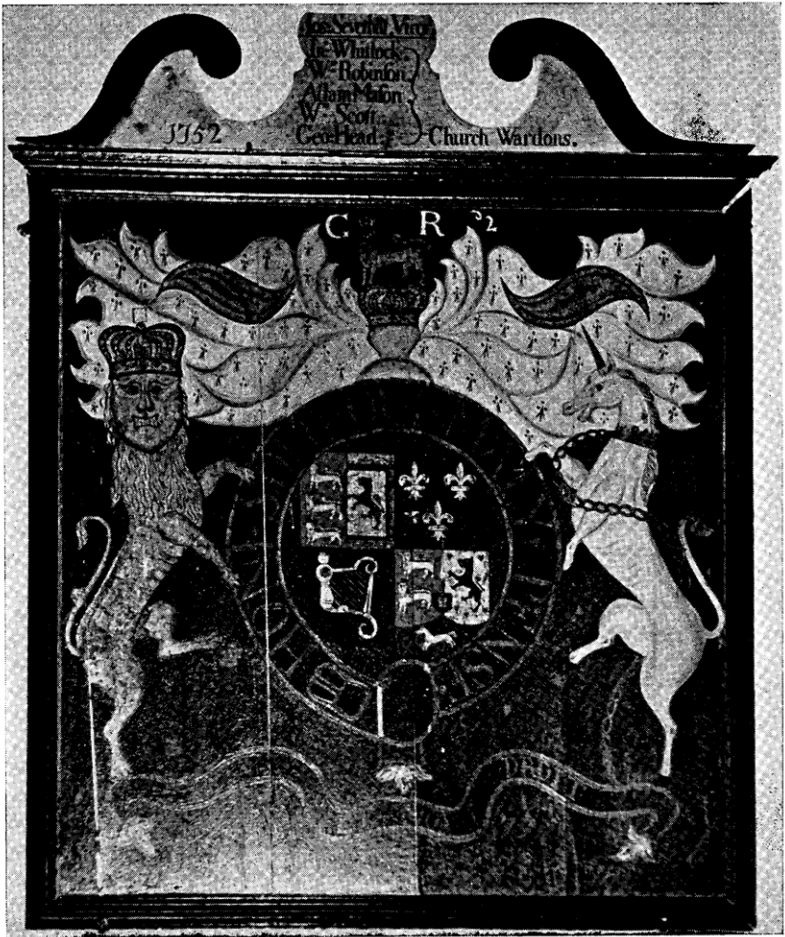
Read at Carlisle, September 1st, 1966.

THE Royal Arms are displayed in a number of our churches and, while adorning the buildings in which they are found, form an interesting study for the antiquary. In material, style and artistic merit they vary considerably, but where the achievement is complete in all its proper details it may be a notable piece of work.

In 1965 there were seventy-two examples of the Royal Arms, of various periods, displayed in seventy-one churches of the present Diocese of Carlisle. (The church of St Nicholas, Whitehaven, has two of the same reign.) The Diocese coincides almost exactly with the territory covered by our Society, except that it does not include two parishes in Cumberland — Alston and Nenthead — which are in the Diocese of Newcastle, and two parishes in Westmorland — Firbank and Killington — which are in the Diocese of Bradford. In addition to the seventy-two examples (to be found in List I) there were also seven examples no longer displayed in the technical sense but still in existence in churches or church halls. (List III.) At least another dozen churches are known to have had Royal Arms formerly (List IV) and this number could doubtless be increased if a diligent search of churchwardens' accounts were made.

No general article on this subject has appeared in our *Transactions* although our neighbour, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, has published a list of thirty-eight for the counties of Northumberland and Durham,¹ and kindred societies elsewhere have done

¹ C. H. Hunter Blair and L. C. Evetts: *Royal armorials in the parish churches of Northumberland and Durham* (*Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4 xxxi).



The Royal arms in Castle Sowerby church.

likewise for their own districts, notably Gloucestershire.² There are forty Royal Arms in the churches of Cumberland, twenty in Westmorland and twelve in Lancashire North of the Sands. We cannot boast of any very early examples or of many specially decorative ones, but some are of unusual interest.

The original reason for having the Royal Arms in a place of worship of the Church of England is sometimes debated and often misunderstood. It should, perhaps, be regarded as an expression of loyalty to the sovereign rather than an acknowledgement of royal supremacy. The custom seems to have begun in the middle of the 16th century during the reign of Henry VIII and continued more or less ever since, although few are to be found of later date than the reign of Victoria. It is legally permissible to display the Royal Arms in a church without the specific consent of the Queen (elsewhere than in a church this has to be obtained, and is done through the Home Office); the only requirement is the normal faculty from the Chancellor of the Diocese.

The earliest examples we have in the Diocese of Carlisle are of the reign of Charles II, soon after the Restoration, at which time there was a definite order for their setting up. There are two or three interesting ones of the time of William and Mary, and four of the reign of Anne. Not surprisingly there are many with the three Hanoverian versions of the Royal Arms. In the reign of Victoria the products are artistically poor, and the practice of having them at all tends to die out. There is one recent Royal Arms, at Shap, commemorating in glass the accession of her present Majesty.

Mostly, the material used is wood (wood panels, framed, often with a curved top, or wood carved in relief); less commonly canvas, framed; occasionally moulded plaster; a singleton at the church of St John,

² Professor E. Fawcett: *Royal Arms in Gloucestershire Churches* (Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, vol. 55, 1933).

Workington, is embroidered in cross-stitch. In size they do not necessarily correspond with the size of the church; the largest may be as much as seven feet by five, the smallest perhaps only two foot square. The quality of the work is sometimes not of a very high standard, and generally there is no clue to the identity of the artist or painter; "signatures", or more correctly names, can be seen at Harrington, New Hutton, Whitbeck, and Workington. In the church of St Lawrence, Appleby, there is an interesting inscription (a quotation from Isaiah) below the Arms of Charles II;³ other notable Royal Arms of the 17th century are at Mallerstang, Orton and Cartmel.

Many a Royal Arms has disappeared when a church has been rebuilt or restored or redecorated, or has been removed at the behest of the incumbent of the day or a prominent parishioner. Nevertheless it is remarkable that so large a proportion has survived even a rebuilding, with the curious result that the Arms of George I — perhaps — may be found hanging in a Victorian church (as at Seathwaite). Sometimes the Arms of one reign may have been adapted to fit a succeeding reign (as at Caldbeck). Their continuing existence in any particular place is largely fortuitous and cannot be claimed to have any special significance.

The precise position in church varies very much; over the chancel arch is a favourite spot, or the front of the gallery (where one exists), and over or facing the main entrance. It has been suggested that in the Lake District there is a special preference for the wall opposite the reading-desk, but only three cases of this are known.⁴

It was the practice from the time of Elizabeth I (1560) to display on boards the Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Often these will have been combined

³ So assigned by *RCHM Westmorland*, but Mr Martin Holmes, F.S.A., suggests they could be Charles I.

⁴ Addleshaw, G. W. O. and Etchells, F.: *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, p. 101.

with the Royal Arms to form a matching series, framed alike, and originally painted by the same hand. Few of them survive in our territory but there is one such series at Castle Sowerby and another at Morland; Cartmel Fell has an attractive set of the Commandments, Creed and Lord's Prayer, although not exactly in the same style as the Royal Arms.⁵

Finally it should be noted that the Royal Arms, of Henry VIII, appear on the Salkeld Screen in Carlisle Cathedral as a decorative feature and can scarcely be counted in the same category as Royal Arms displayed in the churches of the diocese. The interest of the screen and the problems connected with it have been discussed by Mr C. G. Bulman⁶ and by Canon C. M. L. Bouch.⁷

The writer's notes on Royal Arms in the Diocese have been deposited at the Record Office, Carlisle.

Postscript. Whilst this article was in proof our President, Mr Roger Fulford, has resuscitated the Royal Arms of George III at Barbon church, which had been kept in the vestry. They are painted on boards and dated 1815.

⁵ The leading authority on the subject of this paper is a book published more than thirty years ago by H. Munro Cautley: *Royal Arms and Commandments in our Churches*. Reference should also be made to two recent publications, *Armorial Bearings of the Sovereigns of England* by W. J. Petchley (Standing Conference for Local History, 1962) and *Royal Arms in Churches* by L. C. Evetts (in the Annual Review of the Council for the Care of Churches, 1964).

⁶ CWAS2 lvi 112-127.

⁷ CWAS2 lvii 39-43.

LIST I. Royal Arms displayed in Churches (72).

Aldingham	initials: V.R.		over chancel arch
Appleby, St Lawrence	initials: C.R. (Charles II?)		over chancel arch; inscription at bottom in 'Gothic' lettering; ⁸ said to have been put up in 1661
Appleby, St Michael, Bongate	initials: C.R. (Charles II)	dated: 1661	S. side of S. arcade (these two at Appleby are the earliest in Westmorland)
Aspatria	initials: A.R. Arms of Anne, second period, 1707-1714	dated: 1711	S. wall, W. of door; retrieved from tower by Rev. V. D. Clarke, c. 1961; motto: SEMPER EADEM
Barton	initials: G.R. (George II)	dated: 1730	over chancel arch; the Brunswick Arms has three lions instead of two
Beckermet, St Bridget, Old Church	initials: G. IIIrd R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		over E. window; pale blue background instead of mantling
Beckermet, St John	initials: V.I. REG. (added); the Arms are probably those of George III, 1801-1816	(church rebuilt 1810)	S.W. corner, over belfry door; the Hanoverian Arms have neither bonnet nor crown
Bolton, Westmorland	initials: V.R.	(church restored 1848)	over chancel arch; the Lord's Prayer and Creed, N. wall, similarly framed
Bromfield	initials: G.R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		W. side of S. chapel; lacking escutcheon of pretence

Caldbeck	initials: G. IV R. (added); the Arms are those of George III, 1801-1816	(church restored 1809)	W. wall, over belfry door
Carlisle, St Cuthbert	modern Arms, of Victoria	(church restored 1885)	front of W. gallery; carved wood, painted and gilded
Carlisle, St John, Upperby	modern Arms, of Victoria	(church consecrated 1846)	high over W. door, placed diagonally
Carlisle, St Michael, Stanwix Cartmel	Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801 initials: C.R. (Charles II)	dated: 1681	high over W. door; apparently canvas; <i>see also</i> List IV S. wall, over the 'Cromwell' door; a fine example, the earliest in North Lancashire
Cartmel Fell	Hanoverian Arms (George III)	(known to be 1778)	N. wall, facing pulpit; cost £3.14.0 (CWAS2 xii 289)
Casterton	Hanoverian Arms of the third period, 1816-1837 (William IV)	(church built 1833)	over S. door; modelled in metal
Castle Carrock	initials: A.R. Arms of Anne, first period, 1702-1707		W. wall, S. of door; slightly naïve, perhaps the work of a rural artist
Castle Sowerby	initials: G.R. 2	dated: 1752	N. wall of nave; names of Vicar and 5 Churchwardens on pediment; Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Creed on same wall, probably contemporary

Cleator Moor	modern Arms, of Victoria	(church consecrated 1872)	W. end, high over tower arch
Cockermouth, All Saints Colton	modern Arms, of Victoria initials: G. 3d R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801	(church rebuilt 1852)	S. pillar of crossing; on a lozenge-shaped shield W. wall, over belfry door
Coniston	Hanoverian Arms of the third period, 1816-1837	(church rebuilt 1819)	front of W. gallery; embellished with flags and gun barrels
Crosscanonby	initials: G. 2 R.	dated: 1733	N. wall, facing door; lacking escutcheon of pretence; texts on four boards similar in style to the Royal Arms over N. door
Dalton-in-Furness	Hanoverian Arms of the second period, 1801-1816 (George III)		
Egremont	initials: G. III d R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		E. wall of porch
Egton	initials: G. 3 R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801	(a previous church built 1791)	loose at back of S. aisle (brought from school); canvas
Farlam	initials: G.R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		over N. door
Flookburgh	initials: G. III R.	(known to be 1777-1778)	W. wall of N. aisle; cost £3..3..0 — Rev. J. C. Dickinson
Gilcrux Gosforth	initials: G. 2 R. Hanoverian Arms of the third period, 1816-1837	dated: 1759	N. Wall, opposite door W. wall

Grinsdale	Hanoverian Arms of the second period, 1801-1816 (George III)		W. wall; lion and unicorn in strange attitudes
Harrington	Hanoverian Arms of the second period, 1801-1816 (George III)	dated: 1810 (church restored 1810)	in porch; signed 'J. Falder pinxt. Aged 80'
Helsington	Hanoverian Arms of the third period, 1816-1837		W. wall; canvas
Hesket-in-the-Forest	initials: V.R.	dated: 1856	W. wall, over door
Holme Cultram	initials: V.R. (added) the Arms are those of George III, 1801-1816		high on W. wall but formerly over E. window; <i>see also</i> List IV
Holme Eden	modern Arms, of Victoria	(church built 1846)	high on W. wall; probably carved wood
Hutton-in-the-Forest	Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801 (George III)	dated: 1780	N. wall of chancel but formerly on front of gallery; an indistinct inscription and shield of arms at top ⁹
New Hutton	Initials: G. IIII R. (added); the Arms are those of George III 1801-1816	(church rebuilt 1828)	S. wall; very large canvas signed 'W: Stubbs, Painter' (William Stubbs, painter and gilder, Woolpack Yard, Kendal)
Ings	initials: G.R. (presumably George II)	(church rebuilt 1743)	W. wall; lacking escutcheon of pretence
Isel	initials: G.R.; Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		over chancel arch
Kendal, St George	modern Arms, of Victoria	(church built 1848)	front of W. gallery; carved wood, gilded, black background

Kendal, St Thomas	initials: W. IIII R.	(church built 1837)	high over chancel arch.
Kirklington	modern Arms, of Victoria	(church rebuilt 1845)	W. wall; plaster or carved wood, in bold relief, gilded all over
Lindale	initials: G. III R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		S. wall, over main door
Lowther	Hanoverian Arms of the third period, 1816-1837		front of W. gallery
Mallerstang	initials: C.R. (Charles II)	dated: 1663	N. wall of sanctuary but formerly at W. end; initials of the King at the top, and A.P. for Lady Anne Pembroke at the bottom; once narrowly escaped destruction — Rev. F. M. A. Farrer
Millom, Holy Trinity	initials: G.R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		W. end of N. wall, at gallery height, but not in its original position
Morland	initials: G. 3d R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		W. wall, high over tower door; Lord's Prayer, Creed and Commandments on boards, contemporary
Newlands	initials: G.R. (George II)	dated: 1737	S. wall, formerly high on W. wall
Orton, Westmorland	Arms of William III	dated: 1695	S. wall, over main door; these Arms are unorthodox:— 1. England 2. Scotland 3. Ireland 4. France with the Arms of Nassau at the fesse point; rather a splendid specimen; <i>see also</i> list IV

Penrith, St Andrew Ravenstonedale	initials: G.R. (George I) initials: G. II R.	dated: 1723 (perhaps 1747?)	high on W. wall, above gallery S. wall, facing pulpit. ¹⁰ Either side of chancel arch are the Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Creed, dated 1747 (but hidden by organ)
St John's-in-the-Vale	Hanoverian Arms of the second period, 1801-1816 (George III)		N. wall, over door; carved wood, painted
Seathwaite	initials: G.R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		N. wall, facing door; two cherubs' heads at the bottom (brought from Vicarage <i>c.</i> 1960)
Shap	modern Arms, of Elizabeth II	(dedicated 1956)	in window in S. aisle; glass; <i>see also</i> List III
Staveley, Westmorland	initials: G. III R. Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714- 1801		W. wall; canvas; (formerly in old church, then in Village Institute, but restored to pre- sent church)
Threlkeld	Hanoverian Arms of the first period, 1714-1801		S. wall, over door; date and/or initials perhaps hidden by a pipe
Thursby	modern Arms, of Victoria	(church rebuilt 1846)	W. wall, over door
Troutbeck	initials: G.R. (George II)	dated: 1737	W. wall, above gallery but formerly over pulpit
Ulverston, St Mary	Hanoverian Arms of the second period 1801-1816 (George III)	(church restored 1804)	W. end, high over tower arch; probably carved wood, painted and gilded
Waberthwaite	initials: G. III R.	dated: 1778	N. wall, facing door
Nether Wastdale	initials: G. III R. (Hanoverian Arms of the third period, 1816- 1837)		W. wall; plaster; flamboyant design; repainted 1965
Watermillock	initials: G. 2d R.	dated: 1760	S. wall, facing door; (George II d. 1760)

Whicham	initials: G. 3 R. Hanoverian Arms of the second period, 1801-1816		S. wall, over door
Whitbeck	Arms apparently of Anne, second period, 1707-1714		high over chancel arch; the Arms are 1 England 2 France 3 Ireland 4 Scotland, presumably intended for Anne; ¹¹ signed R. Carrick Painter Wigton; the frame has a painted scroll of ivy leaves against a pale green background
Whitehaven, St James	Hanoverian Arms of the third period, 1816-1837		over inner door of vestibule; carved wood, painted
Whitehaven, St Nicholas	(1) Arms of William III	(first church consecrated 1693)	over inner W. door; moulded plaster or carved wood, painted; this and the next are the earliest in Cumberland
	(2) initials: W.R. M.R. for William and Mary but the Arms seem to be those of William only		high above the other example; dark and dirty; also two large paintings, perhaps contemporary with the Royal Arms, of Moses and Aaron, ¹² known to be by Matthias Reed — Archdeacon C. E. Nurse
Windermere	initials: G.R. (George III)	dated: 1761	S. wall, over main door; removed from church 1870, restored 1926
Witherslack	initials: A.R. Arms of Anne, second period, 1707-1714	dated: 1710	S. wall, over the blocked 'Barwick' door; motto SEMPER EADEM
Workington, St John	modern Arms, of Victoria	dated: 1845	on front of gallery; cross-stitch, signed C. How; a very unusual example

LIST II. Royal Arms arranged by periods.*House of Stuart 1603-1714 (11)*

Appleby, St Lawrence	Charles II	
Appleby, St Michael	Charles II	1661
Cartmel	Charles II	1681
Mallerstang	Charles II	1663
Orton, Westmorland	William III	1695
Whitehaven, St Nicholas	William III	
	(two)	
Castle Carrock	Anne,	
	first version	
Aspatria	Anne,	1711
	second version	
Whitbeck	Anne,	
	second version	
Witherslack	Anne,	1710
	second version	

*House of Hanover 1714-1837**First Hanoverian 1714-1801 (29)*

Barton	George II	1730
Beckermest, St Bridget (old church)	George III	
Bromfield	George I?	
Carlisle, St Michael (Stanwix)		
Cartmel Fell	George III	1778
Castle Sowerby	George II	1752
Colton	George III	
Crosscanonby	George II	1733
Egremont	George III	1790
Egton	George III	
Farlam	George I?	
Flookburgh	George III	1777-8
Gilcrux	George II	1759
Hutton-in-the-Forest	George III	1780
Ings	George II	
Isel	George I?	
Lindale	George III	
Millom, Holy Trinity	George I?	
Morland	George III	
Newlands	George II	1737
Penrith, St Andrew	George I	1723
Ravenstonedale	George II	
Seathwaite	George I?	

Staveley, Westmorland	George III	
Threlkeld	George III	
Troutbeck	George II	1737
Waberthwaite	George III	1778
Watermillock	George II	1760
Windermere	George III	1761

Second Hanoverian 1801-1816 (11)

Beckermet, St John	George III	
Caldbeck	George III	
Dalton-in-Furness	George III	
Grinsdale	George III	
Harrington	George III	1810
Holme Cultram	George III	
New Hutton	George III	
Lowick	George III	
St John's-in-the-Vale	George III	
Ulverston, St Mary	George III	
Whicham	George III	

Third Hanoverian 1816-1837 (8)

Casterton		
Coniston		
Gosforth		
Helsington		
Kendal, St Thomas	William IV	
Lowther		
Nether Wastdale	George III	
Whitehaven, St James		

Modern 1837 to the present day (13)

Aldingham	Victoria	
Bolton, Westmorland	Victoria	
Carlisle, St. Cuthbert	Victoria	
Carlisle, St John (Upperby)	Victoria	
Cleator Moor	Victoria	
Cockermouth, All Saints	Victoria	
Hesket-in-the-Forest	Victoria	
Holme Eden	Victoria	
Kendal, St George	Victoria	
Kirkclinton	Victoria	
Shap	Elizabeth II	1956
Thursby	Victoria	
Workington, St John	Victoria	1845

LIST III. Royal Arms existing on church property but no longer displayed (7).

Ambleside	Hanoverian 1801-1816	George III	(church rebuilt 1812)	loose in tower of old church, now St Anne's Church Hall; very faded
Bassenthwaite	Hanoverian 1714-1801	George II		in Church Room ¹³
Field Broughton	Hanoverian 1801-1816	George III		on wall of vestry
Haverthwaite	Hanoverian 1816-1837	George IV?	(church built 1825)	loose on floor of tower; canvas; a poor specimen, in a picture frame
Longmarton	Hanoverian 1714-1801	George II	dated 1750? (the 'o' is indistinct)	fixed to wall of belfry
St Bees	Hanoverian 1801-1816	George III		in 'New College Hall' (in the Priory grounds); ? plaster, painted, rather fine
Wigton	Hanoverian 1714-1801	George III	(church rebuilt 1788)	amongst lumber in tower, very faded

LIST IV. Royal Arms formerly existing in churches. (20)

- Bowness-on-Solway 'The Queen's Arms' seen by Bishop Nicolson 'on a moist wall' 2 July 1703 (Miscellany Accounts of the Diocese of Carlile, ed. R. S. Ferguson, 1877, p. 21)
- Carlisle,
St Michael, (Stanwix) 'The Queen's Arms are old and almost worn out': Bishop Nicolson 6 October 1703 (op. cit. 105)
- Carlisle,
St Stephen Royal Arms of Victoria; removed 1962 (when about to be destroyed and the church demolished), now at Troutbeck in the possession of the writer
- Clifton,
Westmorland 'the Q.'s Armes and 10 Com.' mentioned in the Churchwardens' Accounts, 1707 (CWAS2 xlix 163)
- Dufton The King's Arms 'on a stoothing' (partition of lath and plaster) between the chancel and the body of the church: Bishop Nicolson 13 July 1703 (op. cit. 48)
- Holme Cultram Bishop Nicolson saw 'the King's Arms (France and England, Quarter'd) and, I suppose, those of the Abbey; a Cross Floree and Lion Rampant' 7 July 1703 (op. cit. 25)
- Ings mentioned by the Rev. Thos. Machell, c. 1692, as being between the chancel and the body of the chapel. (*Antiquary on Horseback*, 110)
- Kendal,
Holy Trinity mentioned as existing in 1684; over the chancel arch in 1830; by James Addison, painter, of Hornby (CWAS1 xvi 170, 181, 190)
- Kirkby Thore formerly over chancel arch (old picture, c. 1860, in vestry)
- Kirkoswald Royal Arms of Charles II formerly over chancel arch, still there in 1840 (T. Fetherstonhaugh, *Our Cumberland Village*, 1925, 91)
- Melmerby The Queen's Arms seen by Bishop Nicolson, 25 February 1704 (op. cit. 121)
- Milburn Royal Arms of Victoria (?) over E. window (old photograph in the Library at Rose Castle)

Orton, Westmorland	an obscure reference in the churchwardens' accounts for 1662 suggests that the Arms of Charles II may have been set up in that year: 'It(em) with Webster when the kings Armes should have beene fest (fetched?) rod.' (Rev. H. Sawrey)
Plumbland	formerly over the chancel arch (Rev. F. B. Swift)
Rockcliffe	Royal Arms of Charles II dated 1664 seen by Bishop Nicolson 29 June 1703 (op. cit. 13)
Shap	seen by Bishop Nicolson 20 August 1703 (op. cit. 75)
Torpenhow	seen by Bishop Nicolson 26 August 1703 (op. cit. 90)
Uldale	removed about 1957, paintwork worn off (CWAS2 lix 53)
Wetheral	formerly over chancel arch, probably removed 1882 (A. G. Loftie: Wetheral and Warwick, 1923, p. 23)
Whitehaven, Holy Trinity	Royal Arms in church now demolished (old photograph in the Library at Rose Castle)

References.

⁸ He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth / the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes that / stoppeth his eares from hearing of blod and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil he shall / dwell on high his eyes shall see the king in his beauty, they shall behold the land tis very far off.

(Isaiah chap. xxxiii. verses 15, 16, 17 abbreviated.)

—Canon W. R. M. Chaplin.

⁹ Lord Inglewood kindly tells me that this Royal Arms was done for L. W. Fletcher, Esq' by Thomas Collier, Painter, Penrith. Part of the original account (now in the Record Office, Carlisle) reads:

"1780 May 28th Agreed to Paint and Execute the Commandments and Kings Arms with Gold Letters &c. Lords prayer Creed and five sentences with yellow letters. Likewise to find the Wood Work of the above. £20. 0. 0."

¹⁰ Addleshaw, G. W. O. and Etchells, F.: *op. cit.*, p. 194.

¹¹ But the motto is DIEU ET MON DROIT not SEMPER EADEM.

¹² Moses and Aaron also appear at Ravenstonedale; for the significance of this see Addleshaw and Etchells, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

¹³ Re-erected in St Bega's church, Bassenthwaite, 1966.