

ART. VIII – *Building a public bakehouse at Appleby in 1615*

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HISTORICAL studies of municipal buildings commonly concentrate on the more conspicuous structures such as town halls, even when the documentary evidence is often scant (as with Appleby's Moot Hall) or absent.¹ Thus, it is stimulating to find details of a minor structure, whose modest contribution to understanding a municipal building in its historical setting is easily overlooked. The Appleby borough chamberlains' accounts noted the costs of building a public bakehouse but focussed on how much was paid to whom rather than recording the actual building work and dates.² New pairs of chamberlains took office in October each year. Men named in a list of Appleby freemen dated 1614 are marked by an asterisk when first noted in this study.³

Fortunately the deed conveying the bakehouse site to the Corporation exists in a solicitor's archive.⁴ It is dated 24 March 10 James (New Years Eve 1612/13). For £3, James Parkin* and his son Thomas* sold to the mayor (William Pulley) and Corporation, a site in "the Weinde" bounded by the "Kings high streete" on the north, the garth of James Marton* on the south and the burgage of Leonard Scott*⁵ on the west. The plot was "Eleuen Yardes in length from the said [Scott] Burgage eastwarde towards the Mansion house of . . . Thomas Parkin", who was to receive four shillings a year rent.

The Wiend joins the back lane Dungate (or Doomgate) to the market street (Boroughgate) just north of the Red House. When Figure 1b is compared with the plot description, clearly the bakehouse site was part of the six burgages that made up the Red House property in 1693 when its owner, Thomas Carleton, was the Appleby Castle estate steward.⁶

No deeds have been found which trace the Parkin property directly from 1613 to 1693 but, in a voting dispute between the Lowther and Thanet factions after the 1754 election, all known property deeds in Appleby were studied. The Earl of Thanet's lists included burgage 98 in the Wiend, then "a Malt Kiln and the Upper Part of the Large Garden". It was 12 yards long from "a house late Emerson's on the south" to the street northwards and 6 yards wide from a burgage lately Carleton's "*Eastwards towards the Mansion house formerly Robert Parkins* and heretofore the estate of Edward Guy . . . now the higher part of . . . late Carleton's Great Garden".⁷ The surname Parkin in this position is very significant, for the only Parkin family properties in the eighteenth century were seven plots that voted as two burgages next to the Castle Park at the south end of Boroughgate.⁸ Though there are no wills or parish registers to yield proof, Robert was probably descended from James Parkin. As the bakehouse plot was 11 yards east-west, it must have extended at least five yards into Thanet plot 26 called the "lower part of Carletons great Garden" measuring twelve yards east-west. One can only speculate whether the malt kiln might have been a remnant of the bakehouse. Having found where the bakehouse stood, the study can move on to explore the building work.

As would be expected, the chamberlains' accounts for 1613-14 note 4s. rent paid

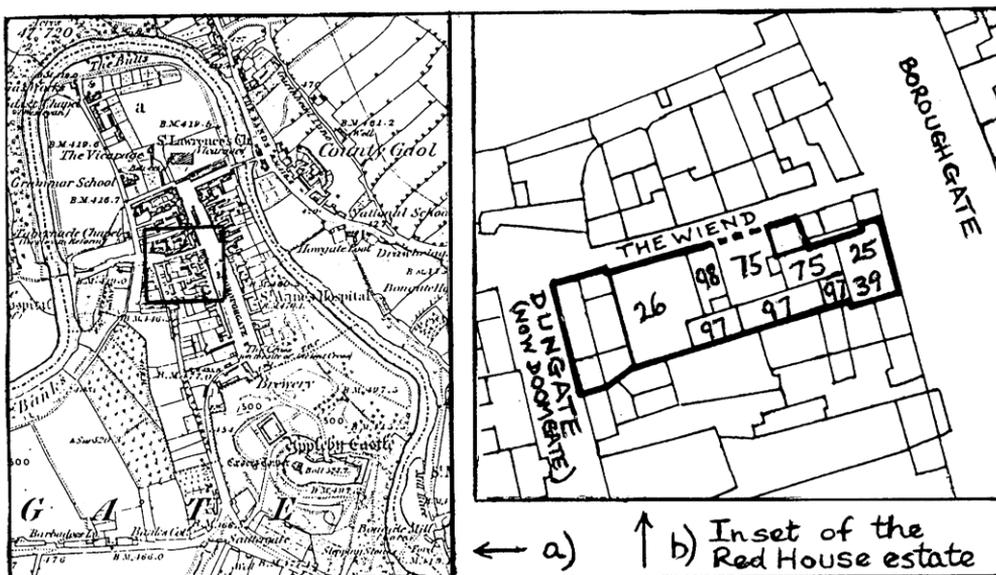


FIG. 1. a) Plan of Appleby, (1st ed. Ordnance Survey (1850), 1:10,560).

b) Plan of Appleby's Red House property in 1766, marked in bold outline. Burgage plots owned by Thomas Carleton in 1693 are shown with Thanet reference numbers. (Sources: CRO(K) WD/Hoth box 34, Humphrey Carleton's sketch plan; WD/Hoth box 6, Earl of Thanet's Burgage Book; CRO(C) D/Lons/L, 1754 election; burgage descriptions and town plan). The Thanet and Lowther burgage numbering systems differed so that T26 = L69 (1660); T98 = L68 (1662); T75 = L66 (1693); T97 = L67 (1662); T25 = L61 (1673) and T 39 = L60. (Known date of purchase by T. Carleton in brackets).

to Thomas Parkin. Also 1s. was paid "for bread and Drinke at the sealing of the writtings for the common Backhouse", but John Thwaites* (probably the town clerk)⁹ had to wait until after the new accounts began in October 1614 for 5s. "for makeinge of the writtings for the common baccus". To enclose the site, 1s. 2d. was paid "to Willyam Crosbie for gettinge of Stuffe and makeinge the hedge at the common backhouse". The "gettinge of Stuffe" may suggest that this was a dead hedge of brushwood.

The bakehouse was actually built before October 1615, because the 1614-15 accounts record 3s. 9d. paid "for bread and drinke to the raisinge of the common baccus", when the roof timbers were set on completed walls. Leonard Sowerby* (carpenter) was paid 9s. 6d. for "working" it. The accounts record 5s. "To John hill and ambrose hill for leading of wood" which was probably purchased from Peter Rowlingson (30s.), John Harrison* (3s. 4d.) and "uxor Davie" (3s.). As most payments were recorded in the 1615-16 accounts, the work probably occurred in the late summer of 1615 so that most workmen waited for payment until new chamberlains took over in October.

The first entry on a page headed "Disbursed for the common backhouse" was 2s. 6d. "to John fayerer for redding the ground" for it, while Edward Bonson had 6d. "for redding the ground at ye end of the same backho: and bearing water the first daye". These would pay for about six man-days to clear the site, while the water was probably used to mix mortar for the walls. Thomas Lowson* was paid 10s. "for

getting and leading of Morter to ye same backho:”, for perhaps ten days work. Though the date is not given, the start of building was celebrated when 8d. was paid to “James Marton wiffe for drinke to the workmen the first daye”. Presumably she had only to pass refreshments over the southern boundary hedge. The small area cleared by Bonson was probably for storing oven fuel such as gorse.¹⁰

Mr Thomas Ubanck* (an alderman) was given 13s. 4d. “for leading the stones to the same backho” and unnamed masons received 17s. 4d. for walling it. There were probably three of them, since 9d. was paid “for three paire of gloves to ye maysons”, a customary gift when masons helped to raise the main timbers. Edward Bonson, clearly a labourer, was paid 4s. 6d. for “serving” them, probably for nine days work. Thomas Lowson was paid 4d. “for leading of coble stones to the same backho,” probably for part of one day’s work, but the spelling “coble” could refer to corbels to support a projection, such as a chimney stack, or cobble stones for the floor. In view of the short duration of his work, the former may be more likely.

Leonard Sowerby helped by William Murton had another 15s. 6d. for “working the common backhouse”. Wood for it included 1s. 6d. for “part of an astrice” and 2s. 2d. for two ribbs [purlins] supplied by Thomas Ubancke. John Ubanck had 1s. 4d. “for bearing of spares out of Dufton Wood to ye frieth gate” while James Bellas was paid 1s. 6d. “for leading the same spares to the common backho.”. Spars were rafters; and Dufton Wood is now a farm with a few copses, 2¹/₄ miles north of Appleby. The route would have been across Brampton Common, whose northern margin ran along Frith lane and Frith beck just east of Brampton Mill¹¹ (Fig. 2). Frith gate was thus the common’s northern entrance. As the gate was only half-a-mile from the wood, the proportionately higher charge for the first part of the trip might reflect awkward conditions for “bearing” the rafters out of the wood, probably on men’s shoulders. Leading them the other 1³/₄ miles to town would be straightforward, at a cost suggesting not more than six return trips. A horse could carry six stout joists¹² so might take ten short rafters at a time, or about sixty in all. A later entry recorded 5d. given “to Anthonie Stewardson* for fetching of six boordes from Keeslye to the backho:”. Keesley is over two miles north-east of Appleby and the beck has woodland on its south bank and in its ravine.

As the work progressed Thomas Lowson was paid 4s. “for leading of stones, mortar and sand to the ovens”, while the masons had 22s. 6d. “for getting of more stones to the ovens” and for building them. Thomas Ubanck had 4s. 6d. “for leading stones to ye ovens”, while Anthony Davie was paid 6s. “for the oven sooles and other stones”. Matthew Smith had 2s. 8d. “for fower bushels of lime and bringing it to the ovens”. Also “two cartfull of stones from Ki[r]kland”, eight miles to the north, were brought by Barnaby Unthank for 8d. but their purpose was not stated. As sandstone was easily available at Appleby they were probably limestone to make more mortar.¹³ At this stage “Willyam close wiffe” supplied drink for 4d.

Edward Guy* was paid 6s. 8d. “for a tree to be spares . . . and latts to the chimlay” and 1s. 7d. for “nayles to ye chimlay”.¹⁴ This suggests that at least the upper parts of the chimney were framed with wood.¹⁵ In Cumbria it was common for a chimney-hood to be built of rafter-sized studs, with lath and plaster or wattle and clay-daub covering.¹⁶ Thomas Lowson and Michael Colston* had 10d. and 8d. respectively “for leading of mortar to the same chimlay” while 4s. 6d. was paid “to Michael Hodgson and Reynald Steadman for working of the mortar and Dawbing of

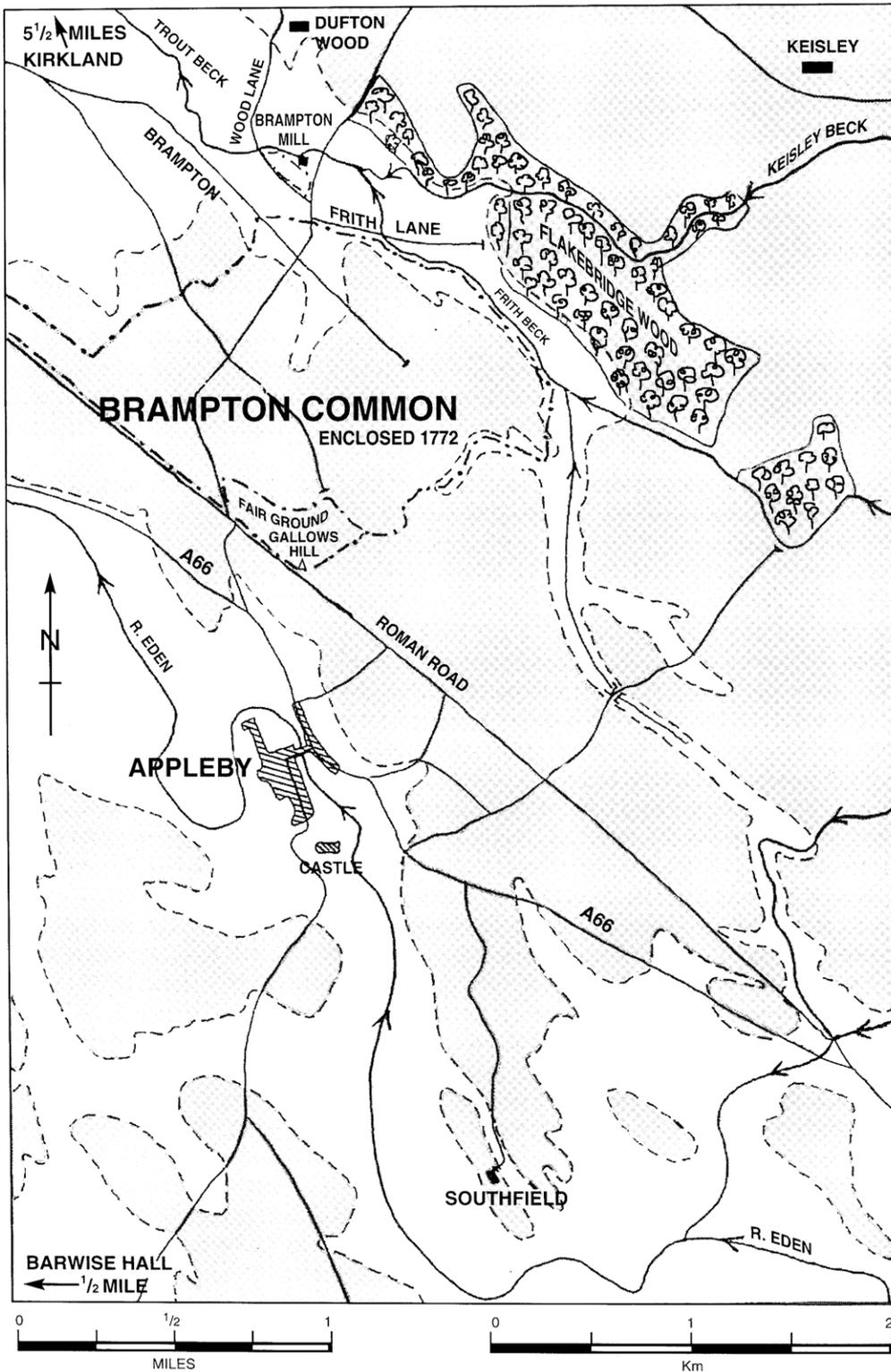


FIG. 2. Map of the Appleby area showing places mentioned in the text.
Land over 500 feet (c. 150 m) shaded.

the chimlay". Again William Close's wife supplied drink for 4d.

The roof was thatched, since Edward Lowson had 10s. 6d. "for getting of wands and watling the comon backho: and graveing of turfes and theeking the same". Edward Bonson was paid 1s. 6d. "for serving the theeker" probably for three days work. "For leading the turfes", Hugh Murton received 11s. , which suggests that his work was very time-consuming.¹⁷ James Warriner had 2s. 8d. "for cutting of watlinge and leading it to the backho:", but his wattles may have been used to clad the chimney, support turves under the thatch or both. At this stage Widow Smith supplied drink for 4d. The back of the 1615 account has a note that "all the watling to ye common backhouse . . . [was] given by Sir John Bow[y]er maior"* , probably as his inaugural gift to the town.¹⁸

Finishing work followed. William Robinson had 3s. "for bands and crooks and a locke to the backhouse Doore" and 9d. "for the bands to the window leaves and setting them on". Leonard Sowerby had 3s. 2d. "for making of the tables and saweing of the window leaves and making them fitt" and 4s. was paid "for fower plankes to be ye two tables in the backhouse and wood for two fraimes to set them on". Finally, Michael Hodgson was paid 2s. "for redding the ground before ye backhouse", no doubt to remove the builders' debris.

Later work

Some later payments refer to repairs. In 1616 for example, 2s. 6d. was paid "to Reginald Lambe* for spares [spars] to ye backhouse". In 1617, 7s. 6d. was given "to Mr Bellas man for threescore therve [threave] of strawe to ye backhouse".¹⁹ New chamberlains after October 1617 paid John Faner 4s. for thatching and Edward Benson 6d. "for getting of Spelks and Drawinge of thatch one day". James Warriner had 18d. "for leadinge of straw from the Southfield",²⁰ and 2d. was paid "to Renold Steadman for carryinge straw unto the backhouse". Hugh Murton had 2s. "for serving the thatcher fower days", while Thomas Parkin had 1s. "for leadinge of turfes to the common backhouse". As there are no signs of walling an extension, the details may suggest that the initial thatching was not wholly successful.

Late in 1620, William Richardson was given 2s. 6d. "for one milne stone to the common backhouse" while, in 1621, John Lawe had 1s. "for leading ye mylnestone from Branton milne"²¹ and four men who "went to help to loode it" had 2d. each. Its purpose was not stated. It might have been full size but worn thin and could have been used to form a sole for a large oven because 4s. was paid to "George Blenckorne for stones to the great oven and leading them". These are the last bakehouse references. They show that, despite the absence of entries for Thomas Parkin's rent after 1618, the building continued in active use. Its demise has not been found because, after 1621, accounts exist only for 1627, 1629 and 1630 before a gap to the end of the century. By then Thomas Carleton had owned the bakehouse site for nearly forty years (Fig. 1b, caption).

Conclusions

Although the building's size and most quantities of materials are not available, the accounts allow interpretation of its form. Its site had to be fenced and cleared about

half way along the south side of the Wiend. Sandstone was available nearby and the walls were laid with mortar taken to the site. Timber was led on horseback from two named places over two miles away and probably from other sources. The roof had two purlins. As no other main timbers were recorded, the bakehouse was probably no more than twenty feet long inside. If sixty half-rafters, spanning from both the ridge and eaves, were side-lapped on the purlins, their spacing would be no more than 16 inches.

The rafters might have carried longitudinal wands (rods), between which wattles could be woven (hurdle-like), to carry turves under the straw thatch.²² If the building was 24 x 16 feet overall, 250 turves (of 2 x 1½ feet) would have covered it with about 50% overlap. They would be laid grass-side down to allow the straw to be held in place by being thrust between them.²³ Facilities inside were very basic, with two wooden trestle tables, shuttered window openings and perhaps an earthen floor. More than one oven was provided, but it seems that another was added six years later probably using a worn-out millstone for its sole. The chimney had a wooden frame clad in wattling and laths and daubed with mortar.

The total building cost was £11 11s. 5d. Unfortunately some costs for getting and carrying walling stones are mixed with those for oven stones, as are the associated labour charges. As materials and labour costs for the roof and chimney are sometimes combined, it is not clear how much wood and wattling was used for each. Despite these problems approximate percentages can be deduced:

Activity	Cost	% of Total
Site preparation	6s. 2d.	2.66
Walling and ovens	33s. 10d.	14.62
Getting/carrying stone and mortar inc. for ovens	52s. 9d.	22.79
Supplying wood	49s. 2d.	21.25
Carrying wood	8s. 7d.	3.71
Carpentry	25s. 0d.	10.80
Thatch and chimney work plus materials	31s. 8d.	13.68
Interior fittings	7s. 2d.	3.10
Ironwork	5s. 4d.	2.30
Treats	6s. 9d.	2.92
Administration	5s. 0d.	2.16
Total	£11 11s. 5d.	99.99

The figures suggest that obtaining and carrying stones cost about 50% more than building the walls and ovens, while getting and carrying timber cost nearly two-and-a-half times as much as the carpentry. All these charges made up almost 75% of the total expenditure and the chimney accounted for about half of the remainder. In all 36 named individuals plus probably three masons were involved. Most were casual workers used for particular jobs. However, labourer Edward Bonson cleared part of the site and served both the masons and thatcher. Of the two chimney daubers, Michael Hodgson tidied up when building finished and Reginald Steadman brought thatching straw in 1618. Eleven borough freemen were involved. Mayor Bowyer paid for wattling. Alderman Ewbank supplied wood and the means to carry most of

the stone. Likewise, freeman Thomas Lowson provided transport for mortar, sand and some stone. Other freemen brought boards from Keisley, mortar for the chimney, rafters for repairs and an old millstone from Brampton. As might be expected, nails and ironmongery were supplied by freemen while the chief carpenter, Leonard Sowerby, was another. The details suggest that freemen usually received 1s. per day, whereas other workers had only 6d. to 8d. a day, even though the skill required of most freemen does not seem to have been greater than that of the workmen. This could create an upward bias in calculations of average wage-rates when studies of former wages are based only on borough records. Rates in the countryside were even lower at 6d. per day for craftsmen and only 4d for workmen.²⁴

The Appleby bakehouse was probably built to meet a perceived, but unstated, public need partly because many houses may have had inadequate baking facilities. Devastation caused when the Scots sacked the town in March 1388 might have been a contributory factor. James I's charter of 1618 cites that as the reason why the town had not been rebuilt. Thus in 1556 Francis (Clifford), Earl of Cumberland and Sheriff of Westmorland, could not pay a debt of £167 9s. for fee-farm rents owed by the town to the Treasury. He sought remission of £157 13s. 4d. A Commission investigating the matter described Appleby as "sorely abused, ruinous and destroyed in so much that the burgesses and inhabitants . . . are so very poor that they have not . . . the power or ability to satisfy our lord the king . . . with respect to the rent of twenty marks". Thus, the charter allowed the remission and cut the rent to just two marks (26s. 8d.).²⁵

Appleby's poverty and resulting stagnation persuaded John Leland to describe the town in 1539 as "a Shire town, but a poor village . . .". William Camden found it memorable only for its "antiquity and situation . . . but so sclderly inhabited and the building so simple, that were it not . . . counted the chief towne of the shire . . . [with] Sessions and Assizes kept in the Castle . . . it would be little better than a village, for all the beauty of it lieth in one broad street . . .".²⁶ Another factor was probably the 1598 plague that killed perhaps a quarter of the population.²⁷

In addition, before the mid-seventeenth century there was a constant threat of famine brought about by adverse weather conditions which could seriously reduce harvests, thus greatly increasing prices of basic foods, especially grain. Andrew Appleby²⁸ obtained convincing evidence from Cumbrian parish registers and other sources that the 1598 plague was preceded by four consecutive bad harvests which raised the average food prices by 30, 36, 83 and 65 per cent above normal in the successive years 1594-7. The poorer sections of society were most seriously affected and the ability of most people to resist infection would be reduced. Appleby also attributed the abnormally high mortality in 1623-4 to another famine caused by the bad harvest of 1622. Such a rapid response suggests that ordinary folk had not the resources to resist imminent hardship in the face of food supply difficulties. These threats to life and security would affect trade greatly and undermine optimism and willingness to invest in house improvements. Hardship probably persuaded the corporation to intervene to improve the supply and quality of the most basic food, but the chamberlains would pay no more than was necessary to achieve the objective. Thus their records, despite several obvious shortcomings, provide a rare and truly vernacular glimpse of municipal building activity under difficult conditions at least half a century before Cumbria's Great Rebuilding began.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Mr L. H. Thwaytes of Appleby for advice about some burgages and to Richard Hall of Kendal for advice and enthusiasm. My wife, Margaret, is a constant source of support.

Notes and References

- ¹ Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: the Town Hall and the English Urban Community, 1500-1640* (1993). A detailed study using documentary evidence is B. Tyson, "Rebuilding the Medieval Court-House at Keswick in 1571", *CW2*, xcv, 119-135.
- ² CRO(K) WSMB/A/1, Chamberlains' Accounts 1610-30 (with gaps).
- ³ CRO(K) WSMB/A, Chamberlains' Memoranda Book, 1614-1661.
- ⁴ CRO(K) WD/HH/66/1.
- ⁵ On 17 May 1615, Leonard Scott was disfranchised until he agreed to swear the freeman's oath in full. (Ref. as n. 3).
- ⁶ Details of the burgages forming the Red House plot and of rebuilding that house are given in B. Tyson, "Two Appleby Houses in the 18th Century", *CW2*, lxxxv, 193-202.
- ⁷ CRO(K) WD/Hoth, box 6, Burgage book, p. 287 (plot 98) and p. 289 (plot 26). The Lowther burgage records are at CRO(C) D/Lons/L, Appleby Election 1754.
- ⁸ CRO(K) WD/Hoth, box 6, Burgage book pp. 355-7 & 361.
- ⁹ John Thwaites was the last of six witnesses to the conveyance. In 1617 he had 6s. 9d. "for copyinge the writ for the areages [arrears] and two petitions writing and for entrie of threscore actions and as many precepts". In 1616 he was paid 3s. 4d. "for writting the Kings Rental in Parchment" and £2 for "goeing to York to the [assize] Judges" with John Simpson.
- ¹⁰ Such a fuel plot existed at a common bakehouse built after 19 August 1763 (Chamberlains' Minute Book, 1729-64). It stood behind Broad Gates on the east side of Boroughgate. Baker Tom Harrison "always kept his whins [gorse] and fuel for heating his oven" on that plot (CRO(K) WD/Hoth, box 6, Burgage book p. 141 and a sworn statement in WD/Hoth, box 2, bundle 4).
- ¹¹ Brampton Common was inclosed in 1772 (CRO(K) WQ/R/1/12).
- ¹² B. Tyson, "Building Work at Sockbridge Hall . . .", *CW2*, lxxxiii, 107-124, esp. p. 113.
- ¹³ Kirkland Hall farm included Carboniferous Limestone deposits at the foot of Cross Fell. B. Tyson, "Skirwith Hall and Wilton Tenement: the rebuilding of two Cumbrian farmsteads in the eighteenth century", *CW2*, lxxxi, 93-112.
- ¹⁴ The 1627 Chamberlains' accounts note Edward Guy as mayor.
- ¹⁵ Probably it had a structure similar to the wooden chimney of Daniel Fleming's brewhouse at Rydal Hall. That was rebuilt in stone in 1673 (B. Tyson, "Rydal Hall Farmyard . . .", *CW2*, lxxx, 113-129, esp. p. 114).
- ¹⁶ For illustrations see R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture* (1970), 107 and S. Denyer, *Traditional Buildings & Life in the Lake District* (1991), 167.
- ¹⁷ For comparison, rebuilding Millbar's Barn at Appleby in 1724 involved 5½ days thatching for 5s. 6d., 5 days serving for 3s. 4d. and the use of 400 turves. Its size was not stated. Based on a proportion of the labour used, the bakehouse probably used about 250 turves (CRO(C) D/Lons/L/1723, Appleby election/ Wharton's Burgages).
- ¹⁸ Sir John Bowyer was admitted as a freeman on 23 August 1615. Two days later he wrote from Barwise Hall to Francis Clifford the 4th Earl of Cumberland (1559-1641) reporting that he had been to Brougham Castle to try to mediate in the inheritance dispute between Francis and Lady Margaret Clifford, widow of George, 3rd Earl (died 1605), whose will favoured his brother Francis rather than his own only surviving child, Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676) (T. D. Whitaker, *History & Antiquities of Craven* (3rd ed., 1878), 367-8). Over the front door, a shield with IS AS 1579, may indicate that Barwise Hall was built by Sir John Sudwick (RCHME, *Westmorland* (1936), 112b). It seems that Sudwick sold Barwise to Sir John Bowyer, and Lady Bowyer sold to Reginald Dobson of Dufton (Nicolson & Burn, i, 337).
- ¹⁹ A threave of straw was 24 sheaves. S. Denyer, *op. cit.* (1991), 158; quoting A. Pringle, *General View of the Agriculture of . . . Westmorland* (1794). Thus 1440 sheaves were used and cost 1d. per sixteen.

- ²⁰ Southfield is 1½ miles SSE of Appleby. It was Appleby Castle demesne land. A farmhouse, barn and byre were built in 1694 for £80 when the farm rent was £92 per year. A new farmhouse was built in 1791, 50 yards north of the other and was demolished in the 1960s (B. Tyson, *CW2*, lxxxv, 215, n. 7., quoting CRO(K), WD/Hoth, box 23).
- ²¹ Brampton Mill, two miles north of Appleby.
- ²² For roofs of this type see J. R. Harrison, "Some Clay Dabbins in Cumberland: their construction and form", *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, 33 (1989), 97-151, esp. figs 43, 47, 60, 64; and *TAMS*, 35 (1991), 29-88, esp. figs 55-60.
- ²³ See note 17. Such turves are compatible with J. R. Harrison's findings in Cumberland and with J. Manners, *Crafts of the Highlands & Islands* (1978), 36.
- ²⁴ B. Tyson, *Aspects of the Management of Traditional Building Work in Cumbria* (1995), 303-10, Ph.D. thesis, Oxford Brookes University. (Copies in all CROs.)
- ²⁵ CRO(K) WSMB, typed transcript of 1618 charter.
- ²⁶ Camden, *Britannia* (1610 ed., London), 761a; Leland, *Itinerary* (3rd ed., 1749), vol. 7, 52. It was convenient for judges on the Northern Circuit to hold Westmorland's assizes in Appleby because it lay on their route between York and Carlisle.
- ²⁷ M. W. Holdgate, *History of Appleby* (1956), chaps 2-4, esp. p. 37.
- ²⁸ A. B. Appleby, "Disease or Famine?" Mortality in Cumberland and Westmorland 1580-1640", *Economic History Review* 2nd Series 26 (1973), 403-32.

