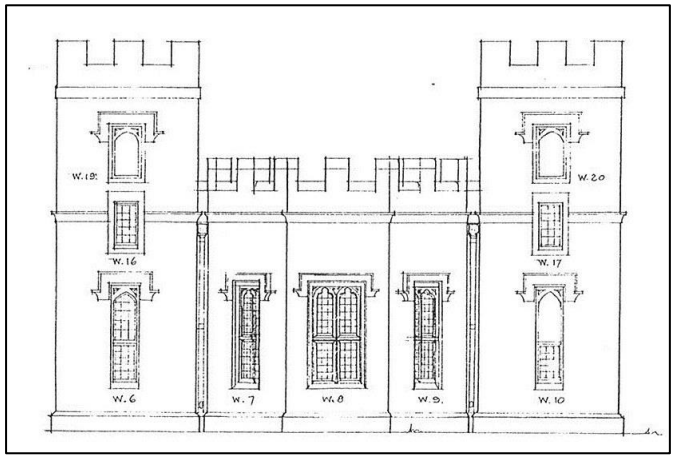
The Landmark Trust

THE COOP HOUSE

History Album



Researched and written by Charlotte Haslam in 1995, updated in 2015

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BASIC DETAILS

Built	**1770s**
Listed	**Grade I**
Owner	**Netherby estate**
Lease acquired by the Landmark Trust	**1992**
Let for first holiday	**1995**
Repaired	**1994**
Architect	**Rosalind Taylor of Stewart Tod and Partners, Edinburgh**
Builders	**Laing North West**

Contents

SUMMARY

The Coop House is a striking example of the kind of Gothic pavilion with which Georgian gentlemen liked to adorn the landscape around their houses. A hint that it was once something more lies in its name: a coop is a wickerwork basket used for catching fish, a method that dates back at least to the Middle Ages. The Coop House, in fact, overlooked a more sophisticated system than a set of baskets. It stands on a terrace in front of which a series of fish pens could be formed by fixing hurdles into a stone pavement. Next to these was a fish ladder, above which a great stone weir spanned the river. All this was built to take advantage of the plentiful salmon for which the Esk is well known. It seems possible that the coops were in fact holding pens for full-grown fish caught in the river, or breeding pens for raising small fish or fry.

The weir above the coops was first built in 1770 by Rev Dr Robert Graham, the owner of Netherby Hall and combined squire and parson ('Squarson') of Arthuret. Over his 25 years of ownership he carried out a long series of much-praised improvements to his estate, including the building of farmhouses and schools, and his establishment of the salmon fishery was a major part of this. But only a year after its construction, floods swept the weir away. It was rebuilt, and a second time destroyed in the same way. Brindley, the well-known civil engineer, rebuilt it yet again to an improved design incorporating a curved weir instead of a straight one. In 1782 this too collapsed when a huge weight of melting ice piled against it after a hard winter.

We do not know exactly when the Coop House was built - possibly in 1772 - nor do we know the name of its designer nor even the reasons for its construction. Certainly it was an ornament to Dr Graham's fine pleasure grounds, and it would have made a vantage point for watching the salmon fishery, for enjoying the sight of water cascading over the weir and fish leaping in the opposite direction. It may also have provided a shelter above the coops for a bailiff to keep watch for poachers.

As first built, the Coop House was little more than a belvedere of one room, its projecting bay taking full advantage of the view up and down the river. There was no fireplace, and it was entered directly from outside, through the arched south door. Each turret had a tall room on the ground floor, with a smaller space above. That on the west had an unlit basement room as well. Curiously, on the ground floor, the south and west windows of the west turret, and all three windows of the little room above, were blocked from the beginning.

With the failure of the weir, much of the point of the house would have been lost. It might still have come in useful as a base for fishing expeditions, or for the river bailiff, and even for the occasional picnic. But from the late 1780s it probably stood empty for most of the next 100 years or so. It was then turned into a cottage for estate workers. A range was installed under the middle window of the main room, which was then blocked. Bedrooms were made in the turrets, with pitched roofs that cut across the front and back windows; the ones in the east turret were therefore blocked up, as those in the west turret had always been, and new windows were made on the side overlooking the river. On the other side an extra room was added in front of the old main door, and a new front door was made in the east side of this addition.

In the 1930s the cottage was lived in by a shepherd, his wife and their five children, but it became too small for them and they moved to a larger house. After they left the Coop House remained empty, becoming increasingly ruinous as the years went by.

RESTORATION BY THE LANDMARK TRUST

The Coop House gently decayed until 1989, when a neighbour suggested to Sir Charles Graham, Robert Graham's descendant, that the Landmark Trust, as a charity that specialises in the restoration of buildings of architectural or historic importance, might take it on - as indeed it was glad to do. The estate granted a lease in 1992, and work started in 1994, under the direction of the architect Rosalind Taylor. The builders were the North-West division of Laings, under foreman Philip Hingley.

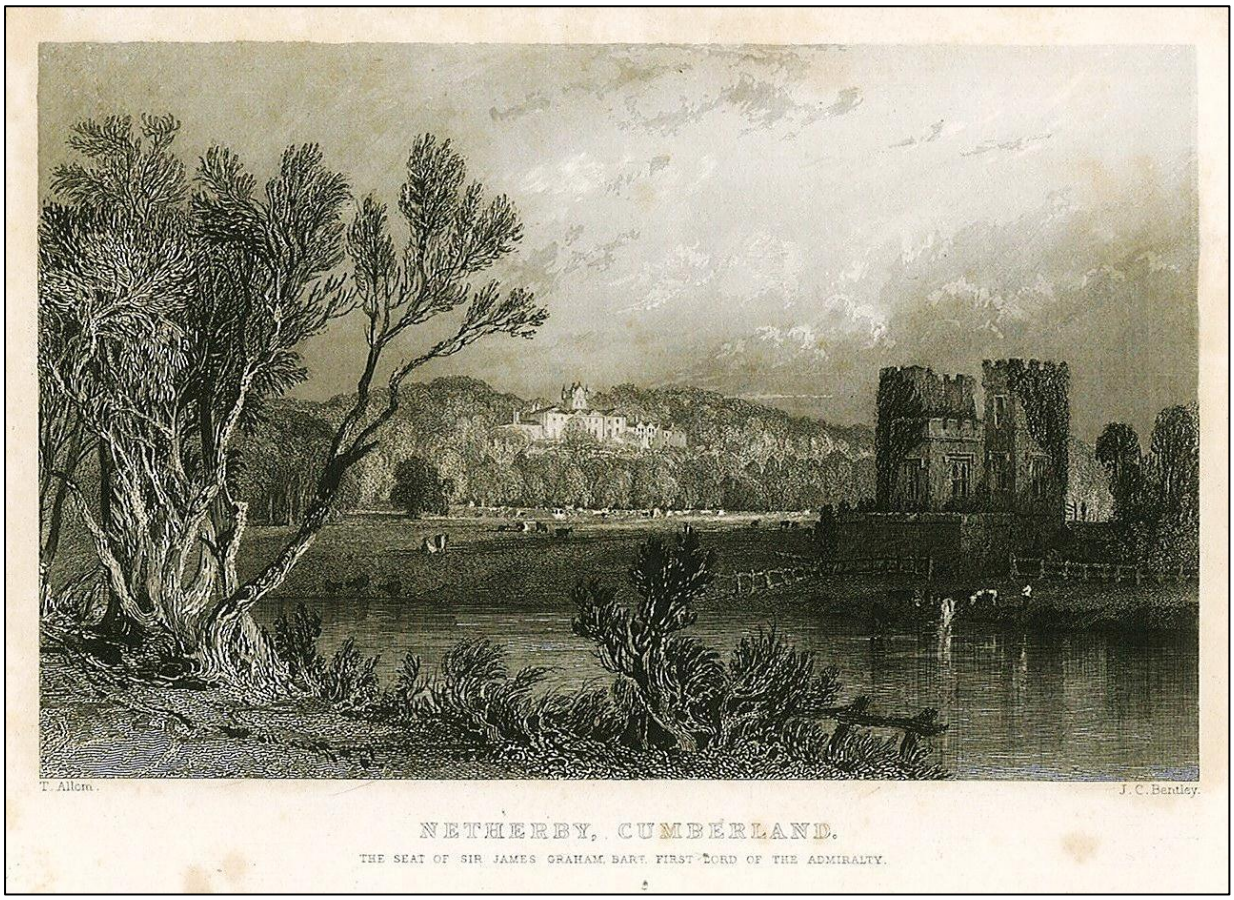
The first task was to clean up the site, clearing away weeds and the build-up of earth inside and out, and the next was to collect together all the fallen stones lying around, to reuse in rebuilding the central bay. A large tree had grown in the terrace wall in front of the house, and the roots had burst the stonework apart: the upper three courses of the parapet had therefore to be taken down and rebedded. The ground behind the wall was dug away to allow a damp-proof membrane to be laid round the bay, and finally the whole area was paved.

The walls of the bay still existed up to the window sills. The stone head of the central window was found, and one length of jamb. The rest were made to match in St Bees stone, the closest match available. Extra rubble stone for the walls came from the same quarry, as did the new coping stones for the crenellated parapet. These had all disappeared, but the design of the new ones was derived from an old engraving.

The whole building leans towards the river, but only on the west was there any sign of instability. The foundations on this side were therefore strengthened, and steel ties inserted to hold the front and back walls together. All the walls were repointed, and then the new roof could go on. The pockets of the old roof timbers were still visible, but to allow headroom for the new gallery planned to link the two turrets inside, the main roof was made with a flatter pitch than the old one. In the turrets new pitched roofs were formed, following the line of the 19th-century ones. Their eaves project slightly forward of the turret walls and so would have showed above the back parapet; there was, however, room to fit in a half-crenellation at each end, behind which the eaves could be hidden.

On the south a porch was added, with a similar profile to the old back kitchen. Inside, the original paving stones were uncovered beneath a layer of soil. They were carefully numbered and then lifted, so that a damp-proof membrane could be laid before they were put back. Matching second-hand stones were found for the ground-floor bedroom, and new ones for the porch. A fireplace was made where the Victorian range had been, with a new stone surround and a cleverly fitted fireback made by a Carlisle blacksmith, Byers Brothers.

All the joinery in the building is of course new. The construction of the staircase called for some ingenuity since none of the walls around it was straight: the newel post in fact acts as a fixed point for a tie holding the front wall. Kitchen and bathroom, and the services that make them work, are also new, all wires and pipes having been specially laid down the track or across the fields from the opposite direction. As a final flourish, the gallery was given a balustrade of suitably piscatorial design, made by a Dorset blacksmith, Francis Russell, with the Graham family crest adorning the porch to welcome Landmarkers.



Netherby Hall

Introduction

The Coop House is, firstly, a striking example of the kind of gothic pavilion with which Georgian gentlemen liked to adorn the landscape around their houses. A hint that it might have been part of something more lies in its name: according to the Oxford English Dictionary, a coop is a wickerwork basket used for catching fish, first heard of in the Middle Ages.

The Coop House, in fact, overlooked a rather more sophisticated system of fish traps than a set of baskets. It stands on a terrace in front of which a series of fish pens could be formed by fixing hurdles into a stone pavement. Next to these was a fish ladder, above which a great stone weir spanned the river. All this was built to take advantage of the plentiful salmon for which the Esk was well known.

The weir was first built in 1770 by Dr. Robert Graham, an improving landlord whose family had formed the Netherby estate soon after 1600, and whose descendants still own it today. It would seem logical that the Coop House was built at the same time. However, in 1772, Netherby was visited by the Rev. William Gilpin, a leader of Picturesque taste. When, in 1786, he published his *Observations on several parts of England, particularly the mountains and lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, he gave a long description of Netherby and the improvements made there by Dr. Graham, agricultural, social and ornamental. He talks about the weir, and the coops, but although he mentions the ornamental benefit in the landscape of the weir, in holding back the water to form a pool, he most surprisingly makes no mention of the Coop House itself. One can only assume that it was built after his visit, and before Dr. Graham's death in 1782.


Whistlebare Open
Cottages
Scotsdike
March-Bank Hotel
Lowmoat
Moat Wood
House
Bellfield
Carwinley High Bridge
Brunton Hill
Carwinley Low Bridge
Carwinley Mill
Carwinley
Hogknowe Bridge
Heatheryknowe
Hog Knowe
Inneybrae Wood
Red Cleugh
Browhead Wood
Millees
Thistle Viaduct
Dismantled Railway
Redbank Wood
Redbank Pond
Watch Hill Wood
Railway Cottages
MS
Susbension Bridge
Waxhirst Hill
Friar's Bush
Lockie's Wood
Friar's Burn
North Lodge
Glinger Burn
Glinger Wood
Dykeside
Aqueduct
Kirkandrews Tower
Glingerbank
Pit (dis)
Glinger Mill
Byer's Wood
Netherby on site of CASTRA EXPLORATORVM ROMAN FORT
COOPHOUSE
Cistern Wood
East Lodge
Cleughfoot
Cleughfoot Wood
Warren Bridge
Oakshaw Hill
Netherby Park
Redburn Burn
Redburn Bridge
Rob Haining Wood
Faulkland Wood
The Kennels
Glengarthe Resr
Croftheads Pond
Croftheads Wood
Red Turn
Croftheads
Slackbraes Wood
Low Plains
Moorhead Cottage
Lowplains Wood

The weir was destroyed in the 1780s, and was not rebuilt. The coops may have been used for holding farmed fish thereafter, but probably not for long. The Coop House became purely a riverside summerhouse.

During the 19th century the house was put to more practical use, being converted into an estate cottage for the river bailiff. The last inhabitants, who left in 1938, was the estate shepherd, with his wife and family. Thereafter the Coop House decayed until, in 1989, a neighbour suggested to Sir Charles Graham that Landmark might take it on, as it gladly did. The estate granted a lease in 1992 and work started in 1994. The architect was Rosalind Taylor of Stewart Tod and Partners of Edinburgh, the builders Laing North West. The building was furnished in May 1995.

An outline of Netherby's history

The Roman Fort

Substantial traces of an ancient settlement at Netherby were commented on by the traveller and writer William Leland in the reign of Henry VIII. Walls were still to be seen, evidence of 'marvelus buyldings' that once stood there. Later that century these walls were no doubt plundered to build the tower house which forms the core of the present Netherby Hall. In the 1760s, when laying out new pleasure grounds around the now enlarged house, many discoveries were made – fragments of carving and sculpture, coins and other treasures, even a bath, identifying this settlement as Roman.

Many of these finds have since been dated to the time of the Emperor Hadrian and the building of the great wall in the 120s AD. Netherby was in fact one of three outpost forts, built some miles north of the wall at its western end. It used to be thought that the purpose of these forts was to give early warning of raids, because the lie of the land allowed the wall itself only a limited outlook in this area. This theory has since been contradicted by D.J. Breeze and Brian Dobson in *Hadrian's Wall* (1976). They say that the job of giving early warning would have fallen to scouts. A more likely purpose for the outpost forts, therefore, was to protect an area belonging to a friendly tribe, the Brigantii, which had been isolated from their main lands to the south by the building of the wall.

In the 3rd century, Netherby was one of four outpost forts to be given a more important function. These now became the headquarters for advance garrisons, from which a wide sweep of land beyond the wall could be regularly patrolled. The aim seems to have been to intercept attackers before ever they reached the wall. These garrisons were manned by highly trained units of mixed cavalry and infantry, a thousand strong, most of whom would have been out on patrol at any one time. A cavalry exercise hall was built at Netherby at this time and it was described as a Castra Exploratum, 'of the scouts.'

As the tribes to the North became friendly to Rome, however, during the 4th century, the forts, and then the wall itself, were abandoned. The Netherby fort has not been excavated in modern times, but from earlier discoveries it appears to have consisted of the standard rectangular enclosure. Within this would have been the headquarters building and the commanding officer's house, both built, like the outer walls, of stone. Other buildings are more likely to have been timber – barrack blocks, hospital, stables, granaries and store rooms. There was also a temple, and in addition to the riding school, Netherby also boasted one of only five Hadrianic bath-houses on the wall.

Earlier Grahams

The story of the Grahams, good and not so good, and their part in the turbulent history of the 'Debateable Lands' on the borders of England and Scotland, is told with some gusto by Christopher Hussey in two articles on Netherby Hall in *Country Life*, published in January 1949. These articles make a good read, so the story is only summarised here - and a copy of the original provided.

The Grahams of Esk were an offshoot of the Scottish lowland clan of that name. They appeared south of the border in the later 15th century, a border that was still only loosely defined, in an area of mainly empty and unclaimed 'moss-lands.' Will Graham, from Dumfriesshire, established himself as laird or baron of Kirkandrews, on the north bank of the Esk. One of his sons was living at Netherby in 1528. Kinsmen followed, so that by 1552, the Grahams were said to occupy 13 tower-houses or peles in the area, along no doubt with many lesser dwellings. The authorities kept a wary eye on these unruly 'moss-troopers', whose allegiance lay equally with Scotland and England, allowing them to make raids on both with complete impartiality.

Lord Scrope, Warden of the Marches, reported in 1593 that the 'best Grahams' were those living on either side of the Esk. In 1596, however, Walter Graham of Netherby took part in an attack on Carlisle Castle, and on the accession of James VI of Scotland as king of England in 1603, he embarked, with a large band of his kin, on a raid which led to pillaging as far as Penrith. This was too much for the authorities, who rounded up some 150 Grahams and, in attempt to turn poachers into gamekeepers, sent them off to join the army. Before long most of them were back, misbehaving as much as ever, so in 1606 another cleaning-up operation was undertaken. This time they were sent to Connaught in Ireland, and seem to have stayed there.

The ancestor of the present Grahams of Netherby was the son of just one of a few lairds left, out of respect for their age, after the clearance. Richard Graham served at the Stuart court, and although he bought Norton Conyers in Yorkshire, his chief ambition seems to have been to reoccupy the lands on the Esk. These he bought bit by bit from the Earl of Cumberland, to whom the old Debateable Lands had been granted, until he owned the whole of the parishes of Arthuret and Kirkandrews, on either side of the river, and more besides. In 1629, King Charles made him a Baronet, Sir Richard Graham of Esk.

Sir Richard served the king during the Civil War, and his grandson, created Lord Preston by James II, also remained loyal to his monarch; Netherby was confiscated by William III as a result. Although restored to his son, he and the next Lord Preston seem to have lived mainly in Yorkshire, and Netherby was left largely to look after itself for the next 50 years or more.

Dr. Graham the improver

The 3rd Lord Preston died in 1738, in his early 30s and without children. His estates passed back a generation to his aunt, Lady Widdrington. She died in 1757, when she left Netherby to her first cousin, Rev. Dr. Robert Graham, Rector of Arthuret. It is possible that Dr. Graham was already living in Netherby Hall at the time of his inheritance, acting in effect as squarson, or squire and parson combined; and that his father, Rev. Dr. William Graham, Dean of Carlisle, had also lived there until his death in 1713. Christopher Hussey credits him with the introduction of some panelling.

As resident rector, Dr. Graham must have formed a clear idea of what needed doing to improve the lot both of the estate itself and of its tenants. The land was fertile but farmed unproductively, and the people were poor and uneducated. Over the next twenty-five years Dr Graham set about reversing this state, and thereby earned widespread praise. John Britton and Edward Brayley, in Volume III of *The Beauties of England and Wales*, published in 1802, went so far as to say that he 'may be considered as having been the principal cause of the flourishing state of this part of Cumberland.'

During his lifetime Dr. Graham was visited not only by Rev. William Gilpin but by the enquiring Welsh landowner and writer, Thomas Pennant. Both remarked on the earlier idleness and ignorance of the people, and the ill effects of absentee landlords. Gilpin describes how Dr. Graham set about curing both:

> *'Without the presence of the lord he knew it was in vain to expect reformation. He divided his land into moderate farms; and build commodious farm-houses. As his lands improved, he raised his rents: and his tenants in proportion found it necessary to increase their labour. Thus he has doubled his own income, and introduced the spirit of industry into the country.'*

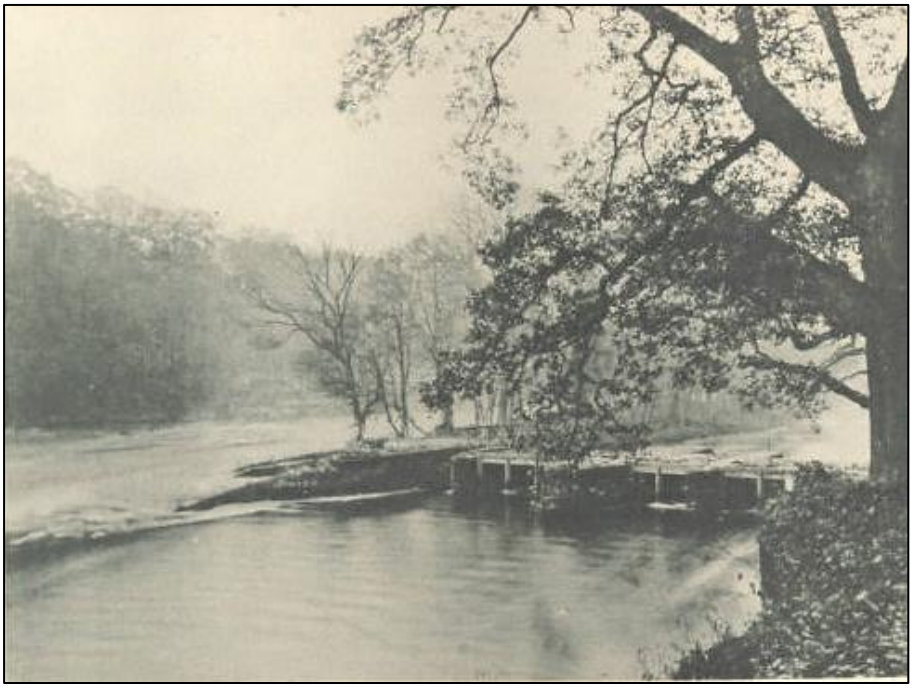
Pennant describes the tenants' discovery that 'much of their land was so kindly as to bear corn for many years successively without the help of manure.' Where it was not, it could be fertilised with lime. Thus, instead of being able barely to produce enough to feed themselves, they found themselves with a surplus to sell – and Dr. Graham built a small harbour at Sarkfoot to make such export possible.

Besides farm-houses he built schools and, whether by encouragement or more forcible means, persuaded his tenants to send their children, until he saw 'upwards of 500 young persons constantly instructed in them.' The social rewards of this were as great as the financial: one writer quoted by Britton and Brayley claims that the people 'were changed from loose and ignorant barbarians, ever quarrelsome and disorderly, into a peasantry, peaceful and regular; a peasantry, perhaps, more intelligent, and better educated, than most others in the island.'

Troubles on the Esk

These undoubted improvements were not achieved without setbacks. Dr. Graham admitted to Gilpin that he had to rule his 600 tenants with a rod of iron, using to the full the powers that a surviving feudal system allowed him.

Less predictable was a natural disaster that took place in 1771, when, after heavy rains, the liquid undersoil of Solway Moss, north of the Esk, burst through the surface and enveloped the mile-wide plain between it and the river with a thick coat of mud. According to Gilpin, some 28 farms and 500 acres of farmland were ruined, although Pennant, who also stayed at Netherby in 1772, paints a less stark picture, with reclamation already well advanced.



Salmon coops at Corby Castle,1904, from *Salmon and Sea Trout rivers of England and Wales*

Another of Dr. Graham's reverses concerned the salmon fishery that he set up in the Esk. The inspiration for this came probably from his neighbour and friend, Philip Howard of Corby Castle. There, on the river Eden, was the ancient fishery of Wetheral Priory, still in use then, as it is today. At Corby, the traps are strung across a channel formed where the river divides to flow round an island. Those at Netherby are more difficult to understand, mainly because they survive only as fragments, albeit impressive ones.

In 1989, in order to assess the stability of the foundations of the terrace on which the Coop House stands, the ground in front was dug away. A beautifully-constructed pavement was revealed, together with other foundations. Further large blocks of masonry could be seen strewn on the river bed. Archaeologists from the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME) came to make a survey of the whole before it was once again hidden by silt. The discovery of Gilpin's description of the fishery at the Coop House made the nature and date of these remains clear, and explained their incomplete survival:

> *'The works on the Esk ... consisted of a massy head thrown across the river, constructed, at a great expence, of hewn stone. This mole was formed at right angles to the bank; but the floods of the ensuing winter swept it way. It was attempted a second time on the same plan; but a second time destroyed. Mr. Brindley was then sent for, whose works near Manchester had given him a high reputation. He changed the plan; and instead of carrying the mole in a direct line across the river, formed it in a curve, arching against the stream: so that it resists the current, as a bridge does the incumbent weight. This work has stood several very great floods, and seems sufficiently firm...The chief end which this work had in view, was a fishery. At this place salmon coops are placed; where all the fish, which enter the Esk, are taken.'*

Before he went to press in 1786, however, Gilpin added in a note that he had heard that Brindley's weir too had perished when, ice on the river having started to melt and break up, a quantity of it had built up against this obstruction. Some of it lay against the foundations and 'being pressed on with a continued accession of strength, acted like a wedge, and the whole blew up.'

Since he died in 1782, poor Dr. Graham presumably did not see the final collapse of his scheme. It was he, however, who had to deal with the first repercussion of his new fishery – its threatened destruction by some 300 Scottish borderers, who marched on Netherby as soon as they learned the reason for the sudden scarcity of salmon upriver. Hearing of their approach, Dr. Graham immediately called his own tenants to arms. The Scots were met at the gates of Netherby by a force of 400, wielding whatever weapons came to hand. 'And if the Scotch' says Mr Gilpin, 'on finding such superiority, had not retreated, Mr. Graham, who told us the story himself, said he believed, that all the spirit and animosity of ancient times would have revived on this occasion.'

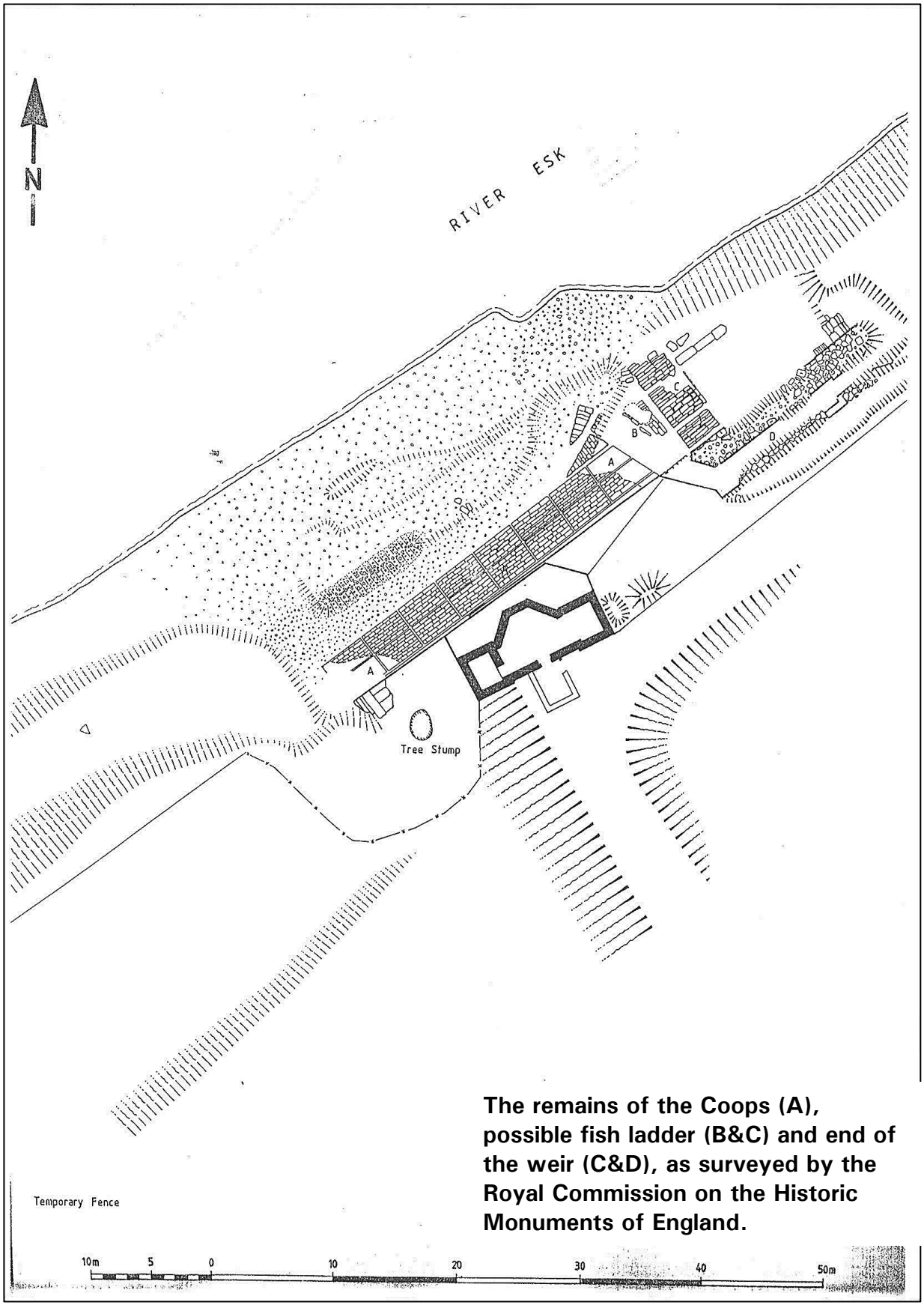
This not being ancient times, however, Dr. Graham consented to make 'reparation' to the Scots – perhaps in the form of a fish ladder or free passage to allow some of the salmon to escape into their hands. That these existed in serious numbers is shown by a family story: in the 1780s Sir James Graham took enough fish to put £50 in his pocket, at the price of 6d a pound.

The coops at Netherby lie in the pavement in front of the Coop House, which contains grooves to allow hurdles to be fixed in place, forming sixteen pens. Since these lie alongside the flow, however, rather than across it, it is hard to see how the fish could have been persuaded to enter. RCHME suggests that they were not in fact traps at all, but holding pens for the full-grown fish caught in the river, or breeding tanks for raising small fish or fry.

The foundations of what seems to be a clear channel, probably leading to a ladder or free passage up the weir, run past the coops; the weir itself presumably stood above, ending in the bank north of the present terrace. There may have been fixings for further coops across the river, but all traces of them have disappeared, or lie hidden.

Gilpin was quick to point out other advantages of Mr Brindley's weir: 'From the curvature of its form the fall of the water appears also to more advantage. It now forms a semi-circular cascade, which has a good effect.' The whole structure, moreover, 'adds great beauty to the neighbourhood. The Esk, which was before in comparison, a shallow stream, gliding unseen beneath its banks, is now a noble piece of water, raised to a level with them, and seen to great advantage from the house and every part of the ground.'

Dr. Graham had taken trouble to surround his newly-enlarged house with fine pleasure grounds – apparently, according to family history, on the advice of Philip Howard. This included the removal of a small hill which blocked the view of the river. It is hard to believe that he did not complete the distant scene with the little red sandstone Coop House, to complement the old keep of Kirkandrews and the newly-fronted church on the far bank of the Esk.



The remains of the Coops (A), possible fish ladder (B&C) and end of the weir (C&D), as surveyed by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England.

The Coop House

As well as being an ornament in the landscape, the Coop House made a vantage point for watching the salmon fishery, for enjoying the sight of water cascading over the weir and fish leaping in the opposite direction. There may, too, have been practical advantages in providing a shelter above the coops for a bailiff to keep watch for poachers.

The argument for dating it to after 1772 relies on Gilpin's failure to mention the building. This might of course be no more than an oversight on his part. The building stands on the long terrace associated with the coops, and the central part of this has been built up, to support the central room. The raised section and the Coop House are clearly contemporary. Whether the raised section and the wall beneath are also contemporary is more difficult to say. The masonry of the retaining walls at both levels certainly looks the same, but the upper part could still be an addition if the one followed the other fairly quickly and was built by the same men. Perhaps those avid improvers, Messrs. Gilpin and Pennant, planted the idea in Dr. Graham's mind when they visited in 1772, and it went up that year or the next. No mention has been found of the name of its designer.

As first built, the Coop House was little more than a belvedere of one room, its projecting bay taking full advantage of the view up and down the river. There was no fireplace, and it was entered directly from outside, through the arched south door. Each turret had a tall room on the ground floor, with a smaller space above. That on the west had an unlit basement room as well. Curiously, on the ground floor, the south and west windows of the west turret were blocked from the beginning with a slab of stone, while in the little room above, all three windows were blocked in this way. There is no sign that the fourth, inward-facing side of either of the turrets was originally built in stone, although the evidence for an upper room is there both in the windows and in the sockets for the timbers supporting what was then a flat roof. Perhaps their inner walls were

made of wood and plaster and these upper rooms were simply used for storage, reached by a ladder – there is no sign of more substantial stairs.

With the failure of the weir, much of the point of the Coop House would have been lost. It might still have come in useful for a base for fishing expeditions, or for the river bailiff, and even for the occasional picnic. The likelihood is that from the later 1780s it mostly stood empty.

Later Grahams

Dr. Robert Graham had married a cousin, Frances Graham, from Norton Conyers. Their son James was made a baronet in 1783, soon after his father's death, and also his own marriage to Lady Catherine Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Galloway. A kind, devout and possibly formidable woman, she seems to have taken greater care of the wellbeing of her husband's tenants than he did of the land itself. His father's tremendous works had left the estate heavily in debt, and Sir James did not succeed in rescuing it. It appears, indeed, that it slid back into something approaching the state it was in in 1757.

The task of revival was left to the next Sir James. He was set on a political career, as a reforming Whig. Unfortunately, his father was a Tory and refused to finance his first steps. His election as MP for Hull in 1818 cost him £6,000, which he had to borrow. Another election following only two years later, he looked around for a cheaper seat, and found it in St. Ives in Cornwall. But here, some of the electors contested the result, and the cost of defending himself was too much. He retired to Cumberland, and took on the management of the estate from his father. His entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (drawn largely from his biography by Torrens) claims that 'this retirement was of great service to him', giving him valuable experience of land management. Like his grandfather, he set about modernising cottages and houses, uniting small farms to make larger and more profitable ones, improving stock and planting woods – 'throughout his life he continued to be a model of an improving landlord.'

After his father's death in 1824, he went back into politics, serving as an MP from 1826 until his death in 1861. He sat on the committee which drew up the 1832 Reform Bill, was twice Lord of the Admiralty (once during the earlier part of the Crimean War) and, having moved to the Tory party, was Sir Robert Peel's Home Secretary in the 1840s. Capable and conscientious, his greatest drawback was a haughty manner which set up the backs of many who might have been his

Netherby, Cumberland with Coop House on the River Esk. Pencil drawing with touches of white by L Rothwell, 1851

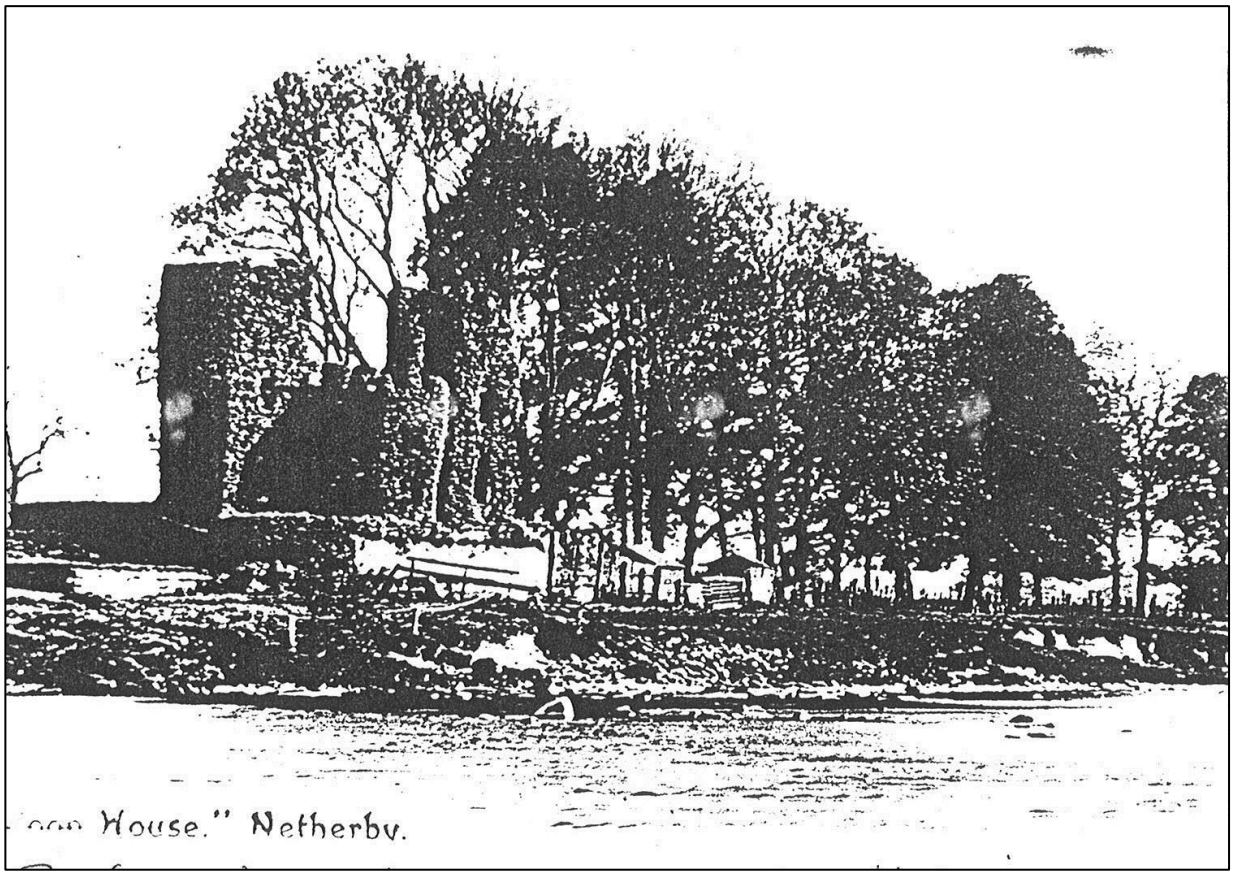
supporters. The DNB concludes that polished speaker and able administrator though he was, 'he was too self-conscious in all he did to be a great statesman.'

At Netherby, his most notable work was to commission that prolific baronialiser, William Burn, to enlarge the Hall in 1833, and romanticise its skyline. This was only right for the home of a friend of Sir Edwin Landseer, and even more so for the poetic setting of the wedding of 'Fair Ellen Graham', from which the bride was carried off by no less a gallant than Young Lochinvar. It is thought that Sir Walter Scott himself gave Sir James the manuscript copy of *The Ballad of Young* Lochinvar, which was still at Netherby in 1949.

Sir James was succeeded by his eldest son, Sir Frederick, 3rd Baronet, who died in 1888. Three more generations have followed, mainly landowners and county magnates, only the 5th Baronet standing as an MP. The family has adapted itself to changing circumstances with foresight and ingenuity: David Cannadine in *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (1990) quotes them as an example of landowners who took the necessary steps for survival in the disastrous period of falling agricultural rents at the turn of the 19th century. Cannadine describes how many landowners at this time found themselves without the means to finance large debts incurred by capital expenditure or family settlements in more prosperous times, let alone to support themselves and their large families and great houses. Instead they faced a choice of ever-increasing debt or of selling up. At the same time, however, new opportunities for profitable investment were to be found away from the land, for those who were able to take advantage of them:

> *'Some middling landowners were able to increase their gross income, and reduce their outgoings, even in such unpropitious times. They would be lesser men as landowners, and might find that the majority of their income was now coming from the stock exchange; but that was the price of survival. The Grahams of Netherby illustrate this well. They owned 26,000 acres of Cumberland, where were carrying debts of £275,000. Between 1882 and 1905, the gross rent fell by more than 25 per cent, from £26,718 to £20,000. In the years immediately before 1914, half the estate was sold, the debt was reduced by 40 per cent, and the remainder was invested in shares. The result was that the Grahams' net income*

actually rose from £14,000 to £16,000. In more recent times, it has been Netherby Hall that has been sold, the family falling back on a dower house and the old Kirkandrews tower, to which Will Graham came some 500 years ago. The estate and the Grahams go on.'



The Coop House in about 1900, when lived in.

The Coop House domesticated

It may have been Sir James, or his son, Sir Frederick, who decided to turn the Coop House into a cottage. This seems to have happened in the mid to late 19th century and called for various alterations.

Firstly, a small open coal range was installed under the middle window of the main room, which was then blocked. In the turrets, the ceilings of the ground floor rooms were lowered, to make space for bedrooms above. These now had pitched roofs which cut across the front and back windows; the ones in the east turret were therefore blocked up, as those in the west turret had been from the beginning. New windows overlooking the river were made instead, interrupting the projecting string course. On the other side, an extra room was added, in front of the old main door, and built of brick. A new front door was made in the east side of this addition.

The adapted Coop House was lived in by a succession of estate workers, the last of whom, in the 1930s, was Mr. Smith. One of his sons, Mr. John Smith, still lives in Longtown and has told us about his family's life there, and the arrangement of the cottage at that time.

The Smiths moved to the Coop House in 1931. Mr. Smith was shepherd to Mr. Irving, a sheep farmer who rented the Netherby Farm, and he took the cottage on from the previous shepherd. When Mr. Irving gave up the tenancy, Sir Fergus Graham took the farm in hand and Mr. Smith stayed on as manager. The farm made such good profits on sheep and cattle that Sir Fergus offered him a bonus of 2 per cent, payable at Christmas.

The Smiths raised five children in the Coop House. There were four bedrooms, two in each tower. John and his brother slept in the top room in the east tower, reached by a fixed ladder. It was quite a squash with two beds in it. There must have been a fireplace, because he remembers waking once to see two huge eyes

staring at him in the dark – an owl had fallen down the chimney. In front of the main door was a paved area which the children had to keep weeded and tidy. The added room was a back kitchen or scullery. Turning right through this, you entered the main living room through the original main door, with the range opposite you on the front wall. The windows either side had small panes of glass. The building was much overgrown with ivy. Mr. Smith used to feed a few leaves of this to sick sheep and they quickly got better.

On the west of the house was a small yard, with a pig-house for two pigs, a cow byre and hen house. It was surrounded by a stout fence, and when the river was in flood, they shut the door on that side to keep the water out. The cow grazed in a meadow fenced off from the park, which also provided a crop of hay. There was also a small vegetable garden, and John kept a few pigeons. As the eldest, it was also his job to fetch the water from the well, which was nearly 250 yards away. It seemed a very long way, carrying two heavy buckets. Sometimes, he would find a frog in one of them.

The park of Netherby was then all one open area of 172 acres, not divided into fields as now. The children used to earn a shilling an acre cutting thistles. When they were given their money at the twice-yearly pay day, their mother would take them to Carlisle to buy clothes. The Irish used to bring cattle over to be sold in a market on the sands at Carlisle, and John used to earn a shilling by driving them the 8 miles or more back to Netherby. John also used to help his father spread lime on the fields and earn a little that way too. All the children helped with jobs.

The children went to school in Longtown. In winter they went over the swing bridge by Kirkandrews church and up to the road to catch the bus. In summer, they would take off their shoes and socks and walk down the river bed to catch the bus further along. Every Sunday they went to church and Sunday school at Kirkandrews church. John was in the choir. The parson used to allow him to fish from the churchyard, which was not estate property – the river bailiff lived in Kirkandrews Tower, so they didn't dare fish anywhere else.

At this time, life at Netherby Hall was still in full swing, with lots of staff, beautifully-kept gardens and stables full of horses. The Grahams were very good landlords, 'proper gentry.' When John's four-year-old brother was ill with meningitis, Lady Graham would regularly bring soup and fruit for him during the six weeks he stayed at home, before being taken to Carlisle Hospital, where he died. Many years later, when Mr. Smith died, and Lady Graham was an old lady, she gave the family sherry in the Hall after the funeral.

The Smiths left the Coop House in about 1938 to live in a larger house; five growing children made it just too small. To have a house with a road running to it seemed like heaven, said John. The years at the Coop House were very happy ones, though; he remembers it as a lovely place to live.

Before restoration in 1989

The Restoration of the Coop House

Although Landmark agreed to take on the Coop House in 1989, and did some preliminary investigations and salvage work, there was some delay before the restoration was carried out. This was partly because the lease for the building itself, and the agreement with the estate for extending an existing farm track to provide access to it, were not finally completed until 1992.

Further delay followed because, at that time, Landmark had many other buildings under repair, and both staff and finances were at full stretch. Only in 1994 was there space in the programme to fit in the Coop House. Further encouragement came with a grant of £50,000 from the Esmee Fairbairn Trust to put towards the work. A low interest loan from the Architectural Heritage Fund also helped, as did a substantial grant for the repairs from English Heritage. More unusual support came from a generous couple who asked their friends to contribute to the building fund, instead of giving them a wedding present.

Work started in August 1994. The architect was Rosalind Taylor, daughter and partner of Stewart and Vivienne Tod, who have restored buildings in Scotland and the Borders for Landmark since the early 1970s. The builders were the north-west division of Laings, under foreman Philip Hingley.

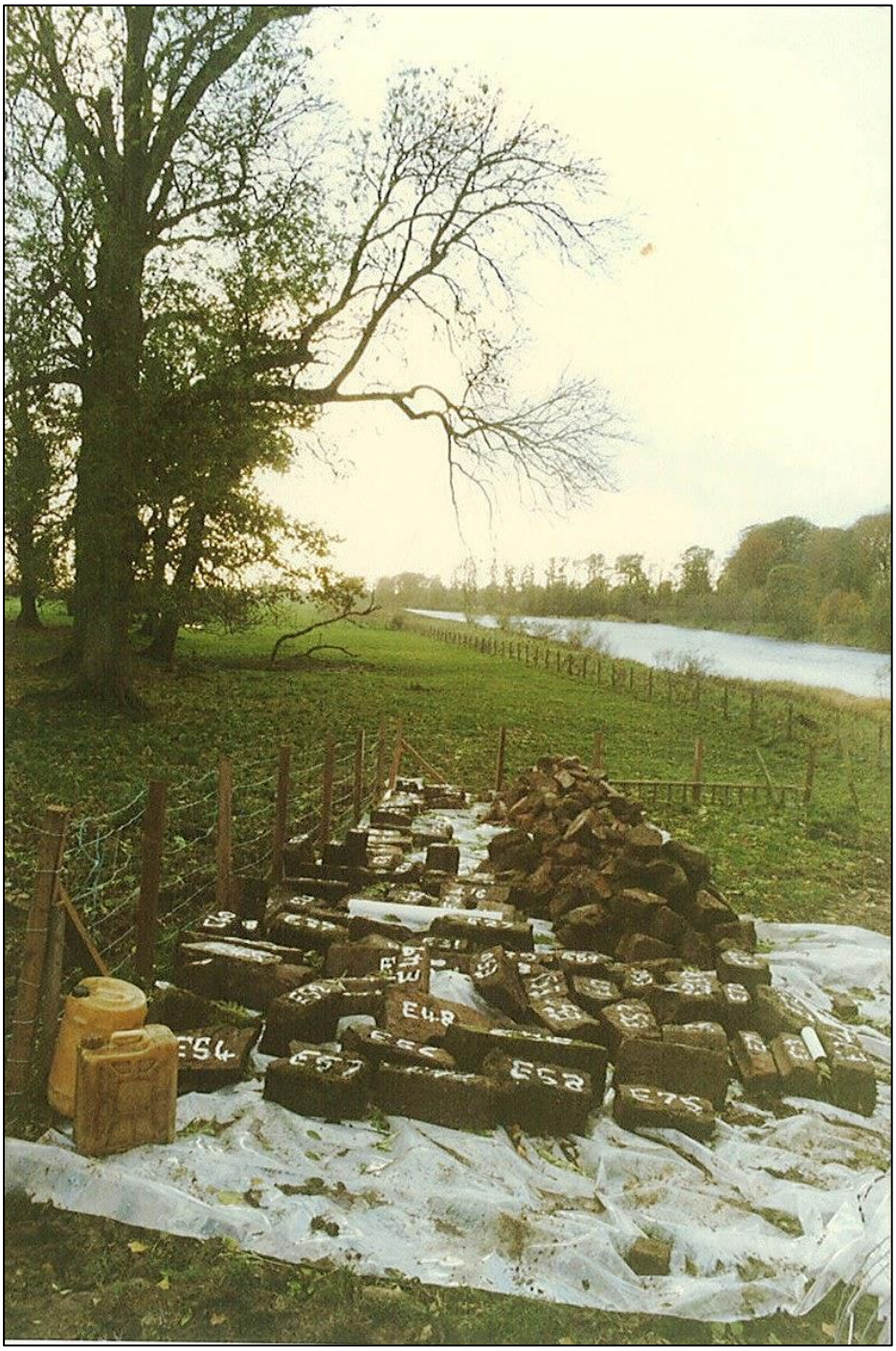
The first task was to clean up the site, clearing away weeds and the build-up of earth inside and out. The next was to collect together all the fallen stones lying around, to use in rebuilding the central bay. In the terrace wall in front, a large tree had been growing. This had been cut away in 1989, but the stump was left and the roots had burst the stonework apart, raising the parapet level considerably at this end. The upper three courses of the whole parapet had to be taken down, therefore, and rebedded. The ground behind the wall was dug away too to allow a damp proof membrane to be laid around the bay. Finally the whole area was paved at the correct level for both parapet and building.

The excavated platforms for the coops, since covered over.

The west turret

Excavating the bay.

The front parapet as damaged by a tree stump.



Salvaged stonework

The walls of the bay existed up to the window sills. Luckily the head of the central window was found, and one length of jamb. The rest were made to match in St Bees stone, which proved closest to the original. Extra rubble stone for the walls came from the same quarry, as did the new coping stones for the crenellated parapet. These had all disappeared, but the design of the new ones was derived from an old engraving.

The walls throughout the building were repointed with a mix of lime and local sand. The whole building leans towards the river, but only on the west was there any sign of instability. The foundations on this side were strengthened and steel ties inserted to hold front and back walls together with the walls fully repaired, the new roof could go on. The pockets of the old roof timbers could still be seen, but to allow headroom for the inside gallery planned to link one turret to the other, the main roof was made with a flatter pitch than before. It is covered with steel sheeting, and has hidden gutters behind the parapets, draining into water spouts.

In the turrets, new pitched roofs were formed, following the line of the 19th-century ones, and covered with old Burlington slate. Their eaves project slightly forward of the turret walls themselves and so would have showed above the back parapet. Happily, there was just room to fit a half crenellation at each end, behind which the eaves could be hidden.

All those windows found blocked were left like that, except for the south one in the new kitchen, the lower half of which was opened up. The rest were given an external coat of lime render to blend in with the walls. On the south elevation, a porch was added, echoing the former back kitchen. It has the same profile, but is otherwise an entirely new design, built mainly of oak.

Salvaged stonework

Inside, the original paving stones were uncovered beneath a layer of soil. These were carefully numbered and then lifted, so that a damp-proof membrane could be laid, before they were put back. Matching second-hand stones were found for the ground floor bedroom, and new ones for the porch. The central window of the bay was rebuilt in its original form.

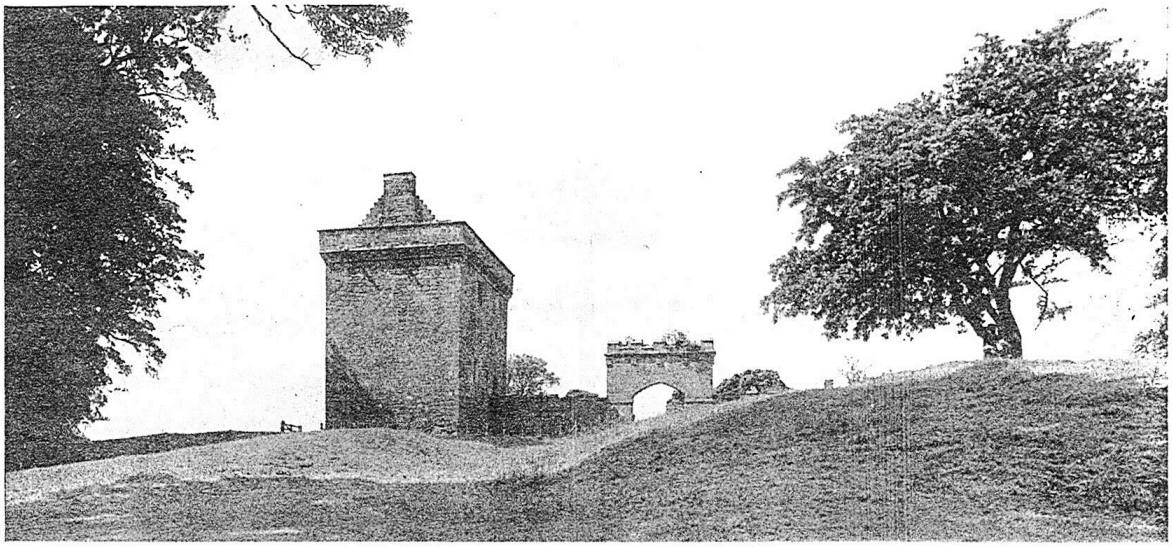
It goes without saying that all the joinery in the building is new: sash windows, doors, floors and stair, mainly in red pine. The stair called for some ingenuity when setting it out, none of the walls around it being upright. The newel post in fact acts as a fixed point for a tie holding the front wall. Kitchen and bathroom, and the services to make them work, are also new, all wires and pipes having to be specially laid down the track or across the fields from the opposite direction. The kitchen shelf and worktop are beech. As a final flourish, the gallery was given a balustrade of suitably piscatorial design, made by a Dorset blacksmith, Francis Russell; while the Graham family crest adorns the front of the porch.

The raised ground level in front of the bay (left). The paving stones in the main room, numbered ready for lifting (right)

A surviving window sill

Clearing away soil in front of the terrace in 1989, to discover the state of the foundations – what this revealed was the platforms on which the coops could be fixed.

During restoration in 1994 – soil has built up again to hide the coops.



1.—KIRKANDREWS TOWER. Facing Netherby across the Esk and a typical Graham stronghold

NETHERBY HALL, CUMBERLAND—I

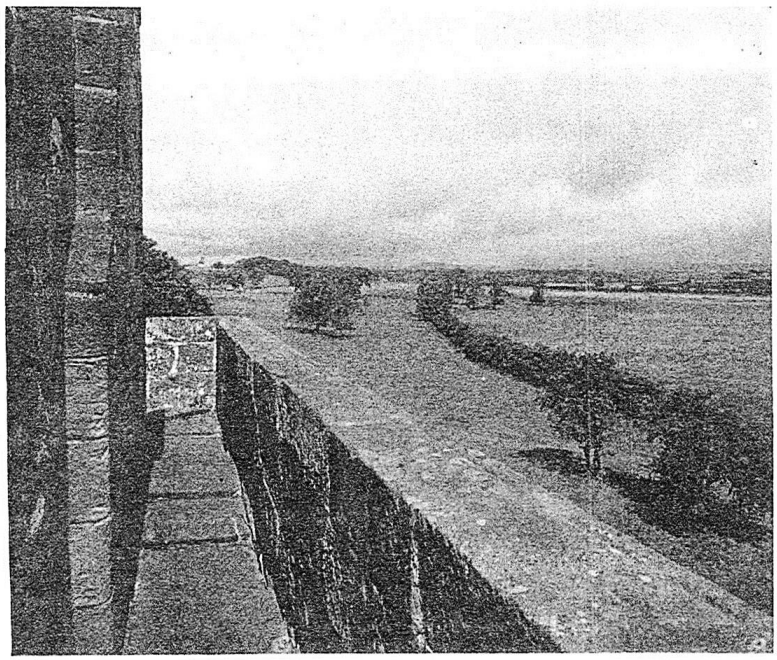
THE HOME OF SIR FERGUS GRAHAM, BT.

By CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY

The Border Tower of the Grahams of Netherby, a clan that established themselves in the no-man's-land between the two kingdoms during the 15th century, is the nucleus of the existing Hall rebuilt c. 1770 and again by William Burn, c. 1840

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan,
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran . . .
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?
—*Marmion*, Canto v, st. 12.

NETHERBY HALL, transformed to Waverley's pattern of chivalrous architecture, stands within a field's width of the swift Esk, natural boundary of England and Scotland at the Solway end of the Marches. On the steep opposite bank of the noble river is Kirkandrews Tower, such a pele as Netherby was, and indeed still embodies among Jacobean, Georgian and Victorian additions. And northwards of Kirkandrews, stretching west to Solway and north-east towards Canonbie and Liddlesdale, between Esk and Sark, stretch the Debateable Lands wherein, Sir Walter notwithstanding, lie the sources of the "true romance," the turbulent history of the Grahams of Netherby.



2.—ESKDALE, FROM THE RAMPART OF KIRKANDREWS TOWER

Both kingdoms laid claim to these mainly low, anciently no-man's, moss lands, though from 1450 a series of agreements sought to preserve them as "international common." This good-neighbourly arrangement might have continued had not, towards the end of that century, the chief of the Scottish lowland clan of Greyme, Graem, or Graham, hard pressed by powerful neighbours of his home in Drysdale, Dumfriesshire, occupied the vacant "barony" of Kirkandrews, titularly a possession of his oppressors, the Douglas, but in fact within the Debateable Lands (as they were now beginning to be called). This Scottish immigrant, traditionally known as Will o' the Bright Sword or Lang Will, was the ancestor of the English border Grahams, moss-troopers, who within less than a century had come to constitute a tactical and social problem to the Tudor Government.

It is not till 1528 that the public records of England bear witness to the clan's presence, but in that year Arthur, one of Lang Will's sons, was in possession of Netherby, which lies on the left bank of the Esk opposite Kirkandrews, and together with his brothers appealed for redress against the Scots who had lately burned the village of Netherby. In the nigh bloodless debacle of the Scottish army at Solway Moss in 1542 (which took place at Arthuret, just south of Longtown and Netherby) the clan contributed 200 lances to the small English force. By 1552 a "plott" depicts 13 "stone-houses, towers," or peles in the neighbourhood as belonging to the Grahams, and in 1593 Lord Scrope, Warden of the English Marches, wrote a report to Lord Burghley analysing the situation that had arisen. He described the Western Marches as now containing a quantity of "tenants," chiefly Grahams and Armstrongs, who were "able border men if they were well governed, but under no government except the warden." Owing, by

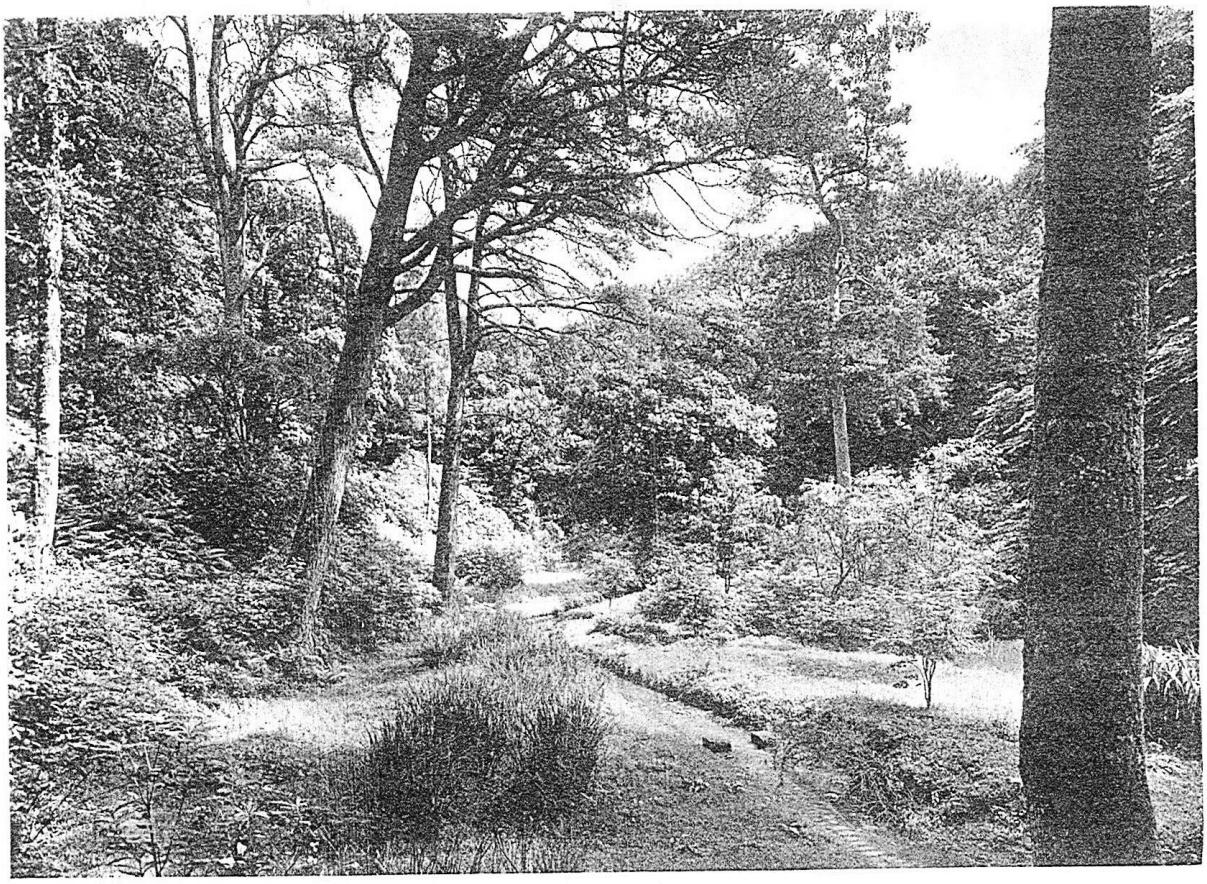
the peculiarity of their tenure, allegiance to no subordinate officer, there was, he found, difficulty in applying discipline to them in the absence of the Warden himself:

> Upon both sides of the river Esk dwelleth the best Grahams, whose service might be acceptable if they were restrained in some sort. These Grahams are not so dangerous to England as others are, but they ride still in Scotland. There is many of them.

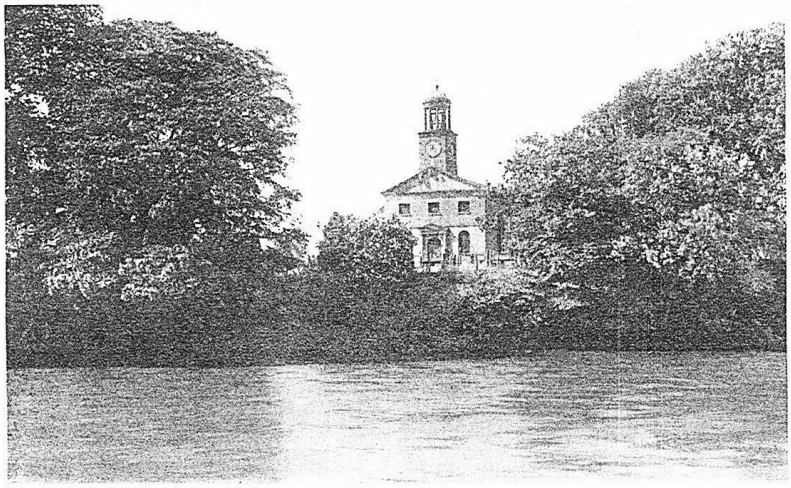
Three years later, headed by Walter of Netherby, the less good Grahams gave their services to Buccleuch in a daring Scottish raid on Carlisle Castle to rescue Kinmont Willie. Then in 1603, misliking the prospect of the union of the Crowns, and persuaded that until James VI was crowned in London the laws of the kingdom were in abeyance, Walter of Netherby with 80 Grahams launched themselves on a pillaging foray, penetrating as far south as Penrith. A hundred and fifty of them were rounded up and transported to garrison Flushing and Brill; Netherby was occupied by the provost marshal of Carlisle; but within two years most of them had filtered back, riding about in small armed bands. In 1606 the Border Commissioners were ordered to clean up Eskdale finally, and 114 Grahams with 45 horses were transported in six ships to Dublin and sent to Connaught. Between the rivers Line and Sark "not more than three Grahams of ability," two of whom were over eighty years of age, were left. Walter of Netherby, Jock of the Lake, Jock of Peartree, Rob of the Bush, saw their towers no more, though a few tombstones of half a century later show that one or two retired "Lieutenant Colonels" found their ways home to be buried beside the Esk.

3.—NETHERBY HALL, THE EAST, ENTRANCE, FRONT

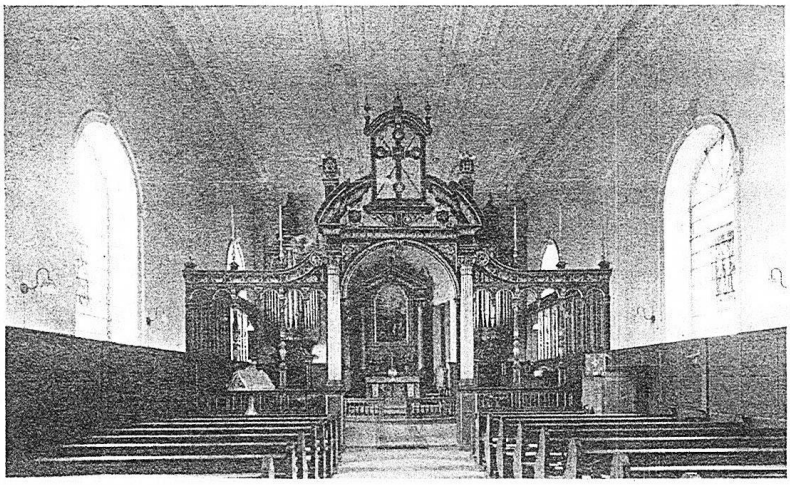
Kirkandrews Tower (Fig. 1), the home of one Tom Graham, though somewhat restored, survives as an example of these houses of strength in the Debateable Lands, with its three storeys, battlemented walk, and stable in the ground storey. The earlier Graham and Armstrong holds seem to have been partly of timber (and probably dry stone) since Lord Dacre, reporting the destruction in 1528 of "Ill Will" Armstrong's, described it as so constructed that it could not be burnt until it



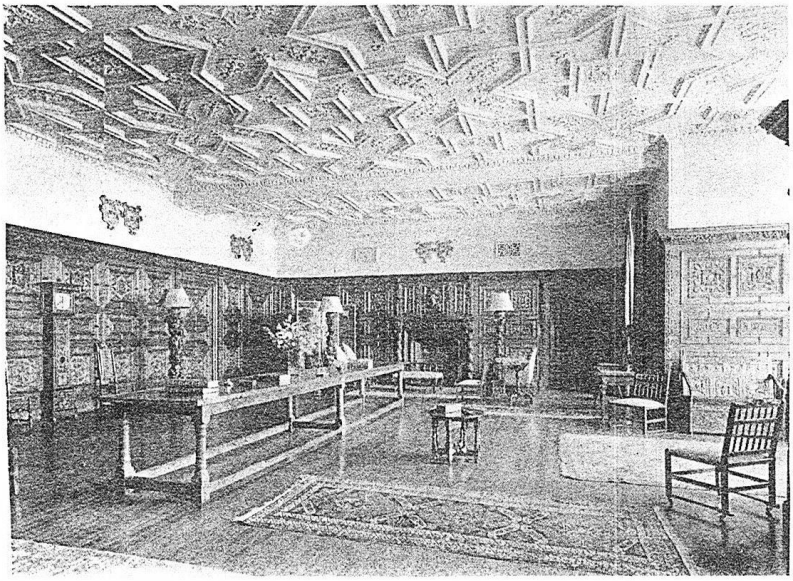
4.—A GLADE IN THE WOODLAND GARDEN. Formed *c.* 1800 among the hillocks of the Roman castrum



5.—KIRKANDREWS CHURCH, 1637 AND GEORGIAN



6.—TEMPLE MOORE'S SCREEN AND REREDOS, KIRKANDREWS



7.—THE HALL, NETHERBY. William Burn, *c.* 1840; lined with carved Flemish panelling

had first been cut down with axes. Lockwood Tower, Dumfriesshire, however, captured in 1547, is described as "a fair large tower with a barnekin, hall, kitchen, and stables all within the barnekin," the tower with a wooden and an iron door. Brackenhill, another of the Grahams' towers, bears the date 1586, and is of the Kirkandrews type, to which probably that of Netherby also belonged.

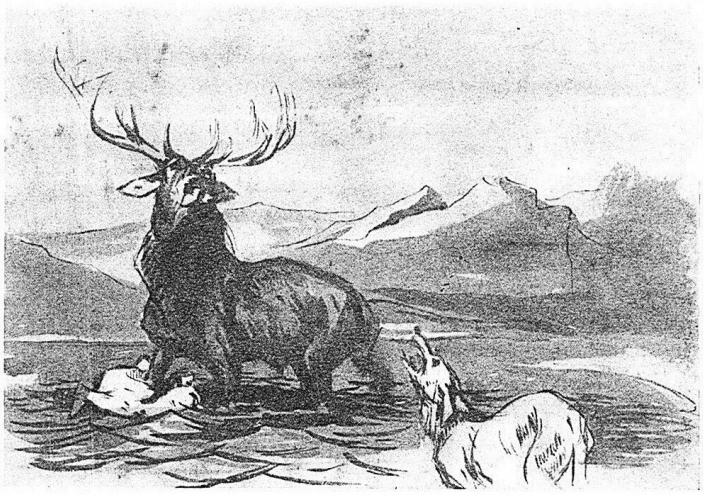
Netherby Tower had no doubt been largely built from the walls of the Roman castrum near which it stood. Gibson's *Camden* (1719) noted a stone inscribed to the Emperor Hadrian built into the walls; and the *Britannia* itself tells how

> There hath been marvelus buildings as appear by ruinus walls; and men alive have seen ringes and staples in the walls as it had been stayes or holdes for ships. . . . The grass groweth now in the ruins of the walls.

In the making of the 18th century pleasure grounds a bath and hypocaust were discovered together with numerous sculptured stones, bronzes and coins, including some of the 1st century, which are preserved in the Hall (Figs. 10 and 11). The site is now regarded as that of the *Castrum Exploratorum*, an advance station some seven miles beyond the Wall, to the position of which, as noted in the Second Itinerary of Antoninus, it corresponds.

After the expatriation of the Grahams of Esk, the Debateable Lands, 8,400 acres in all, were granted to the Earl of Cumberland at a fee-farm rent of £150. Of the old lairds, Fergus Graham of the Plump—a holding in the middle of the Lands—remained unmolested. His second son, Richard, leaving behind him the rough habits of the Border, though carrying with him its chivalry, appears about 1625 at Whitehall as the special protégé of the two most powerful men of the day—Buckingham and Mentieth. To the latter he was a very distant kinsman, for the Grahams of Esk were from their first appearance in the Marches acknowledged to be descendants, and that probably in the senior line, of the Scottish Lowland Grahams from whom sprang the houses of Montrose and Mentieth. By 1622, Richard had bought Norton Conyers in Yorkshire, in 1626 was Member for Carlisle, having already accompanied Prince Charles and Buckingham, as Gentleman of the Horse, on their nuptial reconnaissance to Madrid. There is a story that, encountering a herd of goats, Richard suggested that, to supplement the Spanish meat ration, "he would snap up a kid," on which the Prince is supposed to have said, "Come, come, Dick! None of your Border tricks!" By successive purchases from the second Earl of Cumberland, he bought back Netherby and the whole parishes of Arthuret and Kirkandrews with part of Bewcastle, for which the King reduced the fee-farm, and in 1629 was raised to the baronetage as Sir Richard Graham of Esk. There is preserved in a chest at Netherby, in connection with these purchases, "A Trew Plat of the Debate" (i.e. of the Lands) 27 by 53 inches, which appears to have been unknown to the leading authorities on this Anglo-Scottish saga (T. H. B. Graham in *Transactions* of the C. and W. A. and A. S., and *Victoria County History, Cumberland*, Vol. II). True to the Graham tradition, Sir Richard followed his King to Edgehill, where he was severely wounded, and remained near him throughout the Civil War, dying in 1653. Before the wars he had, in 1637, rebuilt Kirkandrews Church (Fig. 5), though its charming west front, seen across the Esk, looks as though it were refaced by Dr. Robert Graham to whose remarkable rehabilitation of the

8.—SIR WALTER SCOTT'S MS. OF *YOUNG LOCHINVAR*



9.—SEPIA SKETCH BY SIR E. LANDSEER

then derelict house and lands of Netherby in the late 18th century further allusion will be made next week.

The interior has been charmingly refurnished from Temple Moore's designs at the end of the last century. Sir Richard must also have reconstructed the house abutting on the family tower, but his Carolean work was engulfed or overlaid in the course of the 18th-century Georgian alterations and those effected about 1840 by William Burn for the Doctor's remarkable grandson, Sir James Graham, Bt.

It is the spirit of Young Lochinvar's author that inspires the red sandstone turrets of the long east range of the house (Fig. 3) stretching either side of the entrance. This is contained in the base of the octagonal tower added by Burn to one corner of the 16th-century pele, the pinnacles and bows of which conceal its antiquity. But its high gabled roof may well reproduce its original sky-line. The large hall adjoining the tower southwards was panelled with old Flemish carved oak depicting Scriptural and Pastoral scenes dated 1680 and brought to Netherby by Dr. William Graham in Queen Anne's time. Thus transformed it is the setting in which the Graham of the ballad, seeing how

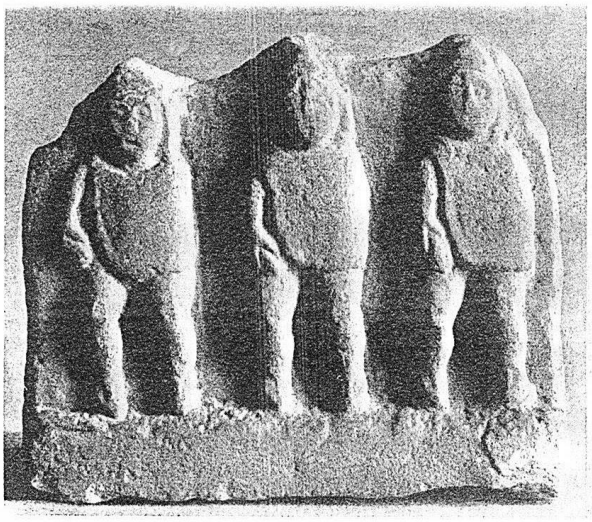
So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall
Among brides-men and kinsmen and brothers all,
(*Cried*) *"O come ye in peace or come ye in war,*
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

Though there may have been no Lochinvar and no Graham at Netherby with whose daughter to elope, at the date implied, there, in a case, is Scott's manuscript of the famous ballad, signed and dated January 3, 1808, and illustrated by Daniel Terry at Scott's home, Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest, in October, 1811.* The same echoes sound from the sepia sketch by Sir James Graham's friend, Sir Edwin Landseer (Fig. 9).

Indeed a grand and bracing air blows throughout this Cumberland borderland. The Debateable Lands (Fig. 2) smile now, thanks to the Doctor and his grandson's agricultural feats; and the quarried, tumulous, site of Roman Netherby was converted by them, with now spectacular beeches and firs, azaleas and rhododendrons, quaint moss-houses, and all the art of the picturesque, into one of the most delectable woodland gardens in either kingdom (Fig. 4).

(*To be concluded*)

* Daniel Terry, actor and manager, became Scott's idolising friend in 1810. I find no reference in Lockhart to Terry as an artist; but he had been trained as an architect and shared Scott's antiquarian passion. Sir James Graham, as First Lord of the Admiralty, put a frigate at Sir Water's disposal in 1831, so the MS. was possibly a gift in recognition of the gesture.



10 and 11.—SCULPTURED RELIEFS FROM ROMAN CASTRUM ON SITE OF NETHERBY. (*Right*) "Victory" Relief, 10½ ins. by 8 ins. (*Left*) "Mother Goddesses," 9¼ ins., by 8 ins., but, we venture the suggestion, possibly Picts or Scots in national costume

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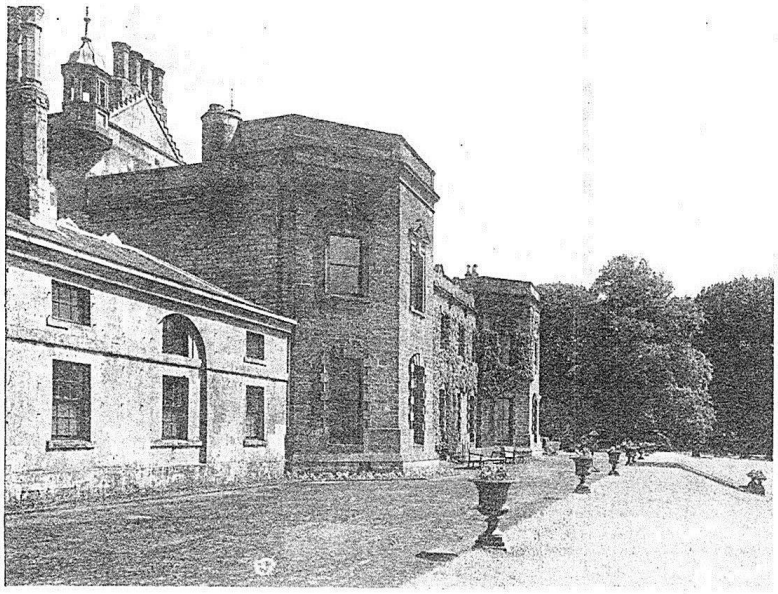
NETHERBY HALL, CUMBERLAND—II

THE HOME OF SIR FERGUS GRAHAM, BT.

By CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY

The misadventures of Lord Preston, the Jacobite, were followed by the rehabilitation of house and estate by Dr. Robert Graham, c. 1760-80, carried on by Sir James, second baronet of Netherby, between 1820 and 1850

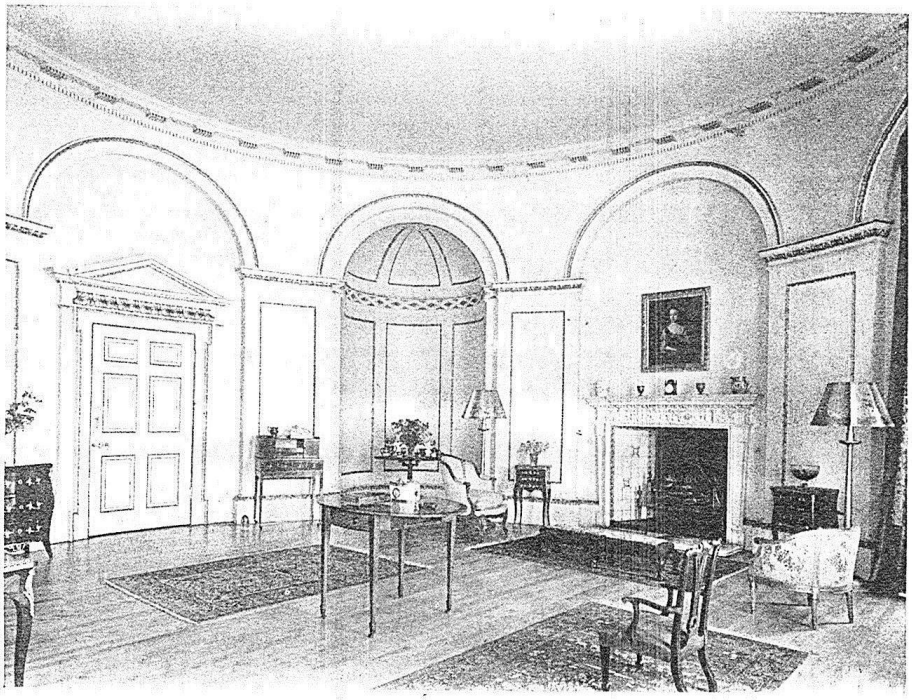


1.—THE WEST FRONT, ADDED TO THE TUDOR TOWER, *c.* 1760

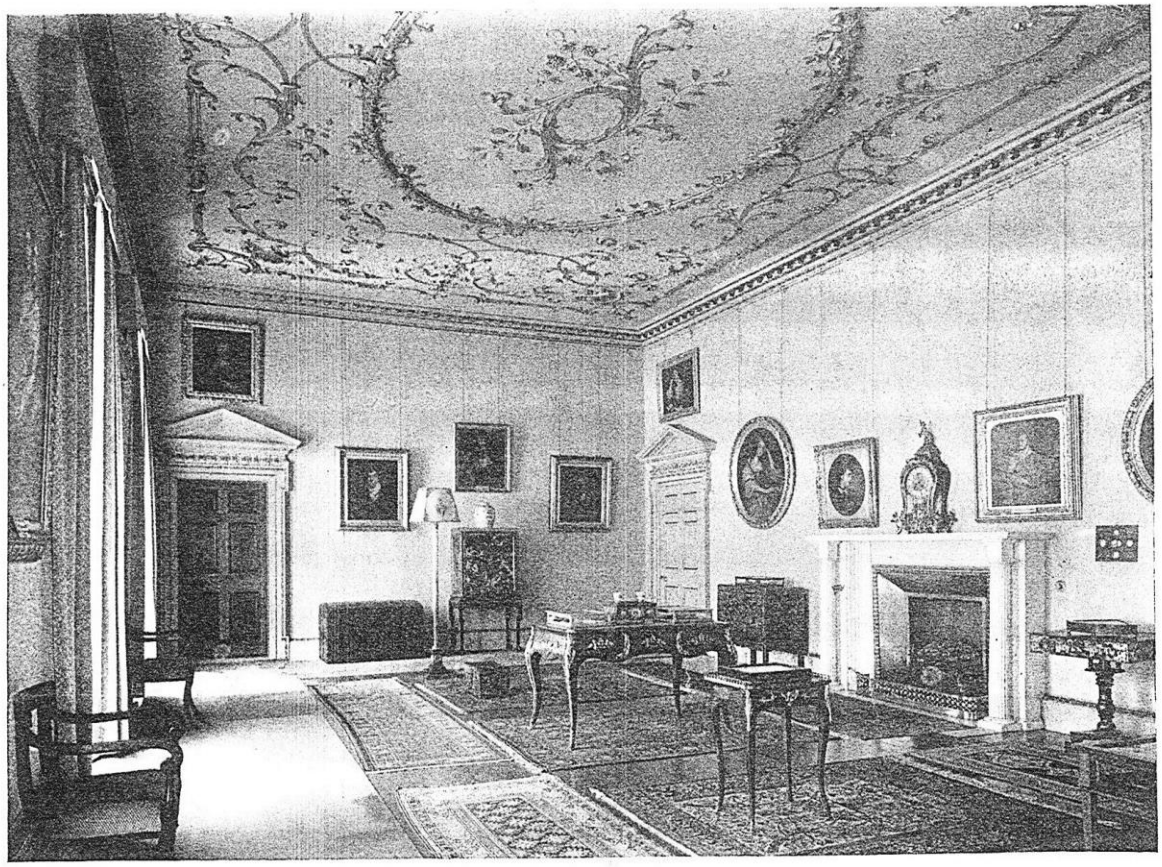
SIR RICHARD GRAHAM, third baronet of Esk and first Viscount Preston, is the most interesting figure in Netherby history between 1650 and 1750, though he can have lived there little since his youth. The historic house, from which many sons went out never or rarely to return, is appropriately rich in children's portraits—always more attractive than those of their elders, the majority of whom look very much like other men and women of their age, whether in buckskin boots and doublets, periwigs, or furbelows in the current fashion. The first Sir Richard is depicted, probably by Mytens, full length as Master of the Horse to the Duke of Buckingham; but we reproduce his treasured silver medal of his Sovereign (Fig. 5). There is a delicious portrait of his second son, born 1635 (Fig. 6), to which there is also a pendant: the coral stick that he is depicted holding (Fig. 7). The child became Sir Richard Graham, founder of the Norton-Conyers branch of the family. The elder boy and a sister were painted a decade earlier (Fig. 8). Of Sir George Graham, 2nd baronet (1624-57), there is little to record but that he raised a large family at Netherby, of which Lord Preston was the eldest; James, the second son, founder of the family of Graham of Levens Hall; and William, the youngest, forbear of the existing line. The last of this little gallery of 17th-century children is the pretty group of Lord Preston's elder children, the second Viscount and Lady Widdrington, of whom more below, possibly painted at Paris when their father was Ambassador.

That conscientious, loyal, but unfortunate man is portrayed at length by Burnet and Macaulay, if unflatteringly, owing to the part he took in history under James II and William III. His career is more closely connected with Nunnington Hall, Yorkshire (COUNTRY LIFE, Volume LXIII, page 148), where he spent his later years in retirement, than with Netherby, which, though his life was spared, the Government confiscated as security for his good behaviour.

Although a Protestant, he had won the confidence of the future James II by his vigorous opposition to the Exclusion Bill, for which he was rewarded with the Viscountcy in the Scottish Peerage. (He always maintained that Charles I had made his grandfather a peer before the Battle of Edgehill but that the patent had been lost or destroyed during the Civil Wars.) This Scottish peerage, appropriate to the international traditions of the Grahams of Netherby, was no doubt given to enable him to take part in the Duke of York's Edinburgh government. It also enabled him, after his Paris embassy, to be James's Leader of the House of Commons as well as Lord President of the Council at the time of the Revolution. At the same time he was given the life patent of Master of the King's Wardrobe, his accounts for which, discovered in his great iron-bound



2.—THE ROUND ROOM, IN THE SOUTH BOW OF THE WEST FRONT

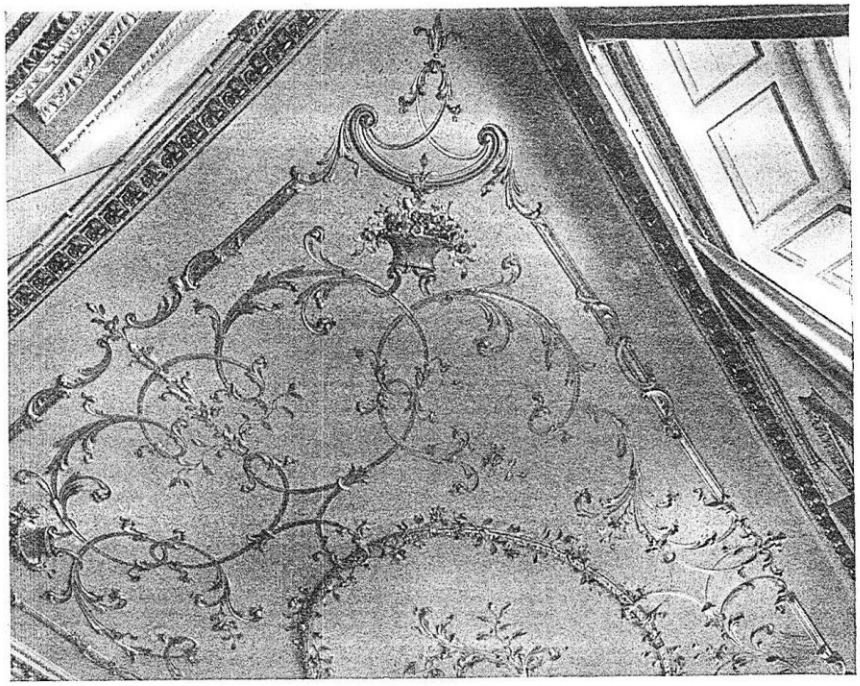


3.—THE BIG WEST DRAWING-ROOM. With Lord Preston's iron-bound chest

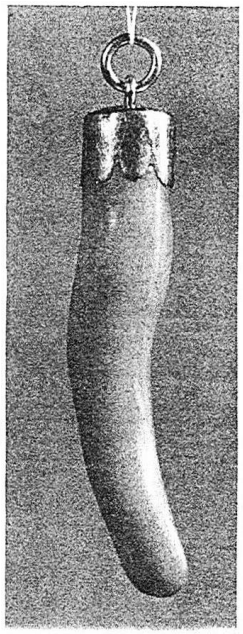
chest (Fig. 12), are among the most interesting of the Netherby muniments. There is also in it a parchment roll inscribed in his own hand "My Pardon."

For, after William III's accession, he was in and out of the Tower pretty constantly, and was, indeed, one of the leading Protestant Jacobites. In 1690, with others, he was caught in a fishing smack making for France bearing a letter from the conspirators inviting King James to come back. It is characteristic of him, perhaps, that the package was weighted to be thrown overboard in case of surprise, but somehow never was. He was condemned to death, but informed that he could save himself by discovering his accomplices. It was said that every day he wrote a confession and burned it after supper. He handed over one confession, was still not reprieved, and finally a fuller one, after which the patent of pardon was given him. It is a pathetically human story, of a loyalty, and perhaps an ambition, which proved just not strong enough in the supreme test.

Netherby remained in the Government's hands till his death in 1695, and neither his son nor grandson appears to have returned. On the latter's death in 1738 the



4.—DETAIL OF DRAWING-ROOM CEILING, *c.* 1760



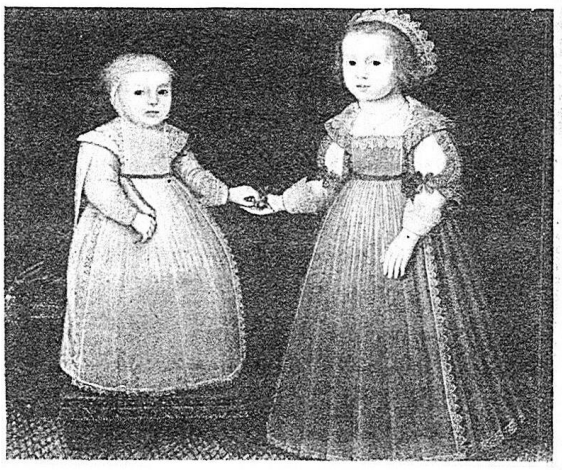
5.—SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S MEDAL-PENDANT OF CHARLES I. (*Middle*) 6.—RICHARD, SON OF SIR JAMES. *Circa* 1637. (*Right*) 7.—THE CORAL STICK DEPICTED IN FIG. 6

peerage became extinct and the estates were left to his aunt, Lady Widdrington, whose husband was also a Jacobite of later vintage. When she died in 1757 the baronetage and estates went to two grandsons, both clergymen, of the first Viscount's youngest son, who had been Dean of Carlisle. The title went to the elder, whose descendants eventually settled in the United States; Netherby to the younger, Dr. Robert Graham, who held the living of Kirkandrews.

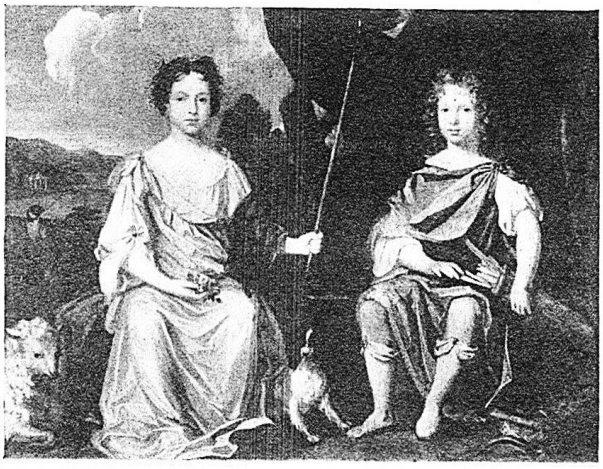
Lady Widdrington, in making this partition, seems to have known her great-nephews. The vicar of Kirkandrews had seen the condition of Netherby after half a century of neglect and non-resident squires. Waterlogged acres, treeless and unenclosed, a poverty-stricken tenantry dwelling in hovels, a derelict and antiquated mansion, the whole reverting to a condition worse than that of the Debatable Lands in the middle ages. Borrowing money to reclaim the waste he drained 1,000 acres, planted extensively, enclosed farms which he let rent free at first to the less thriftless tenants, improved a a neighbouring harbour, built villages and schools—of which the wide street of Longtown is an example—and, in short, made of Netherby one of the brightest, if not the most economic, of Georgian improvement schemes. "Whilst the slow work of draining and planting was going on," the family chronicle relates, "he commenced the building of a mansion on the old site. In laying out gardens and pleasure grounds he sought the advice of Mr. Howard of Corby, with whom he lived on intimate terms and whose taste and judgment he appreciated as they deserved." Thus originated the splendid woods of Netherby and the woodland garden illustrated last week, and in the process the excavation of the Roman castrum which had occupied the site and been recorded by itinerant antiquaries.

Fig. 1 gives an idea of his additions to the Tudor tower and Jacobean house, the Victorianised gable of which rises on the left. In effect he attached to its west side a Georgian range, the principal rooms grouped in the centre contained by twin bows, with a low range on either side containing kitchen at one end, a library at the other. What there was to the east, besides the tower, and whether his rebuilding extended so far, we do not know, since it was entirely reconstructed for his grandson by William Burn in the 1840s.

But several of the west rooms are intact and excellent examples of North-country Georgian. Indeed, the drawing-room, occupying most of the centre (Figs. 3, 4) has a ceiling in the French taste which suggests that a London craftsman was brought to execute it, while the round boudoir beyond it (Fig. 2) has none of the somewhat provincial Rococo that the York decorators maintained into the



8.—CHILDREN OF SIR RICHARD GRAHAM, *c.* 1625



9.—CHILDREN OF FIRST VISCOUNT PRESTON, *c.* 1685

10.—LADY CATHERINE GRAHAM. BEECHEY

11.—SIR JAMES GRAHAM OF NETHERBY. RAEBURN, 1797

1760s. The date of these works is implied by the record that the Doctor's second son was born in 1761 at Naworth, which had been lent to him while rebuilding was in progress.

The expense of all this Whig idealism was greater than the economic yield. The Netherby estate under his management became a marvel rather than a model; and he had the misfortune in 1771 to have his most ambitious reclamations submerged by a phenomenal eruption of bog that, suddenly bursting through the top soil, engulfed and overspread hundreds of acres. The catastrophe was presumably caused by the suppression of marsh gas by a drained and cultivated surface. To ensure against its recurrence he embarked on an expensive and peculiar system of topsoil aeration which has left, in the park, large flat circular stones pierced in the middle with a blow-hole. At his death the estate was, as a consequence, somewhat encumbered.

But shortly afterwards, in 1782, the Whig Government, in recognition of his progressive, and political, support, restored the Netherby baronetage to his son. The first Sir James Graham, though a staunch supporter in Parliament of Pitt, was no accountant, still less a soil chemist, and most distinguished for his wife, a Galloway Stewart. To stimulate the estate's productiveness, the newly acclaimed virtues of liming were resorted to recklessly, with the result that much of it was soon reduced to sterility. Lady Catherine Graham, tall, commanding and benevolent, bore him many daughters and at length a son. The proud parents procured Raeburn from Edinburgh in 1797 when he painted a most engaging portrait of the boy James, aged five (Fig. 11), to add to the Netherby gallery of heirs.

Lady Catherine's bounty was long remembered by tenants and estate staff. One of them is quoted in Torrens's *Life of Sir James Graham* as recalling

> She would see in winter that the poor had enough blankets. A couple of miles was naught to her. She would walk it and back, and didna care for weather, to see after them that were sick. She was verra religious, partic'lar so, and gave away small books they called tracks. I mind her once when she was overtaken in a storm and got fairly fixed in the moss. . . . We got her to a house and I ran for the carriage to Netherby. Ah, there was never the like of her in the county. A fine, bold, good-hearted woman, aye. She went away to London when Sir James died, and we never saw her no more.

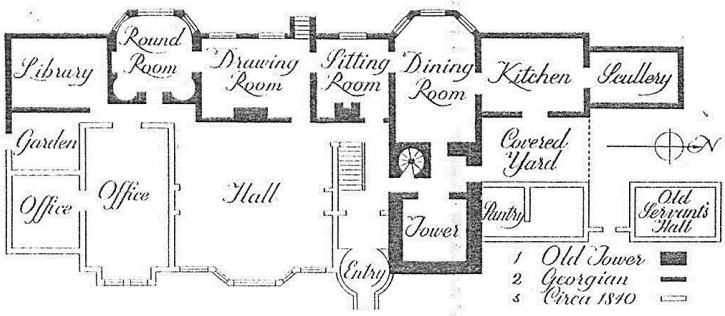
That was in 1824, when the young Sir James Graham, already elected to and ejected from Parliament, was faced with an estate again impoverished and in the hands of an elderly reactionary steward. The story of his second reclamation of it is part of agricultural history and is well told in Torrens's *Life*.

By extensive draining, the turning of smallholdings into large well-equipped farms, the breeding of cattle, and replacing pauperised tenants by energetic farmers, he at length civilised the Debatable Lands and, by energetically carrying on his grandfather's forestry, made of Netherby an economic proposition as well as a visual delight.

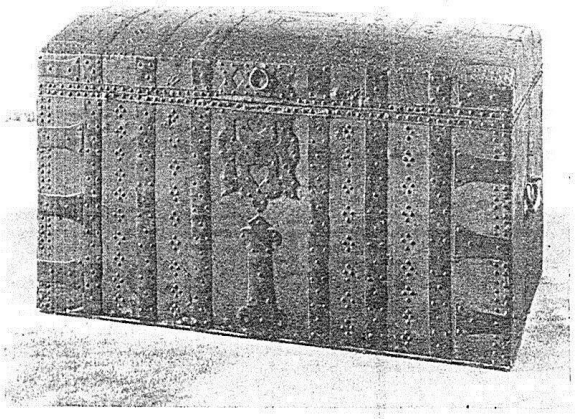
Tall, handsome, and with the aloofness of a Whig aristocrat, he was less successful as a politician, never reconciling himself to the changed atmosphere after 1832, though he held office frequently. His personality is stamped on his home by the large, frigid, baronial reconstruction of its east front, depicted last week. A memorable character, but, one feels, less attractive than the humane, idealistic, Georgian parson, his grandfather.

Throughout these successive enlargements and alterations, the Tudor tower survived structurally intact, inaccessible but by its original entrance and newel staircase. When in the 'thirties Sir Fergus Graham, great-grandson of the Victorian statesman, succeeded to the unwieldy mansion, the tower constituted a massive obstacle to any steps towards reducing it. In 1937 the late H. J. Harding, F.R.I.B.A., entrusted with adapting Netherby to current conditions, decided that the only way involved quarrying communications through the 8 ft. walls of the tower. By this means service quarters were made accessible to the living-rooms other than through the dining-room; cloak-room and lavatory in the base of the tower were provided adjoining the main entrance; already the kitchen adjoined the dining-room which, with the adjacent sitting-room, composed a compact living plan enabling the further rooms to be closed altogether when not required, with the exception of office and study at the south extremity which are also accessible externally. The effect of the operation is to reduce the house for living purposes to the workable dimensions that it probably possessed in the time of the first Sir James Graham of Esk in the 17th century.

Thus a home and a family that have been a famous entity for four if not five centuries of checkered Border history are, under Providence, equipped to face together another of those periods of disturbance and readjustment in the Debatable Lands.



SKETCH PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR



12. IRON-BOUND CHEST OF FIRST VISCOUNT PRESTON. *Circa* 1680