THE
PARISH CHURCHES
OF
APPLEBY

by
Martin Holmes, F.S.A.
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FOREWORD

Since the last revision of this Guide eight years ago much has happened in the Parish of Appleby, not least the closing of the Church of St. Michael, Bengate. This latest revision coincides both with the 850th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Carlisle, together with the Tercentenary of the gift of the Organ in St. Lawrence's by the then Dean of Carlisle, Thomas Smith.

We are indebted to Mr. Martin Holmes, the original author, for his work in bringing the Guide up to date, and to Mr. Gordon Wood for supplying the photographs.

Appleby Vicarage,
June, 1983

R. W. Grayson
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St. Lawrence, Appleby. View of main entrance.
THE CHURCH AND THE TOWN

The two parish churches of Appleby lie on opposite sides of the river Eden. St. Lawrence's being set by the bridge which leads directly to the town centre, and St. Michael's further upstream, by the ford and the footbridge that has now replaced the old stepping-stones. St. Michael's was probably the earlier foundation of the two, and can show the older architectural fragments, but St. Lawrence's cannot be far behind it, and is an integral part of the town-planning of Appleby itself.

This preserves the main outline laid down for it in the turbulent days of Border warfare. The long, wide expanse of Boroughgate, running down from Appleby Castle to the church at the bottom of the hill, is accessible only by the narrow passage of Bridge Street on the one side and the still narrower High and Low Wends on the other, and by Shaw's Wind at the top of the hill, curving round to Scamagate under the Castle wall. These entries could be quickly blocked, and effectively defended, against raiding parties from Scotland or small plundering bands belonging to either nation, and the county town of Westmorland, by virtue of its design, could be quickly turned, at need, into an armed camp.

At the foot of the hill, between the town and the churchyard, stood a small huddle of untidy and unsightly buildings until the late seventeenth-century it was decided to clear them away and close in the north end of the town with a 'convivial and decent market' house or cloister, built largely at the expense of Thomas Smith, Bishop of Carlisle. This involved encroachment on a strip of the churchyard, and an agreement was drawn up, and is still in force, by which the local authorities pay an annual rent to the vicar, whose approval has to be obtained for any leases granted in respect of shops or offices in this miniature barbican. The present cloisters were built in 1811 from the designs of the celebrated Robert Smirke, and make a graceful and appropriate foreground to the church itself. Over the central arch is a shield bearing the three leopards which have been borne for centuries by the Royal Arms of England, and were long thought to have been the armorial bearings of the Borough of Appleby, because of their appearance on one side of the Borough Seal, the other side bearing the figure of St. Lawrence, to whom the church is dedicated. What was not realized, however, by the heralds and antiquaries of Restoration and later times, was that the seal of a Borough, in the Middle Ages, frequently bore the arms of its feudal overlord, and that on the rebellion of Hugh de Neville, one of the four knights who had murdered St. Thomas of Canterbury, his estates and lordships, including that of Appleby, were forfeited to the king. It will be seen that more than once, inside the church as well as here at the entrance, the Royal Arms of the Plantagenet sovereigns are displayed as if they were those of the Borough of Appleby. In later years some ingenious put unwarranted theory that the Appleby arms could not be the same as those of the Monarch, but must have been granted with a heraldic 'difference' of
some kind. Misunderstanding of the ears and muzzles of the leopards on the sixteenth-century mosaic of the Borough Seal suggested that the Appleby leopards were meant to be wearing crowns, and later representations of the arms, here and in the Council Chamber of the Market Hall, show an attempt to rectify the non-existent error. On various carved escutcheons the beasts are shown to be wearing small closed crowns like tea-cosies or bowler hats, and on the late Stuart sword-rest over the Corporation pew, each iron leopard bears on his forehead a small crown-shaped mark, engraved with a punch, like a hallmark on gold or silver plate. It was only in 1599 that Appleby, then still a Borough, acquired argentorial bearings of its own, with differences of detail and colouring indeed, but still suggestive of their royal overrunder.

II THE MEDIAEVAL FABRIC

The construction of the town would be effective against small, marauding bands of horse, but not against an attacking army, and on two occasions at least St. Lawrence's was burned by the Scots and had to be rebuilt. Signs of this are visible at once, as one approaches the building through the cloister-arch. The church porch appears to have been built about 1300, but it is entered through a re-used gateway nearly a hundred years older, with the dog-tooth moulding characteristic of the early Middle Ages. The oldest part of the fabric still standing is the east portion of the tower, up to the level of the bell-chamber windows, where a change in the stonework can still be seen from outside. This is all solid twelfth-century work, and may well have witnessed the burning of the church in 1174, or it may belong to the rebuilding that took place four years later. The thickness of the walls, and the narrowness of the loop-light in the north wall, now blocked by the modern vestry, show that the building was designed as a tall tower of refuge in time of need, and it was only as time went on, and the tower became less urgently required as a fortress than it had been, that high arches were cut through its eight-foot-thick walls to throw it open in the 14th century to the nave and the south aisle.

The parish church was for centuries the centre of secular parish life as well as being the appointed place for public worship. Before the days of regular wooden pews, it was customary for churchgoers to stand or kneel in the open nave during the services, and at other times the space would have been in great demand for a variety of purposes. It was at once the biggest and strongest public building in Appleby, it served as a place of assembly for public meetings, and it even performed, in a small way, the functions of a public library. The revival of learning, and the introduction of the printing-press, led in the course of time to a wide increase not only in the number of available books but in the skill and the will to read them. Certain books on edifying themes might be given or bequeathed to a parish, to be kept available for study in the parish church, but preserved from perilling by being chained to the
shelves on which they stood. The three volumes of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs*, chained to a modern bookcase near the font, show that the practice went on as late as the seventeenth-century, for these books, printed in 1631, were given to the church by their publisher Richard More, an Appleby tailor's son who had been apprenticed to a London printer in 1596 and had risen, in succeeding years, to become Remer Warden of the Stationers' Company. The first edition of the book had appeared in 1563, and copies had been placed, by Government order, in all parish churches; now, nearly seventy years afterwards, the publisher of the newest edition was taking care to see that his own old parish church was being kept up to date in this respect.

The main body of the church dates from two different periods. Raish and burning would have little effect on the foundations and lower courses of the stonework, but it was a different matter higher up. The heat generated by burning thatch and burning rafters, before the roof fell in, might very well turn some of the stones at the top of the wall to calcined, crumbling masses of lime. It is at this height, accordingly, that we may expect to find evidence of early fifteenth-century replacement-work, and at this height, sure enough, we find it. Though the pillars of the nave date back from 1300 or thereabouts, the high clerestory windows above them, and the upper storey of the tower itself, are at least a hundred years later, and represent a gradual reconstruction after the conflagration of a severe raid in 1388. (It will be noted, by the way, that the clerestory windows are so spaced that the light from each falls on the black wall between the opposite pair, giving additional lightness to the nave.) To this period of reconstruction, also, belong the battlements of tower and nave, their gargoyles, now sadly weathered but still grimacing over the leads of the aisles, and the worn arch upon the outside gable, where once the sanctus-bell hung to announce to all in earshot the supreme moment of the Mass.

The chancel contains material of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but shows traces of much alteration in the seventeenth. The arcading behind the choir-stalls is filled by carved wooden screens of 1500 or earlier, two of the long stall-fronts themselves date from the early sixteenth-century, and on the south side of the chancel, by a mediaeval niche that once served as a piscina, or fixed basin for cleansing the sacred vessels, is a fourteenth-century opening that was once a window looking out into the churchyard in the days when the south aisle did not extend the full length of the building. In the fifteenth-century, apparently, the mullions and tracery were removed and the opening extended to ground-level to form the entrance to a new and narrow chantry-chapel, running southwards like a miniature transept, for the use of the family of the Warcop of Colby. When this chantry became part of the south aisle, the opening became a window again, the place of a window-sill being taken by a fourteenth-century coffin-lid, which bears a half-obiterated figure, just recognizable from its headdress as being that of a woman, with hands joined in prayer above an elaborate floriated cross.
The heat generated by the fires could be very well turn the timbers into masses of lime, and if we dig deep enough in the earth our thresholds, the high walls of the tower, and the arches inside, still remain. At the end of the reconstruction, after the digging, by the way, that the sun and the black ink to the nave. To this end of tower and nave, there are the leads at the aisles, the sanctuary bell hanging to the Mass.

Sixteenth centuries but the arcading behind the earlier, two of the long gallery, and on the south, seem as a piscina, or fixed century opening that was days when the south aisle is the fifteenth-century, of the opening extended toward chantry-chapel, use of the family of the of the south aisle, the sun still being taken by a obliterated figure, just seen, with hands joined in
The channel-arch, the east window and the windows of the north and south chapels are all modern, but those in the north chapel are set with three shields of medieval heraldic glass. The arms of Bernmouth, and the blue lion of the great Northumberland family of the Percies, are fifteenth-century work, but a small escutcheon of the arms of France and England quarterly is somewhat earlier, and belongs to the days of Edward III. Hard by, on the eastern pier of the nave, may be seen a number of medieval masons’ marks, and displayed on the wall of the chapel in glass cases are three colours of the local militia. Of these the large central one was presented in the time of the Napoleonic Wars, was located in the Town of London early in this century and restored to Appleby in 1914. The two smaller colours, those of the 4th Battalion of the Border Regiment were laid up in the now redundant Church of St. Michael in 1908 and have recently been placed in their present position for safe keeping.

III THE ORGAN AND ITS HISTORY

Much of this north chapel was taken up, until recently, by the organ, a fine instrument, once in Carlisle Cathedral, but given to ‘The Corporation of Appleby, for use in Appleby Church,’ through the instrumentality and generosity of Dean Smith - who was shortly afterwards appointed to the bishopric - in 1683. It had long been said to incorporate parts of an organ in 1571, and when the comparatively modern pedal action was found to be damaged in consequence of the flood in 1908, steps were taken to dismantle and overhaul the whole instrument and restore it to its original position at the west end of the church. Study of the traditional form of early sixteenth-century organ-cases showed that it had followed the general line of a Roman triumphal arch, with a central round-headed opening flanked by two smaller ones, and by two cornice-like bands of carved ornament over all three. The side towers had been additions of the late sixteenth century, and the central one about a hundred years later still.

With this knowledge it was possible to locate the strips of open-work carving that had adorned the original festoon; and the arumleaf bearings on them, still discernible under Victorian paint and varnish, established the date of the case as falling between 1542 and 1547. There was no place for them in the reconstructed organ-case when it was set up, on a classical singers’ gallery, in 1722, and they were used instead to adorn the Corporation pew below the pulpit, used by the Mayor and Councillors when they attend in state. The round-headed arches of the Tudor case-front are still in position, and the two halves of the main arch now embrace the central tower. The scroll-bracket that once served as a keystone to the arch is now immediately above the console, as are the cherub-heads that would have originally served to support the uppermost cornice.
the north and south set with three shields: the blue lion of the century work, but a array is somewhat in the eastern pier of the, and displayed on the local militia. Of the Napoleonic Wars, it being restored to the 6th Battalion of the garrison of St. Michael in for safekeeping.

The organ, a fine in the Corporation of "inventor" and appointed to the works of an organ in was found to be taken to dismantle final position at the of early sixteenth- of a Romanesque style by two smaller all three. The side and the central one

gesso-work carving on them, still the date of the case for them in the singers' gallery, in tune below the floor in state. The organ, and the two scroll-bracket that give the console, as it to support the
In 1863 the singers were transferred from the western gallery to constitute a robed choir in the chancel, and the organ accordingly was moved to the ambulatory behind them, remaining there, like a prisoner behind the bars of the parclose screen, for just over a hundred years. The coam of arms that had surmounted the towers were fixed to the side of the case, the towers themselves and the pipes behind them were shortened by some two or three feet, and when the organ was restored to its original place and height, the new portions that had to be inserted were deliberately left bright, to indicate the amount of alteration that had been necessary. The arms on the central tower were those of the Lord Lowther of the time, who had contributed to the cost of the installation in 1722, and its companion coats were those of Colonel Graham and Sir Richard Sandford, Members of Parliament for Westmorland and Appleby respectively. An interesting feature of the central coat is the absence of any sign of a crest having been fixed upon the top, though the presence of supporters and mantling would lead one to expect a complete achievement of arms. The explanation is simply one of space. The organ-loft designed in the late seventeenth century had had to accommodate the singers as well, and would have been several feet higher than the present base. As it is, the westernmost section of the ceiling (set up in 1833) is appreciably higher than that covering the rest of the nave, but even so there would have been too little space to spare for the achievement to be heraldically complete.

On the south wall, just inside the entrance door, hangs a carved and painted escutcheon that appears to have been intended originally to crown the central tower if the organ had been set up at the time of its presentation, but this was delayed for nearly forty years, and there was still a good deal of disapproval of cathedral-style music in ordinary parish churches until the advocacy— and the money— of the three local magnates made it possible, and their armorial bearings were mounted accordingly on the towers. The older escutcheon, like the Moot Hall one already mentioned, must be one of the earliest examples of the erroneous "crowned" form that lasted for the best part of three hundred years.

The swell of the organ, and of course the pedales, are later additions, but much of the interior is much older. On one of the wooden pipes, a flute, a paper label bears the words Gloria in Jesuico in seventeenth-century script, and when the organ was dismantled and reassembled the firm who did the work reported that the front pipes, with their simple embossed decoration, were the oldest they had ever known. It was regretfully found, at the reassembling, that they could not be made to sound, and indeed could not have done so since the sound-board was extended, but if the earlier details of the action are anywhere near them in date, the instrument may claim to be the oldest still-working English organ in the country, as its case is independently reputed to be among the finest.
IV THE RESTORATION OF LADY ANNE

In that same north-eastern chapel are the two most elaborate monuments in the church. The older one, formerly in the chancel, commemorates Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, widow of George Clifford, that swaggering, piratical Earl of Cumberland who was Champion to Queen Elizabeth I and was painted by Nicholas Hilliard in richly-decorated armour, with the Queen's glove mounted as an ornament in his hat. His Countess lies in effigy on her marble tomb, carved in alabaster with a widow's mantle over her stomacher and gown, and a coronet of gilded metal. The resemblance of this effigy, in style and technique, to that of Elizabeth in Westminster Abbey has given rise to the not unreasonable conjecture that it is the work of the same sculptor, Maximilian Colte. The Countess died in 1616, and the tomb was set up, in the following year, by her daughter Anne, who lies buried near by in a black marble slab tomb enriched with a wealth of heraldry illustrating the descent of the Clifford family.

For Anne Clifford, Countess Dowager of Pembroke, was a notable figure in the North. Daughter of the Queen's Champion, she had been petted by Elizabeth, had withstood James I to his face in a dispute about her inheritance, had been hostess to Charles I at Winton, had withdrawn to her northern estate and rebuilt her castles in defiance of Cromwell and his generals, and at the age of seventy celebrated the coronation of Charles II by attending service in this very church and afterwards proclaiming the newly-crowned king in succession on two stately high scaffolds at each end of the town, hung with cloth of arms and gold; whether, after service done at the church, the countess of Pembroke, with the mayor, aldermen and all the other gentry of the county ascended, with I know not how many trumpets, and an imperial crown carried before them, where they proclaimed, prayed for, and drank the health of the king upon their knees, the aged countess seeming young again to grace the solemnity'. So wrote the Reverend Thomas Machell, an eyewitness of the scene and brother of Appleby's first Restoration Nave. The two 'stately high scaffolds' presumably stood on the sites of the town crosses, one outside the castle and the other outside the church itself, where are now two tall Regency columns on earlier pedestals, each crowned by an elaborate sundial reminiscent of the Countess's Pillar just outside Penrith, but still called the High Cross and Low Cross respectively.

An inscription on a rafter of the south aisle records that 'ANN CONNESSDE OF PEMBROKE IN ANO 1655 REPAIRED ALL THIS BUILDING', while in 1654 she had repaired the north-east chapel and had a vault prepared for her own burial beneath it. In the next year she took down the walls of most of the chancel, removing a former vestry on the north side, partly blocking the arch to the Warcop chantry on the south and throwing this area into the south aisle by removing the dividing wall, thus giving the chancel its present form. In the process, 'several alabaster and plaster images curiously gilded' were discovered, suggesting that the church had at one time had a reed of those
The North East Chapel with the Clifford Monument.

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carved panels of Nottingham alabaster for which this country was famous, and
at the Reformation, when images were broken down and chantries suppressed,
the panels were hidden for safety in the wall of the disused chapel. Their
present whereabouts is unknown.

To Lady Anne's time belong the exterior buttresses, the rebuilding of the
arches in the nave (though the "ten Gothic heads" that adorn them are an early
nineteenth-century addition) and, it would seem, the communion table now in
the Lady Chapel. The Royal Arms over the chancel arch are those of the Stuart
kings, and the escutcheon is probably part of the reconstruction carried out
after the return of Charles II to his throne. Lady Anne's earlier repairs and
restorations, it must be remembered, were executed at a time when the services
of the Church of England, and the use of the Book of Common Prayer, were
prohibited by order of Parliament, in despite of which the redoubtable old lady
continued to have the service held daily after its wonted fashion, in her private
chapel, wherever she happened to be. It may well have been by her direction
that a text from the book of Isaiah (chap. 33, verses 15 and 17) was painted
under the Royal Arms; she seems to have had a fondness for that prophet, and
more than once cites another text (chap. 58, verse 12) to justify her great works
of reconstruction in the north after the desolation and fanaticism of the Civil
War.

V FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

By the eighteenth century the seating - such as it was - had got into rather a bad
way. Parish accounts of 1720 refer to the need for new pews, and it is possible
that the present Corporation pew, with its three rows of seats for Councillors
and an isolated one occupied by the Mayor, may date from this time, decorated
as it is with panels of carving left over from the original Tudor organ-case when
the instrument was at last set up for its official dedication in 1722. The Castle
had its own private chapel, and its inhabitants worshipped there, or in the
nearer church of St Michael across the river - they had no jurisdiction in or
over the free Borough of Appleby itself, and Lady Anne had to ask formal
permission to have her mother buried in St. Lawrence's - but in the eighteenth
century the agents for the absentee owners had a large pew at the end of the
north aisle, still in living memory used by the descendants but now devoted to
the activities of the Sunday School.

Eastward of this, and hard by the tomb of Lady Anne, are certain items
transferred from the now-redundant church of St Michael in Bengate, notably
two bells, a long-waisted one of mid-thirteenth-century type, and one
inscribed Campana Sancti Michaelis and attributed to the bell-founder
William of Norwich about 1350, and two oakens chairs, dated 1675 and 1693. A
large block of stone, evidently made to be the keystone of a fairly wide arch,
was found to be serving as a weight on the bellows of the organ when the
blowing was done by hand, and bears the date 1791 and the initials of John
Sprout, who was the incumbent at that time, so that it may be assumed to
have come, in later years, from the stable or coach-house of the Vicarage.
The church possesses some fine seventeenth-century plate, the oldest piece being a silver-gilt steeple-cup bearing a London hall-mark of 1612. This is traditionally supposed to have been given to the parish of Bongate by Bishop Nicolson of Carlisle in appreciation of an eighteenth-century vicar’s action in having the vicarage roof repaired at his own expense. It is a characteristically secular vessel, and is exhibited, on indefinite loan, in the Boses Museum at Barnard Castle. Of the plate specifically associated with St Lawrence’s, a chalice and paten of about 1650 may have been a Restoration gift, and a full service of plate - chalice, cover-paten, stand-paten, flagons and almsdish - may well have been another gift, to Appleby from its constituted benefactor, Bishop Smith of Carlisle, as it bears the hall-mark for 1694. All these pieces are necessarily kept under conditions of strict security when not in actual use. A glass case at the western end of the church formerly displayed a set of four flagons, a bowl and a stand-paten, all of pewter, but lost them not long ago, when thieves broke open the case that had contained them. Left untouched were a Bible of 1617 and a Book of Common Prayer, undated but coming from the press of the seventeenth-century printer Charles Bill, and two long-handled objecting-trays of carved wood, used in the eighteenth century. Interesting pieces of woodwork are two seven-teenth-century oaken stools, and the church chest, with its three locks and drawer beneath, while other features that may be noted are the vertical sundial on the south porch, the fragment of a fourteenth-century wooden head over the side gate of the churchyard, and the little grave and mural tablet, in the porch itself, of a week-old baby who died in 1838 and may not have been formally baptized in time, and therefore lies neither inside the building nor among the regular occupants of the churchyard, but practically on the threshold between the two. Inside the baptistery is a font of local stone, commemorating John With, a seventeenth-century magistrate whose collection of local manuscript material is now in the Dean and Chapter Library at Carlisle, and a framed list of incumbents from 1090 onwards, among which is the name of William Paley, a distinguished eighteenth-century divine and author of that once-famous theological work A View of the Evidences of Christianity.

VI  THE CHURCH OF BONGATE

St. Michael’s church stands in the ward of Bongate, on the right bank of the Eden, at the head of a steep descent to the fordbridge and the churchyard. At first sight it has the timeless appearance of any small country church, with its cruciform plan and low, square tower, but in point of fact this characteristic outline dates only from 1885, when the present tower was built on the north side, balancing the small thirteenth-century transept on the south. An indifferent eighteenth-century masterpiece, in Pestell’s Tour from Drumnag to Ashton Moor, shows a barn-like building with a low-pitched roof and a small bell-cote at its western end, and the original low pitch of the gable can still be seen in the steeple, which is set high up in the main roof. The chancel is something outside the steeple as it was in the west end of the steeple, showing in the time before the chancel was added to the nave.

It is now a short walk of about a mile and a half from the church to the site of the Roman fort of Askham that once stood on the heights to the east. The fort occupied a site that had long been a place of strategic importance, and it was here that Gnaeus Julius Agricola, commander of the Roman legions in Britain, was cremated after his death in the year 129. The site of the fort was rediscovered in the late eighteenth century, and the remains of the fort were excavated by the High Sheriff of Yorkshire, Lord Wombwell, in 1843. The fort was a rectangular enclosure with two flanks, a north-south long wall, and a south-west corner tower. The entrance to the fort was through a gateway in the north wall, and the interior was divided into a series of rooms and chambers.

Mythmakers and historians have long been fascinated by the story of the Great Pyramid of Giza, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. According to legend, the pyramid was built as a tomb for the Pharaoh Khufu. However, recent research has cast doubt on the traditional explanation of the pyramid's construction. In his book "The Great Pyramid: The Hidden Heritage," author and pyramid scholar Robert Bauval suggests that the pyramid was actually built as a marker for a lost city, and that the pyramid's orientation and dimensions are related to the ancient constellation of Orion. Bauval argues that the pyramid was built as a symbol of the ancient city of Atlantis, which he believes was a real place, not a myth.

Recent archaeological findings support Bauval's theory. Researchers have discovered a series of massive stone blocks near the pyramid that appear to have been used in the construction of the pyramid itself. These stones, known as "Chephren blocks," are thought to have been part of a temple located near the pyramid. The temple was likely used to house offerings and artifacts that were dedicated to the gods of the ancient city. Furthermore, the orientation of the temple aligns with the constellation of Orion, further supporting Bauval's theory.

Bauval also points out that the pyramid's dimensions are related to the ancient city of Atlantis. He notes that the pyramid's base is 230.4 meters (755 feet) square, and its height is 146.6 meters (481 feet). These dimensions are exactly 1.5 times the height of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, which is considered to be the tallest pyramid in the world. Bauval suggests that this similarity is not a coincidence, and that the pyramid was built as a symbol of the ancient city of Atlantis.

In conclusion, the theory presented by Bauval offers a fascinating new perspective on the Great Pyramid of Giza. While traditional explanations of the pyramid's construction remain popular, Bauval's theory provides a new way of thinking about the ancient city of Atlantis and the pyramid's role as a symbol of its existence. As research continues, it is likely that new insights and discoveries will shed light on the true purpose and significance of this ancient wonder.
seen in the exterior masonry of the west wall. This wall, and the north wall between it and the tower, contain the oldest parts of the fabric, dating as they do from the twelfth century. The small north-west doorway is now blocked, and turned to a window, but its lintel is the one set up by the original builders, and it is in fact a Saxon hog-backed grave-vase of the tenth or eleventh century, showing that there was a churchyard here, and presumably a church, some time before the construction of the oldest part of the present building.

The church was declared redundant in 1975, and turned to secular use, but something of its history can be read from a look at its exterior. A change in the outside stonework beyond the southern buttress on the west front indicates that the south aisle is a later addition. It is ascribed to 1300 or thereabouts, a little later than the transept, which is itself not part of the original plan, though its footings correspond more closely to those of the west end than do those of the aisle. Inside, high on the north wall of the chancel, a carved and painted cartouche displays the letters A.P. and the date 1659 amid a design of strapwork, commemorating the year when the Countess of Pembroke 'raised this church out of its rains.' A larger inscription, on the lines of that in St Lawrence's church, was still to be seen in the eighteenth century 'cut in wood between the chancel and the body of the church,' but this has now gone, and may have been removed at the time of the 1885 alterations.

It is not clear what, or how much, Lady Anne did in 1659. She was unusually keen and well-informed on the habits and building-practices of her ancestors, and her reconstructions were carried out in careful correspondence with the remaining material and the probable appearance of the original. Quite possibly at St Michael's it was largely a matter of setting up what had fallen down rather than introducing anything fresh, though the outer archway of the south porch has a seventeenth-century look about it that suggests an innovation of Lady Anne's day. The Royal Arms of Charles II, once hanging in the south transept and now transferred to the parish church of Maryport, bore the date 1661, the year of the king's coronation, and may well have been set up to commemorate that event.

Opposite to the churchyard gate, in the garden-wall of the former vicarage, are fragments of arcading that seem to have come from the canopy of a tomb, not unlike one still to be seen at Newbiggin, and it is not surprising to find that one of them incorporates a shield on which can still be described the Vipont annulets and the water-skins of Roo, showing that this arcading once framed the niche and an effigy of the Sheriffs. A column and its capital, and a small round-headed recess, are even earlier, dating probably from the thirteenth century, while there are one or two later fragments, including a small sandstone panel - once, perhaps, the cresting of a tombstone or a mural tablet - representing Noah's Ark with the returning dove. The soft sandstone has suffered badly from the weather, but one can still see the dove, almost as big as an Ark, with the olive-leaf in her half-obliterated beak, and the vast hand of Noah filling the only window, though the inscription on the hull of the vessel
has become totally illegible within living memory. Patches of new stonework in
the outer walls indicate where old windows have been re-set in different
positions, and an inscribed stone in the porch is possibly the base of a
medieval font, though the inscription upon it is revealed as a comparatively
modern invention by an inaccuracy in the date.

A twelfth-century documentary reference indicates that at that time St
Michael's was regarded as having the status of a collegiate church, and there is
an allusion to a Dean, but this can only have been of short duration. The parish
was combined with that of St Lawrence and with the fellside parish of
Morton-cum-Hilton into one united benefice in 1952, and in 1972 the three
became the single parish of Appleby, St Lawrence's being the parish church,
to which the other two served as chapels-of-ease. Since then, as has been
stated, St Michael's church was declared redundant, and in the Local
Government Reorganization of 1974, Appleby itself lost the status of a
Borough, which it had held for four months short of eight hundred years.