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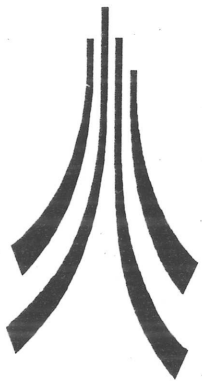

March 1995

RUFFORD OLD HALL
Lancashire

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Commissioned and funded by:

The National Trust

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A survey of the timber frame of Rufford Old Hall Lancashire was undertaken in January 1995 by the staff of the Lancaster University Archaeological Unit in advance of repair works to be carried out on the roof structure by the National Trust. Recording was carried out using a combination of manual and instrument survey. The drawings were intended to provide the architects with a basis for works and analysis and interpretation were only designed to be provisional.

During the course of the survey, evidence was found suggesting a later date of construction for the building than had hitherto been favoured. In addition, the opportunity was taken to examine several of the more architecturally problematic areas of the structure, including the eaves, the fireplace and the coved canopy at the western end. Certain pieces of evidence in the standing structure challenged the received view that the principal facade of the building was originally located on the south side.

This document sets out the principal findings of the survey and points of potential interest on which it was not possible at this stage to make a final statement. It is hoped that it will be possible at a later stage of the project to examine some of the topics addressed here in greater depth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due to the staff of the National Trust, most particularly Maureen Dodsworth and Harry Hall at Rufford Old Hall for their patience, interest and assistance. Acknowledgment must also be made of the assistance of John Bostock, and Susan Denyer.

The Project Officers involved in the project were J. Quartermaine and J Ashbee; the survey was carried out by I. Grundon. The project was under the management of R. Hill.

INTRODUCTION

The Lancaster University Archaeological Unit was contracted by the National Trust in 1994 to undertake a recording of the timber frame of Rufford Old Hall, Lancaster (Grid Reference SD 463160) in advance of an extensive renovation of the roof structure. This survey is intended to create an "as is" record of the structure and to provide a basis for analysis and interpretation of the structural sequence of the building. Further recording will be carried out during the building works. For this first stage, fieldwork was carried out between 9 January and 1 February 1995 by J. Quartermaine, I. Grundon and J. Ashbee. The purpose of this report is to set out the methodology of the recording works and to present a brief summary of the interpretation of the structure arising from the survey.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Following the Project Design submitted to the National Trust in August 1994, the survey has produced the following record drawings:

- A plan of the Great Hall, Ante-Room and Dining Room at window-height. (Sheet 1)
- A plan of the Drawing Room at window height. (Sheet 2)
- A plan of the Great Hall at internal wall-plate level. (Sheet 3).
- A cross-section through the long axis of the Great Hall and across the Drawing Room Wing, including the lantern in section. (Sheet 4).
- A cross-section through one bay of the Great Hall, showing a truss and the east side of the lantern in elevation. (Sheet 5)
- A cross-section through the Drawing Room Wing. (Sheet 6).
- A drawing of the eaves detail (submitted March 1995).

It has been agreed that submission of other record drawings will be deferred until a later stage of the project. These include:

- Internal elevations of the walls of the Great Hall.
- An exploded drawing of the arrangement of the rafters.
- A drawing of the detail of the junction between the Great Hall and the Drawing Room Wing.

Survey stations and the ground plan of the structure were surveyed by means of a Total Station and hand-held prism. Plans at roof level, cross-sections, the detail drawing of the lantern and the control for rectified photography were prepared using a Reflectorless Total Station.

General internal and external photographs were taken along with more detailed coverage of architectural details.

Elevations of the internal walls of the Great Hall, detail of the rafter arrangement, external elevation of the lantern and recording of the external surfaces of the roof of the Great Hall were based on rectified photography. This was carried out by D. Thompson.

The detail drawing of the eaves was prepared from hand-measurement, following the removal of a small area of the slate covering.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE.

Examination of the fabric of Rufford Old Hall confirmed a previous assessment that the plan of the house "although it bristles with difficulties of detail, is clear enough in broad outline" (Smith, 1971, 165). The present timber-framed structure represents a substantial survival of a common medieval arrangement of an open hall with storeyed end-wings. The drawing-room wing stands on the site of the medieval service rooms of the house, which may have been contained in a cross-wing (see below). The present structure is substantially of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in date. The parlour wing which formerly stood at the western end of the hall has been completely destroyed, but its former presence can be inferred from the conventions of medieval architecture and from the two doors in the present west wall of the hall which would originally have given access into this part of the house.

The Extent of Twentieth Century Renovation

Interpretation of the structural sequence of the Great Hall is complicated by the fact that the hall has been the subject of thorough restoration works in the twentieth century. In 1949, the west gable wall was completely dismantled and re-erected with new timber as a result of infestation with death-watch beetle. In the following decade, the timber frame in the main body of the hall was also dismantled, although it was re-erected where possible using the original timbers. These building works could be identified in the present structure by several means:

- *The projection of wooden pegs from the timber structure*. The ends of the pegs stand out on average 15-20mm from the main timbers, whereas standard medieval and early post-medieval practice resulted in a flush surface. In several cases, examination showed that the pegs were loose in their holes and could be extracted freely. Most of the pegs appear to be in new wood and are lighter in colour than the surrounding timbers.

- *The presence of new timbers*. In all parts of the Great Hall, new timbers can be identified by differences in colour, regularity and scantling. Their use varies from entire structural timbers to smaller fragments scarf-jointed to earlier material. The south wall of the building (externally) appears to consist largely of new timber.

- *The shadow-lines on the timbers*. Preliminary investigation by D. Michelmore identified shadow-lines on several of the trusses and interpreted these as evidence for an inserted ceiling, possibly coved. The pattern of these shadows in certain parts of the building is only consistent with this interpretation if several of the timbers have been moved after the removal of the ceiling but not re-inserted in their original locations (eg. the `St Andrew's Cross' cusped braces above the collar beam in Truss 2).

- *The sequence of carpentry marks*. In general, the carpenters' assembly marks indicate that the timbers have been re-erected in their correct locations. However,

in other instances, such as the area of the northern post, hammer-beam and spandrel of Truss 2, marks are visible on the surfaces of some timbers and not on others. Further examination is needed to confirm this, but there appears to be a *prima facie* case that some timbers have been installed facing in the wrong direction. This cannot have occurred during the initial construction of the building and can only be the result of dismantling and re-erection.

As a consequence of this drastic programme of repair, it is likely that considerable amounts of evidence for the structural development of the Great Hall have been irretrievably removed.

The Date of the Hall

Preliminary examination of the timber roof structure of the Great Hall and background research carried out in 1994 by D. Michelmore indicated that the best stylistic parallels for a false hammer-beam roof of this type are found in buildings in West Yorkshire dating to the late fifteenth century, notably Calverley Hall, dated by dendrochronology to 1485-95.

Examination of the structure in January 1995 revealed one feature suggesting a later date of construction. The spandrel supporting the northern hammer-beam of Truss 4 contains a decorative scheme incorporating the `IHS' (or `IHC') monogram and a device of two pierced hands and two pierced feet around a central pierced heart. In view of the obvious Christian symbolism, this appears to be a religious device rather than a conventional heraldic display. Though it has been partially reconstructed in the twentieth century, the device is certainly part of an original design. Moreover, the timber performs a structural role of sufficient importance that it is unlikely to be a later insertion into an earlier structure.

The symbol has been provisionally identified as a variant on *`The Five Wounds of Christ'*, a badge employed by insurgents during the Pilgrimage of Grace in the autumn of 1536 and spring of 1537. This event was a short-lived popular uprising in protest at the suppression of the smaller monasteries. It was at its most violent in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, though its effects were felt in Cumberland and Lancashire. Within a matter of weeks, the rebels were disbanded and the ringleaders executed (Dodds and Dodds, 1915).

The device at Rufford is found in close juxtaposition to the `IHS' symbol, which, though very common in Christian iconography, was also used as a badge by the `Pilgrims' (Gasquet 1889, 110): this lends some credence to its identification with this episode. (A more common type of the Pilgrims' badge depicts the heart dripping blood into a chalice: this is most commonly seen in embroidery. At Rufford it may have been felt that this motif would have been unfeasibly difficult to carve). Another example of the use of `*The Five Wounds*' in a carpentry design in the North-West can be seen in Carlisle Cathedral in a screen erected in the early 1540s by Launcelot Salkeld, the last Prior of the Augustinian Priory and later the first Dean of the Cathedral.

Further research is needed to determine whether the device described above has any meaning in heraldry or Christian iconography other than as the badge of the

Pilgrimage of Grace and whether it was used in England in any period before the 1530s. Should this identification be confirmed, the device will require an historical assessment of why the owners of the hall should display such a politically dangerous symbol in their home (albeit presently not in a prominent position). It may also allow a reassessment of the personality and motivation of the patron of the Hesketh family, Edward Stanley, Earl of Derby. He was a devout Catholic but was charged by Henry VIII with the suppression of the Pilgrimage of Grace in Lancashire. That he hesitated to commit himself until the last possible moment has been a matter of comment for a recent biographer of the family (Bagley 1985, 38-9).

The principal implication for this analysis is that, should the badge be confirmed as the symbol of the Pilgrimage of Grace, the hall cannot have been constructed before 1536 and may well have been built soon after.

The Insertion of the Bay Window

One of the most significant alterations to the structure is the insertion of the bay window on the North side. Examination of the plan shows this to be intrusive in the bay system, suggesting that it was not part of the original design. This interpretation is supported by several aspects of the standing structure. In particular, the upper part of a jowled post is still *in situ* in the panelling which runs above the present arch across the opening to the bay window. This post corresponds to a post on the southern side: this is complete down to the level of the stone dwarf wall. Both bear a figural sculpture facing into the hall. The post on the northern side supported the wall-plate in the original design and was retained through much of the construction of the bay window. During this stage, it would have been free-standing in the middle of what is now the space created by the window. The lower portion was then removed and the upper part now rests on a beam running along the lower edge of the panelling. It is not clear at what date the window was inserted: the presence of the arms of the Stanley Earls of Derby in one of the spandrels may suggest a date soon after the initial construction of the hall. It has previously been suggested that the bay window may date to the period of ownership of Thomas Hesketh who died in 1567 (Rigold 1971, 277).

Drawings and photographs indicate that before the reconstruction of the 1950s, all but the three northernmost faces of the bay window were `blind': the close studding and infill panels of the lowest level continued up in the position presently occupied by the mullioned windows. This is an unusual feature and may represent a means of reducing the awkward architectural effect caused by the insertion of a projecting bay window immediately adjacent to the west wing. It is impossible to reconstruct the form of this part of the house, but it is likely that it projected to the north and would have effectively blocked the western face of the bay window, making a window unnecessary. Possibly the eastern face of the bay window was also constructed blind in the interests of symmetry.

The Construction of the Eaves

Following a request from the National Trust for an examination of the eaves detail, six slates were lifted from the area of the eaves on the south side of the Great Hall and the felt was pulled back from a small area. This indicated that the junction of the hammer-beam and the wall-plate is of the standard lap-dovetail type of assembly. In particular, the hammer-beams project slightly beyond the line of the wall-plate and the dovetailed soffits are clearly visible. The common rafters sit in shallow trenches cut into the upper outside corners of the wall-plate and they too project slightly beyond the line of the wall.

This examination also revealed that the internal `wall-plate' is not a structural feature but has more of a decorative function. Between the main (external) wall-plate and the internal feature is a void of approximately 30 cm in width. The internal `wall-plate' sits on the edge of the main wall-plate and is jointed into the hammer-beams at the end of each bay, but does not completely close the gap between the wall plate and the underside of the common rafters or the laths of the roof. Since externally the spaces between the rafters are open to the elements (though wire mesh has been placed over these openings to keep birds out), the eaves of the great hall on the south side are relatively exposed to the elements.

Arrangements on the north side are different, as the external wall-plate is concealed by coving beneath the eaves. At present, it has not been possible for an examination of this area to be carried out. However, it is clear that the internal wall-plate on this side is also not part of the main timber-frame. This is particularly apparent in the two western bays, where the sections of the internal wall-plate appear to have come loose at their western ends and to project into the body of the hall beyond the line of the wall.

The Fireplace

Until the date of the construction of the Great Hall has been determined, the question of the original heating arrangements will be conjectural. In the context of a date in the later fifteenth century, it is possible that an open hearth was present in the centre of the hall: this would have been ventilated by a smoke louvre set on the ridge in approximately the position of the present lantern (Howard 1987, 17-19). The replacement of the original wind-braces with new timbers at the time of the insertion of the lantern has destroyed any possible evidence for such an open hearth, such as smoke-blackening or a timber superstructure likely to have supported a smoke louvre. A drawing made in 1817, depicting the hall before the insertion of the lantern, shows no sign of such a structure (National Trust 1991, 51). Alternatively, should a date in the early/mid-sixteenth century be correct, a lateral fireplace set in one of the long sides of the hall would be a more appropriate part of the original design. It cannot be conclusively stated that the present fireplace was constructed as the same time as the present timber structure of the hall but nor is there any evidence that a lateral fireplace (probably in this position) was not present in the hall from the outset.

The internal mouldings of the present stone fireplace consist of two ovolo mouldings flanked by narrow fillets divided by half-hollows and define a four-centred arch with almost straight-edged spandrels. Above the arch are narrow `dagger' traceried panels, meeting above the apex of the central arch: these bear a

great similarity to panels in several of the spandrels of the arch braces supporting the hammer beams and though it is possible that the stone mouldings were carved in imitation of the timber features, it is equally likely that they were made at the same time. The mouldings and the architectural composition are within the mainstream of Perpendicular Gothic architecture and could therefore be accommodated stylistically in both the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.

The present fireplace is not intrusive in the bay system, occupying two complete bays. The spandrel supporting the southern hammer-beam of Truss 4 rests on a stone corbel above the fireplace and may always have done so. This Truss and the southern post of Truss 3 appear to be cut away slightly by the stone wall which surrounds them. This is not conclusive evidence that the fireplace is a later insertion, as is generally assumed (Howard 1987, 17) but may alternatively be the result of minor alterations to a stone wall which was always part of the design. Evidence for such alterations can be seen externally in the use of undressed masonry to the east of the chimney stack.

The Coved Canopy at the Western End

The western `upper' end of the hall contains an elaborate coved canopy over the area originally occupied by the high table. This area of the hall has been extensively altered in the twentieth century. In 1949, the entire west gable wall was taken down and re-erected, mostly in new timber, in response to the threat to the building caused by death-watch beetle. At this time, it was discovered that the void between the external gable wall and the internal wall above the coving was occupied by a room known as the `clay room'. This was interpreted as a priest-hole. This room is now completely sealed and inaccessible: its original function cannot be ascertained. It may have been accessible from the upper floor of the parlour wing, which was demolished at some time after 1697 (National Trust 1991).

Aspects of the standing structure suggest that the present coved canopy is not part of the original design of this end of the hall. In particular, it can be seen to cut across and block the ornamental panelling which runs along the north and south sides of the hall. This panelling clearly continues westwards behind the plaster of the coving.

In addition, there are two ornate wooden posts to the inside of the two doorways in the west wall. They are plainly older than the replaced timbers of the ground floor of this wall and appear to be of similar date to the doorways, which are stylistically of the 16th century. This wall has been radically re-modelled and it is possible that these posts are not in their original positions. However, as they stand, they are not related to the timbers of the coving and presently perform no structural purpose at all: they are more easily explicable if they previously supported a major structural timber.

A possible resolution of these architectural problems is to reconstruct the original west end of the building with the present upper internal gable and bressumer being formerly jettied out from the west wall. The posts might then have supported a pair of braces running up to support the bressumer. This solution

would allow the panelling of the long sides to be unobstructed in the westernmost bay of the hall

The large horizontal rails below the coving both contain elaborate mouldings and though these are new timbers, it is assumed that they replicate the appearance of the timbers which they replaced in the 1950s. These mouldings do not relate to the pattern of close studding of the ground floor and suggest that another method of decorative framing was previously employed. It must be remembered that this wall was not originally an exterior wall and only became so with the demolition of the west wing probably in the early eighteenth century.

The Orientation of the Hall

Previous interpretations of the late medieval and early post-medieval hall houses of Lancashire and Cheshire have implied that their builders and owners were aware of the concept of the `front' and the `rear' of the house (Smith 1971, 159). The front should ideally contain greater elaboration of the architecture and ostentatious features, such as bay windows and decorative timber-framing.

It has been stated (National Trust 1991, 8) that the original principal approach to the building was to the south and that the present arrangement is a total reversal. There would originally have been a door on the south side in the bay nearest to the drawing room wing (in a position currently occupied by a window). A straight masonry joint can be seen in this position in the stone plinth, though it is felt that this is unlikely to date to the blocking of the door.

The present south exterior wall of the hall is particularly plain: it is decorated with close studding under the eaves, immediately above the stone plinth and to its full height in the westernmost bay. The windows at present run the complete height from the plinth to the timber rail below the wall-plate: a photograph of c1906 indicates that this last-mentioned timber is an insertion (National Trust 1991, 43). The scantling of most of the timbers of this wall would suggest that the studs are new and that the wall has been almost completely rebuilt. The suggestion that there may originally have been quatrefoil panelling on the south side (Pevsner 1969, 212) may be correct but there is no evidence to support it in the present structure.

At Rufford, the exterior of the north side of the hall, which contains coving under the eaves, ornate detailing of the principal posts, elaborate quatrefoil panelling and to the west end, a large bay window would appear to display all of the characteristics of the `front' of the house. In particular, the bay window makes very little sense on the north side (where it would have admitted less light than on the south side) unless it was felt desirable that it be placed `on show'. An alternative reason for its location on the north rather than the south side may be connected to the previous situation of the stone fireplace on the south side of the building: it would have been architecturally clumsy to have located the bay window immediately adjacent to this feature.

It is possible that the present ornate appearance of the north side of the hall, particularly the quatrefoil panelling, may be a later embellishment of an originally

plain wall. However, quatrefoil panelling appears to be a basic feature of the design of the Great Hall: it is used widely internally in the east and west walls and in openwork panels to either side of the spere truss. Parallels for decoration of this kind can be seen at Speke Hall, also likely to date to the sixteenth century (Smith 1971, 173). In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is assumed that it is part of the original design of the hall.

The examination of the eaves on the south side has indicated that the lap dovetail joint between the wall-plate and the tie beam is as might be expected. There is no sign that this side of the building was ever coved, as on the north side: the rafters show no traces of having formerly run on and later been truncated.

In summary, the evidence of the standing structure does not lend credence to the theory that the present orientation of the hall is a relatively recent phenomenon. The timber structure suggests that at least from the time of the insertion of the bay window and probably in the original design, the north side of the hall was more highly embellished than the southern and that it is likely that the hall can be said to have `faced' in that direction. That this was the state of affairs by the second half of the seventeenth century is confirmed by the fact that in 1662, a brick wing was added to the house bearing fashionable architectural details such as mullioned and transomed windows, gabled dormer windows and a large door-hood (Smith 1971, 165). The suggestion that this was `merely a tradesman's entrance' (National Trust 1991, 9) is unlikely in view of the further ostentation of the date-stone and heraldry. The fact that this wing was located on the north side of the complex presumably reflects the fact that on this side, it would be seen to best advantage.

The Drawing Room Wing

The two-storeyed cross-wing at the eastern end of the hall is not an original part of the design and occupies the area originally used for the buttery, pantry and possibly the kitchen. The original form of this structure cannot be ascertained: JT Smith suggests that it may have been a cross-wing (Smith 1971, 165) but there is no evidence for this at present. The east gable wall of the Great Hall contains evidence of the arrangements for communications between the screens passage and the service rooms in the wing. In place of the usual arrangement of three doors (with doors to the buttery and pantry flanking the entrance to a passage leading to the kitchen), there are five doors, all with ornately carved four-centred heads: the spandrels are nearly straight-edged. One of these doors almost certainly led to a stairway to the upper floor of the wing, while another may have contained a serving-hatch (Rigold 1971, 277). The second door from the north end contains a groove in its southern jamb and peg-holes in its northern: this would be the most appropriate of the doors for a hatch connecting with one of the service rooms. At present, all but the northernmost and the central door are blocked.

The wing is largely constructed in timber, and its external decoration is clearly intended to complement that of the Great Hall: it contains close-studding and quatrefoil panelling. Documentary evidence suggests that it may have been constructed originally in the early eighteenth century, when Thomas Hesketh MP leased the hall and procured the material of Holmeswood Hall near Rufford. It has been inferred that timbers from this building were re-used in the construction of

the Drawing Room wing. However, the internal and external appearance of this wing dates to the 19th century. This is indicated externally by the south east corner of the southern bay window, which is constructed in brick and is of the same build as the neo-Tudor block of the 1820s.

The upper storey contains the drawing room, while the ground floor is occupied by the ante-room and dining room. In the dining room, no trace of the original timber is visible. In the ante-room can be seen a moulded post in the west wall, supporting a ceiling beam into which moulded joists are jointed.

The upper floor contains an elaborate roof which presumably was removed in its entirety from Holmeswood. This roof contains six trusses with arched braces supporting cambered collar-beams with two tiers of moulded butt-purlins. If this roof was brought to the site from elsewhere and re-assembled, it must have determined the width of the wing, which consequently owes nothing to the form of its predecessor.

The Junction between the Hall and the Drawing Room Wing

At the request of the National Trust, examination of the roof junction between the Great Hall and the Drawing Room wing was deferred until after the commencement of the main repair programme, at which time the covering of the roof will be removed. Consequently, little can be said about the relationship between the wing and the hall, beyond what can be seen from inside the building.

It was noted during the recording that the `posts' inside the drawing room along the west wall are hollow. Close to the junction with the cornice, several of these posts contain holes. It was possible to detect the presence of other timbers within these outer posts: these were interpreted as the timbers of the re-used Holmeswood Hall, erected as posts inside the new wing in the eighteenth century and concealed within the outer posts during refurbishment in the 19th century.

On the ground floor, two of these posts can be observed in the blocking of two of the doors which originally led from the screens passage to the service rooms in the original east wing. It is assumed that they support a wall-plate into which the roof trusses of the drawing room are jointed, although this is presently invisible. This demonstrates that the timber frame of the drawing room wing must post-date the construction and original use of the Great Hall: since the hall was originally dependent on access from the service rooms, the presence of such posts blocking the doors would have precluded this.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RUFFORD OLD HALL.

No anomalies were identified in the structure which led to the interpretation that the present building incorporates any parts of an older building on the site.

The chronology of the building is complicated: it is likely that several developments took place within a relatively short span in the early post-medieval period. It is hoped that dendrochronological analysis at some future stage may resolve some of the questions explored in this document.

The main structure of the building, containing the false hammer-beam roof and the side walls may be dated stylistically to the later fifteenth century, though there is slight evidence that it may have been built in the 1530s or later, albeit in a slightly antiquated style. This would not be inappropriate in a building containing a plethora of heraldic decoration and belonging to an upwardly-mobile family. This building was of a standard `open hall with cross-wings' type, though both of the original end wings have been demolished.

Later than the construction of the main hall, although probably fairly soon after, a bay window was inserted on the north side and a coved canopy over the high table at the western end.

It has been assumed by several writers that the hall originally possessed an open hearth in the centre of the floor and that the south wall of the hall was almost entirely rebuilt with the insertion of a lateral chimney stack in the sixteenth century. There is no evidence in the present structure to support either of these assertions: the central portion of the roof was radically refurbished with the insertion of the roof lantern in 1821 and the south wall contains a large number of new timbers from the reconstruction of the 1950s.

The brick wing of the seventeenth century was constructed at right angles to the hall and was probably free-standing, in common with developments in several other houses of Cheshire and Lancashire. It is almost certain that it did not connect directly to the hall.

The present drawing room wing is a creation of the eighteenth century, re-using substantial amounts of structural timber from a derelict timber-framed building close to Rufford. Its present appearance dates to a refurbishment of the nineteenth century, in which internal cornices, posts, doors, windows and fireplaces were inserted in a neo-Tudor style. This wing probably communicated originally with the seventeenth century brick wing: the present doors leading into the Great hall may date only to the nineteenth century.

The Great Hall originally had a coved ceiling, as revealed by shadow marks on the trusses of the roof. It may well be the case that the original carved angel terminals of the hammer-beams were removed from all but Truss 2 at the time of its insertion.

Pictorial evidence suggests that the hall was renovated in the early years of the nineteenth century at the time of its reversion to domestic use.

The extensive renovation works carried out during the twentieth century have included the insertion of large amounts of new timber and a completely new set of wooden pegs. Several of the original timbers of the roof structure do not appear to be in their original locations.

APPENDIX. THE FIVE WOUNDS OF CHRIST IN ICONOGRAPHY

The use of the motif of the `Five Wounds of Christ' on a spandrel supporting a hammer-beam on the north side of the Great Hall has been used tentatively as a dating criterion for the construction of the building. It has been suggested that the present building was not erected (or received its decoration) at a date in or after 1536. This date contradicts the stylistic evidence of the structure, which would suggest a construction date in the last decades of the fifteenth century. However, it would accord with historical evidence which suggests that the sixteenth century was a time of greater prosperity for the Hesketh family: this would be a more likely time for them to take on the large capital outlay involved in the construction of a house of this quality (Richard Deans *pers. comm*).

Research into the iconography of late medieval religion has indicated that the device of the Five Wounds was widely-used long *before* the Pilgrimage of Grace. As such, its appearance at Rufford cannot be seen as conclusive evidence that the building was constructed after 1536. The appearance of the image of the wounds of Christ is only a physical manifestation of a growing cult, whose popularity was increasing up to the onset of the Reformation. The wounds appear in the liturgy as the subject of prayers and of a particular votive mass during the late medieval period; its five-fold symbolism can be shown to have had an even wider prevalence. To the late medieval Christian, the Five Wounds appear to have borne the connotation of the saving Grace of Christ at the moment of the supplicant's death (Duffy 1992, 238-248). So widespread was the devotion to the Five Wounds that the cult came to represent the entire range of salvation theology of the English Catholic Church. It was for this reason that at the outset of the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, the Lincolnshire rebels selected the Five Wounds as the most evocative symbol of the religious aspirations of their movement.

What the badge came to mean in the aftermath of the rebellion is a more vexed question. Historians have suggested that the King and his advisors felt that the Pilgrimage represented a very real threat to established authority. It might therefore be expected that the badge would have become indelibly connected with the rising in the Tudor mind-set. However, examples of the use of this figure in iconography provide no unequivocal evidence that this is so. The badge does appear on monuments associated with the dissolution of the monasteries with some regularity. As examples of this, it can be seen on the wooden screen in Carlisle Cathedral, erected by Launcelot Salkeld, the prior at the time of the Pilgrimage, in 1542, and at Gloucester Cathedral, on the funerary monument of William Parker, the last abbot, dated to the 1530s. However, both of these monuments also contain depiictions of other symbols of the Passion and there is no reason to suspect that the Five Wounds device bears any connotation of a political, rather than religious nature.

The badge of the Five Wounds at Rufford may therefore come into the category of late medieval devotion. However it is notable that this is the only religious image in a building otherwise dominated by the imagery of political and marital affiliation. In particular the bosses of the arch braces and the spere truss tie beam,

the spandrels of the oriel window arch and spere truss, all contain heraldic decoration celebrating the connections of the Hesketh family to other families of note, such as the Stanley Kings of Man. With the exception of the badge of the Five Wounds, all of the hammer-beam spandrels bear decoration of an essentially abstract and geometric character, with variants on the mouchette pattern coupled with figures such as a six-pointed star, a rose and tracery of gothic inspiration. The appearance of this badge is therefore stilll something of an oddity in the decoration of Rufford Old Hall and the reasons for its inclusion remain mysterious. It may have represented the prayer for a good death for a member of the family, a conventional sign of religious orthodoxy, an indication of sympathy with the ideals of a rebellion, or a combination of several meanings. The original intention, to use the symbol as a dating criterion, clearly has less potential than an interpretation of the religious and political views of the builders of the Hall.

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