

SOME FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CARVINGS FROM WHALLEY ABBEY

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THE two examples of wood-carving which form the subject of this note, and which recently passed into my collection, are of the latter part of the fifteenth century. I was informed by their previous owner that they had long been in his possession, and it was stated that they had originally come from Whalley abbey.

The first specimen, which measures $13\frac{1}{2}$ by $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches, is a rounded shield, surmounted by a double embattled band and surrounded on three sides with rayed leaf-work; it bears upon it the sacred monogram, *ih̄s*, the letters terminating in leaf-work, whilst in addition the three sacred nails were also represented. The second example, measuring $15\frac{3}{4}$ by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, is a portion of an inscription, reading *Notandū est*, all of which is in black-letter characters, save for the capital letter, N, which is Lombardic, as was usual at this period.

These pieces of wood-carving are of considerable local interest, since, with the exception of the stalls in Whalley parish church, they are, so far as I am aware, all that now remains of the wood-work of this important Lancashire monastic institution.¹

¹ It is stated (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xviii. No. II., second series, p. 273) that there is a coffer from Whalley abbey in private possession near Windermere.



ANCIENT WOOD-CARVINGS FROM WHALLEY

The following extract bearing upon the destruction of the wood-work formerly in the abbey of Whalley is of particular interest :

Old Richard Eatough (of a family which had been woodmen to the abbey and to Lord Howe for many generations) was fond of detailing to me forty years ago stories of the abbey and of its later owners, and he informed me that after the destruction of the conventual church and the abbot's lodge such was the quantity of beautiful carved angels, flowers, and other ornamental [wood] work, that they filled all the rooms on the south and east side of the Abbot's Gateway until there came a very productive year of corn, when the tenants, instead of stacking it, turned out the carved work into the open air and substituted the corn.¹

¹ Whitaker, *Whalley* (4th ed., 1872), i. 143.