

Dacre Hall

Sir Thomas Dacre acquired Lanercost Priory at the Dissolution, refashioning the western cloister to become his residence. Massive kitchens in the ruined Dacre Tower to the south originally served the impressive first floor hall.

The village now owns the entire building and it is used as a community hall.

Entering the hall from a modern spiral staircase we were confronted by a splendid carved oak overmantel dated 1618 festooned with bunting to celebrate the Queen's birthday. The overmantel has recently being reinstated on long-term loan from the Bowes Museum. Originally painted, it bears coats-of-arms of Sir Thomas Dacre, his son Christopher and his second son Henry Dacre. There were typical strapwork surrounds and "curled leather" scrolling.

We learned that the design originates from a series by Vredeman de Vries published in 1560–63. Members who visited a few days earlier spotted a similar example in the Parlour at Levens Hall. Anthony Wells-Cole in *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England* has suggested the carver was probably from Newcastle.

William Jefferies