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The Losh family came originally from Newton Arlosh on the Solway Firth and took their name either in its full or its shortened form from the village. Family history suggests that they were grangers or farm bailiffs to the abbey estates of Holm Cultram and they retained land in that area.

Legend has it that, about the year 394 AD St Ninian, before he crossed the Solway to build his church at Whithorn, built an oratory or chapel at Newton Arlosh to express gratitude to God for his safe return from Rome. On 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1304, Bishop John de Halton granted a charter to the Abbot of Holme to build 'one chapel or church afresh'. A licence was obtained to crenellate, since this church would not only be a place of worship but also a refuge from the Scottish raiders. After the dissolution of Holm Cultram Abbey the church fell into disuse and neglect. In 1580 it was recorded that 'the Chapel of Newton Arlosh did decay; the door stood open and sheep lay in it. About fifteen years since the roof fell down, and the lead was taken away by some of the tenants and converted into salt pans.'

Sarah Losh, when she visited the church in 1843, was appalled to find villagers carting away the stones as if it was a quarry. With the support of Canon Simpson of Holm Cultram, she offered to restore the church and pay for the work. Sarah's plan recreated the original form, in Anglo-Norman style, with its defensive tower and short nave but she also enlarged the nave northwards. This had the effect of recreating the original profile as the church is approached but internally turning it through 90 degrees to accommodate a larger congregation. This policy combined Sarah's desire to reconstruct an historical form, as she did with the Chapel of Rest, and her practical pragmatic approach.

St John's displays many of Sarah's characteristic touches. She added a semi-circular apse with scalloped stone roof tiles similar to those at St Mary's and placed an eagle to stand guard on the roof. Inside there is a lectern with a base of bog oak, a palm tree base, originally intended as part of a pulpit, and the Bishop's chair with its characteristic curved arms. There are two carved stone rams' heads flanking the original position of the altar. When the foundations were being dug Roman coins were discovered. Some were dedicated to Jupiter Ammon, the Roman form of the Egyptian Amun, creator of life and protector of the poor. Amun often appeared as a man with the head of a ram and Sarah's inclusion of the stone rams' heads may have been a reference to the ancient coins. This was typical of her interest in the overlapping of old beliefs, but the rams' heads, with their demonic connotations, 'gave rise', as her biographer, Henry Lonsdale, put it diplomatically, 'to some discussion'.