

II.

NOTICE OF UNDESCRIBED HOG-BACKED MONUMENTS AT ABERCORN
AND KIRKNEWTON. By THOS. ROSS, F.S.A. Scot.

In bringing before the Society a notice of four hog-backed monuments not hitherto described, it may be well to revert to what has already been done by way of illustrating this class of monuments.

In the *Proceedings* of the Society in 1885,¹ the late Mr Russell Walker described and illustrated all those in Scotland known at that date. These were as follows:—1 at Abercorn (he had heard of another, but could not find it); 1 at Brechin; 2 at Dornock, near Annan, Dumfriesshire; 5 at Govan, 3 of which only are illustrated and described; 1 at Inchcolm; 1 at Luss; 1 at Meigle; 2 at St Andrews (fragments, not described); 1 at Deerness, Orkney, a “coped stone covered with the scale ornament,” known only to Mr Walker from Low’s *Tour in Orkney and Shetland*; and 1 at Govan, “entirely disfigured.” In the *Proceedings* for 1888,² the Rev. Dr Duke described and illustrated another example found in the churchyard of St Vigeans. If to this list of 17 monuments we add the 4 now to be described, it brings the number of hog-backed monuments in Scotland up to 21.

All of these monuments have not the hog-backed feature which has won for them their name. It will be observed that 3 of those at Abercorn are parallel in their sides and level on the top, so that they resemble more a roof-shaped shrine than a hog-back; but as they were found on the same site as the strictly hog-back one, and are covered with the same kind of scale ornament, it may be presumed that they belonged to the same age—they may be regarded as a variety of the same type. All those at Govan are hog-backed, as are also those at Luss, Meigle, Inchcolm, and Kirknewton, and one of the four at Abercorn.

¹ Vol. vii., New Series, p. 406.

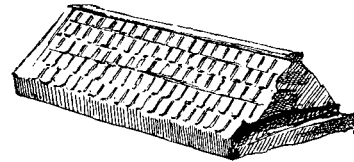
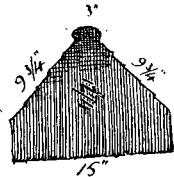
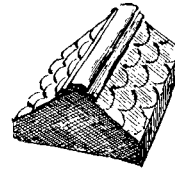
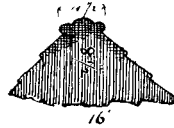
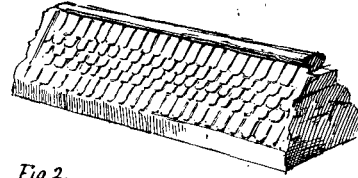
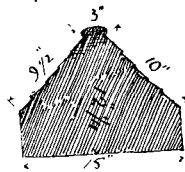
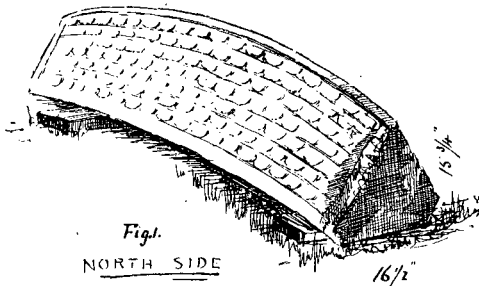
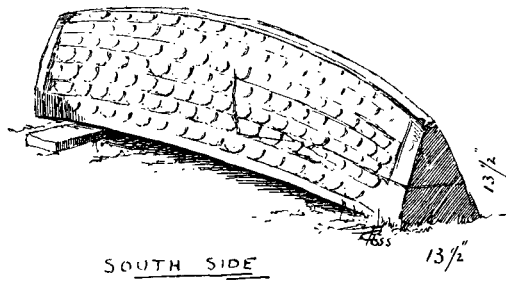
² *Ibid.*, vol. xi., New Series, p. 143.

Many similar monuments are to be found in England, especially in the diocese of Carlisle, 2 at Gosforth, at Cross Canonby, Old Appleby, Broomfield, Aspatria, Plumbland, Penrith, at Sockburn and Lower Dinsdale in Durham, Hexham, Heysham in Lancashire, Repton and Bakewell in Derbyshire, Bedale, Brompton, St Dyonis, Yorkshire, and St Judy in Cornwall.

Abercorn.—The complete monument at Abercorn (fig. 1) is, I understand, in or about its original position, but it has been slightly raised out of the ground and placed on two cross stones. It lies in the churchyard a few paces south from the west end of the ancient Norman Church of Abercorn, in a position somewhat analogous to that of the similar monument at Kirknewton and its ancient church. The broad and high end of the monument is towards the west. It measures 6 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the west end, and $15\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. At the east end it is $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide by $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches high; at its highest point it is about $20\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The stone is strikingly like a boat with the keel uppermost, with seven scalloped planks, as it were, overlapping along its bellied rounded surface; both sides may be said to be alike, except that on the south side there are 17 scales in the length of the lowest plank and 18 on the other side. The scales are considerably worn, soft and rounded on the edges, but still quite distinct almost all over. The flattish rounded keel is brought downwards at each corner, which seems to indicate a finish at each end, so that probably the stone is entire; it is possible, however, that each end may have been ornamented. There is a perpendicular base of some 2 inches or 3 inches high.

The three fragments (not hitherto described) are preserved in a room entering from the church. They were found somewhere about the site of the south aisle when it was being built, some ten or twelve years ago. Fig. 2 was lying above ground, and is doubtless the one which Mr Walker had heard about. Figs. 3 and 4 were found below the surface.

The monument shown by fig. 2 is 33 inches long by 15 inches broad and $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches high; it has a flat, round-edged ridge 3 inches wide; the



Figs. 1-4. Hog-backed Monuments at Abercorn.

sloping sides are not quite equal, one measuring 10 inches and the other $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches on the slope. Both sides are covered with scales in five rows, those on the larger side having the top and bottom scales considerably longer than the three intermediate ones. On the other side the scales are equal.

Fig. 3 is 28 inches long, and, like fig. 2, is 15 inches broad by $12\frac{1}{4}$ high, and with a similar ridge; its sloping sides are equal, measuring $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches. On each side there are five rows of scales of equal size.

Fig. 4 is a mere fragment about 10 inches long by 16 inches wide and about $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and does not represent a whole section of the stone. The ridge consists of three rolls, measuring $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches over. The scales are of the same rounded type as in fig. 1, but, unlike it, they are quite sharp and well preserved.

Kirknewton.—This monument, fig. 5, is lying in the churchyard of Kirknewton, at a distance of about 6 yards south from the west end of the ruins of the ancient Norman Church of Kirknewton. It is thus in the same relative position to the church as is the similar stone at Abercorn, 8 miles due north from Kirknewton. The stone is believed to be in its original position, but the cross stones seen at either end are not supposed to be connected with it.

The high end of the monument, as at Abercorn, is towards the west. It measures 5 feet 7 inches long, and is $18\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide at the west end by about 13 inches high, and at its highest part about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch more. At the east end it is $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and was probably about $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, but at this part it is broken away. In section, the sides are not equal—the ridge is not in the centre; each side is ornamented with three rows of scales. In addition to these, the upright base on the south side is enriched with a kind of nail-head ornament, much worn and rounded. The gabled west end has two rows of scales; the sinking shown in the apex is possibly a weather marking. The other end is rough and somewhat broken.

Many hog-back monuments have been found built into the walls of Norman churches as materials of their construction. Their pre-Norman

date is thus sufficiently established. Two of a very pronounced hog-backed shape were recently found in the foundations of the twelfth-century church of Gosforth, in the Lake district. Abercorn, as a monastery of

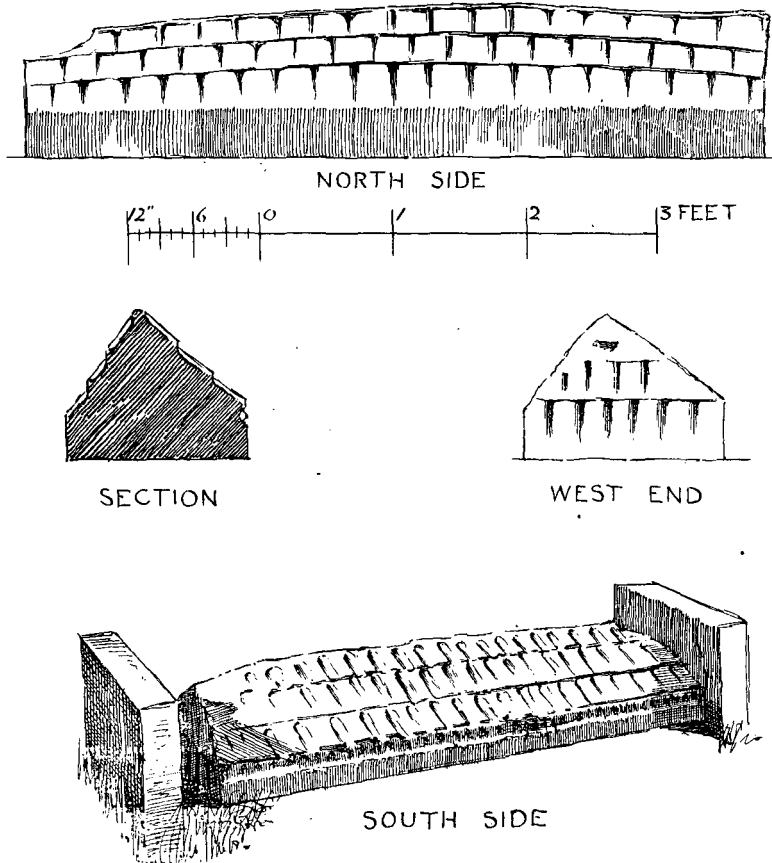


Fig. 5. Hog-backed Monument at Kirknewton.

the Northumbrian Church, dates back to the seventh century, and in consequence of the victory of the Picts over the Angles of Northumberland, Trumwine, the Bishop of Abercorn, fled to Whitby in 685. Although

the Northumbrian Church was thus overturned in the north, Abercorn still continued as a religious centre in the diocese of Dunkeld, and some time early in the twelfth century a church was built on the present site, of which portions still remain.