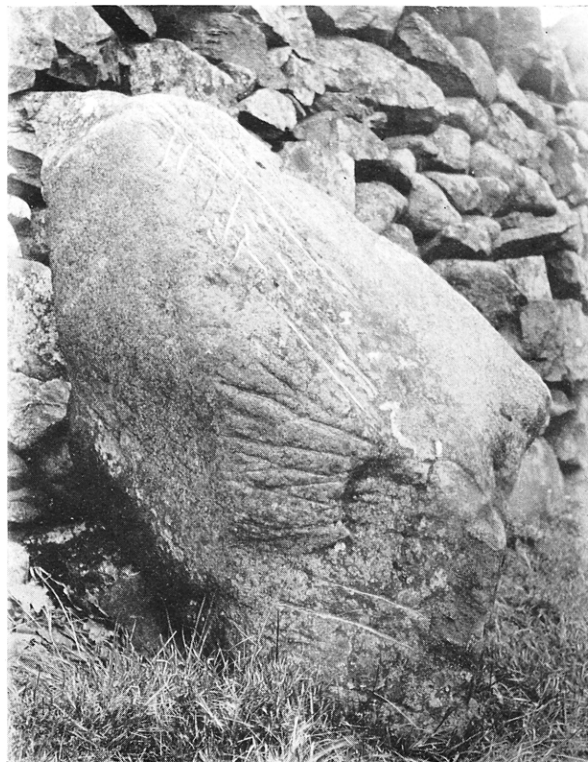




1. STONE AT CASTLERIGG, KESWICK.  
*Phot. by W. D. Anderson.*



2. PLOUGH-MARKED STONE, KESWICK.  
 TO FACE P. 109.

ART. XIII.—*Plough Markings on Stones.* By W. D. ANDERSON.

*Read at Penrith, June 29th, 1922.*

BESIDE the stile leading to the Stone Circle on Castle-rigg near Keswick, there stands a boulder, which, before the erection of the stile in 1913, lay at the boundary and was used as a stepping-stone for surmounting the fence. When this stone was moved there was found on the under side a series of linear marks, the nature of which led to discussion, some people going so far as to suggest that they were Ogham script. To discuss the matter our President, Mr. W. G. Collingwood, visited the place in Sept. 1921, carefully examined the stone (Fig. 1) and reported as follows :

I examined the stone which has been supposed to be marked with oghams at the great Circle near Keswick, on Sept. 15th, 1921. It is now set up on end by the stile in Castle Lonning.

The markings are quite distinct. Most of them are fresher than the rest of the surface of the stone, but this may have been caused by recent clearing of the lines. They are in two groups, neither of which is on a true arris, but each set of roughly parallel scores runs from a comparatively flat face of the stone a little over a softly rounded edge to the narrow face which separates the two groups of markings. There are also a few sharply marked rectangular and triangular forms, but these are plainly weathering cleavage, as usual in these stones. The lines of one group measure from 6 to 8 inches in length ; in the other group the lines are 5 to 6 inches long. They are all roughly parallel at right angles to the longer axis of the stone, without the diagonals of the third set of oghams, the dots on the arris for vowels, or the distinction between the first and second set of oghams on one or other side of the arris. It is impossible to read these marks as oghams.

The only probable explanation of these marks is that they have been made by the plough. Many of them start with a small dent (wheré the plough drove into the stone) and then turn into a curve

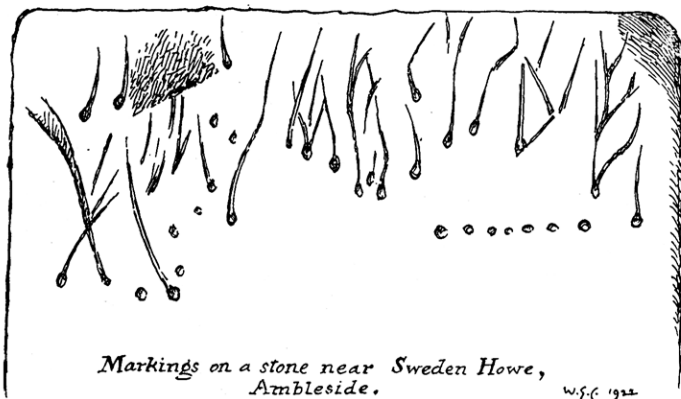
(where the plough was momentarily deflected) before running on in the direction of the furrow. The other group of markings was made on the return journey of the plough, as the stone lay embedded in the soil. The field still shows the riggs of ploughing, and Gray (Journal, Oct. 5th, 1769) described the site as a cornfield. As the stone was an obstruction, it was no doubt taken out and set aside, perhaps at that period (150 years ago), which would account for the patina on some of the scars.

Mr. Collingwood then asked me to look out for stones that had unquestionably been scratched by the plough in order that a comparison might be made. This I did, and had not far to seek, for in the immediate vicinity of the Circle many examples were to be found. Of some of these photographs have been taken, and copies are deposited in the Society's Cabinet at Tullie House. Fig. 2 represents one of these lying against the E. side of the E. wall of Castle Lonning, about halfway between the Ambleside and old Penrith roads.

Stones may be scratched by either plough or harrow, and in recent markings there is little difficulty in determining to which class the marks belong, as those made by the plough are so much wider. I am, however, inclined to think that formerly the ploughshare was often much sharper than it is now, so that it may not be easy to determine which implement is responsible for the marks found.

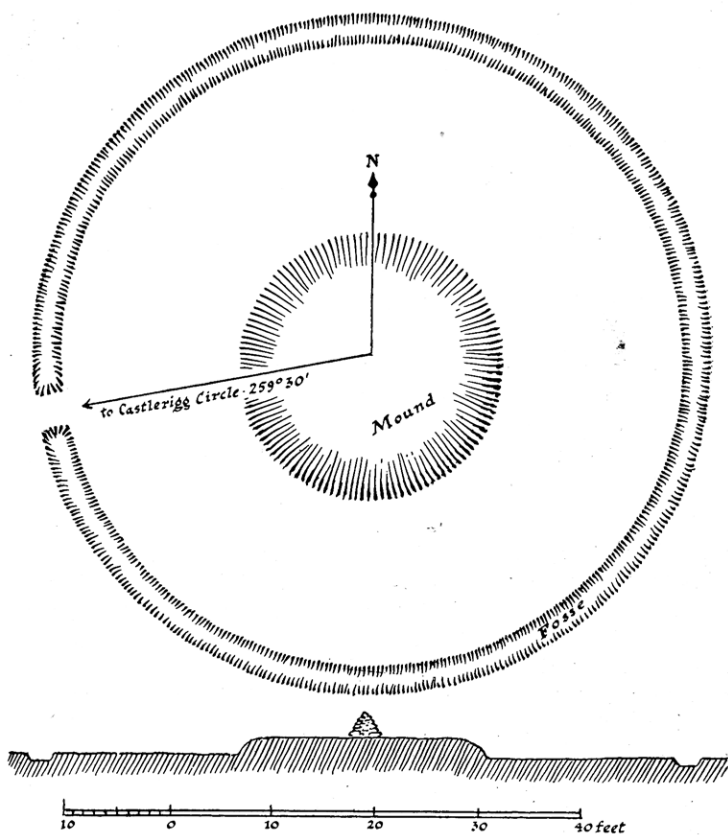
There is often a misapprehension among non-agricultural people as to what a ploughshare is, for some suppose that the mouldingboard is an intrinsic part of the share, whereas the latter is only a small piece of triangular iron at the point of the body of the plough, behind the coulter. The share continually gets sharper with use, which makes the plough more difficult to guide, so that it has frequently to be staved, that is heated and hammered in to destroy its sharp point. Marks of varying character can thus be made with the same plough, and of course, this variation is extended by ploughs of different periods and design.

Mr. W. G. Collingwood added that a similar stone had been known for some time at Ambleside. It is a quoin stone of the fence-wall in the lane leading from Sweden Howe to Sweden Bridge, on the left hand shortly before coming to the Pipe-track.



The markings have been supposed to be runes, but found unreadable. They are undoubtedly plough-scores, and at the farm of Nook End, just below, there are other stones, similarly scored, which confirm this explanation. At Nook End, there is also a quoin in a gateway, with lettering that has been thought Roman, but is not of Roman character. It bears the initials E(or F) R and W R with a few other letters, apparently cut at random, and perhaps eighteenth century. Close by, the Backhouse family, formerly tenants here, have cut their initials on the old stable-door, and the date of 1855 is cut in stone on the building, the work of the late Mr. Woodend, by whose grandson, Mr. William Woodend of the Haven, this information is given. It is desirable to record relics like these, which may possibly be misleading; but no less desirable to continue the search for carved stones at sites of ancient habitation.

In the *Transactions* of the Carmarthenshire Antiq. Soc., pt. xl, p. 31 (1922), Prof. R. A. S. Macalister mentions instances of plough-marked stones that have been or might be mistaken for ogham monuments in South Wales.



Plan and Section of Tumulus on Great Mell Fell:  
by W.D. Anderson, Aug. 4, 1922.