

IV.

THE ABBOT'S CROSS. By WILLIAM FENTON, F.S.A.Scot.

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Among the many estates owned by the ancient Abbey of Aberbrothock, not the least important was the entire parish (then called a "Schyra") of Kingoldrum, in Angus, granted by the founder of the Abbey, King William the Lion, somewhere about A.D. 1178.

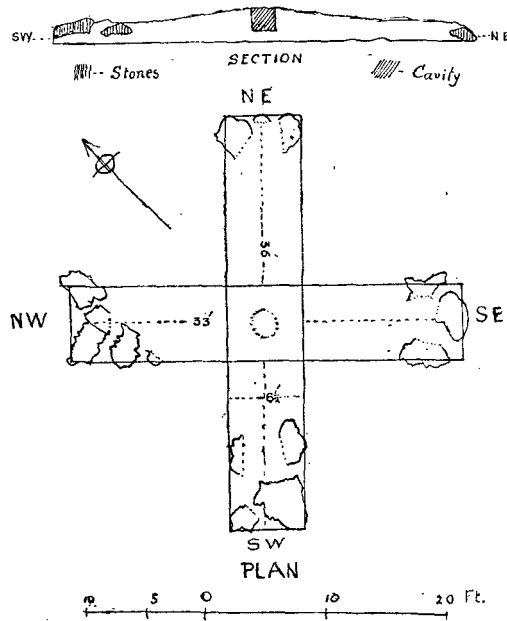


Fig. 1. The Abbot's Cross, Lintrathen, Angus.

The records of the Abbey show that disputes regarding boundaries of church lands were not infrequent, and they also show that the monks prudently marked the boundaries of their lands with cross-stones ("còrsstanes" as they are called in the documents).

The Cross which is dealt with in this communication is much more than a "còrsstane"—it is a collection of boulders, arranged in two arms or ridges, which intersect one another at right angles (fig. 1), each arm being about $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width, one arm 36 feet long and the other 34 feet long.

The stones were piled to form ridges varying from 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet above ground-level, and most of them are now overgrown with grass and heather,

but at the outward ends of the arms the largest boulders are placed, and these still stand out bare, as shown by photograph (Pl. X, 2).

In the centre, where the arms intersect, is a cavity about 1 foot deep and 2 feet in diameter, which was probably occupied originally by an upright stone, now removed. In the cavity are several small stones, lying loose, which were doubtless used as packing for the upright stone.

The Cross lies, not on the top of the hill, but about 400 yards south-west from the top. The hill is now known as Strone Hill (1074 feet) on the map, and is called locally Foldend Hill from the farm to which it is attached.

I understand that there is a similar cross, known as the Bishop's Cross, marking the boundary of church lands near Aberdeen, and that another one is described in the *Inventory of Ancient Monuments for Dumfriesshire*.¹

One would naturally suppose that the present boundary between the two parishes would still be defined by the Cross, but it happens that the existing boundary runs north and south at a distance of over half a mile to the east. Therefore it was necessary to have recourse to ancient documents in search of proof as to the line of the original boundary.

In the *Registrum Vetus de Aberbrothoc* there are three documents dealing with this question.

The first, on pp. 226-27, is dated A.D. 1253, and is concerned with a dispute between Sir Thomas de Rettre and the Abbot regarding the northern part of the boundary between Kingoldrum and Lintrathen. It is very interesting, as it contains a narrative of the perambulation of the marches, but since it does not refer to the region of the Cross we do not require to notice it further.

The second document, dated 1256, is a quit-claim by Alan Durward, Justiciar of Scotland, in which he states the boundaries between his lands of Lintrathen and those of the Abbot. In the southern part of the parish the boundaries are indicated with some particularity, but when he ascends to the moors he is very indefinite, and the frontier as stated by him might be taken to run pretty much on the lines of the present parish boundary.

The third document (in the *Registrum Nigrum*) is dated 1458, is in the vernacular, and is much more detailed than the other two. It begins at the southern part of Lintrathen and proceeds northwards. The following quotation relates to the region of the Cross: "and swa up to the burne of Athyneroith that is to say the Gallaow Burne the quhilk diuides Kynclune and Pergewy · and swa up to the Raistane Well diwidand betuix Kynclwne and Pergewy · and syne northwest to Tybyrnoquhig that is to say the Blynd Well · and swa up to Carnofotyrr that is to say the Pwndiris Carne · syne eist to the corsstane abwne Cargsuryngis."

Every one of these old names, except Kynclwne, Pergewy, and Tybyrno-

¹ No. 564. For other examples, see also *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 345 ff., vol. lx. pp. 269 ff., and J. R. Mortimer's *Forty Years' Researches*, pp. 388 ff.

quhig, is now entirely forgotten, but the Gallow Burn, which marks the present boundary, is identifiable, because it is the only one in the neighbourhood. Proceeding up this burn, therefore, one reaches the limits of cultivated land, and there is an earthfast boulder with a rushy hollow beside it which is probably the Raistane Well. From that point one turns north-west (quite off the present boundary) and reaches Tybyrnoquhig (now called Tipperwhig), where there are the remains of a crofter's house and steading. It seems a fair inference that the words "and swa" mean that the line continues in the same direction as from Raistane Well to Tybyrnoquhig, and we set our course accordingly north-west by compass. This led over a ridge on Brankam Hill, and when we reached the top our line of march pointed direct to the site of the Cross. Accordingly, if this is accepted as sufficient evidence, the Cross must be regarded as the boundary of the Abbey lands. It is certain that on the line taken from Tipperwhig there is nothing which could be called a "Carn" until the supposed Carnofoty is reached.

The question arises, Why is this Cross not mentioned in the elaborate list of landmarks contained in the document of 1458, in which no fewer than four corstanes are stated? These corstanes (cross-stones) were probably the usual earth-bound boulders, marked with a small incised cross, and would be much less noticeable than the large cross. The probability is that during the time which had elapsed between its construction, possibly about the end of the twelfth century, and the statement of boundaries in the middle of the fifteenth century it had been forgotten. Still the line laid down by the Abbot in 1458 leads directly to the Cross, and if Carnofoty is really the eastern top of what is now known as the Foldend Hill, then it is certain that the Cross was put there by the Abbot of Arbroath to mark the turning-point of his boundary, which from the top of the hill runs east as stated in the document, and joins up quite naturally with the present line of boundary.

The alternative name for the hill Carnofoty, that is to say the "*pwindiris Carn*," is not a translation of Carnofoty, but is probably a local name, derived from the carn having been the station of a Pundar, an official employed by many ecclesiastical landowners to look after boundaries, etc., and to "pund" or pound stray animals. There is an ancient turf-walled enclosure on the nearest level ground to the Cross, which might have been the pound, and there are foundations of a house with outbuildings on the high ground to the south of the Cross. These foundations are at a considerable distance from the site of the nearest extinct Croft (called Cordaugh), and appear to be much more massive than those of the usual cottar house of the eighteenth or nineteenth century.