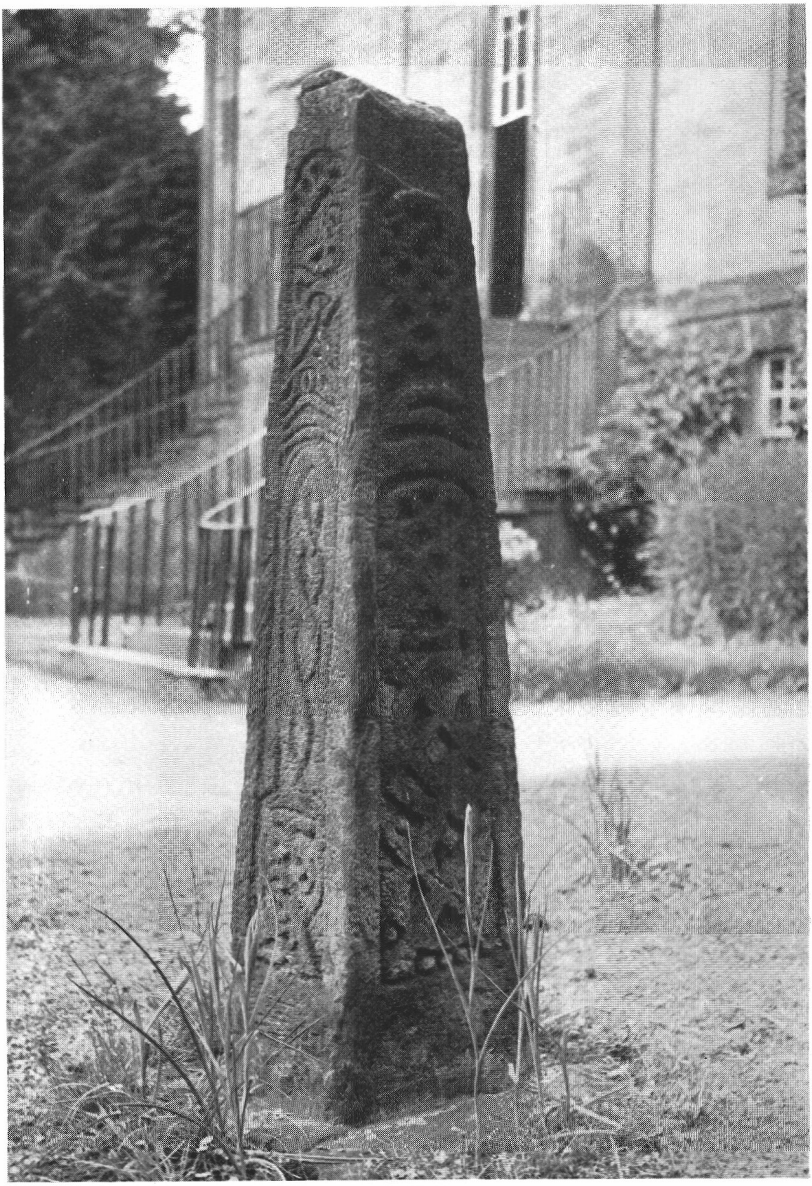

Photo. by T. L. Tudor.

PRE-NORMAN CROSS SHAFT AT TWO DALES, DARLEY DALE.

North Side — No. 2. — West Side.

Note by R.W.P.C. – K.G.H.B.
Ward tells me that this
cross was dug up at Gladwin
Mark on property of the Duke
of ~~Rutland~~ Devonshire but removed
secretly lest the Duke
might claim it
The cross is now
in Bakewell Churchyard
RWPC

Pre-Norman Cross-shaft in Two Dales, Darley Dale.

By Thomas L. Tudor.

THE ancient cross-shaft here illustrated stands in the grounds of The Holt (named Holt House on the 6-inch Ordnance Maps), a distinguished looking residence in the old-fashioned hill-side region of Two Dales about a mile north-east of Darley Bridge, Darley Dale. The house is in the simplified Chatsworth style with alterations characteristic of the late eighteenth century by which the original main entrance on the ground floor was reduced in importance by the construction of an entrance above (in place of a central window), and the approach to it made in the Kedleston style by a winged staircase. This can be seen in photograph No. 2. Local tradition says that the Dakin (Dakeyne) family once lived here, and we note that a flax mill situated north-east of the house not far away, was built by a Daken in 1826.

The stone seems to have been discovered sometime in the nineteenth century lying in Burley Fields near the farmstead of that name and about one mile N.N.W. of Holt House. Here agricultural workers struck upon it lying under about two feet of earth. The owner of the land, being also owner of Holt House, had the stone brought to its present position where it was carefully set up on a solid base, apparently as a curious ornament in a garden setting. It remained there, apparently quite unknown outside the immediate neighbourhood until the summer of 1936 when its special historic value was first recognised. It was due to the local interest

aroused in Darley by a course of lectures on Derbyshire given by the writer under the Nottingham University College Adult Education Department that this discovery was made. Mr. A. Morten[1] of Matlock Bath first drew my attention to it, and, through the courtesy of Mr. J. S. Wain of Holt House, I was able to make all necessary investigations. It was clear at once that here was a monument of exceptional archæological interest and intimately allied to the whole series of Mercian and Northumbrian monuments of the pre-Norman period. Numerous photographs have since been taken by me and on my behalf. The west side has presented some difficulty on account of overhanging trees, but although it comes out rather dark in the picture the details are easily made out and no essential feature remains undisclosed.

The monument is monolithic, of hard gritstone, well chosen for the chisel like those at Eyam, Bakewell and other places, and only slightly weathered considering its age. It is set securely on a flat base flush with the grass and stands five feet four inches high. The section is rectangular and of solid proportions, measuring one foot four inches by eleven inches at the bottom, and nine inches by eight at the top. All four sides are covered with ornament in strict traditional form, bold and deep in its cutting and well planned, and some of the apparent weathering may be due to final dressing of the surface with the pick as with many examples in the north. It is in no sense a second-rate monument of its kind, notwithstanding that the fine classic style of Northumbrian design is absent. We must, however, notice a fault in the interlacing on the south side. But what seems to be a nondescript pattern above the Staffordshire knot on the north side may be due to fractures of the surface. An apparent fault in the shaping of the stone

[1] Mr. Morten has since given me a lead-miner's measuring dish in oak, marked 'V.R. 1858,' which I hope to offer to the Derby Museum in due course. T.L.T.

Photo. by T. L. Tudor.

PRE-NORMAN CROSS SHAFT AT TWO DALES, DARLEY DALE.

South Side. No. 1. East Side.

(edge of the north side illustration No. 2) we should attribute to wear and tear. On examining the stone at its base it is difficult to say whether any portion is missing, but this is possible owing to the shortness of the monument. Yet many northern crosses seem to have been even shorter than this one. (See W. G. Collingwood's *Northumbrian Crosses*, in the Society's Library).

At the top of the stone, where to all appearances the head has been broken off, a round fillet terminates the shaft just above a conventionalised human face and shoulders. This device, originally carved on each broad side but now broken off on the west side leaving a bad scar, is the most striking of all the details and we refer to it again later. On each side of the shaft the scheme of ornament is divided into two arched panels and enclosed by bold borders down each corner of the stone. All along these borders, and cut crossways in runic fashion, there are markings not easily explainable as weathering. They seem deliberate and should be further examined. (See the south-side edges (No. 1)).

A summary of the various patterns is as follows. We find the simple plait or basket pattern; the guilloche; circular interlacing; the close spiral; double spiral (S); pellets for enrichment; and the triquetra (Staffordshire knot), which appears on the Rowsley cross-head described by the writer in the *D.A.J.*, 1932-3. Other significant details are the closed circles, sometimes double (east side, No. 1), which help to date the stone. The full human face (eyes and mouth) is entirely a non-Christian feature, Teutonic, Pagan and ultimately Classic. (See Baldwin Brown, *Arts in Early England*, Vols. 3 and 4, and plates LIX, LX and CL). It occurs on some Irish crosses, but not one example appears in *Northumbrian Crosses* (W. G. Collingwood), and none, so far as we know, in this county. Wherever examples of the human form appear, notwithstanding their rudeness, they are naturalistic and symbolic and not mere conventions of ornament.

Concerning the original intention of this standing cross we may conjecture at large within the wide boundaries of history as recorded by early authors, but we have no clear guidance in this case. The site of its discovery does not help us much save that it tends to exclude the thought that it marked the position of a Christian church. It may have done so, but there is no evidence. Probably when discovered in Burley Fields it lay not far from its original site as the weight of the stone would make its transport a very tiresome business, and notwithstanding the case of the Eyam cross, we may scarcely take it for granted that the destroyers who knocked off the head would take so much trouble to satiate their enmity by carrying away a heavy and useless object with so great expenditure of time and labour. The stone shows hardly any sign of rough usage apart from the rather clean break at the top. No holes have been cut for its use as a gate post, nor has it stood for any length of time where it could be worn or mutilated by utilitarian uses. Its shallow position in the field suggests that it was left lying on the ground, and that it gradually sank into the earth through its own weight and so became obscured by vegetation and other causes. The loss of the head, as in all other cases, is a real calamity. So many of these ancient monuments have suffered the same fate that we conclude naturally enough they owe these disasters to circumstances similar to those that swept away innumerable mediæval crosses after the Reformation.

So although we look on this stone as undoubtedly an ancient sign of the faith it still suggests a transitional period, and as such commands special attention. It bears no definite sign of Christianity unless the triquetra may be so regarded, although this reputed symbol of the Trinity is but an adaptation of Pagan uses. In such a casual place as it here occurs it seems only an ornamental device. But as it appears on the head of the Rowsley

Cross it may very probably have this definite intention. In truth, it is often only the actual cross-heads which surmount these picturesque shafts that give us any impression of the religious feelings of the men who erected them, feelings rivalled, and often outrivalled, by the native delight in old and familiar craft-work.

The Venerable Bede, The Monk, Joceline, in the Life of St. Kentigern, as well as the records of St. Ninian, all tell us vivid stories of the circumstances in which crosses of wood and stone were set up to commemorate christian events in the fervid days of the conversion, and these are our text for looking to wayside and village preaching stations; the conversion and the death of saintly persons; the sites of battles; beside the dwellings of religious persons; at cross roads as reminders to the wayfarer; and also as boundary marks, which have a strong biblical sanction. We can argue nothing from the present thinly populated region where this cross was found. We know, however, there are many signs of old ways and boundaries, and of lost habitations, on these half-wild hillsides.

As to the probable date of the setting up of the cross we have, at least, some indications of an upper limit. It undoubtedly shows Viking influence in its ornament, and if we are to accept Dr. Brøndsted's argument that such influence comes primarily from Jellinge in Jutland where important finds were made about A.D. 930 then that is our limit. Mr. W. G. Collingwood tends, however, to dissent from this absolute conclusion. The Jellinge finds admittedly show Irish influence, and that learned author who has so exhaustedly studied the Northumbrian remains, asks very pertinently why the Anglian region of Britain should wait for this reaction from Jutland when cross-country traffic between Ireland and York was in existence previously. We are not able to judge between the arguments of two such eminent authorities.

The Danes captured York in A.D. 897, and Dr. Brøndsted

thinks their influence in arts and crafts may have been well established here by the end of the century. But after the excavations at Jellinge were carried out, about A.D. 930, Dr. Brøndsted traces new elements of ornament in contemporary art although some features occur earlier. To be precise this author sees in the 'loose' or closed circles of Northumbrian ornament a direct borrowing from the objects of the Jellinge mounds. (See Early English Ornament, pp. 226-7, for the argument, and figs. 143 and 167). The Gilling Stone, also illustrated by Mr. Collingwood, shows these closed circles in double form, independent of the meander interlacings, exactly as we see them on the east side of the Two Dales cross. This then is one definite detail for our purpose. The other element is in the close resemblance between the arched-top panels and the same forms on the St. Alkmund stones in the Derby Museum which have other and even stronger evidence of Viking style. No animal conventions however help us here, as is the case with the finely wrought examples we have referred to, which Dr. Brøndsted praises highly for their vigorous style. In every other respect our stone is a pure Anglian product. The interlacings show no foreign intrusion of the period. The pellets used for enrichment are native to Early England as in Acca's cross, set up probably about A.D. 740, and in Anglo-Saxon coinage; and the 'S' spiral is a late version of the Anglian vine as it appears at Ruthwell, Bewcastle, Ilkley, Addingham, Bakewell and Eyam, etc. The guilloche (No. 2 north side) is plainly barbaric>Roman, but long since assimulated in our native art. It will thus be understood that all the elements of design are ultimately quite Pagan, and Classic, in no sense Christian inventions, and they well illustrate the fact that interlacing ornament, under the limited outlook and exuberant fancy of primitive craftsmen was developed to greater extent in these islands than anywhere else in Europe. In one particular,

however, the Two Dales artist broke out of his ruts. His humanised fancy at the head of the shaft seems to have been a half-lost idea in his time for we find nothing akin to it in his region. Like the sculptor of the Rowsley head he had a vein of individuality. Derbyshire thus claims two unique touches from this picturesque age of a dawning faith and its dedicated arts.

Near the spot where this remarkable stone was found there are records of cinerary urns and burnt human remains having been discovered. They might be Bronze Age or later. We do not know what interval elapsed between some settlement, small no doubt, of earlier humanity here, and a settlement of the first English in and about Darley. History hides much concerning ancient sites good enough for one age also good enough for later comers.

Quite apart from any possibilities as to the character of the head, it seems curious that the most prominent position on this shaft should be given up to a wholly Pagan version of the human element instead of some Christianised form of the same.

The principal ornamentation (interlacing) had long since been dedicated to Christian uses in England (perhaps three hundred years), and by this time it had become a stereotyped convention often without any definite symbolism of the new faith. In early Danish times there may have been a transition feeling about such monuments. Was this so in the case we are considering? Shall we further excite our critics by suggesting that an intrusive settlement of pagan Danes pushing into waste lands about Chesterfield and in their usual way battling against the Christian English in Darley, eventually agreed, on their conversion, to a peace pact and so helped to set up a symbol, half Pagan, half Christian? But what if this cross was not first set up where it was found? The principal riddle is still the same, namely, its com-

promising form; and in fact many crosses of the period have the same indeterminate detail and evidence of delight in mere craftsmanship, which fully conforms to their historic conditions.

By consent of Mr. Wain, owner of the cross, it has been recommended to the Ancient Monuments Advisory Board of H.M. Office of Works to be scheduled for permanent preservation as an object of national value.