

ART. XXXVII.—*Crosses at Waberthwaite Church and at High Aketon farm in the parish of Bromfield.*

By Rev. W. S. Calverley, F.S.A., Vicar of Aspatria.

*Communicated at Seascale, September 21, 1892.*

**I**N Part I., vol iii., p. 95, of these *Transactions*, the Rev. Canon Knowles gives drawings of one face and edge of the large cross at Waberthwaite, which at that time was doing duty as a lintel over the church porch, and he mentions "another (cross) of the same school and date laid down on the threshold of the church door," the recovery of which, from its state of degradation, was then promised. This recovery has been accomplished. The fragment lies in the vestry. One of the faces, as will be seen from my sketch, was divided into panels by horizontal bands, but the passage of many feet has worn away almost all traces of the designs, and one part is now quite smooth. One edge shows interlacing, the other has a freely drawn foliated vine scroll. The material is red sandstone, measuring  $43\frac{1}{2}$  inches long by  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide at the bottom, and  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the top by 7 inches thick at the bottom, tapering to less than 6 inches at the top. The large cross also has, by the kindly aid of Lord Muncaster, been removed from the porch, and fixed in its own socket-stone, which we found lying unbroken in the churchyard. A damaged corner towards the bottom of the cross has been made up with cement, and with the exception of the head and a corner which has been broken away near the top, the monument is pretty much as it was when first set up. The material is red sandstone, measuring 6 feet 6 inches in height, 1 foot 7 inches bottom width, and 1 foot 3 inches top width, and  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches in thickness. The socket-stone stands 1 foot  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, and is 2 feet  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and 2 feet wide. One face and both edges of the cross are covered with  
interlacing



WABERTHWAITE.



interlacings of flat bands. The other and chief face (formerly hidden as the upper side of the lintel of the church porch) is decorated with symbolic devices. The lower portion exhibits two circles in contact, each within a square space, whose four corners are filled by the points of the sacred Triquetra (symbol of the Holy Trinity), into which form the flat band of the ornament is worked. In working out this device it will be further seen that the four Triquetrae which gather round the point of contact of the two circles, take the form of a third circle proceeding from the other two. Immediately over this, and at a convenient height for the purpose, the surface has been worn smooth and grooved by the sharpening of iron tools before the stone was seized as handy building material for the porch. Whether an inscription once filled this space we may not now tell.

The principal panel contains the figure of an animal (? a horse) moving amidst an apparently inextricable tangle, and in the uppermost panel appear two creatures facing each other, and having their lower extremities intertwined and knotted together. These two panels deserve much attention. The upper one is very much like the lower panel of the cross at Collingham, Yorks., which was taken out of the foundations of the church in 1841, and on which is a Runic inscription which gives the name *ONSWINI*, and which Professor Stephens, F.S.A. dates A.D. 651, saying that it was in all probability raised to the memory of that amiable sovereign *ONSWINI* (*OSWINI*), son of King *OSRIC*, and ruler of Deira (the lands between the Humber and the Tyne), who was defeated at Wilfræsdun (Wilbarston in Northamptonshire) by King *Oswin*, and murdered by his order or instigation at Ingetlingen (now Collingham), August 20th, 651.\*

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\* *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, part ii., p. 290, Prof. George Stephens, F.S.A.

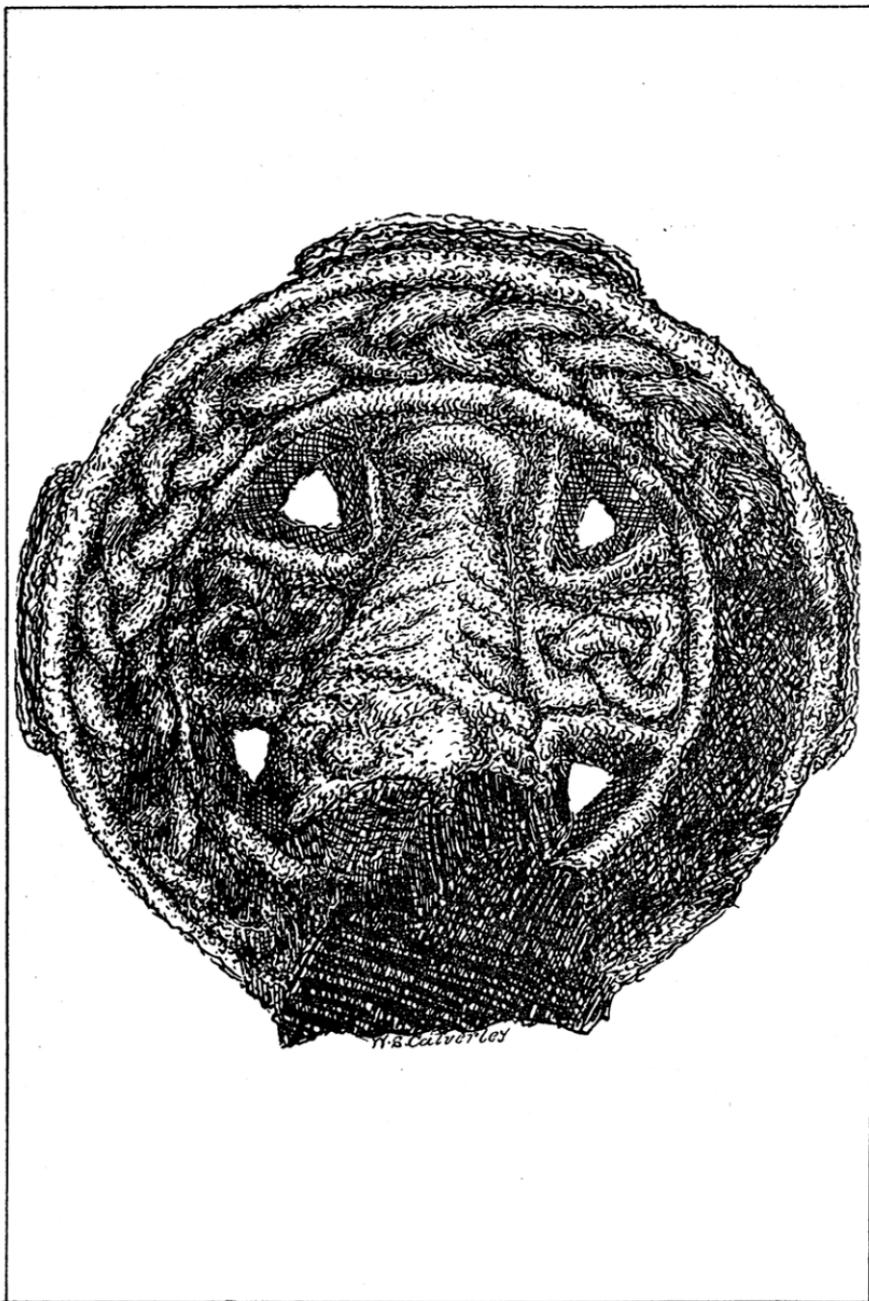
The Waberthwaite work is not so elaborate as that at Collingham, judging from the engravings, but the idea appears to be the same in these two panels, and is again found on the Ilkley cross. It may be noted that the two edges of the Collingham stone are ornamented with interlacing and scroll work, as are the edges of the fragment of the cross now lying in the vestry.

If the figure in the central panel, which has in some places crumbled away, was intended to represent the horse, we may well remember the part which this noble creature played in some of our early religious rites, and in the mythology of our northern ancestors. At Halton, Lancashire, Grani, Sigurd's famous horse is figured on what may be the funeral stone of Tosti, earl of Northumbria, and brother of Harold Godwinson, who made common cause with Harold Sigurdson against his brother the English King, who fell at Stamford Bridge A.D. 1066.

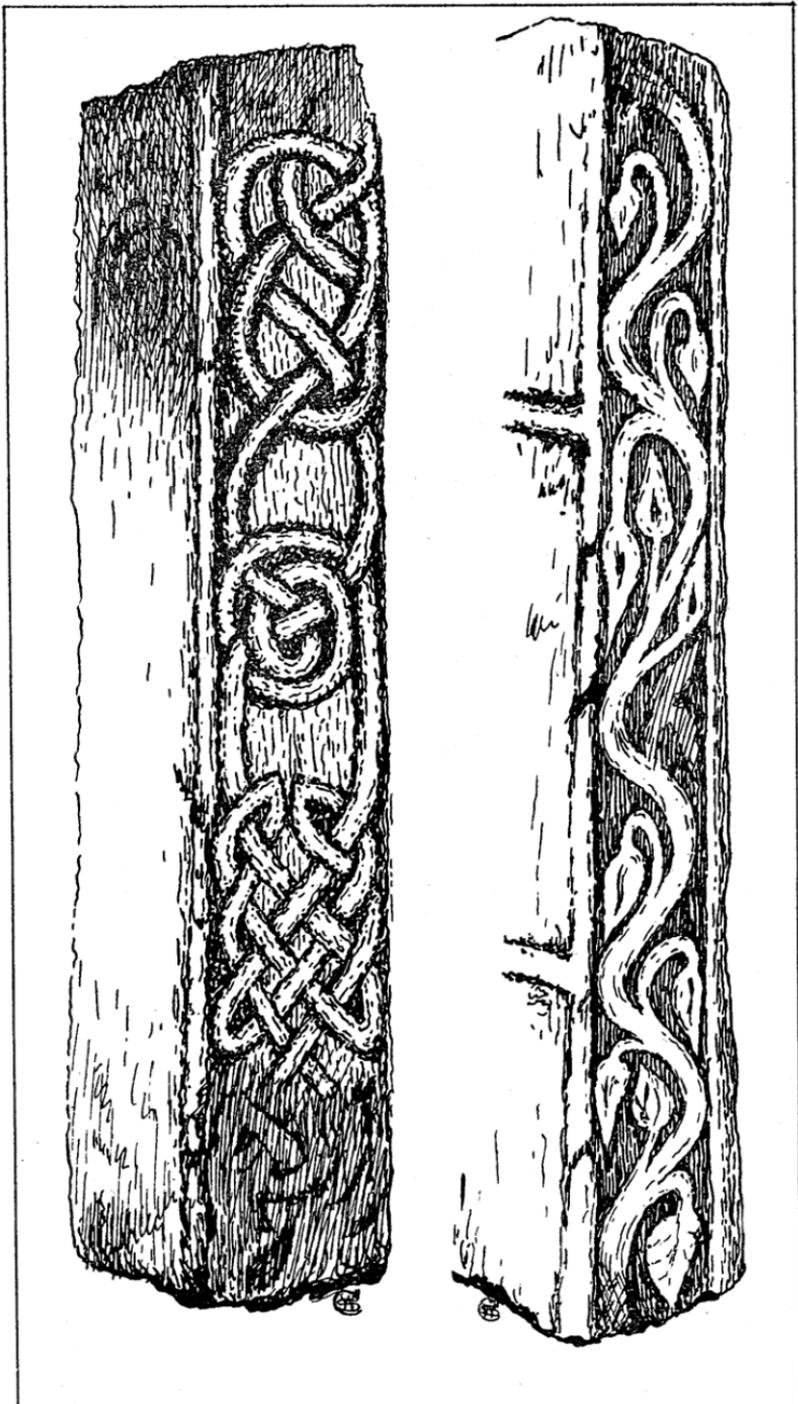
The cross itself is the horse upon which the devoted one "the hanged man," the Crucified, rides to his great victory. At Dearham the horse appears on a very early cross (*Transactions*, vol. vii., p. 290), bearing his rider with the treasure in front of him. At Gosforth (vol. vi., p. 409) and at Penrith, the Lamb and the Hart (vol. vi., p. 387) appear as the symbols of the *devoted One*, and walk nobly on in spite of the "tangle of tragic events" and the presence of the old enemy—the serpent. At Brigham, in the head and arms of the cross, the God Man Himself wrestles victoriously with the *Evil One*, who has entwined himself around His body and knotted Himself beneath His left hand (vol. vi., p. 212).

Waberthwaite has been spelt Wyberghthwaite and Wayberghthwaite, and was the old home of the Wybergh family.

I desire to seize this opportunity of acknowledging with gratitude the kindness and hospitality shown by Mr. and Mrs. Postlethwaite on more than one occasion to myself,  
and



CROSS HEAD, HIGH AKETON, BROMFIELD.



EDGES OF CROSS FRAGMENT AT WABERTHWAITE.

and Mr. Fletcher, whose admirable photographs form the basis of my illustrations.

The cross head, of which I here give a sketch, was noticed by the Rev. Richard Taylor, Vicar of Bromfield, on passing through the farmyard of High Aketon, in that parish. It is of light-coloured sandstone; measures 21 inches across, is 4 inches thick, and is built into an outer wall. The arms of the cross pass through a circular band ornamented with plaitwork of three strands, and they protrude slightly. The head has been broken from the shaft close beneath the circle. Instead of a boss occupying the centre as at Dearham (*Ancient Crosses at Dearham*, No. ii., vol. v., p. 153), the head of whose standing cross this one much resembles, the head of a beast stretches upwards and is held by a ring through the snout, within the upper arm or limb of the cross. Each of the side arms contains, as at Dearham, a design which may have been intended to represent the Triquetra.

If reference be made to the great cross at Gosforth (vol. vi., p. 395), the head of the beast will be seen on the shaft of the cross, attacking the holy forces above the Triquetra in the arm immediately over its open jaw. At Aketon the beast has pressed upwards and swallowed the holy sign and the boss itself, even as the wolf swallowed Thor and Odin in that last fight, but he is overcome at length, and we can hardly help but be reminded of the wolf gagged and bound as represented in another carving on the Gosforth cross (vol. vi., p. 388), when we look at the ring in the nose of this last aid to the reading of our early Christian sculptured stones. The time has not come at which we need date each work; rather let us gather together every fragment as being of priceless value towards elucidating some of the obscurities of our history.

I have to thank the family of Mr. Wm. Miller, the tenant of Aketon farm, for assistance in obtaining the materials for my sketch.

Mrs.

Mrs. Dykes, of Red House, Keswick, kindly allows me to say that the property, together with Crookdale Hall adjoining, and once the home of Adam of Crookdake, whose tomb is in the transept of Bromfield Church, belongs to Mr. Dykes, of Doventry Hall, and that she has no doubt that the cross head was taken from Bromfield Church, but not from devotion to antiquities, as it is known by writings and by tradition in the family that the north transept of Bromfield Church, called the Crookdake Chapel, was utilised for the repairs of the farm houses on the estate by two possessors successively in the early part and middle of the last century. Mrs. Dykes has reason to believe that the chapel was in ruins, which might somewhat excuse the plunder.

These facts supplied by Mrs. Dykes are valuable, inasmuch as by their means we now know that there have been, in pre-Norman times at least three crosses of different types at Bromfield Church; a very early one of white sandstone, figured at p. 125, vol. xi., of the *Transactions* of this Society; the cross whose head we have here under consideration, and a red sandstone cross, smaller but somewhat of the same character as the Rockliffe cross, and shown at p. 174 of vol. xii. of these *Transactions*.

The Vicar of Bromfield tells me that the chapel, sometime called the Crookdake Chapel, now the north transept, is the Lady Chapel, and that the chapel to the south of the chancel is the St. George's Chapel.