

Paul Churchyard Crosses, Cornwall

Report of conservation and investigation



Historic Environment Projects

Paul, Cornwall
Churchyard crosses
conservation and investigation

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Within Historic Environment, the Project Manager was Ann Preston-Jones.

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Cover illustration

The cross-head being removed from the church prior to its final restoration

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Abbreviations

EH	English Heritage
HER	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
HES	Historic Environment Service, Cornwall County Council
NGR	National Grid Reference
PRN	Primary Record Number in Cornwall HER

1 Summary

At Paul, in West Penwith, are two fragments of decorated crosses of early medieval origin. One is the shaft of a cross, the other a cross-head; there is a possibility that both were at one time part of the same monument.

This report describes work that took place early in 2009 to stabilise the cross-head and to investigate whether the shaft and the head were at one time united. The cross head was found to be fixed to the churchyard wall by a totally inadequate iron pin; this was replaced with a sturdier pin of stainless steel. The investigation of the shaft suggested that although it is likely that the shaft and head are parts of the same monument, this cannot be proved with absolute certainty.

The cross-head, which is located at SW 4642 2707, is a Scheduled Monument number 28467, and number 18767 in Cornwall Council's Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record. The cross-shaft is acknowledged as a significant aspect of the grade 1 Listed church building.

2 Introduction

2.1 Summary

Standing on a boulder built into the churchyard wall and a prominent feature in the village of Paul, is the head of a large four-holed cross. The cross, which has a crucifixion carved on one face and five bosses on the other, is possibly of 10th or 11th century date, and the oldest visible feature at the church site.

In recent years, it had become apparent that the cement and ironwork holding the cross-head to the boulder and the churchyard wall was in poor, deteriorating condition, making the monument at risk of damage.

In February 2006, an interlace-decorated cross-shaft was noted, built into the north wall of Paul Church. It was considered possible, but by no means certain, that the cross-head and shaft both came from the same original monument.

It was the purpose of this project to stabilise the cross head, investigate the relationship between the head and the shaft, and consider the long-term feasibility of removing the two stones from their current positions and re-uniting them, should it be proved that they were originally one. However, there was no intention within this project to undertake any such action. The final aim was to raise awareness of the importance of the monuments locally.

For the locations of the crosses see Figs 4 and 5.

2.2 The monument

2.2.1 Description of the monument

The cross-head set on a large boulder close to the south entrance to Paul Churchyard is a typical example of the Penwith group of pre-Norman sculpture. Like others in the group, its round wheel-head has a crude representation of the crucifixion on one face and five prominent bosses on the other – one at the centre and one in each of the cross arms (Figs 6, 7, 8). The shaft of this cross was thought to have been long since lost. However, the recent discovery of a decorated shaft built into the lower part of the north wall of the church has raised the possibility that the entire monument does still survive on the site (Fig 9). Visible on this shaft is a fine example of multi-strand interlace of the sort typical of the Penwith group, making it possible that the two pieces of sculpture originally belonged together. Alternatively, it is equally possible that the head and shaft came from two original monuments: St Erth Church has parts of two separate pre-Norman crosses surviving.

Fig 7 illustrates one of the best and most complete examples of the Penwith group of early sculpture: although now at Lanherne in St Mawgan in Pydar, this cross was originally from Roseworthy in Gwinear.

For as long as it has been recorded, the cross-head has always stood in the very prominent position that it now occupies. The date at which the head was cut from its shaft and the head only reserved for re-use is unknown, though analogy with the very similar cross-head in St Buryan Churchyard, where the head has been mounted on a stepped plinth similar to those used for later medieval churchyard crosses throughout the west country, makes a 15th or early 16th century date possible. This would tie well with the probable date at which the shaft was re-used for building stone in the north wall of the church. But these are details that could only be confirmed by further research.

2.2.2 Assessment of the significance of the monument

The cross-head and shaft are both of exceptional importance as examples of pre-Norman Cornish sculpture. Although medieval crosses are relatively ubiquitous in this part of Cornwall, pre-Norman sculpture is far less common and any example is of considerable importance for both Cornwall and the country as a whole. The group to which it belongs is unique to west Cornwall, highly distinctive, and reflects an important stage in the history of Cornwall, when it was becoming assimilated into Wessex and England.

The cross-fragments also have value as evidence for the pre-Norman origin and status of Paul Church site. They are the earliest dateable feature at the site: Paul church is not otherwise recorded until the mid 13th century while the earliest architecture is of 14th century date, with the majority of the present church having been built in the 15th century.

The contrasting late medieval uses of the head and shaft are of considerable interest in reflecting changing attitudes, values and tastes in religion in Cornwall: the shaft and its fine but by then unrecognisable sculpture was discarded for building stone in the late medieval period while the head, with its admittedly crude image of the crucifixion, still had recognisable significance and could be re-used (like the churchyard cross at St Buryan – Langdon 1896, 190) in an interesting local interpretation of the national practice of setting up tall sculpted lantern crosses on stepped bases in the 15th and 16th centuries.

2.2.3 Amenity value

The cross has considerable amenity value in its own right, being a conspicuous feature on the churchyard wall. As Paul Church is famous for its memorial to Dolly Pentreath, the last native speaker of Cornish, and is close to the attractive fishing village of Mousehole, the church attracts a considerable number of visitors, most of whom will walk past the cross-head before entering the church.

2.3 Condition of the monument

Prior to conservation work, the cross-head was set on top of a large boulder in the churchyard wall, between two coping stones (Fig 8). It was wedged underneath each shoulder with iron wedges on the inside face and another iron fixing (a nail?) under the centre (Fig 10). All these fixings had rusted, those on the shoulder pushing up the coping stones to either side, particularly on the west. This movement was pushing off the cement, which was cracking around the base of the head. It was not known whether there was also a central iron dowel holding the cross-head onto the boulder, although it was suspected; however there were no visible signs of any deterioration associated with the corrosion and expansion of such a fixing.

The cross-shaft is stable in its position in the north wall of the church, although it is not conspicuous. Prior to the project, however, the wall here was pointed with cement, which had been spread over the edges of the stone, obscuring the outline of the monument.

2.4 Background to the present project

The problems regarding the deterioration of the cross-head's fixings to the churchyard wall were first noted by the English Heritage Historic Environment Field Advisor in 2003 and soon after, conservators Sue and Lawrence Kelland were invited to look at the problem and give advice. They considered that although this problem should be dealt with, it was not particularly urgent. 'At this stage, as no damage is being done to the actual cross head, we would recommend only minor conservation work combined with monitoring' (Kelland 2005).

Meanwhile, in February 2006, the decorated shaft, which may or may not be part of the same monument, was noticed in the north wall of the church by Jill Hogben and Aidan Hicks, local historians and members of the congregation at Paul Church. This remarkable discovery was a significant addition to the relatively small collection of pre-Norman sculpture in Cornwall and it seemed opportune to combine conservation of the cross-head with some exploratory work to the shaft.

In 2008, it was agreed by all concerned that both the minor conservation work and the investigation could be undertaken by the Historic Environment Service's Scheduled Monument Management team, through the current 'Conserving Cornwall's Past' project.

2.5 Aims of the management work

The aims of the project and the methods by which the work would be carried out are described in the original project design (Preston-Jones, 2008).

- The overarching aim of the project was the replacement of the deteriorating cement and corroding ironwork holding the cross-head to the churchyard wall.

Subsidiary aims included

- Investigation of any central iron pin also holding the head onto the wall
- Some small-scale work to investigate the relationship between the head and the shaft
- Raising awareness of the importance of the monuments and their conservation by producing a leaflet for the church, arranging publicity and doing a talk for the local community.

The management work is described below in section 4, and the results of the accompanying recording are noted in section 5. These sections are preceded by a description of the history and original setting of Paul church and the cross(es).

3 Background

3.1 The parish

Located to the south of Newlyn and Penzance, Paul parish occupies one of the more favourable positions on the exposed Penwith peninsula. Facing east across Mount's Bay, it is sheltered from the prevailing south-west winds, except at its heart, where the land rises to over 100 metres above sea level. The area of the parish is a well-defined geographical unit, bounded on the east by the sea, on the south-west by the steep-sided wooded valley that reaches the sea at Lamorna Cove, and on the north and west by Newlyn Coombe. Geologically, the parish is predominantly granite, but the eastern and northern coastal fringe are Mylor Slates with some basic igneous intrusions, the latter exploited in recent times by the massive Penlee Quarry (Bristow 1996, 65-6).

Intense prehistoric activity in the area is indicated by a rich array of sites, field systems and chance finds. These include many scatters of Mesolithic flints, Bronze Age standing stones, Iron Ages hillforts and rounds and Roman period courtyard houses, while the small size and irregular boundaries of many existing fields betray their prehistoric origin.

Paul church is located half a mile up the steep-sided valley that leads inland from Mousehole. It stands in a commanding position on the crest of the southern side of the

combe, in a location that may well have been the site of a barrow or round in prehistoric times.

3.2 Paul Church site

On the basis of details in the 'life' of the parishes patron saint, Paul Aurelian, Paul church is tentatively identified by Olson (1989, 20-8) as the site of an early medieval monastery. It is not recorded as such in Domesday Book or any other source, however, so it is probable that even if it had once been a monastic site, this status would have been lost by the time the cross(es) were carved. A curving south boundary to the churchyard may suggest the site of an early Christian religious enclosure or *lann* but again, there is no other evidence to confirm this. In Cornwall, where the name of the Churchtown Farm sometimes preserves the original name of the church site, and may be a clue to its early origin the lands adjoining the churchtown at Paul are called *Breweny* or Brewinney, after the hill on which the church stands (Henderson 1960, 383; Padel 1988, 132). Interpretation of the date of the church building varies, but the listing entry supposes a mainly 15th century structure, with some rebuilding after the Spanish raid of 1595. There may be slight traces of an earlier 14th century building (Henderson 1925, 174; Sedding 1909, 258) and possible foundations of a Norman Church were noted when the church was re-floored in the 1990s (Trelease 2006, 12). Disagreement mainly concerns the extent of rebuilding after the Spanish raid.

Under these circumstances, the cross fragments are the only definite evidence for the early medieval origin of the church site.

3.3 The cross(es)

The cross-head, standing on a large boulder in the churchyard wall, has a carved figure of Christ on one face and five prominent bosses on the other. The shaft, built horizontally into the lower part of the north wall of the church, has interlace decoration on the only exposed face. An unsculpted area at the west end (the original bottom of the shaft), represents the mortice, which would have been sunk in the ground.

3.3.1 The cross-head

From its earliest depiction by Blight in 1856 (see Fig 6), the cross-head is shown built into the churchyard wall, in exactly the position it occupies now. Marked in antiquity lettering as 'stone', the cross-head is depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880 and is first fully described and illustrated by Langdon in 1896 (see Figs 2 and 6). A tantalising note in the *Transactions of the Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society* for 1887-8 states that the stone was once stolen or hidden but later returned. Sadly nothing more is known of this incident, although it may help to date the ironwork holding the head to the stone on which it is set. Mary Henderson very prophetically noted that the missing shaft might be built into the fabric of the church awaiting discovery (1952-83, 433). The cross-head and other wayside crosses in the parish of Paul are summarised by Langdon in 1997 and Cooke in 2001.

3.3.2 The cross-shaft

The existence of the cross-shaft, which is built into the lower part of the north wall of the church, near its eastern end, remained unknown until 2006, when it was noted by Jill Hogben and Aidan Hicks.

The date at which the cross-shaft was built into the wall is uncertain. The aisle of which it is a part may have been first erected in the 15th century, but was possibly rebuilt in the 16th after the Spanish raid (see above, p13). In addition, there was a fairly comprehensive re-

build of the outside walls of both north and south aisles after a storm in December 1828. The walls were reported to be 'bulging outwards, one inch to every foot' - the church was deemed unsafe, and the church hall was licensed for 'divine service'. However, as the shaft is low down in the wall there is a good chance that this part of the wall survived the two rebuildings as it was underneath the old earth level of the churchyard until the Victorians removed the soil from the church walls and created the present drainage channel in which the shaft can now be seen (Jill Hogben *pers comm*).

4 The conservation of the cross-head and the investigation of the shaft

An initial phase of conservation and investigative work was carried out in January 2009; a second phase was carried out in September of the same year. Phase 1 was carried out by Adrian Thomas and David Cutting, with the work monitored and recorded on site by Andrew Langdon. Phase 2, the replacement of the pin holding the cross-head to the churchyard wall was necessitated by the fact that the phase 1 investigations showed the existing pin to be completely inadequate. This second phase involved Adrian Thomas, Goeff Hoad and Pip Morse. Access and local organisation was arranged by Churchwarden David Carpenter.

The work was underpinned by the following principles, which were agreed with English Heritage (these are repeated from the proposal: Preston-Jones 2008):

4.1 General principles for the conservation work

- Extreme care would be taken at all times to avoid damaging the granite of the cross-head and shaft
- Care would be taken to avoid damaging any lichens and mosses on the cross(es).
- Mortar on the face of the cross-shaft would not be removed but would be left to weather off naturally
- The material and nature of new fixings to replace the iron would be discussed and decided once work commenced and the nature of the existing became more apparent.
- The new fixings would be of a non-corrosive material
- Lime mortar would be used for finishing all joints: this to be NHL 3.5 or 5 in a 1: 2.5 mix with sand, to achieve a colour and texture which matches the granite of the cross reasonably well (to be agreed when work commences)
- New pointing would be slightly recessed from the face of the stonework so as to reveal as much as possible of the monuments, but without the finish jarring with surrounding masonry. This to be discussed on site with the archaeological contractor.

In detail, the work involved the following:

4.2 The cross-head: phase 1

The cross-head is fixed to the top of a large boulder and the churchyard wall butts up against this on two sides. Prior to work commencing, the head was fixed to the boulder with iron wedges, pins, possibly a central iron dowel and thick applications of cement. The latter was cracking on the north side where the iron work had started to corrode and

expand but on the south side was still in good condition, although it obscured details of the monument, especially the lower part of the crucifixion (see Figs 8 and 10).

4.2.1 Method

1. All the cement pointing was removed from around the monument, taking great care not to damage the granite of the cross-head: some of the cement came away very easily, but some proved extremely tough (Fig 11).
2. All ironwork wedging the cross-head was carefully removed, taking care not to damage the granite of the cross in the process .
3. All the bedding mortar was removed from the joint between the cross-head and the boulder on which it sits, in order to investigate the nature and condition of the central iron fixing. The cross-head was carefully supported with wooden wedges at this point, to ensure that there would be no risk to either the monument or the contractors undertaking the work (Fig 15).
4. Following this, the cross-head's bedding mortar and pointing were replaced, using wooden wedges to ensure that the head was both stable and upright on the boulder (Fig 13). The mortar was recessed from the edge of the cross in order to display the carving fully.
5. The mortar used was a hydraulic lime mortar, using NHL 5 and Cornwall Lime Company's CLS 25 (New Milton Sand) in a 3:5 mix. NHL 5 was chosen for its ability to set and provide strength rapidly, given the time of year that the work was undertaken.
6. The new mortar was protected from adverse weather conditions for at least two months following the conservation work (Fig 14).

4.2.2 Observations made in the course of carrying out this work

Only observations relating to the condition of the cross-head are recorded here. Observations relating to the monument are recorded separately, in section 5.

- The visible, rusting ironwork around the base of the head was found to have had no significant role in supporting the cross-head, whose main support came from the thick cement collar alone. The rusting iron that could be seen before work started proved to be nails and other small pieces of iron whose function was uncertain. Given its role in supporting the cross-head, the fact that the rusting of the fixings was causing the cement to crack was a significant problem.
- Investigation of the joint between the boulder and the cross-head showed that any original mortar in here had disappeared, to be replaced by a loose earthy fill which had no effective role in holding the cross head to the boulder.
- Although a central iron pin was discovered, this was found to be small (approximately one inch in diameter with four inches of its length extending into the cross-head, corrosion had reduced its diameter at the centre to about half the original) relative to the size of the head it supports; moreover, the head was not securely held by this pin but rocked on it: hence in all probability the relatively recent application of the solid cement collar. Moreover the pin was corroding and so could not be relied on to support this large head. (Figs 12 and 20).

4.2.3 Recommendation for the cross-head arising from phase 1

Because of the discovery that the central pin was inadequate for the task of securing such a large cross-head, the repair that was carried out in January 2009 could only be considered

temporary. In order to secure the cross-head to the boulder with absolute safety, it was essential that the central pin should be replaced as soon as possible with a more substantial and better designed fixing. This was considered necessary both for the security of the monument and for public safety.

4.3 Investigation of the cross-shaft

The cross-shaft is built horizontally into the north wall of the church. Prior to the recent work, its edges were obscured by cement pointing of probably late 19th century date which was smeared over the edges of the stone and so obscured its full dimensions. Some patches of an old lime render also covered parts of the shaft.

The pointing and a couple of stones were removed from around the shaft, in order to find out more information about it. It was afterwards restored using a slightly recessed pointing, so that it is now more conspicuous than previously (Figs 16-18).

4.3.1 Method

1. All cement pointing was carefully removed from around the cross-shaft, taking especial care not to damage the granite of the shaft.
2. All edges of the monument were carefully exposed.
3. All mortar was carefully raked out from the joints around the cross-shaft, to a depth which enabled an assessment to be made of the thickness of the shaft and of the survival of decoration on the hidden sides.
4. Two stones were removed from around the shaft: one to the east and one from below it. Both were in positions where their removal would enable more information to be obtained in absolute safety and without compromising the surrounding masonry.
5. No attempt was made to remove the lime render from the face of the shaft, so as to avoid any damage to the very low relief decoration.
6. The shaft was recorded before the mortar was replaced.
7. The joints around the shaft were repointed with lime mortar (a hydraulic lime mortar, using NHL 5 and Cornwall Lime Company's CLS 25 (New Milton Sand) in a 3:5 mix. NHL5 was chosen for its ability to set and provide strength rapidly, given the time of year that the work was undertaken.
8. The new pointing was slightly recessed to make the shape of the shaft more obvious.
9. The new mortar was protected from adverse weather conditions, with hessian, for two months following the conservation work.

4.4 Conservation of the cross-head: phase 2

The final phase of work took place in October 2009.

1. On 5th October, the mortar which had been put in place in January was chipped away again and using a digger, the cross-head was lifted from the churchyard wall. It was removed and stored temporarily in the church. The pin was left protruding from the boulder (Fig 20)

2. Two days later, on 7th October, the rusted pin was extracted from the boulder-base, using a specially designed 'puller' to lift it. (Fig 21).

3. The central hole for the pin was then drilled and deepened to take the new, longer pin: 1 inch in diameter and extending 21.6 cm (8 ½ inches) into both the base and the cross-head (Fig 22).

4. The new pin was secured in the base using Fischer F Bond Polyester Resin, prior to the final restoration on 9th October (Fig 20). The head was retrieved from the church (Fig 23 and front cover), offered up and checked for fit on the new pin, removed, the pin glued and finally lifted into place (Fig 24). Once the resin had gone off, the joint was mortared using lime mortar as previously described, except that this time, with the head now fully secured, it was possible to keep the pointing to an absolute minimum so that even more of the monument is visible (Figs 25 and 26).

4.4.1 Observations made during the final restoration

The complete removal of the cross-head from the base revealed

- The boulder had been dressed roughly level to take the cross-head, but the surface had then been levelled with cement.
- The cross-head had been dressed roughly level to fit it to the boulder, but in doing this, the shape of the feet and legs of the figure had been left intact and carefully cut around, to preserve the full dimensions of the figure.
- The old pin had rusted at the centre where rainwater had penetrated the joint between head and base.
- The old pin was set into a tapering hole in the boulder, 5 cm (2 ins) across and 4 cm (1 ½ ins) deep, probably representing an original hand-drilled hole, which had on a separate occasion been mechanically drilled deeper.

5 Results of the accompanying recording

A record was made of the work at all significant stages in the process. This was carried out by Andrew Langdon and involved:

5.1 Photographic record

Photography was used as the main medium for recording the various aspects of the management work.

A full set of photos was taken of the cross-head and shaft before work started, during the work, and afterwards.

Monochrome photography was used as the main record medium, with digital images used more selectively for 'action' shots. Archive numbers for the photos are listed at the end of the report.

5.2 Monitoring the management work

Close liaison was maintained throughout with the contractor employed to do the conservation work, and a record made of any significant features revealed in the process of carrying out the management work. All significant stages in the work were recorded with notes and sketches.

5.3 Observations of significance made in the process of carrying out the conservation work

5.3.1 Cross-head

Removal of mortar from around the cross-head made it possible to obtain a measurement of the point at which the head would have joined the shaft. This showed that the top of the shaft/bottom of the head measures

Width at front	0.2 metres (8 ins)
Width at back	0.23 metres (9 ins)
Thickness/depth	0.19 metres (7 ¾ ins)

In other words, the very top of the shaft that is still attached to the cross-head is very nearly square in section. This is of interest given the dimensions that were obtained for the shaft in the wall.

5.3.2 Cross-shaft

Careful removal of the pointing and of a couple of stones from around the cross-shaft revealed a number of other interesting features and made it possible to obtain accurate dimensions for the stone:

1. Accurate measurements were made of the cross-shaft at its centre and at its top (the east end). These are as follows:

At approximate centre of shaft:

Width of visible face	0.33 metres (1 ft 1 in)
Depth into wall	0.33 metres (1 ft 1 in)

At top of shaft:

Width of visible face	0.26 metres (10 ½ ins)
Depth into wall	0.26 metres (10 ½ ins)

Like the cross-head, the shaft is of square section. The section of the top end of the shaft in the wall is larger than the short stump of shaft on the head by just over 10 centimetres (4-5 inches), but it is clear that the full length of the shaft does not survive, as the pattern at the top of the shaft is truncated. The shaft in the wall can be clearly seen to taper inwards at its top end, indicating that when complete it would have been smaller still at the top.

2. Further dimensions obtained included:

Length of shaft	1.86 metres (6 ft 1 in)
Depth of mortice	0.22 metres (8 ½ ins)

3. It was established that decoration survives well on all other sides of the shaft, although due to the restricted space available for examination, it was not possible to obtain any details

4. The exploratory work was made very much easier by the fact that behind the shaft, the core of the wall was found to be hollow. This suggested that the wall here had been previously disturbed – perhaps there had been a vent here, under the shaft, at some point, for which the shaft acted as a lintel, but which had subsequently been blocked.

5. The surprising find of a number of bones was made within the wall cavity. Steve Hartgroves of Cornwall's Historic Environment Information team examined the bones and provided the following report:

You gave me four fragments of bone for identification. The largest bit is clearly part of the shaft of a 'long bone' and the other bits can be assumed to be smaller fragments of the same bone. Unfortunately we don't have the diagnostic end parts, so it is impossible to be certain about it. However, it is possible to hazard the following:

It is a fragment of the shaft of a long limb bone – either humerus or femur (upper arm or leg). It is very heavy and dense, and the bone itself is pretty thick-sectioned, so it is from a large heavy animal – not a sheep, goat or anything smaller. It is too big and coarse to be human. It is not a horse bone – they are smooth, dense and gracile. I think that it is most likely to be a section from the leg of a cow.

There are a number of marks on the surface which might be the result of butchery (linear marks) or gnawing (sub-circular depressions) so they were probably someone's dinner!

Jill Hogben (pers comm.) pointed out that at one time there had been a slaughterhouse adjacent to the churchyard which may well have been the source of the bones for the workmens' lunch!

6 Outreach

Outreach for this project involved the production of a leaflet for the church, a talk on the conservation work, and press releases at various stages.

6.1 Talk

On 12th February at 2.30pm a talk on the conservation of crosses in general and the cross at Paul in particular was given by Andrew Langdon in Paul Church Hall. The talk was part of the Paul Church Community outreach series. It was very well received and well attended, with over 50 people present. The rusty ironwork that had been removed from the cross-head was on display, as well as other samples showing the effects of corroding ironwork, displays, and a demonstration of microchipping.

6.2 Leaflet

A simple and attractive leaflet with information about the medieval crosses in Paul church and parish was designed by Andrew Langdon on the conclusion of the project (appendix 1). Five hundred copies were printed and given to the Churchwardens, for dissemination in the church.

The Church was also given a CD with the leaflet on, so that they will be able to print their own, if needed, and it is hoped that the leaflet will also be made available via Cornwall Council's own website as well as the website of the Old Cornwall Societies <http://cornishcrosses.oldcornwall.org/>.

7 Discussion

The project as a whole was successful in securing the long-term security of the cross-head on the churchyard wall, and in raising awareness of its significance through the talk and the leaflet. The further facet of the project, to establish the relationship between the cross-head and the shaft in the churchyard wall, is discussed below.

In section 5.3 it was recorded that both the shaft in the wall of the church and the remnant of shaft attached to the cross-head on the churchyard wall are of square section, although there is a difference in size between them of about 10 centimetres, or 4 – 5 inches. However, the top of the shaft was seen to be tapering, and is not complete, so there would have been a small section of shaft missing between the two. The obvious conclusion arising from this, therefore, is that the head and the shaft could indeed once have been parts of the same monument. As the shaft is nearly square, it is not possible to say whether the face currently visible in the church wall is front, back, or one of the sides.

This square section is unusual amongst crosses of the Penwith group of pre-Norman sculpture, most of which have a rectangular cross-section. However, the cross at Phillack, another member of this group, is also nearly square in section and in fact, its greatest measurement is from front to back, rather than from side to side.

Further points of interest arise in consideration of the monument's dimensions. They are shown in relation to other members of the Penwith group of sculpture in Fig 27.

The shaft as we have it at present is already the tallest in the group, being a tiny bit longer than Sancreed's (although the Paul shaft does include a short mortice, which would have been sunk into a base). If the fact that a small portion is missing is taken into account, which for argument's sake, could be 5 inches or 13 centimetres giving a shaft of approximately 2 metres (6 ft 6 ins), then the greater height becomes even more apparent. So if we accept the argument that the head and shaft were originally one monument, then it was unquestionably the tallest known in this group at present, with a full height of about 2.6 metres (8 ft 6 ins).

The shaft, whether or not the head originally belonged on it, is not only unusual for its square section and height, but also for the fact that it is remarkably slender in relation to the head. Its width is similar to that of St Erth 1 (see Fig 27), the smallest member of the group, and half the height of the theoretically reconstructed Paul monument. Strangely, though, the St Erth cross has a much longer mortice: something that might be more needed for the support of a taller monument!

A final point of interest in relation to the Paul cross and its slender shaft, assuming the existing head was mounted on top of it (and even if it wasn't), is that the head would have been large in relation to the shaft. The head is 0.6 metres wide while the shaft is 0.33m at its widest and 0.26m at the top, making the head approximately twice the width of the shaft. Most of the complete crosses in the Penwith group have a relatively small head, about one-and-a-half times the width of the shaft, giving the monuments a rather compact appearance (see for example Lanherne, in Fig 7). A 2:1 head:shaft ratio is much more characteristic of the early medieval crosses of east Cornwall, and can be seen for example in the crosses at Prideaux Place, Padstow and Quethiock (Langdon 1896, 397. 399), where the outstanding head is a notable feature of their design. On the other hand, there are other similarly large cross-heads in Cornwall at St Buryan and St Erth, whose shafts are still lost. Who is to say that when first set up, these did not also stand boldly above similarly slender shafts?

8 Recommendations

This project has involved investigation of the early medieval cross-shaft and stabilisation of the cross-head at Paul. As a result, both are secure and likely to be so for many years to come. And, having also now concluded that the cross-shaft and cross-head are likely to be two parts of the same monument, there exists the exciting possibility of being able to reunite them one day, to restore the monument to its original glory!

In the Victorian era, it is probable that such a discovery would have led quite quickly to the restoration of the full monument. In *Old Cornish Crosses* (1896), AG Langdon records restorations at Sancreed in West Penwith, Cardinham in mid Cornwall and Quethiock in the east (Langdon 1896, 354-5, 363, 398-9) – all very spectacular crosses which now look as though they have always been a part of the churchyards they occupy and are now a significant element of the ‘character’ for which Cornwall is so famous. Nowadays, however, such a project would be considerably more complex, involving amongst other things a detailed project design, agreement of the Vicar, Parochial Church Council and local community, and Statutory Consents (Scheduled Monument Consent, Faculty), as well as a substantial fundraising campaign.

Even if this were not to happen, it would be worth considering whether to remove the shaft from the wall anyway, so that it can be mounted in a place where all four sides are visible and the monument can be more fully appreciated. The project has established that well preserved decoration and possibly inscriptions may survive on all four sides of the shaft: but until it is removed from the wall, the hidden decoration - a rare example of 10th century sculpture - will never be seen.

9 References

<http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk/BuildingDetailsForm.aspx?id=69384&search=y>

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10 Project archive

The HE project number is **2008223**

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of the Historic Environment, Cornwall Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. A project file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration, copies of historic maps etc.
2. Black and white photographs archived under the following index numbers: **GBP 2164, 2165**
3. Digital photographs stored in the directory `..\\images\\Sites M-P\\Paul churchyard cross`
4. This report held in digital form as: `G:\\CAU\\HE PROJECTS\\SITES\\SITES P\\Paul Churchyard Cross\\Paul Cross Conservation Report.DOC`

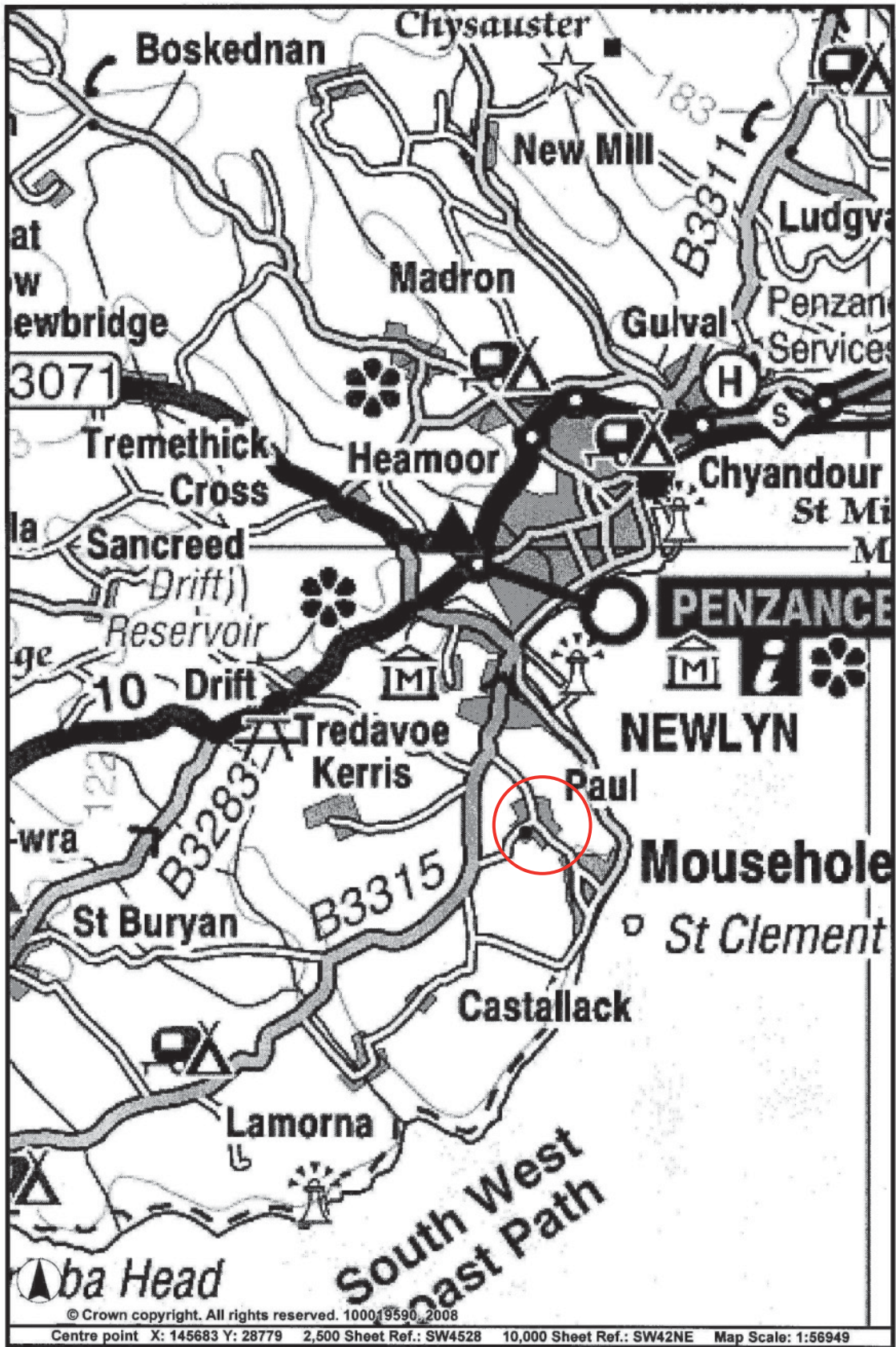


Fig 1 Location map

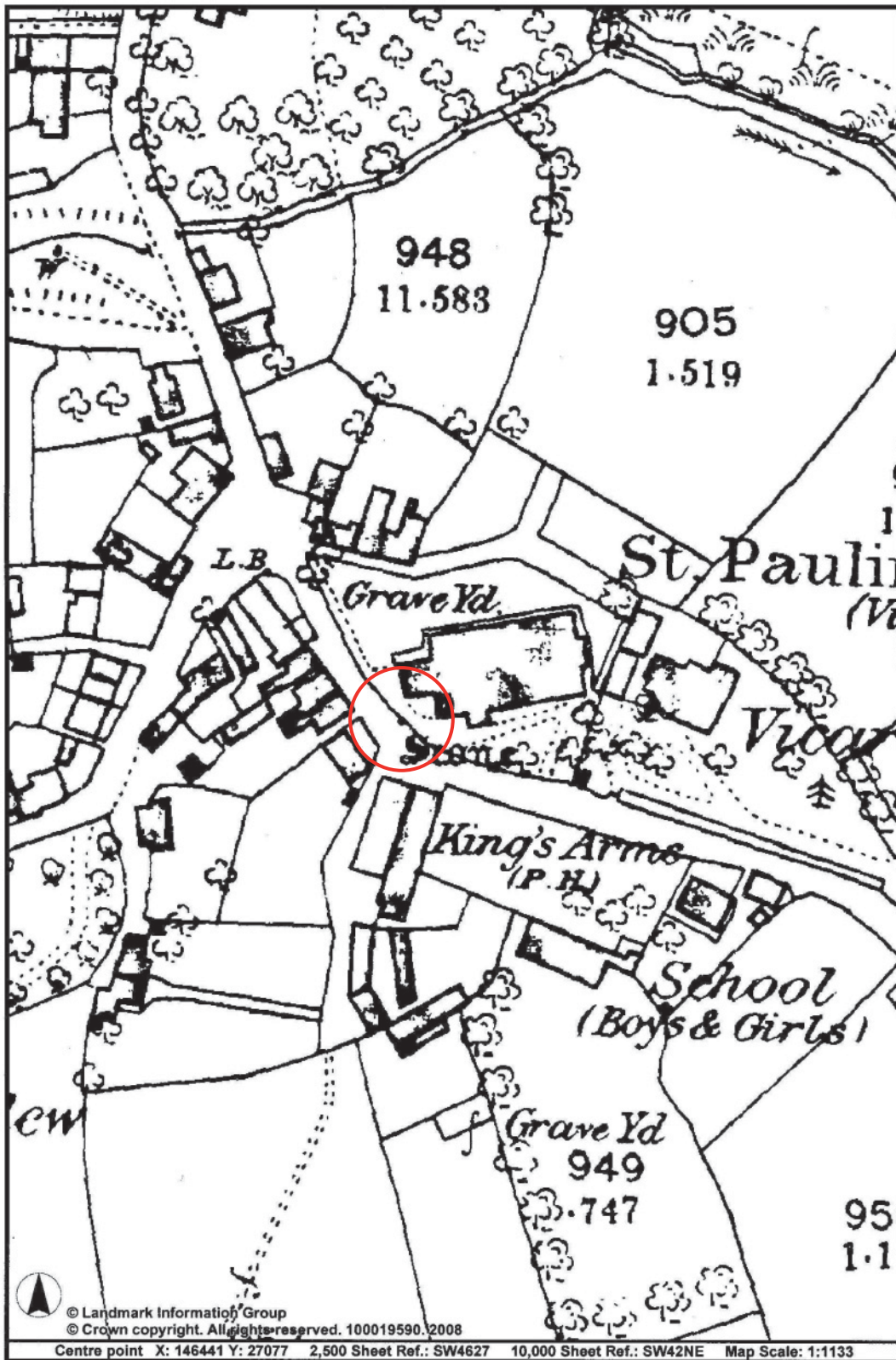


Fig 2 First Edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, 1880

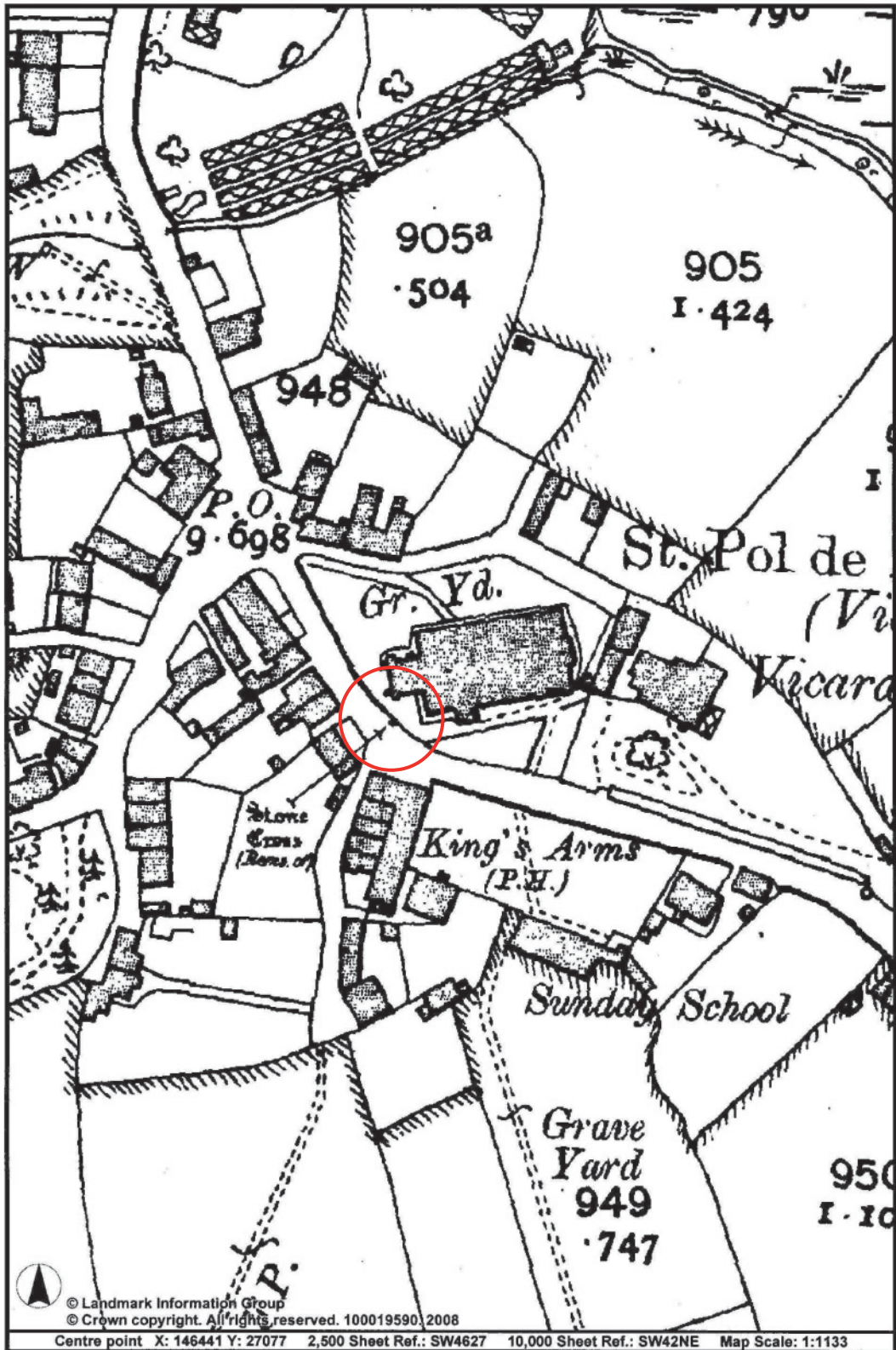


Fig 3 Second Edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, 1907

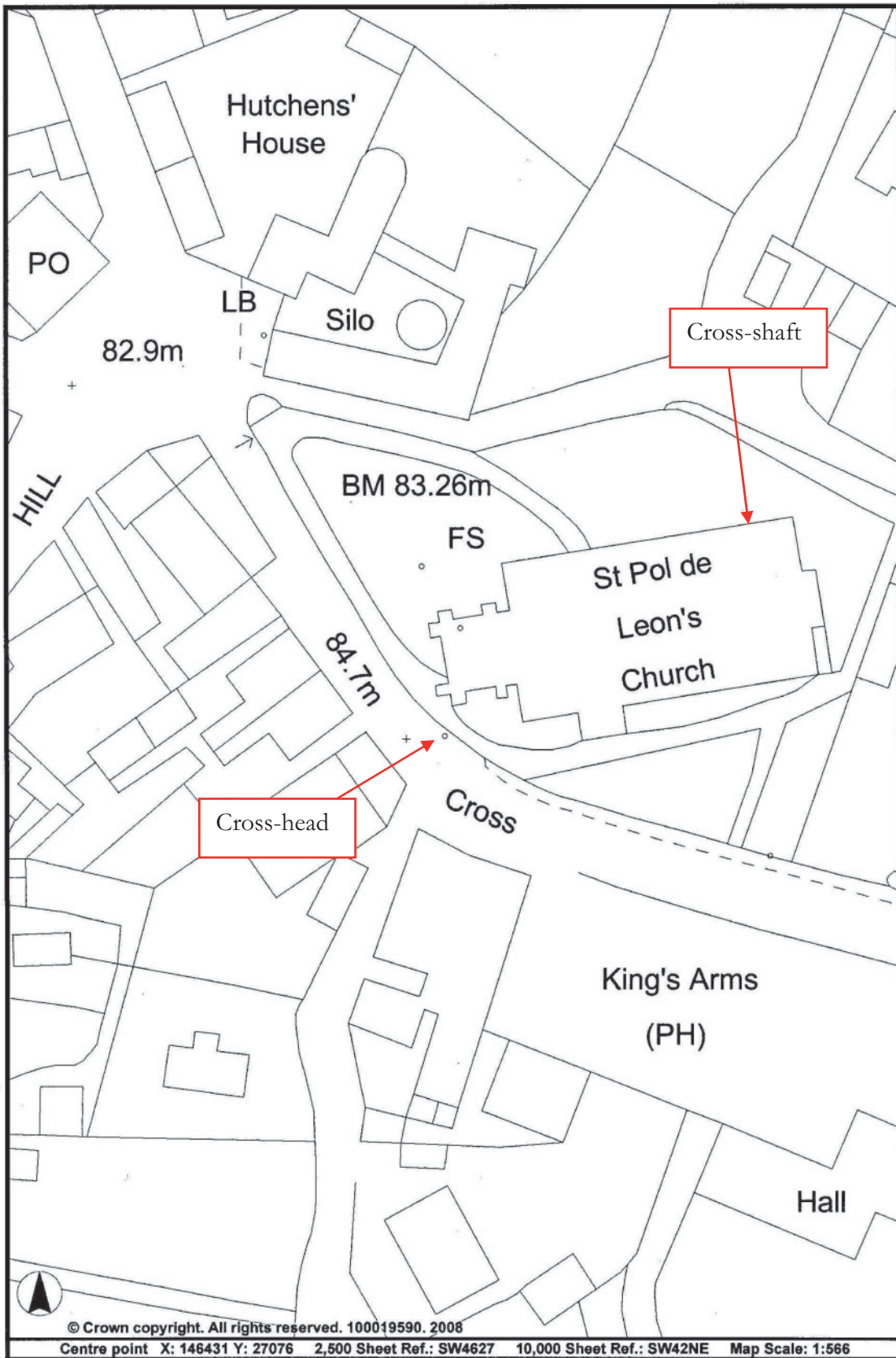


Fig 4 Ordnance Survey digital mapping showing the location of the cross-head and shaft (2003)

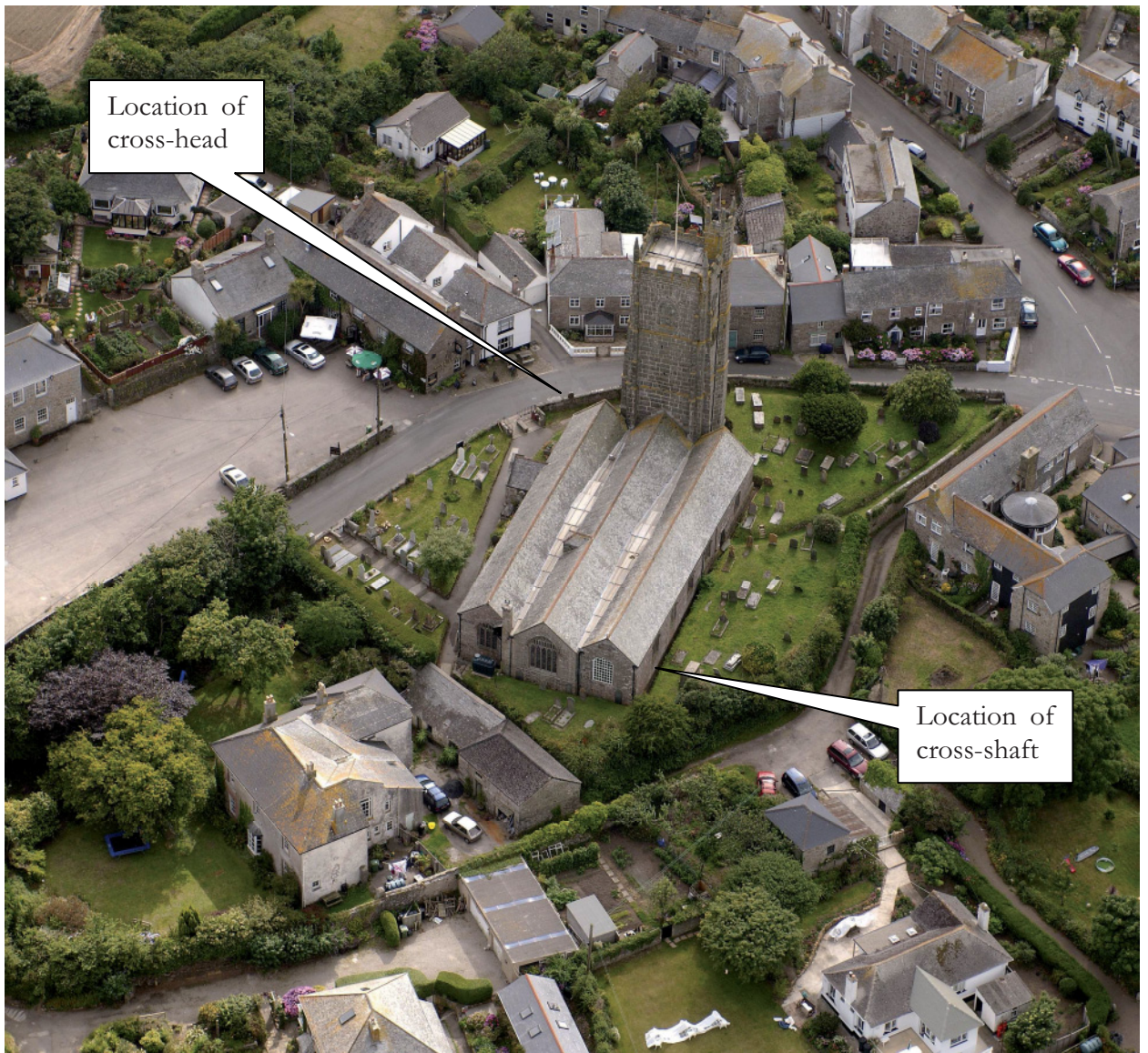


Fig 5 CC HE air photo showing the church site and the location of the monuments. Photo by Steve Hartgroves of Historic Environment, Cornwall Council. Photo number F84-158.

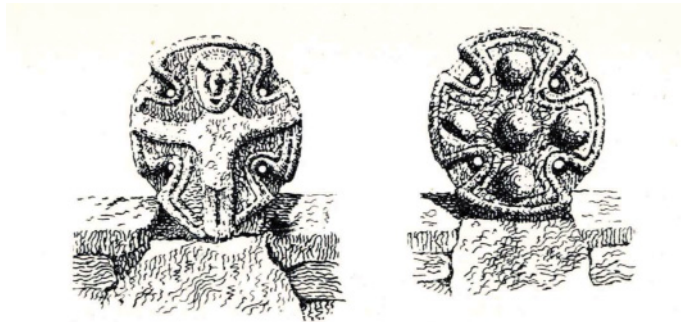
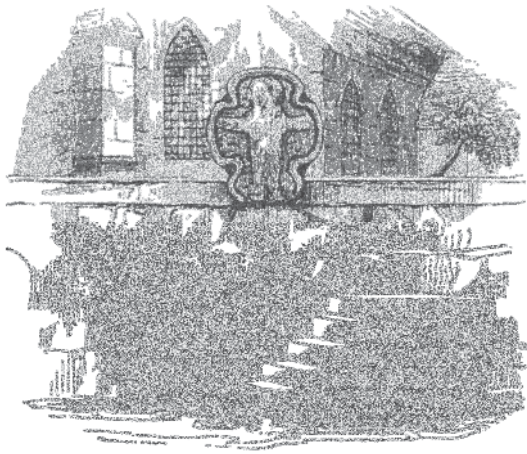


Fig 6 Illustrations of Paul cross-head by
 JT Blight (1856), 20 (above) and AG
 Langdon (1896), 192 (right)

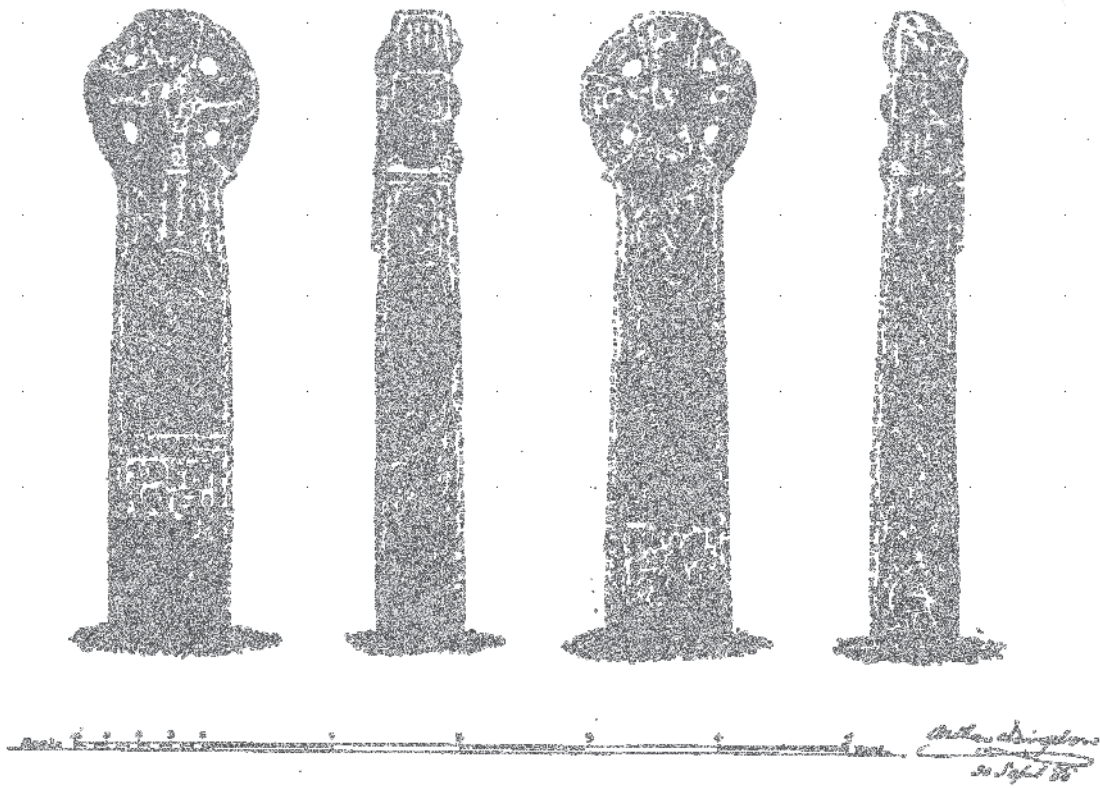


Fig 7 The Lanberne Cross: an example of a complete Penwith-style cross(Langdon 1896, 358)



Fig 8 The cross-head before conservation: from inside and outside the churchyard



Fig 9 The shaft before conservation



Iron pin
holding cross-
head to wall

Cracked
cement
pointing

Iron pin
holding cross-
head to wall

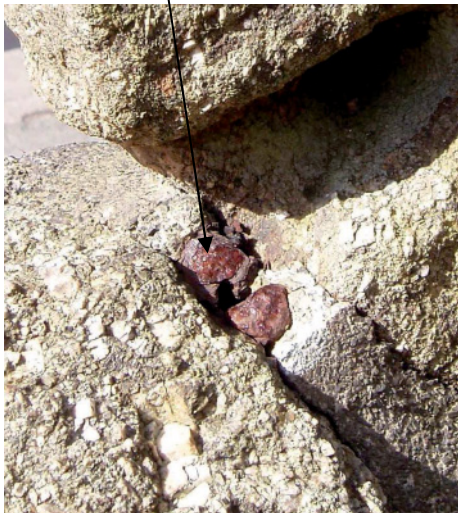


Fig 10 Detail of the ironwork visible in the mortar around the cross-head



Fig 11 Removing cement pointing from around the cross-head

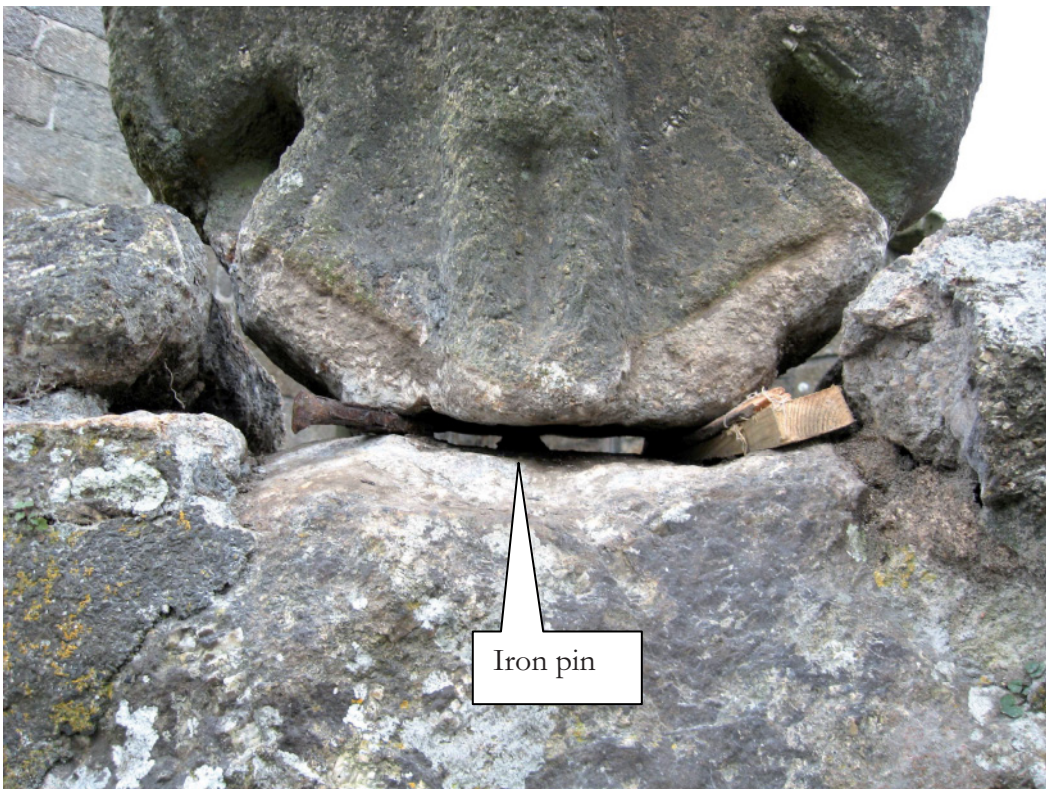


Fig 12 The iron pin visible between the boulder and the bottom of the cross-head



Fig 13 Repointing with lime mortar



Fig 14 Mortar being protected with hessian



Fig 15 The cross-head after maintenance in January 2009: note that by comparison with Figs 8 and 10 (above), far more of the carving is visible



Fig 16 The mortar being removed from around the cross-shaft



Fig 17 The shaft fully exposed



Fig 18 The shaft after re-pointing



Fig 19 Removing the head from the cross



Fig 20 The rusted iron pin



Fig 21 Removing the pin with a specially-designed puller



Fig 22 The new stainless steel pin in position in the boulder-base



Fig 23 Removing the cross-head from the church prior to final restoration



Fig 24 Replacing the cross-head



Fig 25 Final repointing of the joint between the head and the boulder



Fig 26 The cross-head after final repointing

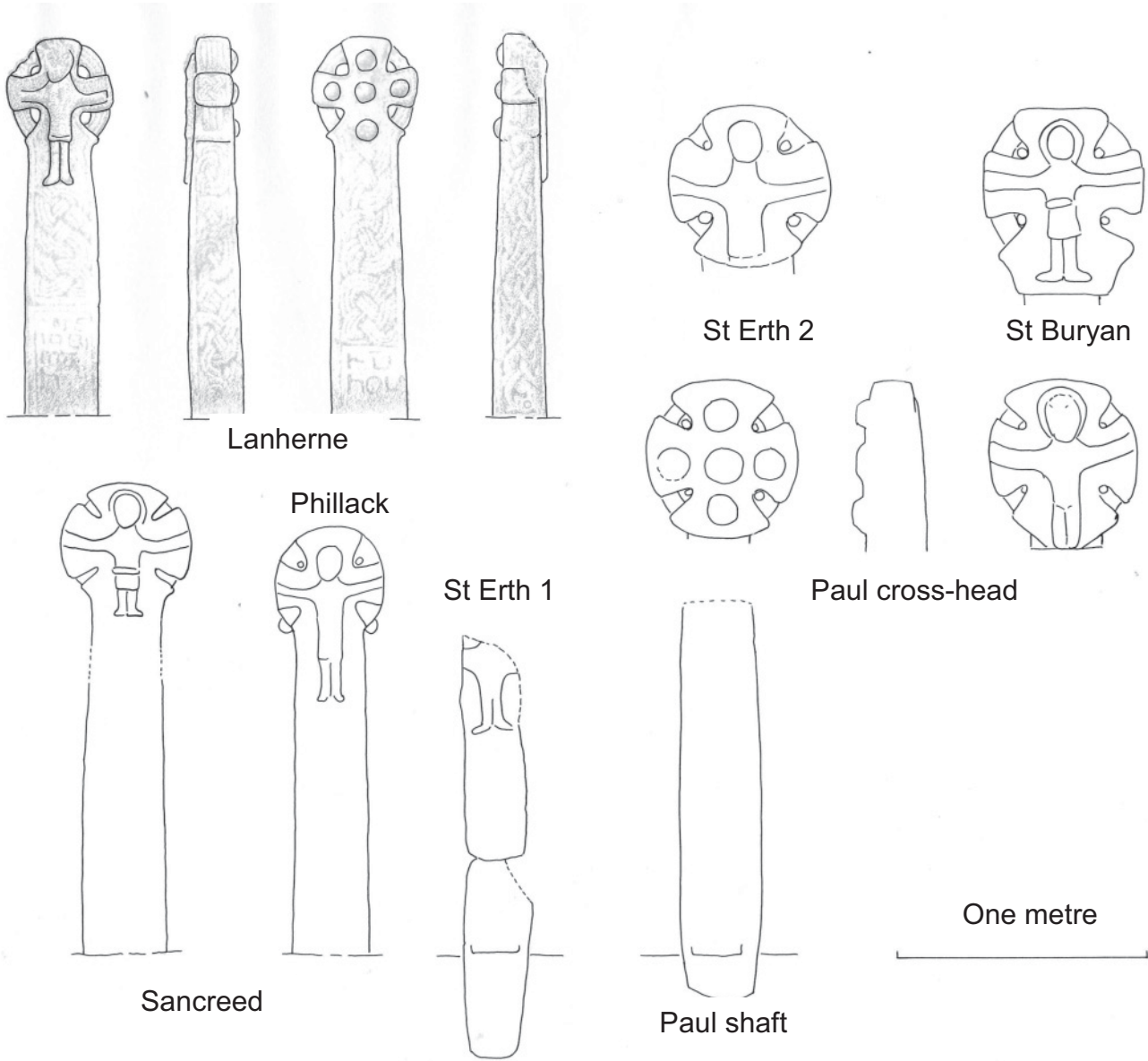


Fig 27 All of the Penwith Crosses compared to the Paul Cross

11 Appendix 1 Leaflet on Paul Crosses

Stone Crosses in Paul Parish

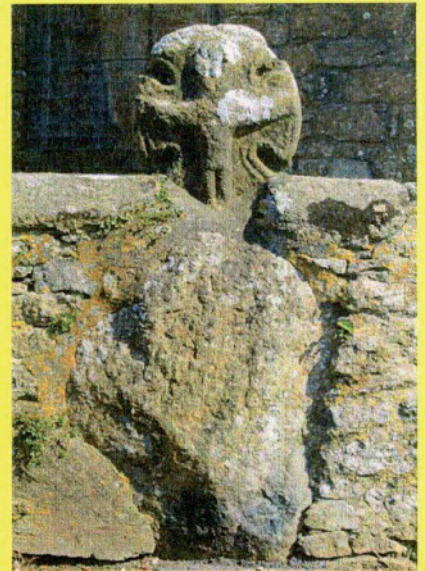


The parish of Paul has a fine collection of stone crosses varying in both date and style.

The oldest dates from the 10th century and the remainder to the 12th and 13th centuries.

Today at least one cross has been lost and two removed to the neighbouring parish of Madron, but several remain accessible on public footpaths, in the churchyard and churchtown.

Stone Crosses in Paul Parish



The parish of Paul has a fine collection of stone crosses varying in both date and style.

The oldest dates from the 10th century and the remainder to the 12th and 13th centuries.

Today at least one cross has been lost and two removed to the neighbouring parish of Madron, but several remain accessible on public footpaths, in the churchyard and churchtown.

1 Paul Down Cross was removed to the grounds of Trefeife in neighbouring Madron parish during the 1920s. There is no free access to this cross, although the gardens and house are open to the public.

2 Carlanken Cross, along with crosses 4 and 6, all marked a track from Sheffield to Kerris. The Carlanken Cross was moved and placed outside Kerris Manor where it can be seen from the public road.

3 Rose-an-Beagle Cross, now better known as Tremethick Cross, was moved to Madron parish during the mid 19th century and set up on a high bank beside the A3071 road from Penzance to St Just.

4 Kemyel Drea Cross is set up on a hedge beside a footpath between the hamlets of Raginnis and Kemyel Crease.

5 and 6 The 10th century churchyard cross-head is fixed to a large granite boulder built into the south boundary wall of the churchyard. The front face shows an image of Christ with arms outstretched, and the reverse shows five bosses.

7 The cross-shaft built into the north wall of the north aisle of the parish church was discovered in 2006. The shaft may be connected with the cross-head on the south wall.

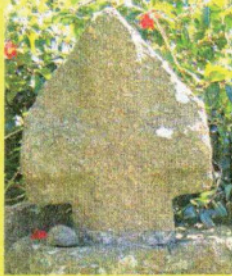
8 The Churchtown Cross is situated 200 metres east of the parish church by the entrance to the old vicarage. It is the only surviving wheel-headed wayside cross in the parish.

9 Kerris Cross is fixed to a garden wall at Kerris, close to the Carlanken Cross. This cross has chamfered edges to its head and shaft and may be slightly later date than the others.

10 This cross has chamfered edges like 9, it use to be in the garden of a house on Mousehole Lane, but is now missing.

11 The base-stone of a cross can be seen built into the foot of a hedge on a footpath near Trungle, further base-stones can be found at Castallack, Tredavoe and Trewarveneth.

12 The Halwyn Cross sits on a hedge beside a footpath between the farms of Trevithal and Halwyn.



9 Kerris Cross

8 Churchtown Cross

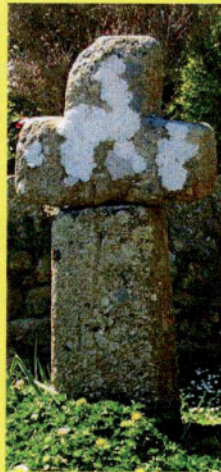


10 Missing Cross from Mousehole

11 Trungle Cross-base



12 Halwyn Cross



1 Paul Down Cross

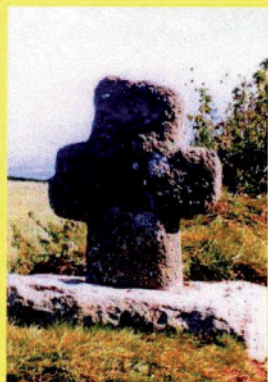
2 Carlanken Cross



5 The Churchyard Cross-head—Front face



6 The Churchyard Cross-head—Reverse face



4 Kemyel Drea Cross



7 Decorated cross-shaft recently discovered built into the north wall of the Paul parish church

3 Rose an Beagle Cross

This leaflet was compiled for the Historic Environment, Cornwall Council, and Paul PCC, with the support of the organisations mentioned overleaf, by Andrew Langdon, following conservation work to the cross-head on the churchyard wall in 2009.