Cross south-east of Tremethick Cross, Madron

Cornwall

Report of restoration

Historic Environment Service (Projects)

Cornwall County Council

Cross south-east of Tremethick Cross, Madron, Cornwall

Restoration following vehicle collision

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November 2008

Acknowledgements

Cover illustration

The restored cross and finger post

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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

A medieval granite wayside cross in a prominent position at a junction on the main Penzance to St Just road (A3071) was badly damaged by a lorry in February 2008. As a result of the dramatic collision, the cross was broken into three pieces.

This report describes the restoration of the cross, which took place in October 2008. It also discusses the original context of the cross in the parish of Paul, and the circumstances under which it was brought to Madron parish. A carved letter 'V' was noted on the cross-shaft while the work was being carried out, perhaps suggesting that it had been used as a boundary stone at some point.

The cross is a Scheduled Monument, Cornwall 26240. Located at SW 4484 3014, it is number 18834 in Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Record.

2 Introduction

2.1 Summary

A medieval granite wayside cross in a prominent position at a junction on the main Penzance to St Just road (A3071) was badly damaged by a lorry in February 2008. As a result of the collision, the cross was broken into three pieces.

This report describes the restoration of the cross in October 2008, eight months after the accident occurred. Observations made in the process of restoring the cross are described, and its original context in Paul parish is discussed.

2.2 The monument

Before the recent damage, the cross stood in the angle of a road junction 0.7 km to the south-east of Tremethick Cross, Madron , on the A3071 (Figs 1 - 6). It was not *in situ* but is said to have been moved here from Rose-an-Beagle in Paul parish in the mid 19th century. The cross stood high above the road, allegedly on top of a Bronze Age barrow (Langdon, 1896, 208) (Figs 5, 6).

The cross is a simple granite latin cross set in a granite base. Before the damage, the cross stood 1.67 metres high, with a shaft 0.25 metres wide and 0.56 metres across the arms (Figs 5 and 7).

2.3 Condition of the monument

Although the cross had suffered damage in the past, resulting in the loss of part of one arm, it was on the whole in fairly good, stable condition. Despite its location close to a road, the cross seemed safe from vehicle damage as it was set well back from and above the road.

However, a recent accident confirmed the belief that any monument in a roadside location is potentially at risk from damage. On the morning of Friday 22nd February a lorry travelling north-west from Penzance to St Just veered off the road, up the bank on which the cross stands, and came to a halt right on top of the cross (Figs 8 and 9). In the process, as subsequent inspection revealed, the cross was broken into three. The head was thrown off and landed in the field to the west while the shaft was pushed into the mound of earth and stone ploughed up by the lorry as it climbed the bank. A few smaller fragments and flakes of granite were also broken from the shaft (Figs 10, 11, 12), while the bottom of the shaft remained buried in the base.

The broken pieces of the cross were rescued on Sunday 24th February and taken to nearby Trewern Farm by Tony and Ann Jenkin (the latter the chairman of Madron Parish Council) for safe-keeping (Fig 13). The only part of the cross which remained on site was the base, with the lowest part of the shaft still lodged in it (Fig 12).

At the same time, a cast iron finger post was damaged and a road sign dented and bent but these are outside the scheduled area of the monument. Remarkably, the alleged barrow on which the cross stands, which is also Scheduled, was not significantly damaged, with just a little turf being skimmed off.

2.4 Background to the present project

Following this damage, the Historic Environment Service (HES) agreed to organise the restoration of the cross for Cornwall County Council's Planning, Transportation and Estates section. Mel Barge, the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments at the time of the incident, agreed that this could be done 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).

Clearly the overarching aim of the project was the restoration of the cross.

Subsidiary aims were to:

- restore the cross to a state which would be as near as possible to its condition before the accident

- restore the cross in such a way that the mound in which it is set, said to be a Bronze Age barrow, was not damaged or disturbed in any way

- make an appropriate record of the restoration process

- ensure that work proceeded according to the methods agreed in the specification

- keep local people abreast of developments through local liaison and by arranging publicity, as appropriate

The management work is described below in section 4, and the results of the accompanying recording are noted in section 5. Both these sections are preceded by a description of the history and original setting of the cross.

3 Background

3.1 History of the cross

It was antiquarian John Blight of Penzance who in *c*1856 was the first person to record this cross; although it is possible that other crude illustrations of a latin cross between Penzance and St Buryan by Haslam (1845) and Hingston (1850) may also be representations of the cross. Although Blight (1856, 44) illustrated the cross in its present position, he stated that it had been removed from Rose-an-Beagle in the parish of Paul.   In addition, in his collection of sketch books housed in the Morrab Library, Blight goes on to record that the cross was dug up on an estate belonging to one Joseph Carne Esq. of Paul who gave the cross to the Revd Charles Valentine Le Grice of Trereife. According to Blight the cross had been set up in its present position ten years previously (that is, *c*1846) and that this ground on the junction of the St Just road with a minor road to Tregavarah was part of the Trereife estate. Blight also records in his sketch book that the cross was perfect when it was removed to its present site, but that it had been damaged by some St Just men going home drunk. This may explain how one of the cross-arms became broken to give the cross its present asymmetrical appearance.

3.2 Original site

Henderson (1960, 384) records that Rose-an-Beagle in Paul was part of the nearby manor of Halwyn, while Ian Cooke (2000, 36) identified Rose-an-Beagle with the village of Sheffield. The Tithe Apportionment schedule of 1841 shows four fields with the name of Rose-an-Beagle under the tenancy of one Thomas Mathews (1003, 1104, 1173 and 1174); they are shown on the Tithe map as being located between the main road into Sheffield (the B3315) and Trungle Moor. Cooke suggests that the cross originally stood in line with the footpath to Kerris at approximately SW 4580 2695, the Rose-an-Beagle fields being just

to the north. No further information is known about the original site, although Cooke's suggestion, on the footpath from Kerris to Paul churchtown seems probable. In this position, the cross would have been one of three latin crosses that marked a church path from Sheffield across Paul Down to Kerris: the other two being a cross formerly in the middle of Paul Down (now at Trereife) and a cross now outside Kerris manor house that originally came from nearby Carlankan.

The latin-style cross appears to have been the preferred type of wayside cross in the parish of Paul, with further latin crosses at Kemyel Drea and Halwyn and only one wheel-headed cross situated near the entrance to the vicarage. This is in contrast with St Buryan, for example, where the majority of surviving medieval crosses are wheel-headed (Preston-Jones and Langdon 1997, Figs 4 and 5)

3.3   Location and setting

The ground on which the cross was erected in the 19th century overlooks the St Just road near Tregavarah and at the time belonged to the Trereife estate, leading Langdon (1896, 207) to suggest that the cross was known by both the name Tremethick (the nearest hamlet) and Trereife. Although this is not its original site, it is in fact a perfect choice, standing like so many *in situ* crosses in a prominent position at a road junction. Reflecting its siting on top of a possible Bronze Age barrow, the cross has wide-ranging views over the surrounding countryside particularly over Mounts Bay.

Now, the cross is considered to be part of Cornwall County Council's Estate, because it lies within the lateral extent of the highway. Today the cross is surrounded by a number of road signs which do not enhance its setting, and is often lost in the vegetation during the summer months.

4 The restoration work

The restoration of the cross was undertaken by Adrian Thomas and David Cutting, with much of the work being carried out at their workshop at Nanquidno, St Just; with the final assembly being carried out on site.

Once the method of restoration had been agreed with English Heritage, the pieces of the cross were removed from Trewern to Nanquidno, in September 2008. The lowest part of the shaft, which remained buried in the base-stone, was removed and also taken to Nanquidno. Following this, there was a considerable delay before work commenced in earnest but at last, between 6th October and 11th October the cross was drilled and prepared for the re-erection, which finally occurred on 16th October.

The work involved the stages described below.

4.1   Initial work on site

The lowest part of the cross was removed from the base on Wednesday 7th May 2008. As the cross was found to be mortared into the base, this involved a day chipping away at the hard lime mortar between the cross-shaft fragment and the base-stone. A small hole was drilled into the top of the cross-shaft fragment and a small eye-bolt with an expanded end fitted in the hole for lifting the fragment from the base-stone. Once the fragment of cross-shaft was loose, a scaffold tower was built over the base-stone, and the shaft fragment lifted out with a block and tackle supported on the scaffold (Figs 14 and 15). The same hole was later increased in diameter to receive a stainless steel dowel to pin the two broken parts of the cross-shaft together. The two upper pieces of the cross were taken from their temporary home at Trewern to Nanquidno, during September.

4.2   In the workshop

1.   At their workshop at Nanquidno, Adrian Thomas and David Cutting carefully measured the broken surfaces of the cross to determine the positions for the pins to join the pieces together.

2.   2.5 cm diameter holes were drilled to a depth of just over 20 cms into the body of the cross-shaft and cross-head to receive the stainless steel pins.

3.   The pins were cut to a length of 40 cms, allowing for 20 cms in each piece of the cross.

4.   A trial fitting took place to ensure that all parts of the cross would fit together squarely before the pieces of cross were removed to site for the final assembly (Figs 17 and 18).

5.   The stainless steel pins were glued into the upper cut surface of each fragment to make the final re-assembly easier.

4.3   Final re-assembly on site

Final re-assembly of the cross took place on 16th October 2008. This was carried out by Adrian Thomas, David Cutting and Geoff Hoad, with Dick Cole supervising for the HES.

1.   The separate parts of the cross were transported to the site.

2.   The lower part of the cross, with pin already fitted, was lifted into the mortice in the base-stone, and set 8 cm (3 inches) deeper than previously, so that the now vulnerable joint in the granite (which had been found to be quite weak) would not be flush with the base-stone. This was then held secure with wooden wedges while the main part of the shaft was lifted onto it.

3.   The middle part of the cross was lifted onto the pin in the bottom part of the shaft, and the pin and joint secured with resin (Fig 21).

4.   Once the resin had gone off, the cross-head was lifted into place, with a preliminary trial fitting before the resin was applied. (Fig 22) At this point, there was a small technical hitch when the head refused to sit snugly on the shaft, and in fact rocked a little. At first it was thought that the pin might be a little too long, but eventually, the head settled securely onto the shaft when a very small piece of granite was chipped from the centre of the broken face. Once this had been sorted out, the pin and joint were resined and the head finally lifted into place.

5.   Once all resin had set, the joints in the shaft and the base were finished with lime mortar. (Fig 23)

4.4   The finger post

The iron finger post adjacent to the cross, which had also been damaged in the accident in February 2008, was removed after the incident to the local Highways depot at Marazion, and from there taken to Falmouth boatyard to be welded and painted. The post was restored on the same day as the cross (Fig 25). As it had been buried in earth previously, it was put up again in the same way, without using any cement. The 'finger' and cap were replaced a few days later, by Peter Lugg of Cornwall County Council.

5 Results of the accompanying recording

A record was made of the work at all significant stages in the process. This 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, the cross undergoing conservation in the workshop, conservation work in progress on site and the restored cross.

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 observations made in the process of carrying out the management work. All significant stages in the work were recorded with notes and sketches.

5.3 Observations made in the course of carrying out the conservation work

One significant observation or discovery was that a letter V had been carved on the cross-head just below the upper cross-arm. The incised character had been carved horizontally across the cross-head and although worn can be easily seen (Fig 20). A horizontally-carved letter of this sort has the potential to be part of a longer Early Medieval memorial inscription; but no further letters could be discerned. Single letters or initials are commonly used on boundstones to denote ownership, and in Paul parish the cross from Carlankan has been used at some stage as a boundary stone, with the letters LA carved on its shaft, which Cooke (2000, 22) suggests may represent Lord St Levan a principal landowner in the area. The same may be the case with the letter V, carved on the head of the Tremethick Cross, but the letters on a boundstone would normally be much larger and set upright, not horizontally. So the origin of the single V on the cross is something of a mystery.

No record survives to indicate whether a base-stone was removed from Rose-an-Beagle to the present site, along with the cross. However, when the shaft fragment was pulled from the base-stone, many pieces of broken granite chippings were discovered beneath the mortice suggesting that either an originally smaller mortice had been enlarged to take the cross-shaft, or that the mortice was completely formed *in situ* from a new boulder at the time the cross was brought to its present site. The authors consider the latter is most probable. The sharp freshness of the sides of the mortice certainly supports the notion that the mortice in its present form was cut in the 19th century (Fig 16). A very fine white lime mortar had been used to bed the cross at this time and had evidently not been disturbed until the recent incident.

A number of broken and whole 19th or 20th century bottles were found in the ground around the base-stone (Fig 16). The reason for these is not known. Perhaps the cross, being a very prominent landmark, was used as a venue for occasional picnics; but the idea that they may have resulted from the activities of the drunken St Just men cannot unfortunately be confirmed!

6 Discussion

Following the work described above, the cross has been happily restored to its position for the last 160 years, above the main Penzance to St Just road. Here it again forms a conspicuous landmark, even if this is not its original location.

It is unfortunate that all three of the latin crosses that once guided parishioners from the hamlet of Kerris, via Sheffield, to the churchtown at Paul have been removed from their original sites. Only the cross from Carlankan, preserved outside Kerris manor house, remains in the parish. All three tall latin crosses originally stood within a mile of each other; together they may indicate the importance of Kerris during the medieval period.

The letter V, carved on the head of the Tremethick Cross was probably a later addition to the monument and suggests that at some period the cross may have been used as a private boundary stone, although it is not known what the letter represents.

Finally, it is interesting to recall Blight's reference to the fact that the cross was damaged by men from St Just during the 19th century. It is therefore perhaps fitting that it was a St Just stonemason, Adrian Thomas, who repaired the cross in the 21st century following its recent damage – making good the depredations of his ancestors!

7 Recommendations

1. When the accident occurred during February 2008, the lorry was recovered from the site, but many parts of the damaged vehicle were never removed, and although some have been buried many parts can still be found poking out of the soil. It is therefore recommended that all parts of the vehicle should be recovered as they present a partially hidden hazard for anyone visiting the cross.

2. Now that it has been restored, the cross forms a very conspicuous sky-line feature, which it has not done for many years because scrub had grown up around it. It is recommended that this striking appearance is retained by regular clearance of the surrounding vegetation.

3. The fact that modern road signs around the cross detract from its setting was mentioned above (page 11). In the long term, consideration should be given to reducing the clutter.

8 References

8.1 Primary sources

Ordnance Survey, c1880. *25 Inch Map* First Edition (licenced digital copy at HES)

Ordnance Survey, c1907. *25 Inch Map* Second Edition (licenced digital copy at HES)

Ordnance Survey, 2003. *LandLine Digital Mapping at 1:2500*

Tithe Map and Apportionment, c1841. *Parish of Paul* (microfiche copy at HES)

8.2 Publications

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Blight, J. T. (1856) *The Ancient Crosses and other Antiquities of west Cornwall*. William Cornish, Penzance.

Cooke, I. McNeil (1996) *Mermaid to Merrymaid: Journey to the Stones*, 2nd Ed. Men an Tol Studio, Madron, Penzance.

Cooke, I. McNeil (2001) *Crosses and Churchway Paths in the Land's End Peninsula, west Cornwall, vol.4, Paul & Sancreed*. Men an Tol Studio, Madron, Penzance.

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Haslam, W. (1838-46) 'On the Crosses of Cornwall' *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, 26.

Henderson, C. G. (1960) 'The 109 ancient parishes of the Four Western Hundreds of Cornwall', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*.

Hingston, F. C. (1850) *Specimens of Ancient Cornish Crosses, Fonts etc.*, W. J. Cleaver, London and J. R. Netherton, Truro.

Langdon, A. G. (1896) *Old Cornish Crosses*. Joseph Pollard, Truro.

Langdon, A. (1997) *Stone Crosses in West Penwith*, Federation of Old Cornwall Societies

Preston-Jones, A. (2008) *Proposal for the repair and restoration of medieval wayside cross near Tregavarah, Madron*.

Preston-Jones, A. and Langdon, A.G., (1997) 'St Buryan Crosses', *Cornish Archaeology* **36**, 107-128.

9 Project archive

The HES project number is **2008223**

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of the Historic Environment Service, Cornwall County 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: GBP2008

3. Digital photographs stored in the directory ..\Images\Sites Q-T\Tremethick Cross

4. This report held in digital form as: G:\CAU\HE PROJECTS\SITES\SITES T\TREMETHICK CROSS\TREMETHICK CROSS, CROSS RESTORATION REPORT.DOC
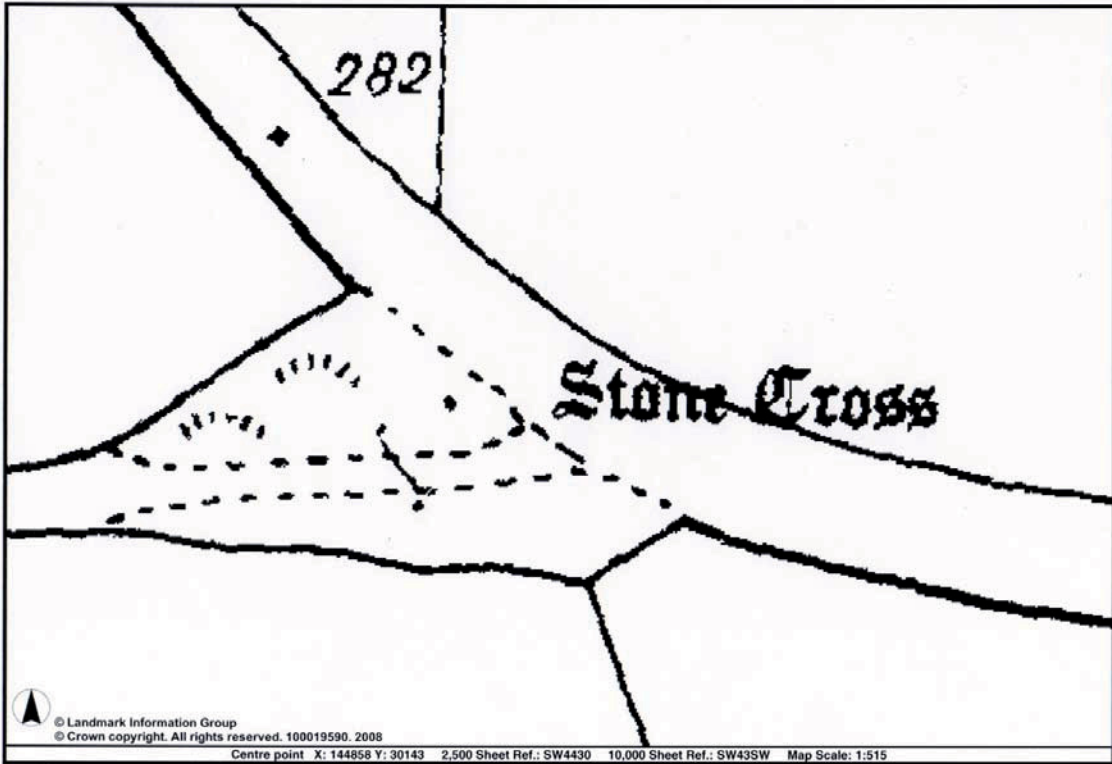
Fig 1 Location map

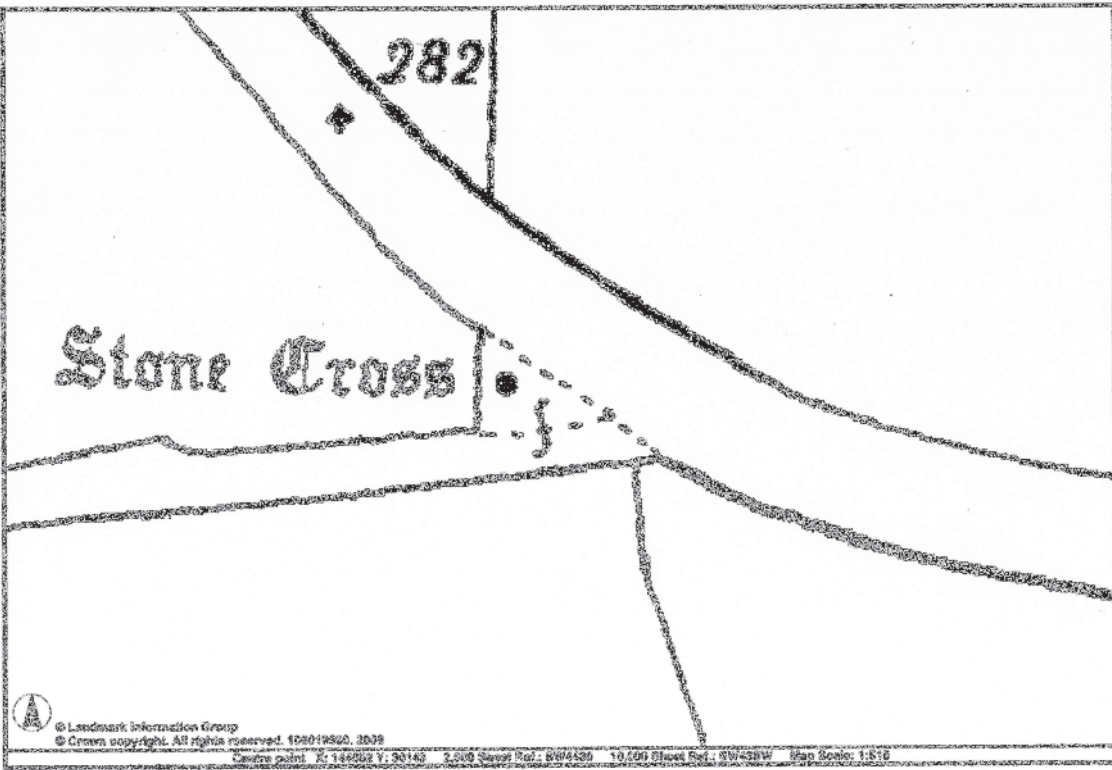*Fig 2 First Edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, 1880*

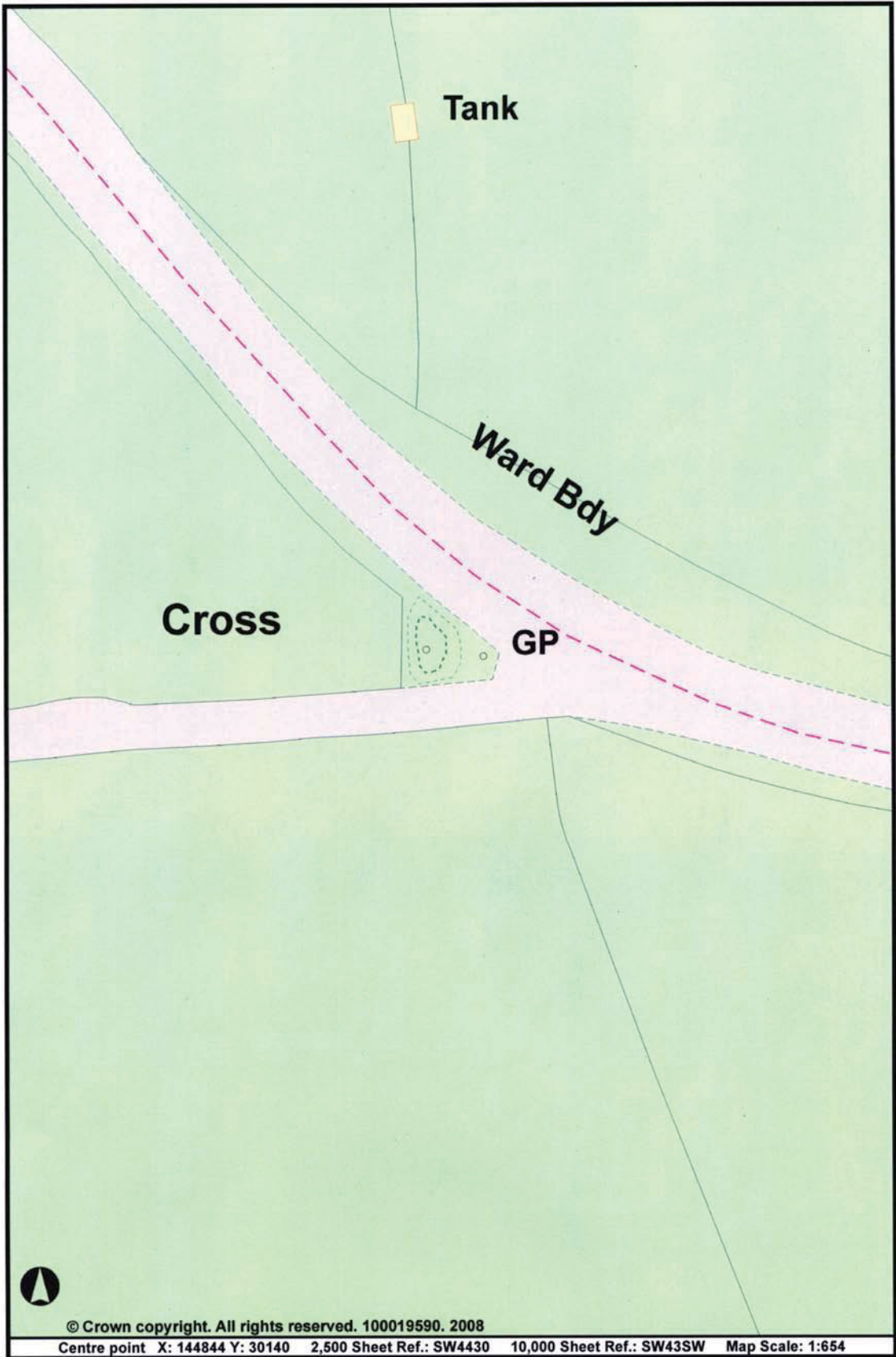*Fig 3 Second Edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, 1907*

Tank

Ward Bdy
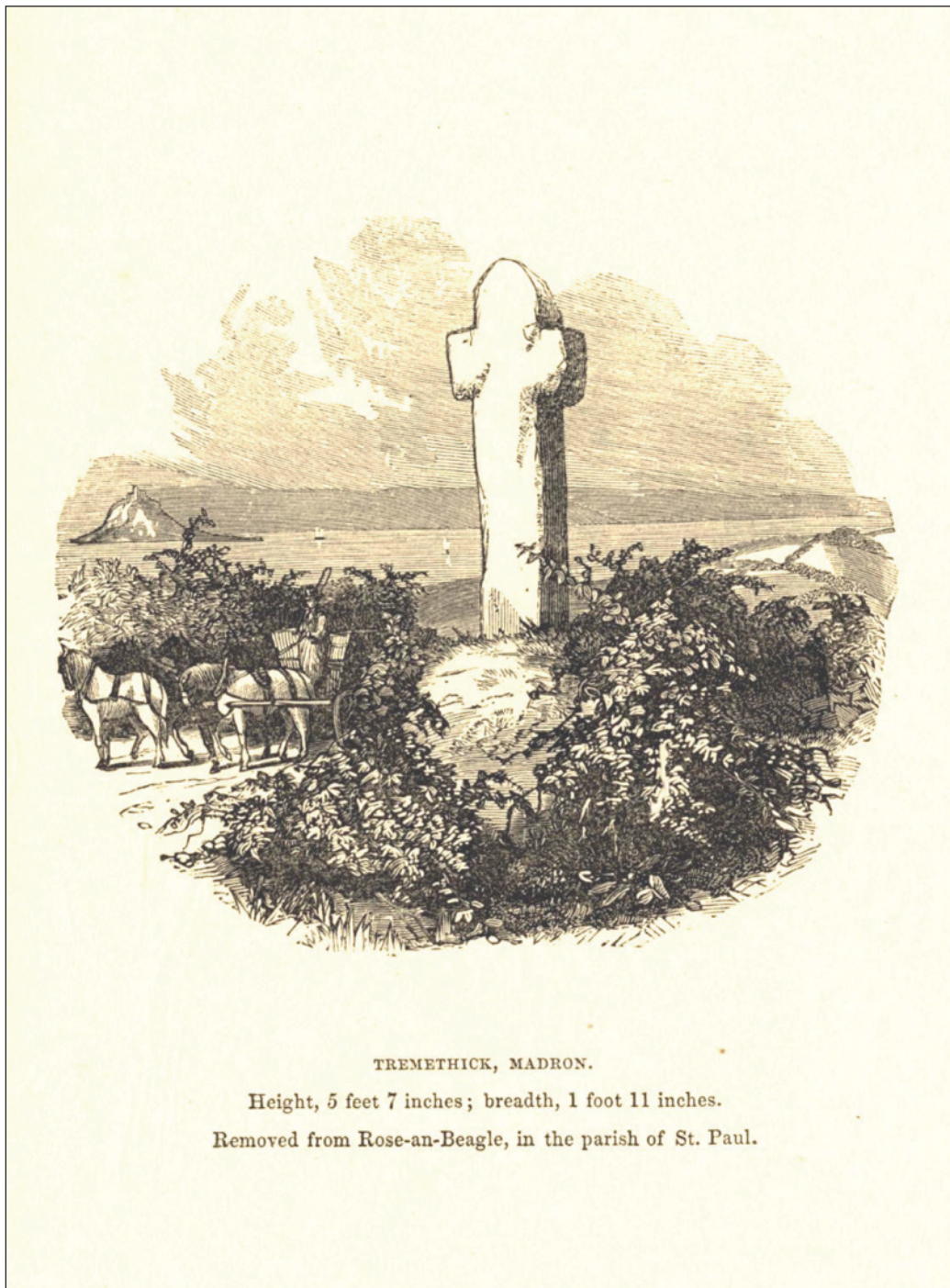
Cross

GP

Centre point   X: 144844 Y: 30140   2,500 Sheet Ref.: SW4430   10,000 Sheet Ref.: SW43SW   Map Scale: 1:654

Fig 4   Ordnance Survey digital mapping showing the site and its environs (2003)

TREMETHICK, MADRON.

Height, 5 feet 7 inches; breadth, 1 foot 11 inches.

Removed from Rose-an-Beagle, in the parish of St. Paul.

Fig 5 The cross in its present position in the 19th century (J.T.Blight 1856, Ancient Crosses and Antiquities of Cornwall, 45)

Fig 6 The cross in its setting, before damage

Fig 7 The cross before damage

Fig 8   The lorry on the bank, on top of the cross, on 22nd February 2008(photo Peter Lugg, Cornwall County Council)

Fig 9 The site after removal of the lorry

Fig 10 The damaged cross-head, lying in the grass in the field behind its actual site

Fig 11 The damaged cross: the shaft lodged in the rubble ploughed up by the lorry

Fig 12 The in situ *cross-base, with the stump of the shaft visible at the centre*

Fig 13 The pieces of the cross at Trewern Farm: Ann Jenkin discusses their restoration with Adrian Thomas

Fig 14 Removing the bottom of the cross-shaft from the base

Fig 15 Removing the bottom of the cross-shaft from the base

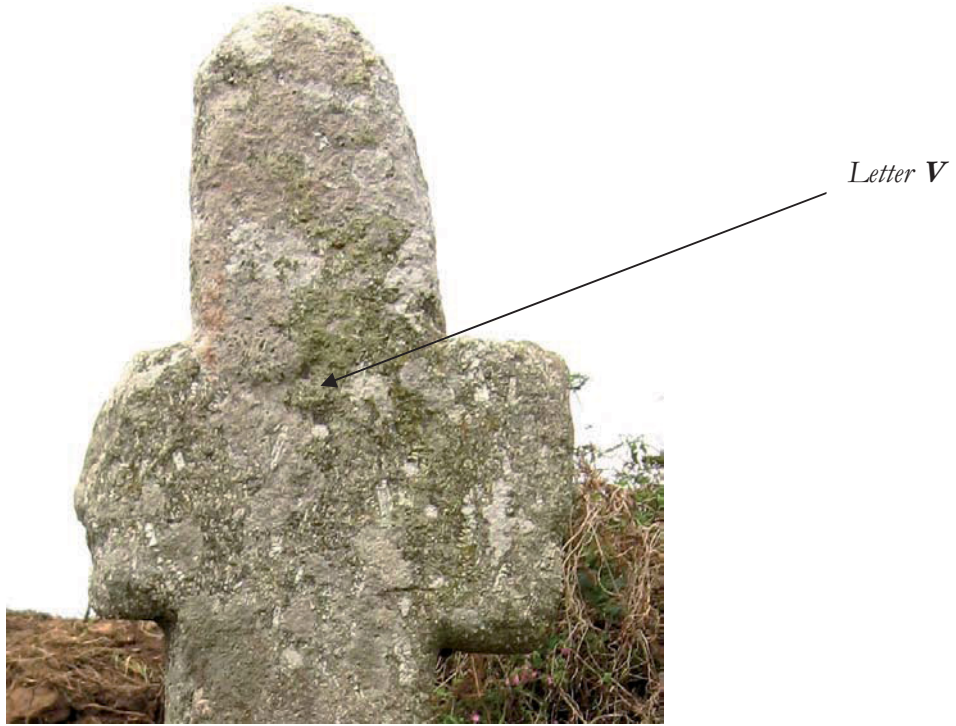*Fig 16 The cross-base after the cross-shaft was removed.*

Fig 17 The cross at Nanquidno

Fig 18 The cross at Nanquidno

Fig 19 Old bottles discovered during the removal of top soil from around the cross-base

*Letter **V***

Fig 20 Letter V carved on the cross-head

Fig 21 Restoring the cross on site: the shaft is put in position

Fig 22 Restoring the cross: the cross-head is lifted back

Fig 23 Pointing the joint in the shaft with lime mortar

Letter **V**

Pin

Pin

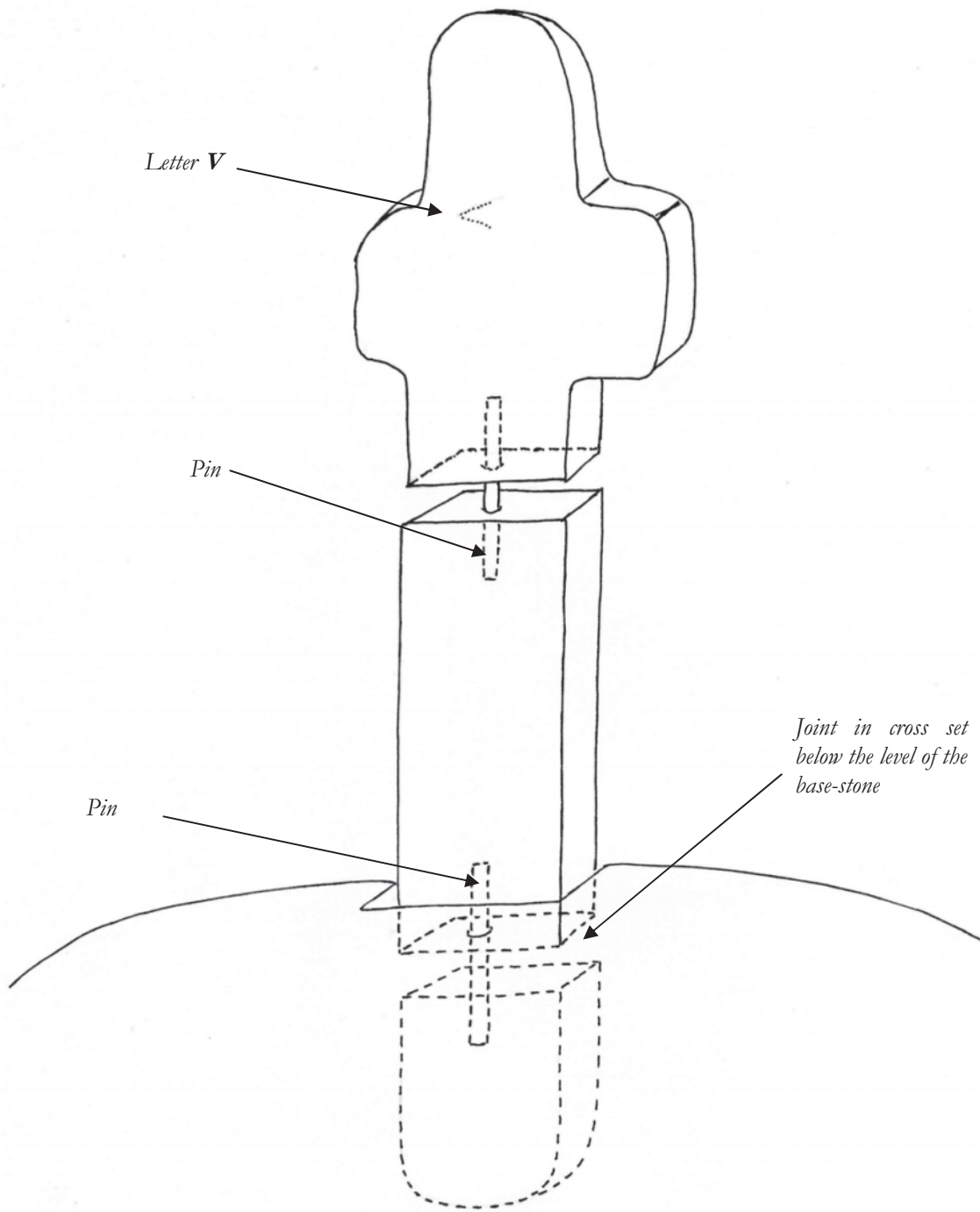Joint in cross set below the level of the base-stone

Fig 24   Illustration showing the position of stainless steel pins

Fig 25 The finger post is restored (note the restored cross behind it)

Fig 26 The restored cross, from the west

Fig 27 The restored cross, from the east