

## BRADBOURNE CROSS, DERBYSHIRE.

By the REV. PROFESSOR G. F. BROWNE, B.D.

In speaking of the early sculptured stones of Derbyshire, at the meeting of the Institute at Derby in 1885, I described the portion of the shaft of a cross which stands in the churchyard of Bradbourne<sup>1</sup>, and added,—“ This is not the only fragment in the Bradbourne churchyard, for, in order to make a stile, the men of some past generation took another fragment, covered with human figures and foliage scrolls, and split it down the middle, and planted the two pieces to form the two jambs of the stile. I feel quite sure that if a very small effort were made, the parish would gladly accept two less valuable and more suitable stones with which to form the stile, and the present fragments might be put together in the parish, or might even be given for the purposes of the Derby Museum.”

A month or two after this was published in the proceedings of the Derbyshire Archæological Society, I received a welcome letter from Mr. Albert Hartshorne, to the effect that he was anxious to do what he could to preserve the stones used as a stile. In the spring of 1886 I heard from him that he was in a position to do something for the stones. He had learned that there were said to be other fragments of the Bradbourne cross in the grounds at Tissington Hall.

The Rev. Gray Granville, Vicar of Ilam, very kindly called on Sir William FitzHerbert of Tissington, and learned from him that until lately there were fragments of the head of the Bradbourne cross under the yew trees in his grounds. He allowed a search to be made by Mr. Granville

<sup>1</sup> See Proceedings of the Derbyshire Archæological Society, for 1885, and the photolithograph from my rubbings of two

sides of the shaft, Plate XIII. fig 2, in the same volume.

and Mr. Hartshorne ; and when they found one arm of a cross, he allowed them to carry it off to its old home at Bradbourne. This very liberal conduct will make archæologists feel a debt of gratitude to Sir William FitzHerbert.

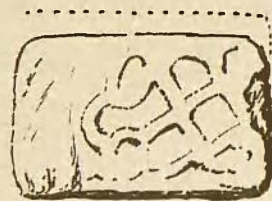
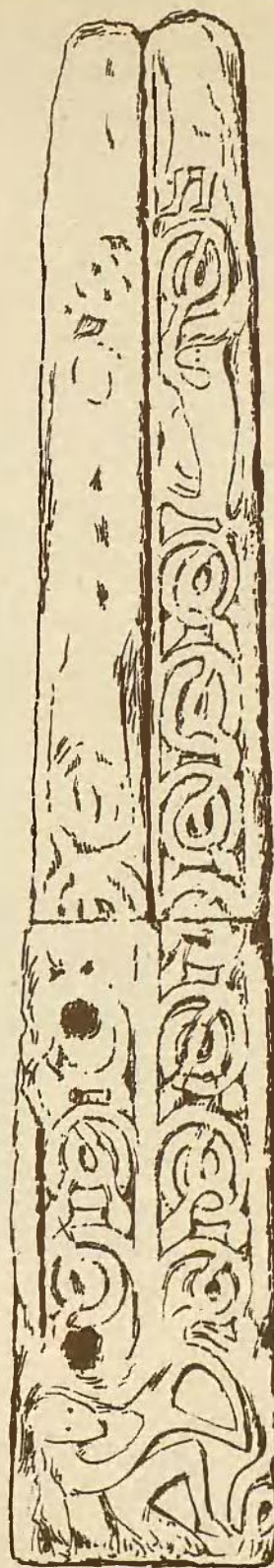
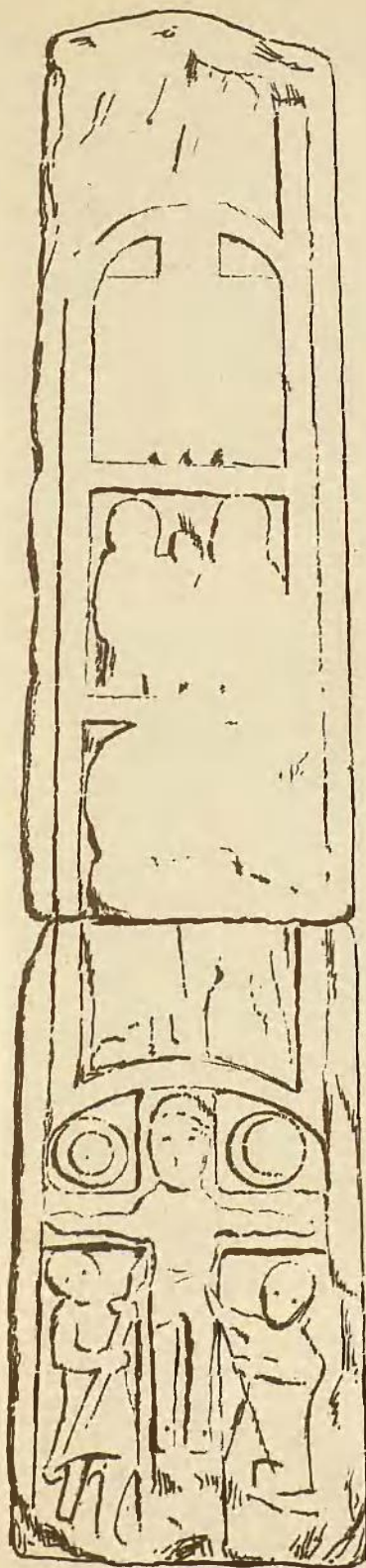
On August 16, 1886, the day after the conclusion of the meeting of the Institute at Chester, Mr. Granville drove me over from Ilam to Bradbourne Hall, where we found Mr. Crombie the Vicar of Bradbourne, Mr. Jourdain the Vicar of Ashbourne, Miss Petit, and others, with Mr. Hartshorne. We examined first the arm of a cross brought from Tissington. It told its history at once. It is but a fragment, but it has two angels exactly like those on the arms of the cross at Eyam, one on the front, the other on the end. On its upper surface it has a rather clumsy interlacing pattern of one band, exactly like that on the edge of the rectangular head of the great shaft in Bakewell churchyard, and on the under surface, it has a rather prettily conceived interlacing pattern, not well worked out either in principle or in execution.

We then proceeded to dig up the two jambs of the slab in the churchyard wall. Much to our satisfaction, we found that one part of the sculpture which had been turned inwards, and all those parts which had been underground, were in very good preservation. The difference between the exposed part, worn practically smooth, and the bold relief of the sculpture on the buried part, seemed to tell of very many generations of men and women pushing through the narrow orifice since first the stones were placed there.

When we got the stones out and moved away with some difficulty into the open, we found that they fitted together fairly well, and had evidently been split in two from one block ; we found, further, that when placed together they fitted on the top of the portion of the shaft standing in the churchyard, and carried on the patterns on the two edges and the arrangement of the two faces of that fine piece of shaft. The original shaft is a little over three feet high, the new portion is over four feet, so that there is now more than seven feet of what has been one of the finest and most remarkable shafts in the kingdom.

It will be convenient to quote here some remarks which

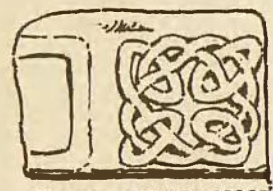
BRADBOURNE CROSS  
DERBYSHIRE.



*Top*



*Side*



*Bottom*



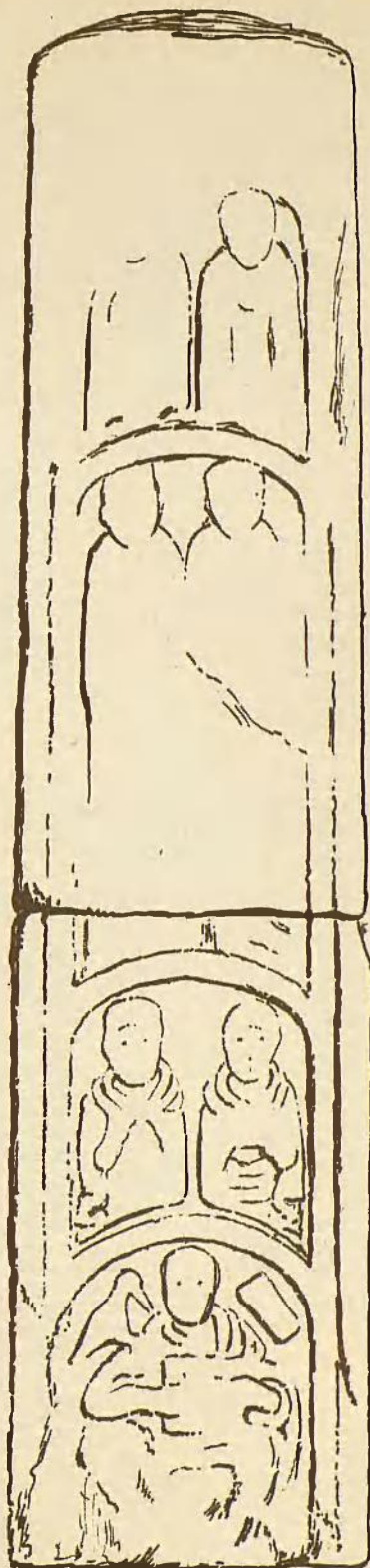
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ARM OF CROSS

Scale of Feet.

2





I had the opportunity of making at the Derby Meeting on the Derbyshire stones.

"It will be seen that the ornamentation of the great cross at Bakewell consists of a magnificent scroll, springing alternately right and left from a sort of cornucopiæ. The scroll at the top has a somewhat nondescript animal nibbling at the topmost bunch of fruit. Now, the Northmen believed in a sacred tree, known as the world-ash, in which four harts nibbled the buds. The harts shown on the stone at York (Plate XII.) may have reference to this part of the story. The tree was, besides, a pathway for the messenger between the gods and the earth, and this messenger was the squirrel. I suggest that the animal on the Bakewell cross recalls this early belief, for nondescript as it is there is no question at all that its fore legs clutching the fruit excellently represent the attitude of a squirrel with a nut in its paws. In this case we should have, as we have so remarkably at Gosforth, a combination of the Christian and the Teutonic religious beliefs, the Christian tree of life, and the pagan messenger of the gods in its topmost branches. No one who knows the magnificent cross at Ruthwell, in Dumfriesshire, need be told where to look for a graceful original of the Bakewell squirrel. At the very bottom of the cross is a curious semi-circular piece of ornament, below which the stone seems to have been broken, or to have come to an abrupt end. There is a corresponding semi-circle at the bottom of the great fragment of a shaft at Bradbourne (Plate XIII.), and it had seemed to me that this probably represented a bow, the man drawing it being on a part of the stone which is lost. I found in the Weston Museum, in Sheffield, the cast of a portion of a magnificent shaft, the original of which is in a garden near, of which I show the front, &c. (Plate XIII.) In details and size it is remarkably similar to those at Bakewell and Bradbourne, and here we have a beautifully designed and executed man, in a kneeling position, holding a bow, to which he is fitting an arrow. It is interesting to find a theory, formed on the fragments at Bakewell and Bradbourne, so entirely confirmed by the complete base of the cross at Sheffield. On a stone found at Bishop Auckland (Plate II.), there is a man drawing a bow, and taking aim at an animal involved in a scroll.

The head-dress of this man, which is beautifully executed, and the hair on the top lip, point to the style adopted by the late-Saxon dandies. This idea, however, was continued into Norman times, for you have it on the pillars at the west front of Lincoln, and also on the alternate pillars of the Norman door of the little old church at Steetley."

Having said this in 1885, it was very interesting to find on the Bradbourne fragments, when they were cleared of their dirt, no less than four squirrels employed in eating the fruit of the scrolls on which they stand, as the one squirrel at Bakewell is doing. Further, and this is an exceedingly unusual thing, we found men also in the foliage of the scrolls. So far as I can remember, it is only at Spalato and Sandbach that we find this. At Jarrow there is a man fighting a beast among scrolls, but at Bradbourne and Spalato and Sandbach the man is standing in the scroll-work as if he were only another variety of animal. It was with almost more satisfaction that I made out the much decayed sculpture at the bottom of the east edge of the original piece of shaft to be a man with a bow and arrow, in the act of shooting up into the scroll work. Thus the surmise with regard to Bakewell and the west edge of Bradbourne was confirmed in 1885 by the shaft at Sheffield, and then in 1886 Bradbourne itself produced a second confirmation. The Bradbourne shaft as it now is can claim to be unique. It has two archers upon it, three men in its scrolls, and four squirrels; and thus it may fairly be described as opening a new field for investigation, and affording examples of ornamentation which have not been found elsewhere. It tells very clearly of the prevalence in Derbyshire, in some far off time, of some one master principle in the erection and ornamentation of these remarkable works of art. Eyam, Bakewell, the shaft now at Sheffield, and Bradbourne, have so much in common that mere coincidence is quite out of the question, while at the same time each has its special points. Bradbourne is in my opinion the most remarkable of the series.

The figures on the north and south faces are too far perished for any safe conclusions as to their details. The Crucifixion speaks for itself; that on the Bakewell shaft has practically perished. The figure corresponding on the

opposite side, with a bird at the right ear and some object on the left, corresponds with a panel which can still be to a certain extent made out on the west face of the Bakewell shaft. The comparative grammar of sculptured subjects is not as yet sufficiently ascertained to enable us to feel sure about this panel; it may be compared with two panels at Sandbach. The remaining panels seem to contain twelve figures in pairs; if that is so, their attribution is not difficult.

It will be seen that the east edge of the shaft has scrolls springing right and left from a central stem. This arrangement is less common and presents a more rich appearance than the scrolls at Ruthwell and many other places. The Sheffield shaft resembles the Bradbourne shaft in this as in other particulars. There are beautiful examples of it at Jarrow, Easby, Rothley, and a few other places. It is not easy to see at what period after 1066 the districts of Derbyshire which produced these works of art were in a condition to produce them. And yet they are persistently called Norman crosses; I never knew why.