



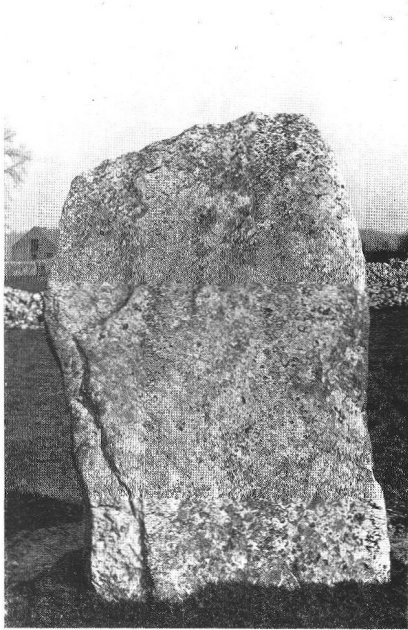
THE STOUP, LOOKING NORTH. No. 1.
October 2nd, 1913.



CROSS ON THE STOUP, LOOKING NORTH.
No. 2. *October 2nd, 1913.*



A B C
THE STOUP DETAILS, LOOKING NORTH.
No. 3. *October 2nd, 1913.*



WESTWARD STONE NEAR WIRKSWORTH,
LOOKING EAST. No. 4.
April 17th, 1914.

Some Menhirs.

By T. ARTHUR MATTHEWS.

THE STOUP.



ABOUT half-way between Ashbourne and Wirksworth, on the west side of the road, is a stone (Plate I., Nos. 1, 2, and 3) which can hardly fail to attract notice. It is about 40 yards from the road, and 140 yards south of the White House corner. It is known as the "Stoup." The field in which it stands is called "the Stoup field." The owner is Mr. H. Oldfield, of Owslow, to whom I am indebted for permission to make examination, and more especially for calling my attention to the cross referred to below.

The stone stands about 6 feet in vertical height above the ground, or about 7 feet measured along its centre line. It has the appearance of having fallen over both to the west and south, and has probably slightly twisted on its base also, as the sides and ends nearly, but not exactly, face the cardinal points. There is no sign of cleavage on any visible portion of the stone, all being weather-worn beyond the power of climate on limestone for the limited period suggested below. This indicates a surface stone—not quarried from the solid.

A line carried due west for about 6 miles hits two stones on Ilam Tops, lying flat, close together, side by side. These are two of several in a straight line, perhaps a quarter of a mile long, nearly (not exactly) north and south. The latitude of the two and that of the Stoup appears to be exactly the same, the difference (if any) being not more than a few yards. This seems to point out a possible connection between the widely separated stones.

In the introduction to *Rough Stone Monuments*, Mr. T. Eric Peet says: "In many cases, too, crosses have been placed or engraved on Menhirs in order to Christianize them." On the southern side of the Stoup a cross has been cut, which can be traced near the top of the first photograph, and is plainly evident in the enlarged view. This is so overgrown by moss that it is not readily noticeable till attention is called to it.

In the photograph (Plate I., No. 3), the line to the left, marked A, is a plumb-line (much foreshortened in the picture). The second line, marked B, is the centre line of the cross. The third line, C, is the centre line of the stone. From A to B, at 5 feet down from the intersection of the lines, is 8 inches, measured at right angles to the south face of the stone, and at the same level A to C is 18 inches; so that the inclination of the stone is $2\frac{1}{4}$ times as great as that of the cross.

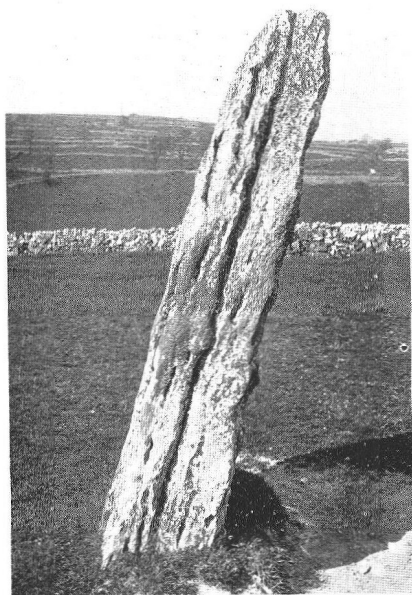
It may reasonably be assumed that the cross, when cut, would either be parallel to the centre line of the stone, which it is not, or that it would be vertical. Its present position is ridiculous as a matter of design. It is therefore taken to have been vertical.

The stone, in falling over, would probably start extremely slowly, and, in the course of centuries, might move at a less slow rate as the leverage of its weight increased. Hence it is not unreasonable to assume that the date of erection is at least $2\frac{1}{4}$ times as far back as the date of the incision of the cross.

It does not seem possible to ascertain the date of the cross. Is it too great a flight of fancy to consider it as nearly coincident with the introduction, locally, of Christianity? This was probably about, or soon after, A.D. 600. It might have been much earlier, and was not likely to have been much later. Take it at 1,300 years ago.

$$1,300 \times 2\frac{1}{4} = 2,925$$

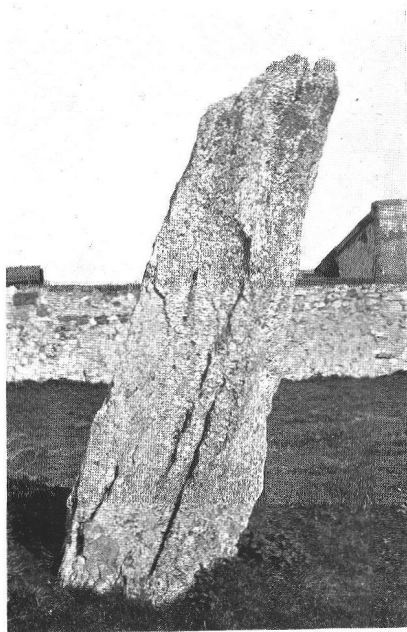
Thus, about 1000 B.C. might be the latest date of erection.



WESTWARD STONE, LOOKING NORTH.
No. 1.



EASTWARD STONE, LOOKING NORTH.
No. 2.



EASTWARD STONE, LOOKING EAST.
No. 3.



EASTWARD STONE, LOOKING WEST.
No. 4.

STONES NEAR WIRKSWORTH.
April 17th, 1914.

TWO STONES NEAR WIRKSWORTH.

THE WESTWARD STONE.

About 3 miles 20° north of east from the Stoup is a stone (Plate I., No. 4, Plate II., No. 1) to the south of the road from Wirksworth to Brassington, measuring about $4' 0'' \times 1' 4'' \times 7' 6''$ high, to which the writer's attention was kindly called by the editor of this *Journal*, to whom, also, he is grateful for the valuable suggestion below as to the possible meaning of the stones.

This stone is weather-worn on three sides; the fourth side (furthest away in Plate I., photograph No. 4) is probably the bed from which it was quarried.

Presuming a depth of 5 feet below the ground, the stone might measure $12' 6'' \times 4' 0'' \times 1' 4'' = 67$ cub. feet, or about 5 tons.

THE EASTWARD STONE.

Yet again, about half a mile a little to the north of east, is another stone (Plate II., Nos. 2, 3, and 4), to the north of the Wirksworth to Brassington road, which bears a strong resemblance to the Stoup. This stone measures about $2' \times 2' \times 8'$ high.

This is also weather-worn on three sides, the fourth being probably the quarried bed.

Again, assuming a depth of 5 feet below the ground, the stone might measure $13' \times 2' \times 2' = 52$ cub. feet, or about 4 tons.

In Plate II., photograph No. 4, nearly level with the top of the field wall, a rough circle, with a possible centre, can be traced, and, to the left of this, an irregular curved line. These may be artificial, or may be natural, but the circle and centre suggest a phallic mark.

BRADBOURNE STONE.

A quarter of a mile to the north of Bradbourne Church, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles a little north of west from the Stoup, is a stone, very kindly shown to the writer by Mr. Norcliffe, of Bradbourne. This measures about $2' 0'' \times 6'' \times 5' 6''$ high. About forty years ago

two others were removed which stood nearly south and nearly east of the one remaining, and each, perhaps, 150 yards away. The existing stone is weather-worn on two sides, one side is the bed, and the fourth is cut or fractured. Mr. Norcliffe considered it was not quarried in the immediate neighbourhood, his opinion on limestone being of great value.

The writer would be loth to think these great stones were erected on no system, but so far he regrets his failure to trace any, the west line to Ilam Tops being very tentative.

The angle of 30° west of north, which applies to lows and "circles," does not seem to be in evidence.

If, then, these stones bear no relation to each other, the question arises, why were these gigantic stones placed here at the cost of much evident labour? Dr. Cox has shown in *Memorials of Old Derbyshire* that most, if not all, the ancient crosses marked ecclesiastical or parish boundaries, or probably parochial chapelries, when Christianity was an established fact.

These stones are not the remains of crosses, nor do they mark such boundaries. They might, however, have marked the boundaries of proprietary rights, or the motive of their erection may have been to commemorate some great event or individual, or to mark that individual's burial-place.