

Notice of a Stone Cross

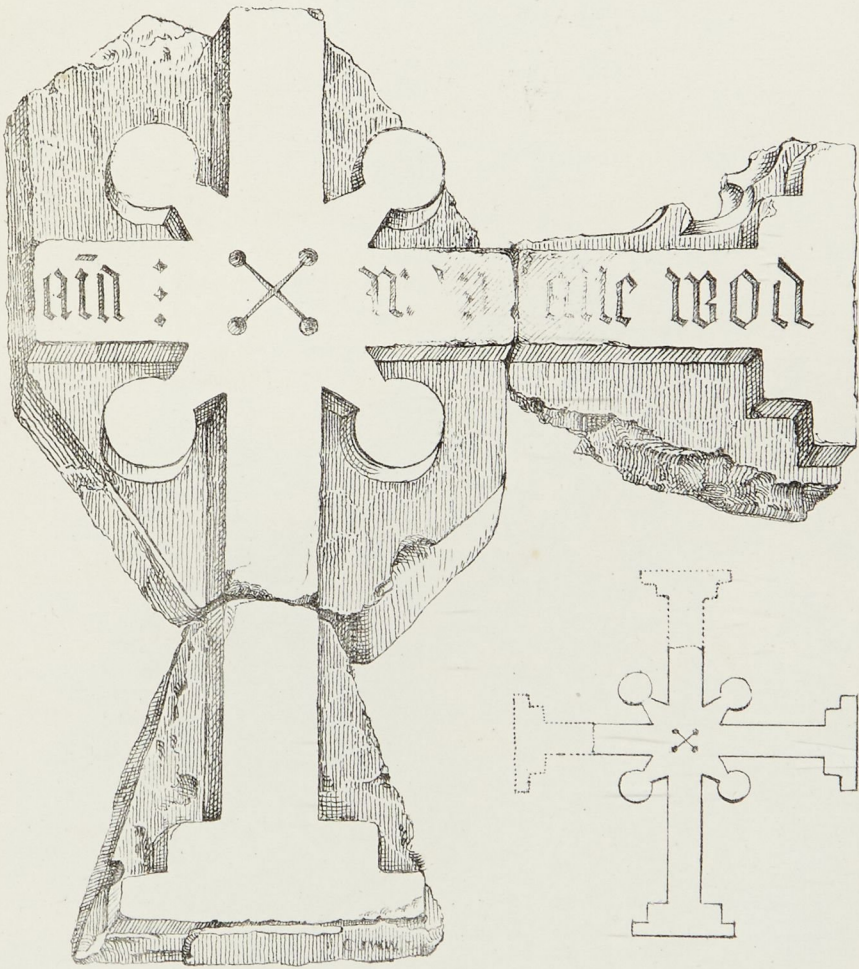
FOUND ON TAKING DOWN THE CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL
AT SIDESTRAND, NORFOLK, 1881.

COMMUNICATED BY

JOHN GUNN, ESQ., M.A., F.G.S.

THE church of St. Michael in Sidestrand stood on the edge of a lofty cliff, which was yearly encroached upon by the sea. Its condition was ruinous, and it was determined to take it down, and to build another with the materials, on the model of the old church, in a more retired and safer spot.

On taking it down, the very remarkable, and perhaps unique, stone cross, here figured, was discovered, in a fragmentary condition. Mr. Cornish, the contractor, informs me in a letter that three several pieces of it were found "in the filling in above the wall-plate on the south wall of the nave; the fragments were not all together, but all were on the same wall." It appears to have been originally cruciform, with steps at the termination of each of the four limbs. Only two of the steps are preserved, but there can be no doubt that when perfect there were four. The limbs were $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches long measured from the middle of the small cross incised in the centre, except the



STONE CROSS AT SIDESTRAND.

Writing him to say that I
am referring to you for
guidance.

Yours Respectfully
Teo Beckett

L. C. Polingbrook &
Warwick

P.S. I hope you rec^d
the copy of my booklet

ENGADINE.
OVERSTRAND.

Nov 9. 99

Dear Sir

You will remember giving me permission to have a block produced of the Ancient Stone Cross at Siderstrand.

The Editor of the Antiquary was staying in Overstrand this summer & said he would review my booklets & specially note the Cross - for this purpose I lent him the block & the review in Nov Antiquary has the illustration & acknowledgment.

I beg to enclose his letter which kindly return - uniformly -

Mr Apperson sends me the letter in confidence or I would have sent it to you - but the purport of the writer (who hail from Derby) is to doubt the illustration being like the Cross in Siderstrand Church & queries if this illustration does not belong to a cross somewhere else - as there are (according to his statement) two of ~~his~~ its kind in England.

I have concluded that your drawing was taken when the Cross was first found.

However I shall esteem it a great favour if you will kindly instruct me how to answer Mr Apperson's letter. I am

lower, which is one inch longer, and might have been prolonged considerably more. They were $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and at the angles of intersection there was a cross saltire terminating at each of its ends with a flattened cross pommée or pomel, so called, according to Guillim, from its derivation from *pomme*, an apple in French.

The flattening of the circular terminations of the larger cross saltire seems to indicate that its original position was upon the floor, just as that of an ornamental cross on the east of the font at Barningham Winter Church, which has been sacrificed to the spirit of restoration. The termination of the four limbs with steps seems more admissible, if it were laid upon the floor, so as to be approached on every side, than it would be if raised in the air as a gable-cross, or affixed to a wall laterally. Besides, the wearing away of part of the stone, of "fine Barnac," which is very durable, and of part of the inscription, may be regarded as a proof that it had been trodden upon when laid upon the floor.

The inscription has been so much obliterated as to be difficult to decipher. It appears to have been **Orate**
 p̄ aīa **Willi atte wod.** I am indebted to the Rev. C. R. Manning, our Honorary Secretary, for pointing out the name of Attewood in Blomefield's *Norfolk*, vol. viii., p. 170, as a patron of the living; and to Dr. Bensly for pointing out to me the more ancient way of spelling the name "atte wode" in accordance with the inscription in the Institution Books in the Registry of the Bishop. It appears from them that in 1439 William atte-wode, or at the wode, being patron of the living, presented John Winter. The initial letter of the Christian name marks him as the person recorded on the monumental cross for whose soul prayers are requested; and the next presentations, in 1462 by the King, and in 1477 by John Attewode, Gen., prove that he had died then, and indicate the date of

the cross itself. I have not been able to find any cross of a similar pattern: the "Crux gradatus" appears to me to approach nearest to it, but that has a repetition of steps upon the same limb, from which it derives its name; and therefore I have come to the conclusion that it is of so interesting and uncommon a character that the name of the "Sidestrand Cross" will survive the demolition of the old church, and am glad to know that it retains a place in the new church.

A fine figure of an angel bearing a cup was discovered in the ruins of the former edifice. It appears to have been placed upon a bracket, and to have been exposed to the weather. Mr. Cornish, who is a careful observer, says that he found it attached to the mullions of the east window; but, in comparison with the size of the window, it appears to be too large for that position. It might have been placed in a niche in the former tower, which is figured by Ladbrooke. The present tower, retained for mortuary purposes, is of very recent construction. On the whole, although we must record with regret the removal of one of the old churches of the land, still we must admit that there was a good cause for it, that the sea threatened to destroy it altogether, and that the new church has been built judiciously on the same pattern as the former.

I am allowed to append a few lines to Mr. Gunn's description of this cross, and I venture to differ from his view in some respects. The cross was evidently intended to be set in some surrounding work, such as squared flints; and it seems to me more probable that it was part of some external wall-decoration, rather than a gravestone. These last, when laid down on church floors, were always whole slabs, with either brasses or incised subjects upon them. I do not remember any instance of a cross such as this, of

solid bars of stone, forming part of a pavement, imbedded in tiles; while it is of course very common in the Eastern Counties to see flint panel-work on the outside walls of porches, aisles, chapels, or towers, often with inscriptions commemorating donors and benefactors, and with various designs of sacred art and symbolism. The form of this cross, with graduated ends, not uncommon in the Greek Church, is very unusual in this country. Possibly it may have been employed here as part of a larger composition, so that the arms abutted against the sides of a square or circle. The upper limb may not have had any steps at all, but may have terminated in some altogether different fashion.

C. R. M.