

WOODEN CROSS FOUND BURIED UNDER A MOUND
AT HIGHAM-ON-THE-HILL, LEICESTERSHIRE.

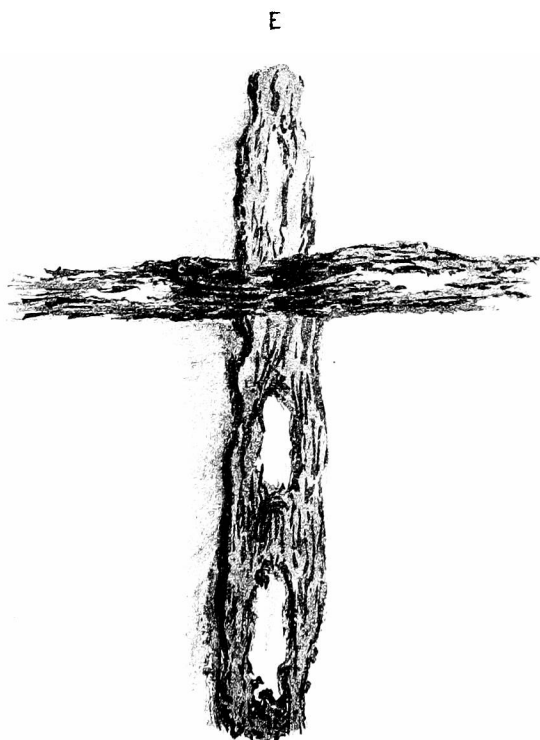
ON the 4th day of July, 1899, at the invitation of the Rev. H. Fisher, the Rector (a Member of this Society), a few other Members met him at Higham, to inspect an excavation made into an ancient mound, existing in a field in that parish, about a quarter-of-a-mile South of the Church. The Tenant of the field was intending to remove the mound to fill up a pit in another part of his farm, when he was requested by the Rector to be careful in making the excavation, and observe especially what might be found in it. He desired him to shew him any antiquarian relic that might be discovered. The Tenant soon after informed him that, in making the excavation, they had come upon a large piece of wood, much decayed, buried in the centre of the mound, which proved to be in the form of a cross, the remains being about 18 feet long, and the piece lying across the stem, about one-third from the head, being about 16 feet. The Cross was pierced with oblong openings, one in the head, and one in each arm, and two in the lower limb. The cross piece had not apparently been in any way fastened or morticed to the stem, but simply lay across it. The thickness of the wood seemed to have been originally about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, but may have been more. The Cross was lying due East and West, the head to the East.

A careful search was made for any trace of metal in connection with the Cross, but none was discovered. The wood of the Cross was pronounced to be Oak.

The relic was eventually carefully taken up, and removed to a barn belonging to the farm.

I mentioned the discovery of the Cross to the Curator of the Museum, at Leicester, to which Institution it was offered, but owing to its size it was found it would take up too much room if placed on the ground, neither is there wall space enough for it to stand upright. It is therefore very doubtful if it can be accommodated in that building.

It was the opinion of some of the party who were present at the excavation, that the oblong openings in the Cross had been cusped at the ends, but the decayed state of the wood made it impossible to be sure of this. One of the openings seemed to have been rounded at each end.



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*Wood cross discovered at Higham on the Hill - Co Leicester
18 ft high the cross bar 16 ft - J. O. Bellairs. del.*

I made rough drawings of the mound and the Cross as it lay in the ground, and these have furnished the accompanying illustrations. The mound was measured as 8 feet high in the centre from the level of the field, and about 60 feet in diameter. It was not surrounded by a ditch, and in the opinion of the Tenant of the farm (and others) was not composed of the same soil as the rest of the field, but seemed to have been brought from elsewhere. The mound was situated close to the road from Higham to the Watling Street.

GEORGE C. BELLAIRS.

P.S.—It has been suggested that this may be one of the portable crosses used by the Early Christian Missionaries, and buried to save desecration.
