

Refs. *The Western Daily Mercury Newspaper* 15th. April 1883  
*The Western Antiquary* May 1883 p.22  
Langdon A.G. *Old Cornish Crosses* 1896 p.391-394  
Langdon A.G. *Stone Crosses in North Cornwall* 1992 No.95 p.61

The project is being organised by

**The North Cornwall Heritage Coast & Countryside Service**

in conjunction with

**St.Teath Parochial Church Council**

**Andrew Langdon (Dyffresyas Crowsow)**

**English Heritage**

**Cornwall Archaeological Unit**

**Camelford & District Old Cornwall Society**

and

**Wadebridge Old Cornwall Society**

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## St.Teath Cross Restoration Project

**Introduction** - This tall medieval churchyard cross stands in the entrance to the cemetery at St.Teath and was smashed into pieces early in the 19th. century and later restored in 1883. This repair has lasted over a century, but in recent years concern has been voiced about the condition of the cross head. It has become apparent that the original repair, which consisted of cement mortar and red brick has suffered at the hands of the weather. Frost, wind and rain had all taken their toll, causing large fragments of mortar to fall off, and leaving large gaps in the cross head making it even more vulnerable to the weather.

**Restoration** -Initially a package of works was put together involving North Cornwall Heritage Coast and Countryside Service and St.Teath Parochial Church Council. However, although the cross is listed rather than scheduled, English Heritage were keen to become involved and ultimately to fund the physical work.

The specialised nature of the repairs has meant the need to involve experienced conservators in the form of Sue and Lawrence Kelland. Their main role will be to rebuild the missing section of the head using lime based mortars and special phosphor bronze dowels. This work will be overseen by Ann Preston Jones, English Heritage's Field Monument Warden.

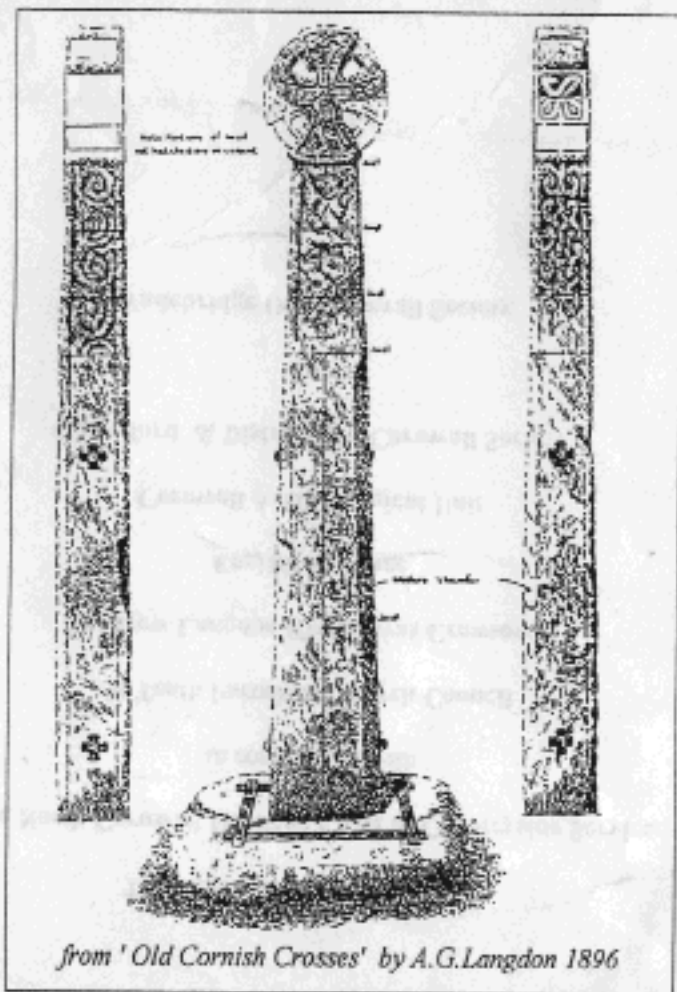
The project is required to stabilise the existing cross head and prevent any further deterioration, frost damage etc., and re-build the missing fragments. The restoration work will be the minimum deemed necessary to protect the monument well into the 21st. century.

**General History** - At the beginning of the 19th. century this tall ancient monolith served as a footbridge across the outlet of a pond in the neighbourhood. Its large proportions and decoration suggest it was the original churchyard cross, rather than a simple wayside cross. Further support for this assumption is the



reference by Arthur Langdon in 1896 to an empty cross base in the churchyard, which today is missing.

The cross appears to have been thrown down or neglected, possibly during the stormy years of the reformation, when many monuments of the old faith were damaged and destroyed, later to be re-used as a simple footbridge. The Polrode Mill Cross at St. Kew churchyard was also used as part of a footbridge during the latter part of the 19th. century, a fate that many of the large Cornish crosses



succumbed to. It was in 1835 that the stone was rescued by the Rev. Joseph Fayerer (incumbent 1821-1838) from this incongruous position and returned to the churchyard, his intention being to re-erect the monument on its original base stone. This project appears to have been dogged by problems. Langdon recorded

that the cross shaft had lost its tenon and that the base stone was in a damaged condition, which prevented the Rev. Fayerer from ever completing the task.

It was in 1841 during the incumbency of the Rev. Thomas Amory (1838-1875) that the cross received its severe mutilation. At this time the head was broken off the shaft and smashed, the larger fragment being used as a pivot for the churchyard gate. The long shaft was broken in half, and the upper section cut into 3 one foot cubes which were used in the churchyard wall, while the remainder of the shaft was split with wedges lengthways and used as coping for the churchyard wall. The destruction didn't end here, the length of shaft used as coping was then smoothed erasing all its decoration and finally chamfered down one edge. This is by far the worst example of wanton vandalism ever recorded to a Cornish stone cross.

The fragments of cross remained in the wall for the next forty years until the Rev. Thomas Worthington (temporary Priest in Charge) came to its rescue in 1883. Through his efforts the fragments were identified and removed from the wall. The lower section of shaft was drilled and bolted back together, and the cubes from the upper section cemented to it. Unfortunately small fragments of the head were never found, resulting in the stone mason restoring the head with the aid of small pieces of red brick, which were then covered by cement. In all, the monument was restored to the best of anyone's ability and is a credit to the stonemason. It has seen a century of weathering without the need of any further maintenance.

**Height** -The cross measures 13ft. in height and is the third tallest cross in the county. Mylor boasts the tallest cross if we count the shaft buried below ground level and is 17ft.6ins, while Quethiock measures 13ft.4ins. When the Rev. Worthington's restoration project was reported in the Western Daily Mercury newspaper in 1883 it was recorded as being 15ft in height, although this appears to have been a mistake, its original height must have been close to this as being without its original tenon, a portion of the shaft must have been buried within its new base. The base stone was originally the top stone of an old Epping Stock, (a flight of steps used by riders to mount a horse).

We have no knowledge of why this monument was re-erected in the cemetery and not in the churchyard. Traditionally the churchyard cross would have been set up on the southern side of the yard. Perhaps interments had taken place on the south side, leaving no suitable site. Further enquires to parishioners in the village suggest that the site of the pond may have been near the property known as Forge Cottage, opposite the southern entrance to the churchyard.