

## Two Bristol Crosses: Bewell's Cross, St Michael on the Mount Without Parish, and Bewys Cross, Kingsweston

By RICHARD COATES

The fact that these two monuments of the Bristol area have sometimes been associated with each other, if only in name, gives the opportunity to discuss both, in rather different ways and for different purposes. The note below on Bewell's Cross reviews its history and suggests a possible, though doubtful, relation between its name and a local surname of the 13th century, whilst that on Bewys Cross makes a suggestion about the original purpose of the monument and about the date of its transfer to its present location. There is no evidence of any original connection between their names, and in particular the occasionally-met local idea that they are related through *Bewell's* being a form of *Bewy* with the dialectal 'Bristol L', is completely false.

### **Bewell's Cross and Beowulf in Bristol: musing on a possible loose connection**

Bewell's Cross is a lost ancient monument of which no image is known to survive. It marked (at least approximately) the northern boundary of the town of Bristol, and later that of its county when this was created in 1373. The Cross was near a place of execution in a typical prominent boundary location, standing close to the site of the gallows<sup>1</sup> at the top of St Michael's Hill, on the eastern side of the junction between the former main road from Bristol to Wales via the Severn ferry at Aust, now called Cotham Hill, and the present Hampton Road. It was mentioned by William Worcestre in 1480:<sup>2</sup>

*'... ad petram de Frestone prope locum justitie vocate anglice lez Fourches siue Galowes ...'*

*'... at the stone of Freestone by the place of execution called in English lez Fourches [i.e. 'gallows' in Law French] or Gallows ...'*

Anything recognizable that was left of it had been destroyed by the 19th century. John Pritchard reasonably suggested that, in common with many other crosses nationwide, it had been removed by order of the Commons in or after 1643.<sup>3</sup> That said, 'the Cross' is referred to in a boundary survey of 1736, renewing one of 1653.<sup>4</sup> The wording of clause 23 in the 1736 survey (Fig. 1), '... a stone on the High Bank, over-against the Cross ...', clearly suggests its continuing presence. But it is just possible that this place-designation had become traditional; that the site, or the road junction, rather than the Cross itself is referred to; and therefore that the words are not necessarily evidence against its removal in the 17th century.

1. Still marked on Rocque's map of Bristol (1742–50) and not used for executions after 1805.
2. F. Neale (ed.), *William Worcestre: The Topography of Medieval Bristol* (Bristol Rec. Soc. 51, 2000), 187.
3. J.E. Pritchard, 'Bristol archaeological notes for 1905: VI', *Trans. BGAS* 29 (1906), 275–7.
4. Published in *Bristol: The City Charters*, sold by Felix Farley and others (Bristol, 1736: available online through Google Books).

Stone	Per. qr.
16. From thence, along by the Side-Wall, E. N. E. to a Stone fixed on the N. Corner of <i>Cantock's</i> , a long Slange of Ground, call'd <i>Spencer's Acre</i> —	} 15
17. From thence, E. N. E. to a Leading Stone in the said Ground, near to the N. Corner of a Ground belonging to the <i>Maudlin's</i> or <i>Bartholomew's</i> of <i>Bristol</i> —	} 19
18. From thence, E. N. E. by the said Hedge, is a Stone fixed in the E. Corner of the same Ground, near the Highway, which leadeth from <i>Bristol</i> to <i>Henbury</i> —	} 8
19. From thence, into the Highway, N. W. and by N. to a Stone on the N. W. Side of the Way—	} 20
20. From thence, N. W. and by N. to a Stone in the S. E. Corner of <i>Bewell's-Croft</i> —	} 15
21. From thence, N. W. and by N. along by the Hedge of the same Croft, to a Stone pitched near the Green-Way-Grate, on the N. E. Side of <i>Bewell's-Well</i> —	} 17
22. From thence, along the Highway, N. E. to a Stone on the other Side of the Way—	} 3
23. From thence, back again, to a Stone on the High Bank, over-against the Crofs—	} 24
24. From thence, S. E. and by S. along the N. E. Side of the Lane, to a Stone at the Head of <i>Brampton's-Clofe</i> —	} 45

Fig. 1. The section of the 1736 survey covering the area of Bewell's Cross, from *Bristol: The City Charters* (1736).

The geography of the locations at the end of Hampton Road is made reasonably (but not absolutely) clear by the survey of 1736. In this, there is a reference to 'a Stone pitched near the Green-Way-Grate [sic for *Gate*], on the N. E. Side of *Bewell's-Well*' – stone 21, which, with the well or spring whose name relates to that of the Cross, must be at the northern end of the plot, still unbuilt on today, between Hillside and Hampton Road, at point 21 on Ashmead's map (Fig. 2). The number derives from that of the stone in the survey. In terms of modern mapping, the Cross was at approximately OS Nat. Grid ST 5818 7393, and the spring at approximately ST 5813 7399.

In 1829, a stone was found in the 'Gallows Field',<sup>5</sup> which was supposedly from its plinth. It was shifted a few yards to the south-east and built into the wall which later enclosed the adjacent Cotham parish church (which at the time was Highbury Congregational chapel). But it is open to

5. Not identified: possibly no. 283 on the Westbury-on-Trym tithe map of 1841 (Bristol Record Office [BRO], EP/A/32/41), or more likely the adjacent triangular plot in St Michael's parish, which was the actual site of the gallows.

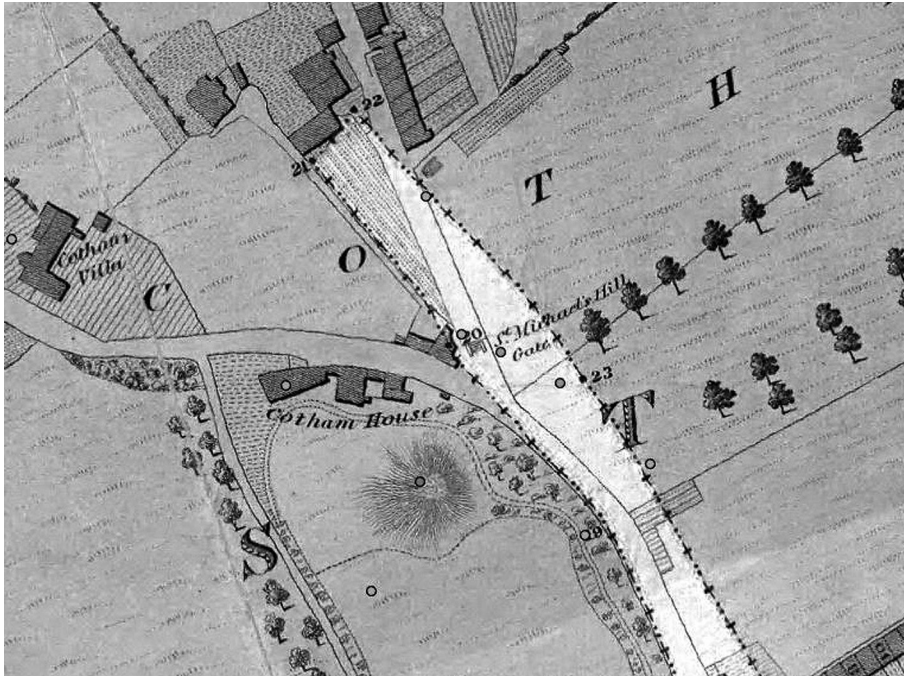


Fig. 2. The position of Bewell, Bewell's Cross and Bewell's Croft. Screenshot of Ashmead's map (1828) from the website 'Bristol: Know Your Place', showing the (pale grey) finger of St Michael's parish protruding into Westbury. Bewell, the spring, was at point 21, the extremity, and the site of Bewell's Cross was at or close to the dot under 'S' beginning 'St Michael's Hill Gate'. Bewell's Croft must have been the triangular (apparently ploughed) piece of land between the two. On its right is what is now Hampton Road. Triangling from the left is Cotham Hill. The gallows were at or close to point 23, and Cotham church at the dot below the adjacent large 'T'. (All scanned images of maps are the property of Bristol City Council. They are reproduced here under the Council policy of permitting their non-commercial use, as set out on the Council's website).

doubt whether the stone really belonged to the Cross, according to John Latimer.<sup>6</sup> This modest remnant (or imposter) is still there, marked by a plaque (Fig. 3).

On the face of it, the name of the Cross derives from that of the nearby spring or well (Old English *wella* and variants), which was probably Old English *bēo-wella* 'bee spring'. Roger Leech, the author of a historical appendix to a University of Bristol masterplan, refers to 'the spring of

6. J. Latimer, *Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century* (Bristol, 1887), 134. Latimer says that on Roque's original map (1741) the Cross is 100 yards to the north-west of the supposed find-spot. But, to my knowledge, it does not appear on any edition of Roque's map, as noted already by Pritchard (see n. 3). Uncharacteristically, Latimer has confused it with the field or enclosure called *Bewell's Croft*, or perhaps assumed that the well and the Cross were at exactly the same place. The stone may therefore be genuine. Bewell's Croft is first mentioned in the boundary survey of 1736 referred to above: '... to a stone in the S. E. corner of Bewell's-Croft'; the stone is presumably not the one under discussion, but one still marked on later maps by the former tollgate at the top of Cotham Hill (see Fig. 2 and n. 12). Note that the possibly relevant fields 203, 283 and 284 are not named in the Westbury-on-Trym tithe award: BRO, EP/A/32/41.

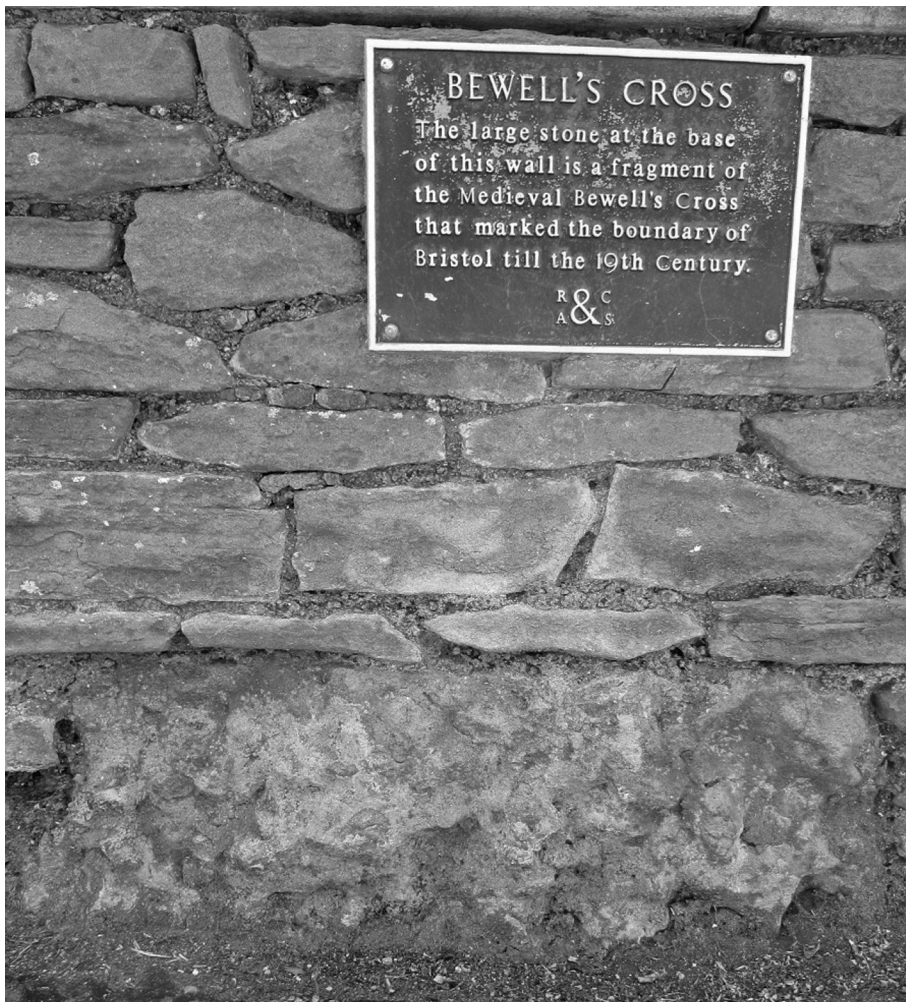


Fig. 3. The stone and plaque commemorating Bewell's Cross at Cotham parish church (photo: author).

Bewelle (or Bewell), close to the beginning of what is now Hampton Road.<sup>7</sup> No spring is marked on maps known to the author, not on Roque's (1742) and not even on Ashmead's (1828) or the Westbury-on-Trym tithe map (1841). Such a spring clearly existed, though, as the 1736 bounds reveal, and the 19th-century local historian John Evans refers to it as (or as served by) 'the pump in Cotham'.<sup>8</sup> Compare also the nearby *Springfield House*, formerly at 3 Cotham Road,<sup>9</sup> though this house-name was, and remains, common and did not necessarily commemorate a spring. As

7. University of Bristol Masterplan (2004), BaRAS report no. 1352/2004, available online at [www.bris.ac.uk/estates/documents/masterplan/masterplan-appendix14-section3.pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/estates/documents/masterplan/masterplan-appendix14-section3.pdf), paragraph 4.01.

8. J. Evans, *A Chronological Outline of the City of Bristol* (Bristol, 1824), 92.

9. This house has now been demolished and replaced, and the name transferred to new accommodation behind its former site.

we have seen, the spring was actually a short distance (a little over 100 m) from the site of the Cross and gallows. It stood at the northern end of, and probably accounted for the existence of, the northern finger of the Bristol parish of St Michael, which protrudes into Westbury and which is represented approximately by what is now the southern end of Hampton Road (Fig. 2). It must have been appropriated to St Michael's to assure the urban parish's water supply.

The earliest record of the name of the spring in either of the spellings mentioned by Leech is in a charter of John, earl of Mortain, the future king John, of 1188,<sup>10</sup> which defines the limits of the town of Bristol as follows:

*'... usque ad metam ville, scilicet inter Sandbrooke et Bewell' et Brickenbrigge et fontem in itinere juxta Aldberiam de Knolle ...'*

*'... as far as the boundary of the town, that is, between Sandbrook and Bewell and Brightbow Bridge and the spring/well on the road near Aldbury at Knowle ...'*

Bewell is clearly one of a list of water features which mark the boundary. But the reference to the cross and spring in the bounds in the letter patent of Edward III creating the county of Bristol (1373: clause 38 in Harding's edition) is ambiguous on one point. The bounds proceed:

*'... usque ad quandam crucem vocatam Bewellescross; et ab inde adhuc versus boream usque ad lapidem fixum prope fontem de Bewelle ...'*<sup>11</sup>

*'... as far as a certain cross called Bewell's Cross; and from there still/also northwards<sup>12</sup> as far as the fixed stone near the spring/well of Bewell ...'*

It will be seen that the wording of the 1373 reference to the spring or well (*fontem*) does not necessarily require *Bewell* to be its name; the expression used could be understood as if the spring or well of [a person called] *Bewell*. *Bewell* is occasionally found in the historical record as a variant of the surname *Beville*, originating in a Norman place-name.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the letter patent (clause 28) includes such expressions as *'eiusdem prati de Katerynmede'* ('of the same meadow of Catherine Mead'), indicating that *de* could be used to signal a following actual place-name. But the appearance of the spring-name in the earlier record makes caution redundant. The name *Bewell* is clearly a genuine local one for a spring, and the name of the Cross, with its genitive construction, is 'the cross at or associated with Bewell', showing the same structure as *Pylhillesbrugge* 'the bridge at or associated with *Pylhill*' in the same document (clause 20).<sup>14</sup> Genuine lack of awareness of the origin and import

10. N.D. Harding (ed.), *Bristol Charters, 1155–1373* (Bristol Rec. Soc. 1, 1930), 8–9. Other medieval documents confirm the name in the form *Bewelle*; see *ibid.* 26, n. 4.

11. *Ibid.* 156–7.

12. The house called *Springfield* referred to above was in fact east of the site of the cross, and in Westbury parish. There is no way to resolve this directional discrepancy except by presuming that fields 203 or 282/3 on the Westbury tithe map, north of the site of the house, were once called *Spring Field* (for which there is no evidence), and that the house takes its name from there; or by presuming, as suggested in the main text, that the house-name had nothing to do with the spring.

13. Recorded for the last 400 years, *Bewell* has typically been a surname of the East Riding of Yorkshire: 'Family Names of the United Kingdom' project, University of the West of England, Bristol; data by courtesy of the International Genealogical Index of Family Search International and the 1881 census.

14. As observed in the preamble to this article, we should take the opportunity to scotch the local myth that *Bewell* is the same as the name of *Bewys Cross* (see below) but displaying the addition of the dialectal 'Bristol L'. *Bewell* has always had its <l>, whilst the earliest known mention of *Bewys Cross*, on Benjamin Donn's 'Eleven-Mile' map (1769: see n. 20), shows *Bevis's Cross*. The 'Bristol L' seems to date, at the earliest, from the later 19th century: R. Coates, 'How old is the Bristol "L"?' *Regional Historian* 20 (Autumn 2009), 39–41.

of *Bewell* seems to be shown by the use of the same construction in the reference to *Bewell's-Well* in the 1736 boundary survey, which could clearly be understood as if containing a surname.

A local 19th-century poet<sup>15</sup> built on this onomastic ambiguity by sanctifying the monument in a verse homily called 'Saint Bewell's Cross', which is a flight of fancy. But its name could truly have become attached to a person. Formally, it could be related to an unusual surname which is found in Bristol records. There was a *prepositus* (reeve) called Elias or Elys recorded twice in the 13th century, presumably c.1260–80, with the surname *Beowulf*.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, it seems possible that his surname is a punning alteration of a local one derived from the spring-name, unless the similarity of these names is a pure coincidence. On the other hand, if that is wrong, it is possible that this *Beowulf* could be a continuation of the Anglo-Saxon heroic name *Bēowulf*. We know that it survived the Norman Conquest, because a man named *Beulf* was a tenant of Waleran in 1086 in Church Knowle (Dorset),<sup>17</sup> and, in various spellings, it is known to exist as a surname also in Devon, Sussex and the earldom of Cornwall.<sup>18</sup> It therefore originated either as a patronymic (a name linking the bearer to his/her father's name), or as a nickname if popular knowledge of the hero persisted into the later Middle Ages.

The Bristol records testify either to continued use of the given name and hence the surname in the Bristol area, or to an antiquarian knowledge of the hero or the Anglo-Saxon story in the 13th century sufficient to cause someone to reshape a local surname of locative origin derived from the spring. On balance, it seems most likely that there is no connection between the surname and the spring-name, but the near-coincidence is provoking and both names are interesting in their own right.

### Bewys Cross, Kingsweston

The monument presently known as *Bewys Cross* or *Bewy's Cross* (OS Nat. Grid ST 543 775) is a Grade II-listed limestone ashlar artefact, which is about 10 feet high overall. It consists of the truncated octagonal shaft said to be of an ancient cross of uncertain age, though no cross-head survives or has ever been recorded, and it stands on a four-stepped plinth. The structure dates perhaps from the early 15th century, though the steps may be more recent.<sup>19</sup> It used to stand on or close beside the ancient seabank of the Severn in the area of historic Shirehampton now known as Avonmouth. It is marked as *Bevis's Cross* on Donn's map of 1769, and more non-committally as *Bevis Stone* on Isaac Taylor's Kingsweston estate map of 1772.<sup>20</sup> Its position was a little to the south-east of where the Avon used to flow into the Severn, about halfway between the sites of the later Avonmouth and Marine Hotels, which have both since been demolished. It is not marked on the tithe map of Shirehampton (1841), but it stood on or extremely close to the seabank next to the north end of field 314 (Fig. 4), which is field 253 on Isaac Taylor's map (forming part of

15. J. James, *Poems* (Bristol, 1841), 27–9.

16. BRO, P.St MR/5163/19 (deed of 1216 × 1272 naming Elias Beowulf as a churchwarden of St Mary Redcliffe); P.St MR/5163/21 (deed of 1272 × 1307 describing Elys Beowulf as '*prepositus* of la Redecliuē'). Both deeds are calendared in the BRO online catalogue. For the etymology of the name *Bēowulf* as 'bee-wolf', possibly as a kenning for the bear, see the discussion by Fr. Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg* (Lexington MA, 3rd edn., 1950), xxv–xxviii.

17. *Victoria County History of Dorset*, III, 96.

18. P.H. Reaney (ed.), *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (London, 3rd edn, 1991), xl.

19. C. Pooley, *Notes on the Old Crosses of Gloucestershire* (London, 1868), 59–60; J.M. Hunt, 'Notes on the old stone crosses of the county of Avon', *Avon Past* 15 (1990), 24–6.

20. B. Donn, 'A Map of the Country Eleven Miles Round the City of Bristol' (1769): BRO, BristolPlans/arranged/232c; I. Taylor, 'Plan of the King's Weston estate' (1772): BRO, 26570.



Fig. 4. Section of the 1841 Westbury-on-Trym tithe map (screenshot from ‘Know Your Place’ website), with the former location of Bewys Cross indicated by a cross.

‘Avon house Grounds’) and field 46 on the 1903 revision of the Gloucestershire Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map. Its former position is now in the middle of the eastern arm of the Royal Edward Dock, Avonmouth (OS Nat. Grid ST 512 789). The positions of the hotels and that of the old mouth of the Avon, and by implication that of the Cross, can be seen and compared conveniently on the maps on Bristol City Council’s ‘Know Your Place’ website.<sup>21</sup>

Before the late 19th century, the navigable river Avon flowed into the Severn some 3–400 m north-east of its present mouth. Sailors wishing to reach Bristol needed to round the northern promontory of Easton-in-Gordano parish (Som.). From the late 18th century onwards this promontory was progressively breached by river and tidal scour, and eventually cut off to form Dumball Island (Fig. 4). The old course of the Avon, overlooked by the position of the Cross, silted up suddenly, accumulating 34 feet of mud between 1867 and 1871, thereby linking Dumball to the Gloucestershire mainland, and the new ‘Swashway’, south of the island, deepened to become the only navigable channel. The island has in its turn vanished; its location is under the older Avonmouth docks and quays dating from 1877.<sup>22</sup>

21. Bristol City Council, ‘Know Your Place’ website, [www.maps.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace](http://www.maps.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace). See also English Heritage Buildings List, ID 380010; ‘Parks & Gardens UK’ website, [www.parksandgardens.org](http://www.parksandgardens.org), ID 1953.

22. Sequence of large-scale Ordnance Survey maps (6” and 25”) viewed online at [www.old-maps.co.uk/index.html](http://www.old-maps.co.uk/index.html).

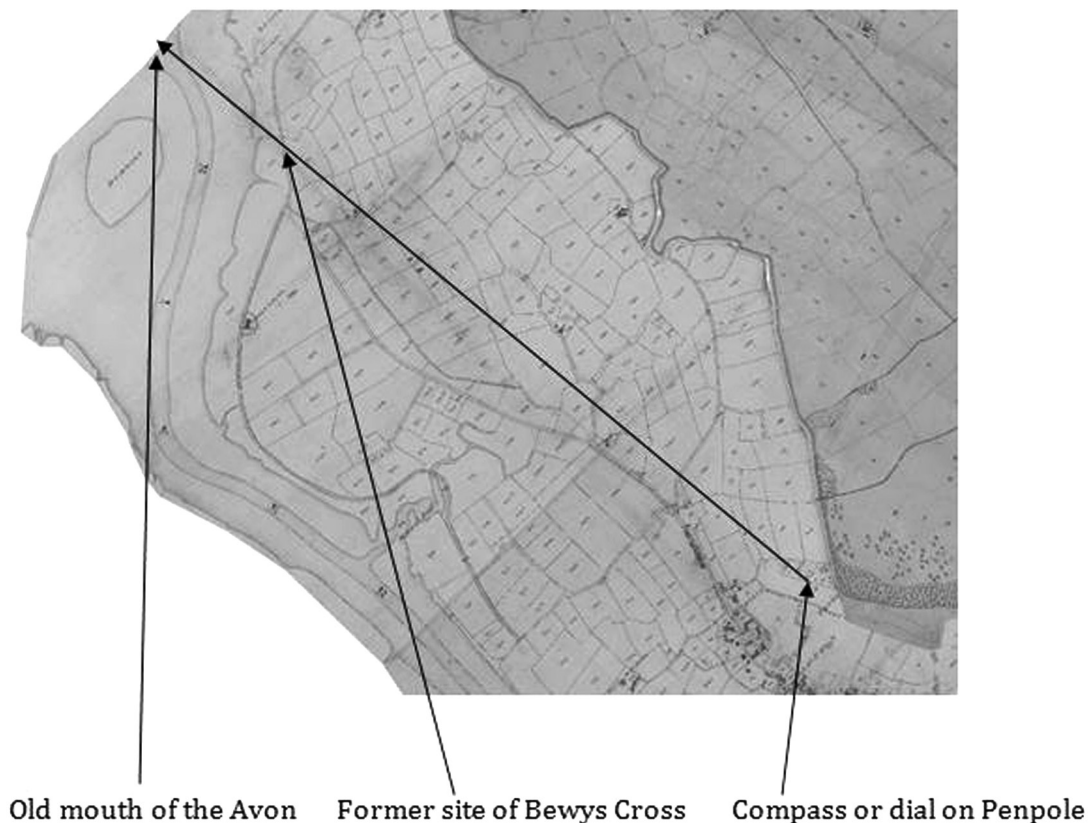


Fig. 5. The former location of Bewys Cross aligned with the Penpole sundial (screenshot from 'Know your Place' website).

It seems reasonable to suggest that the Cross was a navigation mark. It may have indicated, when aligned with some other feature, the course which a captain wishing to enter the old Avon had to steer to find the channel, whilst avoiding the shoals and mudbanks guarding the mouth of the river. It seems unlikely to be coincidence that the middle of the mouth of the Avon as it existed before the events of the 1860s and 1870s could be located quite precisely by aligning the Cross with the compass/sundial on Penpole Point (Fig. 5).<sup>23</sup> This artefact stands high on the ridge overlooking the coastal marshes, and it is only in fairly recent times that the sightline, along with the once-famous view,<sup>24</sup> has been obscured by unchecked scrub growth at the end of Penpole. The compass/dial is of unknown age, but was renewed with an octagonal shaft in 1668 largely at the Merchant Venturers' expense, 'the rest to be made good at his [own] chardge' by Sir Humphrey Hooke, the then owner of Kingsweston.<sup>25</sup> The involvement of the Merchant Venturers suggests

23. It is a pleasure to acknowledge that David Martyn, chairman of King's Weston Action Group, has independently arrived at exactly the same idea.

24. Remarkd upon in glowing terms by, amongst others, the German travelogue writers Gebhart Wendeborn, Johanna Schopenhauer and Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau between 1793 and 1828.

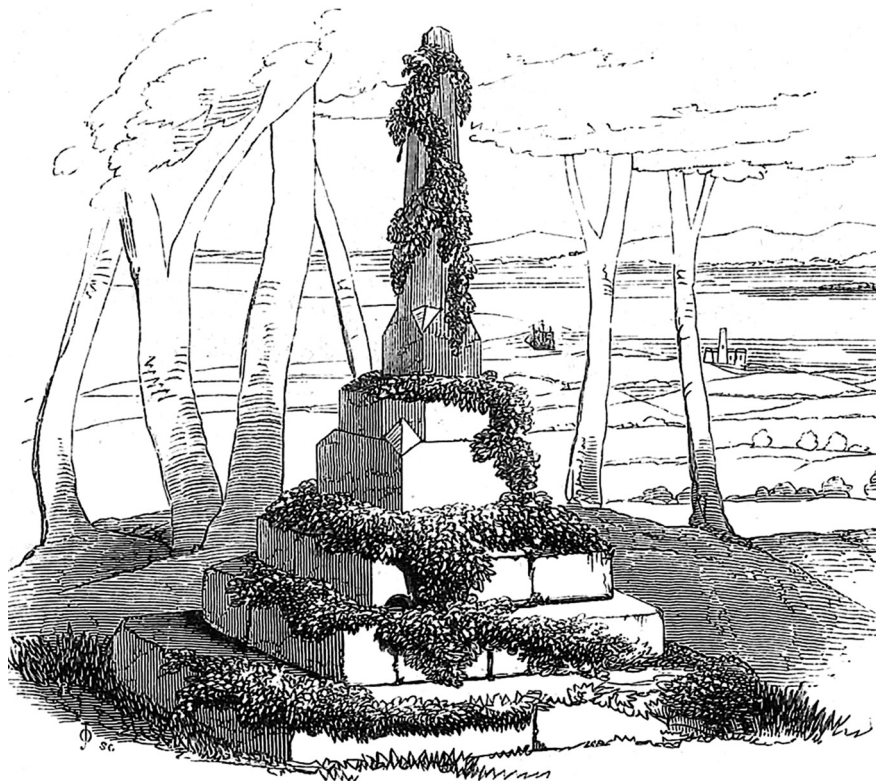
25. J. Latimer, *The History of the Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol* (Bristol, 1903), 172.



that it truly had some maritime function; and in fact the word *compasse* in the Merchants' book has been written in after *marke* was struck through.<sup>26</sup> The association of the Cross with seafarers seems to be supported by the local tradition that sailors showed their gratitude to God for their safe return by leaving donations for the church, and there is a hole in one of the steps which is said to have received their coins.<sup>27</sup> Nick Hanks,<sup>28</sup> picking up a suggestion by A.J. Parker,<sup>29</sup> proposes that a suitable context for its erection was the creation of the county of Bristol in 1373, whose extent included the whole of the River Avon downstream of the docks, and out into the Bristol Channel as far as Denny Island and the Holms. The Cross, on this hypothesis, would have marked the landward limit of Bristol's authority; however, the seabank itself, above the limit of the tides, did not form part of the new county. It seems to the author that the practical idea of a navigation marker or seamark is simpler, but Hanks's suggestion is not out of the question.

The Cross was moved from the seabank sometime after 1772 and re-erected on a hillock in Kingsweston Lane (OS Nat. Grid ST 542 776), Kingsweston tithing, Henbury, on the land of (and nearly opposite the entrance to) the mansion Kingsweston House. It has been suggested by Nick Hanks that the Cross and the Stone were not the same object, which means that the Stone (whose present whereabouts, if we follow Hanks, is unknown) must have replaced the Cross between 1769 and 1772.<sup>30</sup> It appears in its original position on John Cary's Gloucestershire map (1787, in 'a new set of county maps from actual surveys'),<sup>31</sup> but it is not known for certain when the Gloucestershire survey was done. But even if Cary's date cannot be trusted, Hanks's view seems unnecessarily pedantic. In its present state the Cross does not look like a cross, and it would be hardly surprising if it had also been called a stone. Moreover, there is no obvious reason for the Cross to have been shifted to Kingsweston at that time. It appears much more likely that this was done by the local 'squire' of Kingsweston, Philip William Skynner Miles, MP, at some time in the 1860s.<sup>32</sup> The most likely context is the construction in 1863–5 of the Bristol Port and Pier Railway (Bristol Port Railway and Pier Company), which terminated close to the Avonmouth (later the Continental) Hotel, just on the seaward side of the ancient seabank, and which passed about 40–45 m west of the site of the Cross (Fig. 4), detaching its site finally in 1865 from any maritime function it might once have had. It was about to become even more redundant as the old channel of the Avon rapidly silted up (1867–71), but it is unclear whether such a degree of silting could have been predicted in 1863–5. Miles may also have had other reasons to safeguard the now-redundant monument. He may have felt it was vulnerable in the long term to potential dock and commercial development on his Kingsweston estate land at Avonmouth, a scheme which

26. I am grateful to David Martyn for supplying me with an image of the original entry in the Merchants' book and for pointing out the change of wording, which appears to secure the suggestion offered in this article.
27. E. Thomas, *Down the 'Mouth. A History of Avonmouth* (privately published, 2nd edn., 1992), 15–16; E. Thomas, *Shirehampton Story* (privately published, 2nd edn., 1993) 23–5.
28. N. Hanks, 'Bewys Cross, the Bevis Stone and Sir Bevis of Hampton: an exploration of possible connections', *Bristol and Avon Archaeol.* 21 (2006), 87–9.
29. A.J. Parker, 'A maritime cultural landscape: the port of Bristol in the Middle Ages', *International Jnl. of Nautical Archaeol.* 28.4 (1999), 332.
30. Hanks, 'Bewys Cross'.
31. 'Gloucestershire', in J. Cary, *New and Correct English Atlas. Being a new set of county maps from actual surveys* (London, 1787).
32. Miles actively promoted the commercial development of his own very extensive land, starting with the Avonmouth Hotel, nucleus of an intended resort, in 1863, followed by the Bristol Port Railway and Pier to serve it; and finally the first Avonmouth docks complex, which opened in 1877: Thomas, *Down the 'Mouth*, 45–6; C. Wells, *A Short History of the Port of Bristol* (Bristol, 1909), *passim*.



KING'S WESTON.

Fig. 6. Bewy's Cross, as depicted in Pooley's *Notes on the Old Crosses of Gloucestershire* (1868).

he with others actively promoted from 1862–3 onwards;<sup>33</sup> and it may not be coincidental that 1865 was the year in which his only son and heir Philip was born (21 January), implying that its removal to Kingsweston may have had a sentimental dimension. The Cross in its new location in the View Garden was said in 1868 to be covered with ivy,<sup>34</sup> but Pooley's illustration seems to show it artistically arranged, almost draped (Fig. 6). In any case, three to five years is quite enough time for that amount of growth to flourish, and ivy is rampant even today in the Kingsweston woodland. It might even have been deliberately encouraged; ivy, symbolizing immortality, was often sculpted onto funerary monuments in much the manner of the engraving in Pooley's book, and the real thing may have been thought appropriate to an ancient monument believed to have religious significance.

The ivy was stripped off the Cross again by concerned individuals before it was moved to its present location. The son and heir, the last 'squire', Dr Philip Napier Miles, had died in 1935, and the Kingsweston estate was sold off in parcels. In 1954, the subsequent owners of the rump, Bristol Corporation, moved the Cross the short distance to the grounds of the nearby House in

33. Wells, *Port of Bristol*, chapter 9.

34. Pooley, *Crosses of Glos.*, 59–60.

the Garden, which had been built in 1938 for Sybil, the widow of Dr Miles. It still stands there by the pond. There was a flurry of correspondence in the late 1940s suggesting that it was Mrs Miles's wish or intention that the Cross should be returned to Avonmouth after her death, but this never happened.<sup>35</sup>

Possibly against the idea of a move in the 1860s is the absence of the Cross from the Sturges' 1817 map of Shirehampton tithing<sup>36</sup> and from their 1841 Shirehampton tithe map.<sup>37</sup> But since it had no direct connection with landownership or tenancy or land-value, its absence from these maps is understandable, even if surprising, and it does not necessarily indicate that it was no longer there in these years. It is not marked at its later location in Kingsweston on the 1840 Sturge and Marmont Henbury tithe map either,<sup>38</sup> so nothing can be read into its cartographic absence at both places in the early 19th century on maps by the same surveyor. There is also no compelling reason for it to have been removed when the battery was built at the actual mouth of the Avon, 200 yards further towards the Severn, at the time of the French wars in the late 18th century. It is not inconceivable that it was moved in the turmoil of this period, for its protection or to deprive the French of a potentially useful landmark. But for me, the circumstances of the 1860s provide a more persuasive account.

The origin of the name of the Cross is uncertain. It should not be confused with Bewell's Cross, the medieval boundary mark in Bristol (see above). There is a Bevis Cross in Wisbech (Cambs.), which might be considered, almost certainly deriving its name from one Alan de Beuveys ('of Beauvais'), recorded in 1279.<sup>39</sup> There may be an echo in the name of the Kingsweston cross of the popular medieval legendary hero Sir Bevis of Hampton.<sup>40</sup> There is tantalizing possible support for the basic idea, though it is by no means decisive: it may or may not be coincidence that the earlier site of Bewys Cross was in the tithing of Shirehampton, which was in early medieval times was called simply *Hampton*. The original Sir Bevis of Hampton is associated with the Southampton area, and the similarity of the place-names may have encouraged an act of commemorative naming. There is also a mention in 1551 of a 'parcel of pasture' lying in *Beweburste* at Compton in the nearby parish of Almondsbury, which is of uncertain relevance.<sup>41</sup>

It is a curious fact that the Berkeleys' manor of Kingsweston was, in medieval times, regularly let with the Cotswold manor of Beverstone, along with Over and parts of others not far from Kingsweston.<sup>42</sup> But there is no convincing way of linking the name of Beverstone philologically with that of the monument.

35. BRO, P.Avon/X/4/a (papers relating to Bewy's Cross, original file of 1937, with additional material to 1950); 21744/7 (MS lecture notes on Bewy's Cross by F.C. Jones, including a 1950 photo of it released from its ivy).
36. Northants. Record Office, Plans 615–16 (annotated photostat copies available at BRO, 16668 (1) a and b, and (3) a).
37. BRO, EP/A/32/34.
38. Ibid. EP/A/32/22.
39. P.H. Reaney, *The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely* (Cambridge, 1943), 294.
40. E. Kölbing (ed.), *The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun* (London, 1885–94). This connection was already suggested by Hanks, 'Bewys Cross', though his attempts to associate it with the group of four local sites of folkloric interest, all called *Snakewell* and all in northern Somerset, appear far-fetched to the present writer.
41. BRO, P.Hen/Ch/1/7.
42. Arthur Collins, in his *Peerage of England* (1768), 440, noted that '[Robert de Berkeley *alias* de Were] likewise had by inheritance of his father Robert (son of Harding) the manors of Beverstan (or Beverstone), Kings-Weston, &c.'. See also for instance the surviving quitclaim of 1300 in Gloucestershire Archives, D 1866/T 16.

An assessment of the current name of the Cross is, then, that it might enshrine the surname *Beavis* or one of its variants such as *Bevis*. This is either from Norman French *bel fiz* ‘fine son’, which might well later be understood as if it were *bel vis* ‘handsome face’; or from *(de) Beveis* ‘(from) Beauvais [in Normandy]’, as in the case of the Wisbech cross. Alternatively, it could recall the Middle English name of the legendary knight, *Bevis* or *Beves*, which is actually of a quite different origin, from the Medieval French given name of Frankish origin, *Beuves*. In its surname guise, *Be(a)vis* is strongly associated with southern England and its epicentre is Hampshire.<sup>43</sup> The modern name of the Cross, with <w> rather than <v>, might result from confusion of such a name with either the Bristol or the Compton place-name, but there can be no original connection with either.

43. P. Hanks *et al.*, *Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, forthcoming).