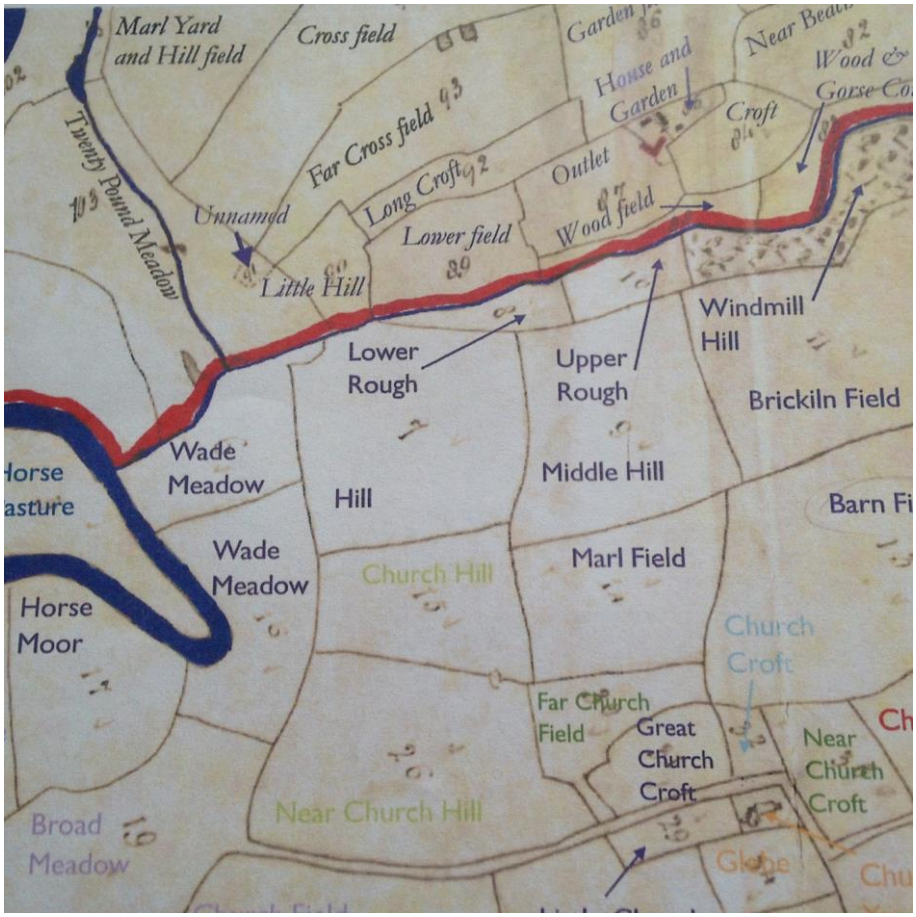
Shocklach Cross

Shocklach's medieval red sandstone cross has been repaired and restored, but does it now stand in its original position or has it been moved? Crosses were usually located in a prominent position, sometimes at crossroads or old trading routes and often on high ground.[1] They were sometimes used as preaching crosses by itinerant preachers.

Shocklach Cross was damaged by gunfire in the Civil War as Royalists were briefly imprisoned in Shocklach Church.[2] This suggests that the cross was located in the vicinity of the church. In 1899, George Haswell claimed the Shocklach Cross was of interest "*by the fact of its nondisturbance from its original position – the south side of a church, opposite to the chief entrance, being a common one*".[3]

However, local tradition suggests that the cross may have originally stood on an old pathway from a ford crossing the River Dee. This path, to the south of St Edith's church is no longer evident on the ground, but can be seen on a Lidar survey of 2007.[4]



[1] Burgess, R., *Cheshire Secrets from the Past*, Sigma Press, Wilmslow, 2000, p75-77.
[2] *Tilston, Shocklach & Threapwood, The History of three Parishes,* published by The Local History Group, Herald Printers (Whitchurch) Ltd, 2001, p29.
[3] Haswell, G. W., *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological, & Historic Society for the County & City of Chester & North Wales*, 1899, p164.
[4] Information contained in an email from Dr Lou Macchi to Professor Nancy Edwards in 2009.

Cross Field, mentioned in early documents, has also been mooted as the original position of the cross. However, Cross Field is situated in Caldecott, so several fields away from the church. The 1839 tithe map below shows Cross Field at the top and St Edith's Church, Shocklach in the bottom right-hand corner, below Church Croft.[5]

The article *St Edith's Church, Shocklach, Fact, fiction and unsolved mysteries* states that before the Norman Conquest the manor of Caldecote, part of Shocklach parish, was owned by a priest named Wulfgar.[6] The fact that there has never been a church at Caldecote has led to suggestions that Shocklach church was founded in the Saxon period and that Wulfgar was its priest. This seems feasible since Shocklach church is dedicated to St Edith, the granddaughter of Alfred the Great, who died in 984 AD. A dedication to an Anglo-Saxon saint would be unusual after the Norman Conquest and confirms suspicions that Wulfgar the priest had a church here in 1066. Perhaps St Edith's Church was deliberately built half way between Caldecott and Shocklach village since it was to serve both areas? Shocklach cross may have been moved to the site of St Edith's when the church was consecrated, or at some later date prior to the Civil War.

There is of course the possibility that there were originally two crosses, one of which was situated in Caldecott and the other at or near St Edith's Church.

[5] maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps.

[6] Article *St Edith's Church, Shocklach, Fact, fiction and unsolved mysteries,* by Jim Blake, Keith Matthews & Margery Waddams.