

*The Milestone Society*

# *On the Ground*



**Worcestershire Action.** Graham Stanton using muscle power to square up a Bradley stone on the Droitwich to Alcester road. It was subsequently repainted and brought back to life.

*No. 5 September 2008*

*Compiled and Edited by John V Nicholls*



# *The Milestone Society* *On the Ground* THE ANNUAL REVIEW



Issue No.5 September 2008  
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*'On the Ground' is produced annually for members of the Milestone Society. Opinions and statements expressed in this publication are those of the editor and contributing individuals and are not necessarily those of the Milestone Society, its executive committee or general membership.*

Contributions for the next issue should be sent to the editor at:

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## INTRODUCTION

The content of this issue might give the impression that 'On the Ground' (OTG) is starting to lose direction. Originally conceived as a publication giving reports on happenings over the previous twelve months, OTG has now moved on and will contain general articles that are either too lengthy for the twice a year newsletter or insufficiently specialised to be considered for 'Milestones & Waymarkers'. As compiler and editor I rely mainly on the contributions sent in by the county representatives to fill the pages and the reps in turn rely upon their county members to keep them up to date with happenings. At the beginning of July the annual panic set in with very little material about milestones on my desk. John Higgins and Christine Minto helped fill the gap with their Anglesey and Bute articles. Although not related to the restoration and preservation scene over the last twelve months, it does show the dedication of members in finding and recording.

In this issue are two larger articles that have erred towards 'alternative' markers rather than milestones; fingerpost finials of Dorset and county boundary markers of Buckinghamshire. Both involved many hours and miles 'on the ground' in their preparation (John Tybjerg and Mike Faherty in Dorset and your editor in Bucks) and the efforts and results are worthy of recording in this issue of OTG.

There are two major concerns that might directly affect the Milestone Society. Firstly, the increasing amount of metal theft nationwide. The main targets have been high value non-ferrous metals including modern aluminium road signs. Hardly a county is immune and there will increasingly be a move towards new signage made of plastic composites that have little scrap value. Nevertheless, iron and steel also have scrap value now and therefore mileposts and mileplates could

become targets. If stolen to sell on for decorative reasons there is always a remote chance that one day they can be recovered but if stolen for scrap they are lost forever. Although there does not seem to have been a significant increase in the theft of mileplates and mileposts so far, it can only be down to luck. So keep a watch out for mileposts that are loose in the ground or plates with loose fixings. Early reporting of these could help to make the artefacts more secure.

The other concern could be the current economic state of the nation; higher fuel costs and rising costs in general. It is becoming less practical for your county representatives to justify burning petrol to meander around to keep an eye on things. Even if you are unable to contribute 'hands on' your local knowledge of finds, losses and restorations is now more important than ever. Pass on any information to your county rep or a member of the Society Committee.

It is hoped that the current economic climate will not have a drastic effect of funding by, for example, local authorities and highways. This will have to remain a wait and see situation.

**Hertfordshire county representative.** It was with much regret to hear that John Donovan was rapidly overtaken by serious medical condition and has had to be moved into a nursing home. John was an enthusiastic 'milestoner' and had a very good rapport with his county's highways and heritage people. He will also be remembered for his rather dry sense of humour that members who attended his talks will attest. **John Kilby** has kindly taken over as the new Herts representative. John can be contacted at:

Email: [john@john-kilby.co.uk](mailto:john@john-kilby.co.uk) Telephone: 01763 289466.

## AROUND THE COUNTIES

A round-up of milestone finds, restoration, conservation, research and recording from around the counties

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE.** Grainne Farrington, the Cambs rep, has been keeping busy as can be seen in these extracts from her Cambridgeshire newsletter. In October she was approached by Shona Smith, Conservation Officer at South Cambs D.C., regarding a letter to be sent to all parishes about listed buildings. It was decided to include copies of the Society's leaflet. From this positive responses have been received from the parishes of Gamlingay, Landbeach, Hauxton, Lolworth and Little Eversden. Other enquiries have

come from Stapleford, Somersham and Eltisley as a result of general publicity.

There are now three stones waiting to be repositioned on the A1. There are also two stones from Catworth and one from Hemingford Grey that need to go back on the A14. All six need to be replaced by the Highways Agency.

The groundwork on the new Loves Farm estate in St Neots was finished in August. A joint effort by McAlpine and Gallagher put the stone back on the verge. Both companies were most positive and helpful.

There have been downsides. A smashed post at Orwell, South Cambs is one concern. Hopefully some repairs can be carried out but cast iron pieces are notoriously difficult (but not impossible) to repair. Any ideas? A visit to the 'London 77' milepost at Yaxley found it to have been further damaged by demolition contractors – how apt. Local residents are keen to rescue the pieces for possible restoration. [See also Huntingdon below.]

**CHESHIRE.** [Mike Griffiths, South Cheshire rep]

Mike was pleased to locate a previously thought lost 'open book' type milepost a mile from his home. The condition of the marker alongside the A50 is very poor with the right hand wing broken off. Mike will clean and paint the post and pass photos on to his contact at Cheshire CC Highways. It is hoped that a repair can be arranged as an historical restoration project although it will involve casting a new wing.



Mike was supplied with paint to refurbish any mile markers of his choosing. He has repainted the 'open book' milepost that stands adjacent to his home [pictured below left] and carried out painting on two of the almost ubiquitous Cheshire County Council (CCC type) mileposts; an example below right.



Good news is that Cheshire County Council's Highways Services applied for funding through the Local Authorities Business Growth Incentives (LABGI) scheme. The focus of the bid was to obtain funding to refurbish and repair items on the highway which are of importance and interest. In particular are the distinctive black and white 'Cheshire' railings, milestones and mileposts, fingerpost signs and boundary signs. The bid was successful and £30,000 was awarded for the project early in August 2008.

On 20 August Mike Griffiths with John Nicholls in support attended a meeting at Cheshire CC Highways in Winsford.

The meeting was chaired by James Wood, Areas Highways Manager with Jill Collens, County Archivist for Historical Archives, and Marie Farrow of the County Historical Buildings Department. Tim Pemberton of Cheshire CC Highways who will be organizing the project was unable to be present.

The meeting outlined the purpose and aims of the project, the role of the Highways service, the role of the Transport and Regeneration Service and the role/involvement of the Milestone Society and other voluntary group organisations.

It was considered that the CCC Roads Department should use this project to further educate and interest people of Cheshire in the heritage still remaining on their roads.

The Milestone Society will develop a plan for repainting milestones with a view to providing opportunities for the CCC and local parishes to develop publicity and awareness of the project. It was suggested that some of the series of crested 'township' mileposts on the A530 between Middlewich and Nantwich be restored and used as an initial group for publicity purpose.

After the meeting Mike and John checked out the status of the A530 mileposts. Five were recorded by John Nicholls and John Higgins in 2004 but one has been lost. But on the plus side another was found by Mike one mile from Middlewich which was surveyed for entry into the database.

**Thanks to Society member John Langdill** of Macclesfield who sent in a report of a replacement mileplate erected in the village of Adlington, between Stockport and Macclesfield at grid reference SJ911804. It was unveiled by Deputy Mayor of Macclesfield, Councillor Thelma Jackson on 8 December 2007 in front of a stalwart group of local residents who braved the wind and rain for the ceremony.



The new plate was cast as an initiative of Adlington Parish Council. Aluminium was chosen as presumably this was an easier option than cast iron. The pattern was based on a neighbouring survivor. It is likely that the series of plates was connected with the turnpike route from Hazel Grove to Macclesfield, Leek and points south. A possible date of about 1824 has been mooted for the plates although the historian who delved into the history has died and his sources are not known. The picture above shows the cutting of the ribbon at the unveiling.

**CORNWALL.** [Ian Thompson, Cornwall rep]

**Cornwall Painting Partnership.** Cornwall County Council did a wonderful job looking after Cornwall's milestones. Starting in 1889 for over 100 years the Council work force did its best to maintain the milestones it had inherited. In 2000 the policy changed to one of emergency repairs only.

If a milestone was reported knocked over by a “traffic strike”, it would be set upright and repainted.

The Milestone Society has been working with Cornwall County Council to see how this policy can be developed, within a tight Council budget, to protect all Cornwall’s milestones for the future. Milestones were being damaged by grass cutting machinery and hedge cutting flails. It was important that contractors working on the county’s roads knew where milestones were and could see them on the ground. Milestones needed to be marked accurately and reliably on the County Council’s digital mapping system so that contractors could be told where they were, and they needed to be painted so that they could be spotted by operatives on the ground. If milestones were freshly painted and more visible, they were also less likely to suffer a “traffic strike”.

A public/private “Painting Partnership” agreement was set up by the Milestone Society’s Ian Thompson and Cornwall County Council’s Head of Highway Management, Jeremy Edwards. Ian would be contracted to paint the county’s milestones on behalf of the County Council. The target would be to paint every milestone once every ten years. This would mean painting 70 milestones a year on a rolling programme.

Ian was given a one day training course on Traffic Management, joining a roomful of young graduate engineers on a course run by Notter Bridge Training, to learn of the hazards of working beside the road and of the correct procedures and road signs for different situations. Contacts were set up with Area Supervisors in each Highway Division and a budget was established to cover Ian’s expenses for petrol, paint, etc.



Three steps in bringing the ‘NEWQUAY 2’ back to life.

Work began in April. Weather permitting, one day a week was set aside to paint two or three milestones. A spreadsheet was drawn up and agreed with the Area Supervisor. Some milestones were identified as too hazardous to work on without large scale traffic management – traffic lights. These would be left until other road works, requiring traffic lights, were taking place.

The first task for each milestone was to find it. As the summer wore on and the undergrowth grew, this became an increasing challenge. “Men at Work” signs and traffic cones were set up as required, and hand tools were used to clear the immediate area of the milestone of undergrowth, grass and weeds. A bucket of water and a scrubbing brush removed dirt and lichen. If there was another milestone nearby, this could be located, cleared and scrubbed, while the first one dried. The next step was to apply a coat of white masonry paint. Cornish granite is a hard, stable stone on which smooth Sandtex paint gives a good finish. When the white paint was dry, the inscription was picked out with an artist’s brush and black acrylic paint. At the end of each month, details of the work completed were passed to the Area Supervisor.

Could this work in your county? You need a good relationship with the right person within the county’s highways team. Every highway engineer I have ever spoken to has been keen to preserve milestones. They are on our side. It helps if you have county councillors on your side as well, but I am sure you will find them, too, want to keep the milestones, if you can show them how to do it at minimal cost.



The ‘III to St Columb’ and ‘BODMIN 13’ before and after painting.

Perhaps in your county the “milestone fairy” can get away with a bit of clandestine painting without the knowledge of the highway authority every now and then, but the way forward for the Milestone Society, the national charity dedicated to the future of our milestones has to be something more. Would a “public/private partnership” work in your area?

<sup>1</sup> Sandtex and similar masonry paints are usually fine to use on hard igneous rock such as granite. Advice should be sought before using masonry paints on softer sedimentary rocks such as limestone and sandstone. Ed.

## DEVON. [Tim Jenkinson, Devon rep]

**Dartmoor Micro-chipping 2008.** The project to microchip vulnerable roadside artifacts by DNPA is ongoing for 2008. Attention is now focused on the good number of granite guide posts, mostly dating from the 1820s that survive in the rural lanes of East Dartmoor around the towns and villages of Bovey Tracey, Ilsington and Liverton. This unique cluster, along with other pre-turnpike stones marked with simple lettering on other parts of the moor, has been targeted in order to prevent their unauthorized removal. Brian Byng of DNPA is pictured scanning the chip on the grand old five sided post at Five Lanes near Hennock that shows, along with others clear directions to Exeter, Chudleigh and the long since



disused name of South Bovey (now Bovey Tracey). The good relationship between the Milestone Society and DNPA continues in the ongoing quest to protect these important moorland markers.

**Devon Milestone Reset at Roadside.** A broken milestone was reset at the roadside in January 2008 by Devon CC after it had been rescued following a road traffic accident in October 2007. The stone

which stands at the 7 mile point from the city of Exeter in Tedburn St Mary on the old A30 to Cornwall has been set onto a new base with a back slab to make it more visible and add protection. The stone,



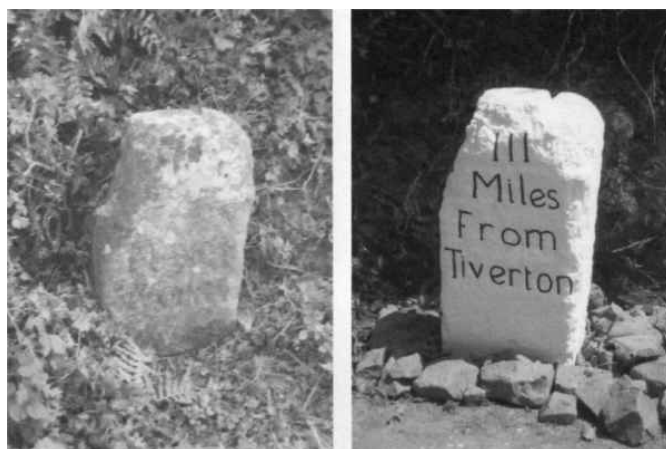
which was often overgrown in the summer months, was knocked out of the ground by an agricultural vehicle. Prompt reporting of the problem to DCC by County Representative Tim Jenkinson led to its salvation and subsequent replacement. Members of Tedburn St Mary Parish Council were kept informed of the situation and they too lent support to the marker's return at the roadside. Special thanks go to Highways Agency of

Devon, particularly Mr Colin Bradshaw who arranged for the extra protection at the site and a repaint of the inscription. The restored milestone is pictured left.

**Milestone Repositioning Petrockstow.** A recently repainted milestone on Brandis Hill in the village of Petrockstow, North Devon, on the old road between Hatherleigh and Great Torrington suffered a damaging blow to its left hand side from a grass cutting machine in October 2007. The stone which shows 'To/Torrington/8/Miles' was unfortunately at an angle and could not be seen by the contractor. Following liaison with DCC the stone was subsequently repositioned to make it more visible and hopefully ensure its ongoing protection at the roadside. Villagers who earlier in the year had uncovered several of these markers along this road were very pleased with DCC's sympathetic and swift response to the request for help. See picture on back cover.

**Milestone in Butterleigh, Mid Devon Restored.** Following a request from local residents to attend to a damaged and ailing milestone in the village of Butterleigh in Mid Devon, Alan Rosevear has successfully undertaken a restoration. The marker stands on the old turnpike road between Tiverton and Exeter and dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century prior to the build of the 'new' road, the present A396 between town and city. Alan was able to liaise closely with

the Devon CC who were very supportive of the Milestone Society's intervention. The restoration was carried out in May 2008. Alan was able to pick out the legend in black on a white background and the mileage to the town is recorded in Roman numerals. The milestone at the two mile point has recently been discovered and it is hoped that this too may undergo a similar renovation some time in the future.



Butterleigh milestone – before and after.

**Promoting the work of the Society in Devon.** Several of the Milestone Society's members have been busy, actively promoting the work of the Society in 2008. Tim Jenkinson, Alan Rosevear, Geoffrey Harding and Dick Passmore all undertake regular talks to local history groups on a variety of subjects. Whenever the opportunity to discuss milestones, turnpikes or toll houses arises the Society receives a mention and leaflets are distributed along with the chance to purchase books and postcards. The recently produced Devon postcard (No.17 in the series) is proving very popular at these events. Recent talks have taken place in Exeter, Chulmleigh, Silvertown and Petrockstowe. There have been displays at the Guildhall in Exeter City centre and Lee Moor village hall on South Dartmoor to draw the public's attention to the Society's aims. There has been much enthusiasm about roadside heritage in the county as a result of these talks with reports of several 'new' stones that are being added to the database. More talks are being planned for 2009.

**Midnight action on the A38. Milestone repositioned on Haldon Hill, near Exeter.** Essential road improvements to the A38 dual carriageway in Devon from April until July 2008 necessitated the removal and reinstatement of an early 19C milestone. The marker at the 7 mile point from Exeter was originally set up c1823 when significant improvements were made between the city and Plymouth. The works were carried out under the guidance of noted civil engineer James Green. The stone is one of just five now surviving along a 10 mile stretch between Exeter and Chudleigh town.

The erection of crash barriers on both sides of the ascending eastbound section from the direction of Chudleigh to the top of Haldon Hill meant that the stone, which had stood at the foot of a steep bank of the offside carriageway for decades, had to be taken into safe keeping. Throughout the entire episode the contractors Enterprise Mouchel maintained contact with MSS county representative Tim Jenkinson in order to negotiate the best outcome for the stone. This included facilitating two site visits by Tim to discuss the repositioning of the stone once work was completed. It was agreed that the stone would be replaced on the nearside carriageway, opposite the original site, for ease of access with





Burning the midnight oil on the A38.

a view to repainting the inscription at some point in the future. This is a project scheduled for 2009.

The stone was successfully reinstated on Haldon Hill at 0023 hours on 25 July 2008 at grid reference SX 893826. Many thanks go to Environmental Specialist Ruth Bunting and to Site manager Nick Hawtin of Enterprise Mouchel who were instrumental in the safe custody and repositioning of the stone and also to Alan Rosevear for his advice and wisdom on such matters.

**Turnpike Toilet at South Brent.** Fellow Devon member Jane Marchand of DNPA has discovered what appears to be an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century toilet block on the north-east end of Brent Bridge over River Avon, on Exeter Road at South Brent. It is well known that the house beside the bridge once charged tolls to travellers coming along the road from Exeter and Plymouth and it also marked the point where responsibility for road repairs passed from the Plymouth Eastern Turnpike to the Ashburton and Totnes Trust. It seems that a small toilet with corrugated roof was built beside the bridge for the benefit of road users, but having no flush mechanism provided just a drop facility to the river below. Today the shelter is boarded up and is much overgrown with ivy, its western wall has now crumbled away to reveal the inner closet, that remarkably retains its toilet seat. Now of little significance the loo was nonetheless in its heyday an early equivalent of a motorway service station.

#### **ESSEX.** [John V Nicholls, Essex rep]

It has been a very quiet year on the milestone front in Essex over the past year. An email from a resident in Great Chesterford, north of Saffron Walden expressed concern over



the 'WALDEN 3' milestone on the B184. It had previously been damaged by grass cutters but later had become almost

obliterated by dumped road sweepings. John Nicholls paid a visit and dug out the stone [pictured below left] with the intention of returning at a later date to carry out refurbishments.

Another email in May came from a resident in White Colne, between Colchester and Halstead on the A1134. He had discovered a milestone while cutting back an overgrown hedge in front of his property. This had not been previously recorded. That was the good news. The finder decided to clean the stone then immediately painted it with white household emulsion. No legends were visible so the finder decided to add his own, along with his house number, with black marker pen. The result can be seen above on the right.

#### **GREATER LONDON.** [Colin Woodward, Middx]

With members' surveys nearing completion, it is estimated that there are approximately 123 milestones remaining within Greater London. They are distributed as follows:

- Middlesex 57 (excludes six outside Greater London and three museum examples).
- Metropolitan Surrey 37.
- Metropolitan Hertfordshire 1.
- Metropolitan Essex 2 (and there are three further museum examples).
- Metropolitan Kent 22.

The London Borough with the most milestones found so far is Barnet with 13, followed by Hounslow with 12. However, surveys have failed to locate any milestones surviving in some London Boroughs. These include Islington and (surprisingly) Enfield, although Islington does have the milestone-like "Whittington Stone".

#### **HUNTINGDONSHIRE.** [Michael Knight, Beds rep]

A restored milestone was relocated on the B1040 in Hemingford parish, just to the south of the A14 dual-carriageway. The restoration work was carried out by Skillingtons of Grantham. This was one of five milestones that had been residing on a pallet for many years at a council depot. The distances relate to a notable drovers road, turnpiked in 1755, between St Ives (Hunts) and Potton (Beds). The southern junction of this route connected with the Great North Road near Biggleswade. Unlike the other restored stones noted above, this example has been wholly renovated by the masons who clearly show great talent in bringing the inscriptions back to life.



More restorations by Skillingtons are shown in the photographs below. They show the before and after condition of three renovated milestones in former South Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire) located on the B645 and B660, once a 1755 turnpike trust highway to Oundle, Northants. Situated in the parishes of Hail Weston (57 miles), Great Staughton (59) and Kimbolton (64) it was eventually the District Council who came to aid. All three were badly damaged. Their mileages relate to a branch route off the Great North Road at Eaton Socon, Bedfordshire. Part of the centre section of milestone 59 was missing so a new block was inserted into which the letter 'GHTON' were cut. This is a pleasing outcome after seven years of less than sympathetic response from all the three parish councils.



The lifting and the restored 57, 59 and 64 milestones.

Michael wishes to extend thanks to the professionals who made the restorations possible and also thanks to Grainne Farrington (Cambs rep) for her invaluable cooperation.

**KENT.** Colin Woodward (Middlesex) hopes to complete his search for Kent milestones before the end of 2008. The total found in members' surveys has reached (in June 2008) about 150 but with a number of sites still to be confirmed and unexpected finds still being reported, a total in excess is expected for the county. This is a far greater number than was thought to be the case when five years ago the national database predicted a possible total of 70. This is consistent with South-East England generally, where far more milestones have been found than were thought to exist – the total for the region is over 500.



Kent Milestones. Left: An example of a well maintained milestone in Staplehurst – rare for this area. Right: A restored milestone on the B2097, Bridgewood, Chatham. Note the strange arrow on top that bears only passing resemblance to an OS bench mark.

All Kent local authorities, including the Kentish London Boroughs (L.B.), have surviving milestones. The total numbers found so far, broken down by local authority are, in descending order: Tonbridge & Malling 19; Sevenoaks 18; Canterbury 15; Dover 15; Swale 12; L.B. Bromley 11; Ashford 8; Maidstone 8; L.B. Greenwich 8; Dartford 7; Thanet 7; Shepway 7; Tunbridge Wells 5; Medway 5; Gravesham 2; L.B. Bexley 2 and L.B. Lewisham 1.

Unfortunately many milestones in Kent appear to be unloved. Some do not seem to have been touched since the Second World War. All too often the typical milestone is in poor to moderate condition with mileplates missing, giving many the appearance of a 'Flintstones' television set.



Left: An example of a 'Flintstone' television set. Unrestored, this stone minus its mileplate is in Bethersden. Right: This stone in Sevenoaks has a half-size replacement mileplate of unknown date.

Colin hopes to follow up his search with some intensive lobbying of the various local authorities to encourage

milestone restoration and perhaps reproduction of missing ones. Scattered examples of restoration can already be found in Kent, such as are shown in the accompanying photos.

John V Nicholls (Essex) has also had connections with Kent after receiving an email from the Town Clerk of Tenterden Town Council. She was concerned about the lack of activity in the restoration of the grade II listed milestone that stood in Tenterden. It had been broken down to ground level by a dust cart in 2006. The parts of the stone still languish in a depot in Ashford after a mason considered the stone beyond repair. At the time of writing (July) a second opinion is being sought from another mason.

Included in the Tenterden email exchanges was news of



another broken milestone in the area. Just south of the town is Leigh Green on the B2080. A milestone buried in 1940 was accidentally excavated in the 1970s. It has spent its time since in a local farmyard. It is broken in two but probably not beyond repair and reinstatement to the roadside.

#### **NORFOLK.** [Carol Haines, Norfolk rep reports..]

In December 2006 I wrote to Norfolk Highways about the milestone at Honingham which was badly in need of attention. It had been hit, probably during verge mowing, and had been broken just above ground level and the top part no longer sitting squarely on its base. A few days later, while



Honingham – not a full restoration but all parts now secure.

driving up the A140 to Cromer, we saw the lower half of the stone at Erpingham uprooted, with a crashed car in the field nearby. Someone led us to where the top half of the stone, which had been snapped off, had come to rest in a thicket

about 30 yards away. This also came under the North 2 Highways area, and they responded very quickly and took both stones to their depot at Aylsham.



The milestone at Erpingham was uprooted but the car came off worst in the confrontation.

The two milestones have been repaired and are now back in place. It appeared that only the top half of the Erpingham stone had been put back, but the Highways Department recently advised that the two halves had been cemented back together but the whole stone had been reset lower in the ground. This has reduced the visible height by 35cm and thus hiding the parish name. The full inscription reads CROMER 7 / AYLSHAM 4 / NORWICH 15 / ERPINGHAM.

#### **NORTHUMBERLAND.** [Iain Davison, county rep]

In the last twelve months Iain has been able to prompt



Northumberland CC to repair and restore two milestones. The first one was at Halton Shields on the Military Road, the B6318 at NGR NZ 023686, 14 miles from Newcastle. When Iain found it after many attempts it was in two pieces, fortunately fairly close to each other. It is suspected that the stone was moved many years ago when the sight line at the road junction was improved. The stone is now back in one piece and in a safe position.



The second success was re-erecting a milestone incised C (for Corbridge) 8 and E (for Elishaw) 14 on the A68 at NGR NY 941758. Iain found the stone some years ago at the back of a dry stone wall. Originally it was in a very vulnerable position on a narrow grass verge and on a bend. The County Council had proposals for minor road improvements including laying kerbs at the bend that will hopefully afford a little more protection for the re-erected milestone.

Iain received a copy of the Northumberland County Council Highways' milestone database to which he was able to add to the entries as well as extract a few that were unknown to him.

#### OXFORDSHIRE. [Derek Turner, Oxon rep]

There has been useful progress on milestones of various kinds and in various places. We are close to getting the authoritative story of how two of the three stones, originally on the B4027, ('London 57' and 'London 59') came to end up a few hundred yards apart in Bletchington village away from the road. This is thanks to information provided by the owner of one of them. I am to meet with a former worker on the Bletchington Park Estate who was involved in the original (and legal) moving of the stones. I am hoping also to find out why 'London 58' survived in its original and proper position while its two neighbours were moved. The man involved has agreed to have his memories recorded so we will have the beginning of what I hope will be an oral history archive. The Thame Museum Oral History Project is kindly cooperating in the recording process. [If any reader has a good story to tell about milestones or other waymarkers in Oxon or knows anyone who has, please let Derek know.]

The sterling work undertaken by Ted Flaxman, Charles Hughes and Mervyn Benford on re-plating the stones on the old A43 continues. The latest re-plating took place in February when Charles Hughes attached 'Brackley 4 Oxford 17' to its stone that Oxfordshire Highways had straightened and which Charles had thoughtfully covered the previous night in case rain dampened the stone and weakened the adhesive. This stone is conveniently off the present line of the A43 near to the Tusmore estate on a now quiet road. The next one to be restored is 'Brackley 9, Oxford 12', the stone for which for a while has been in the garden of a local councillor for safekeeping. Its location will be on a difficult stretch of road, but it is hoped that the stone and a replica plate will be united some time soon if the health and safety considerations can be met.



Charles Hughes completes the fixing of the 'Brackley 4' mileplate.

More about the restored Tusmore stone appears in two recent publications. Ted Flaxman was instrumental in getting an article 'Miles to go' by Peter Barrington published in the May 2008 issue of *Lifestyle – the magazine for North Oxfordshire*. Though Ted is not credited as author, the substance of the article, which links the milestone with the book *Lark Rise to Candleford*, is based on his extensive researches on the area. I was invited to write an article for the June 2008 *Limited Edition* colour supplement of the *Oxford Times*, having written to the editor pointing out that a picture of a boundary stone used to illustrate an article was incorrectly stated to be at Ickford when it was actually near Bicester.

Finally, an example of a successful piece of cooperation between a concerned local, Roy Rowles, Oxfordshire Highways and the Society – in the person of Robert Caldicott, who having been alerted to the poor state of a milestone on the A361, 'Chipping Norton 4 Burford 7', contacted Oxfordshire Highways. At first there was some doubt whether the Highways Maintenance department would be able to undertake the extensive work needed but thanks to the efforts of Lydia Jewell of the Oxfordshire Environment Department, the stone has been splendidly restored to pristine condition.



Another job well done in Oxon. [Pictures Robert Caldicott]

#### SHROPSHIRE. [Alan Reade, Salop rep]

##### Milestone Repair and Maintenance – the last few years.

The results of contact with the Parish Councils in the Bridgnorth District have been disappointing. Only one out of the thirty four or so parishes made any significant response (Kinlet) where some plates have been manufactured and restored on milestones. The repair of damaged milestones on the A49 at Wistanstow and on the A489 at Lydham [below] is proving to be a rather slow process.



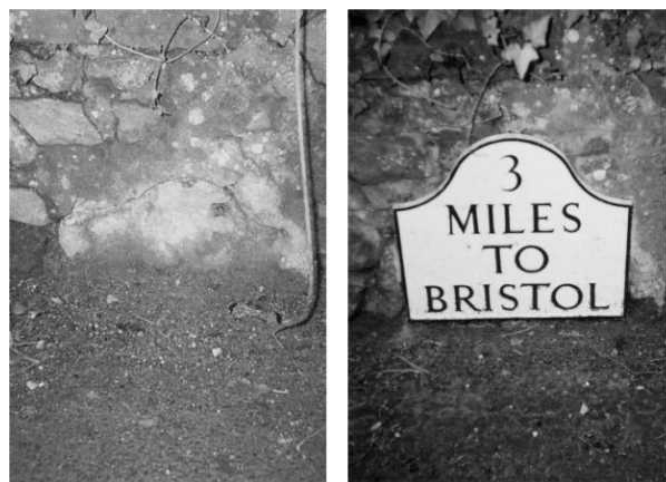
The repair and reinstatement of the sandstone obelisk in front of the Bell Inn at Tong, on the A41, however has been rebuilt with commendable speed following its demolition by a heavy goods vehicle. Again in the parish of Kinlet, three milestones have recently been listed by English Heritage using photos provided Alan.

Telford & Wrekin Highways has recently completed a programme of repainting the remaining milestones in this area.

The cast iron milestone recovered from eBay by Alan (with Shropshire Highways and police assistance) has not yet been replaced by the road side. Recent thefts of gully gratings and road signs in the area give cause for concern regarding the safety of metal mileposts, particularly as the milepost on the Count straight near Cressage on the A458 has recently disappeared. For the time being, the milepost will be kept at the Longden Road depot until a safe haven can be found.

**Recovered Milestone Plate.** A cast iron plate from a long-missing sandstone milestone on the B4380 Ironbridge to Attingham Road has been handed in to the SCC Highways Depot at Longden Road, Shrewsbury. Although a listed milestone, and photographed in situ in the 1980s (seen here), the stone was noted as 'badly damaged' during the SCC survey in September 1996. The painted cast iron plate with raised lettering 'SHREWSB<sup>Y</sup> / 7 / IRONBR<sup>E</sup> / 6' is a treasure which SCC Highways is reluctant to reinstate at the roadside where it will be vulnerable to damage and/or theft. Subject to further consideration, it has been agreed that the plate should be stored pending discussions with English Heritage. It may be considered appropriate for the plate to be exhibited at the Wroxeter Roman City Site, two miles from its original roadside position.

**SOMERSET.** (Janet Dowding, Somerset rep)



Long Ashton at grid ref ST 548705. This Bristol Trust is on the MSS database as S345. The 'before' image by Janet Dowding 2005 and the 'now' by Alan Sutton 2008. The replacement plate was provided by persons unknown.

Janet is keeping busy in the milestone scene as she is looking after the affairs of the Surrey Group as well as Somerset. Shown here is a selection 'before and after' pictures of recent Somerset restorations.



North of Kelston on the A431, grid ref ST 689682. A Bath Roads milestone on the database as S271. Repainted by Bath & North East Somerset Council. Pictures by Janet Dowding 2003 and 2008.



On the Bannerdown/Colerne road, Bath at grid ref ST 786676. S127 on database. Painted and stone repaired by Bath & North East Somerset Council. Pictures by Janet Dowding 2002 and 2008.



A mile out of Bridgwater on the A39 at Grid ref ST 314538. This Bridgwater Trust milestone is S240 on the database. 2003 and 2008 by Janet Dowding.



Landsdown Road, Bath at grid ref 736677. Bath Trust and S190 on the database. Painted for Bath & North East Somerset Council by the school whose grounds are adjacent to it. Pictures 2002 and 2008 by Janet Dowding.



In the parish of Compton Pouncefoot at ST 651254. On the database as S91 and was on the Sherborne & Shaftesbury Trust. Painted and photographed by Somerset member Philip Smalley 2008. 'Before' image by Janet Dowding 2001.

**STAFFORDSHIRE.** [John Higgins, Staffs rep]  
Members of the Staffordshire Group have continued their repainting programme during the summer.



All the remaining mileposts in Stafford Borough have now been tackled and completed. Above are some examples that

show the typical condition of the mileposts prior to restoration and how a typical milepost appears after some dedicated refurbishment.

Next year's repainting programme will be moving on to the South Staffordshire and Cannock Chase Districts.

#### **WARWICKSHIRE.**

The installation of a newly sculptured milestone was reported briefly in 'On the Ground 3', page 13. Michael Knight (Beds), having previously given talks to two groups in Kenilworth, was afterwards contacted by a Warwickshire Council agent. Advice given regarding the means for restoration was taken up and the waymarker was unveiled by town councillors who had supported the project. (2006)



**WILTSHIRE.** This large county with its many 'lost' roads and former drove ways has an abundance of milestones but gets little exposure in our publications.

#### **Across Salisbury Plain** by Mike Faherty.

When I joined the Society two years ago, I wanted to get involved with recording. Obtaining the county records for Dorset (my home county), Somerset and Hampshire quickly revealed that all three counties had been as good as fully recorded.

The next nearest county was Wiltshire. Apart from The Bath Road and its branches, surveyed by Alan Rosevear, contributions from Rod Smith in the north-east of the county, and earlier or partial surveys, much of Wiltshire had not been surveyed. Salisbury (WISA) and West Wiltshire (WIWW) Districts were (then at least with much cheaper petrol) within striking distance of home in Bournemouth.

My first step was to check the Victoria County History; unusually, there is an excellent chapter on roads, with lists of parliamentary acts, a map of turnpiked roads, and a brief history of the more notable routes.

Second, and crucial, were Ordnance Survey 6" maps, courtesy of old-maps-co.uk. These revealed about 290 original sites.

To date, I have managed to visit 260 sites in WISA and WIWW. Remaining still to be surveyed are parts of the dreaded A303 (I managed to keep on thinking of reasons not to walk along its often motorway-like miles) and the MoD Kimber Range.

Many good series of milestones and mileposts remain, though generally neglected by Highways, in the network of roads from Salisbury north-west to Warminster, Melksham, Trowbridge, Amesbury and Devizes, north to Marlborough; fewer east and south-east to Andover, Stockbridge, Romsey and Southampton; good runs also exist west and south-west to Blandford, Shaftesbury and Mere.

Of the 260-odd sites surveyed, almost 200 milestones and mileposts remain. Of particular interest are three routes with 18C stones which do not appear to have been turnpiked; perhaps they were for planned turnpikes which were not approved. Firstly, west from Salisbury to the Somerset border near Alfred's Tower – roll-tops with a fine stylized 1750 date; 16 remain, often several metres from the current track. Secondly, four remaining gables dated 1754 on an alternative route from Salisbury to Warminster, which disappears in the Imber Range; and lastly, branching off from the second, a

route from Salisbury to Bath, also truncated by the Range, with 8 remaining stones, with level or unfinished roll-tops.



[Left] Gabled type on the old Salisbury to Warminster road and [right] a level top on the Salisbury to Bath road.

I would encourage any visitor to Wiltshire to spend an hour or two walking across the Plain. Wild flowers in the summer are stunning, in the many areas of unimproved grassland owned by the MoD and accessible to the public; wild life (buzzards, deer, pheasants, partridges most obviously) abounds and provides relief from the roar of the A303. Thanks to Janet Dowding, Somerset rep for assistance.



A 'roll top' on the Salisbury ox drove.

**WORCESTERSHIRE.** [Terry Keegan reports]

#### 12 Months to June 2008 with the Worcestershire Group.

Three new members have been recruited since June 2007 bringing our numbers up to a record 35. At our quarterly meetings we continued to plan new projects over cups of coffee and home made cakes. As a result of income raised from giving a total of 18 talks to various clubs and societies we were able to fund the publication of our booklet Finding Worcestershire Milestones. 500 were printed and a third have already been sold – increasing our milestone fund even further.

Our major project, started last year, was the re-plating and, where necessary, replacing missing stones on the Worcester to Bradley Green turnpike. After a slow start the project is at last showing signs of coming together. Five parishes and



Worcester city council have been involved in helping the group to refurbish the eleven stones which once lined this route.

[Left] The 11 mile stone in Bradley Green – one of the eight original stones of which five have so far been re-plated.

Unfortunately three of the original stones were missing as well as all the cast plates. Five of the original stones have now had their new plates attached and three more will be completed in the near future. The three missing stones will be replaced by three beautiful stones supplied by the stonemason's yard at Worcester cathedral. Lord Sandys has agreed to perform a short unveiling ceremony of one of the stones in early September.



The stonemason's yard at Worcester cathedral where Worcestershire Group members David Beacham and Ted Showell discuss with Darren Steele the positioning of the cast plates to the three new stones for the Worcester to Bradley Green project.

Using the wooden former constructed to cast the new concrete 'Bradley' stone Freckenham last year, another new Bradley stone has been cast to replace the broken one two miles from Droitwich on the road to Alcester and a new plate attached.

One milestone was rescued from a farmyard, where it had been stored for many years, and re-erected by the roadside close to its original site. We are negotiating the return of a superb early milestone uprooted and sold at auction over ten years ago. Using some of our accumulated funds we hope to be able to purchase this stone and transport it back all of twenty odd miles to its original site not far from the Herefordshire border. An un-plated milestone on the Great Witley to Stourport road was uprooted in a car accident. Members of the group re-erected the stone and the local parish has paid for the missing plate.





Only one previously unrecorded milestone has been located in the past twelve months. We continue to paint mileposts and milestone plates when weather permits.

# **YORKSHIRE. The Harrogate to Ripon Road A61.**

This eleven mile piece of road was originally part of the Harrogate, Hewick, Ripon and Pateley Bridge United Turnpike which was an amalgamation of two Trusts in 1852. Hewick to Pateley Bridge is the current B6265 which also runs eastwards through Boroughbridge to join the A59 at Green Hammerton.

Harrogate had developed and grown throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of its spa waters. What had been a small village was taking precedence over nearby Knaresborough with its castle and Killinghall that was the junction of the Dudley Hill (Bradford) and Killinghall Turnpike with the Harrogate to Ripon one.

Although the West Riding extended to the north of Ripon the mileposts on this route are different to the ubiquitous ones virtually all over the old County Council area. They do not have the backing stone but are cast in a simple V shape. The inscription is rather elegant. The places names with serifs on the letters curve round the numbers and a prominent raised hand points the way on each side.

Perhaps these posts, made by J Ingram of Ripon, were already in place when the County Councils were formed. Maybe when the two trusts joined in 1852 the trustees decided to replace older worn stones with newer fashionable posts. And the prudent West Riding Highways and Finance Committees didn't want to spend more than was necessary and replace them.

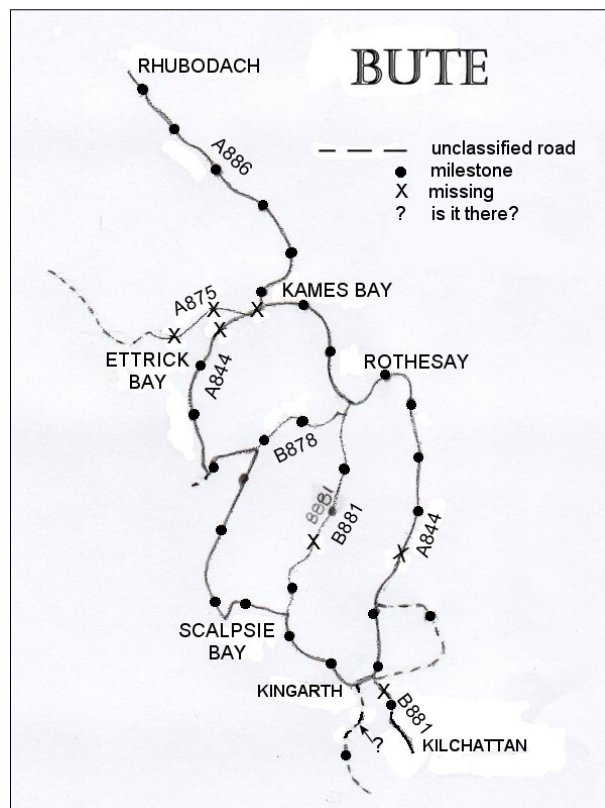
There is a good run of these posts with only Harrogate 3, 7 and 9 missing. When the Ripon bypass was built the 10 mile post was relocated near the traffic island. Brian Bradley-Smith has repainted the remaining ones. He had also cleared away years of brambles and nettles from around a B&B type post near the Killinghall parish boundary on the Dudley Hill route, the B6161 and repainted it. So the Parish Council were very pleased when he constructed a wooden 'milestone' to



## **SCOTLAND**

**The Milestones of Bute.** [Christine and Frank Minto]  
On our 1980 OS map Sheet 63 there are thirty five milestones marked. So a couple of days cycling along the island roads

meant we should be able to visit them all. Fortunately we had good weather albeit a bit breezy. Twenty eight of the marked stones were found plus one other, 'Rothesay 2' at Port Bannatyne. Although we did search for them, unfortunately seven have either disappeared or been buried in the vegetation.



Some had the usual edge chips but two were extensively damaged. One was broken off at ground level and lying on the banking where golfers park for the 9-hole course. The other had big chunks missing and laid on a very narrow verge near a farm entrance on the road to the ferry at Rhubodach. On the way there I saw a lump of stone which I thought had fallen from a wall but on checking it when we came back I decided that the shape of the moss-covered remnant confirmed this to be the saddest stone on the island.

All the stones are of a similar shape and size and probably date from the same time. They are chunky rectangular blocks with a slightly curved top. Although 'Rothesay 1' at Bogany Point has a level top and tooling round the edges. However other subtle differences were noted.





One factor contributing to the inscriptions is that the A844 goes right round the southern end of the island but there are a couple of B roads cutting across to the west from Rothesay. So near Ettrick Bay it is  $4\frac{5}{8}$  miles to Rothesay by Gn (Greenan) Mill but 5 by Bannatyne and north of Scalpsie Bay it's either 6 by Birgadale or  $5\frac{1}{3}$  by Gn Mill.



Many of the stones have had their inscriptions ground out, perhaps in 1940, as shown in the illustration on the left. Later, ROTHESAY and a mileage have been painted on the sunken area. Some of these however have original elegant inscribed arrows.

All but one of the stones which were not defaced have the words in upper case letters [picture right] but on the B881 there is just a capital for the first letter of each name – Rothesay 2, Kingarth Church  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and two of the stylish arrows. This stone looks as if it has been buried in the banking and so, presumably, was missed by the 1940 grinder Perhaps this is how some of the defaced ones were inscribed originally.



Another stone of note is 3 miles north of Rothesay on Kames Bay. It is beautifully painted, white with bluish bell shaped flowers but there is the ground out recess on the front. The flowers may be Scottish bluebells, or harebells to us English. [Picture left]

Only three of the stones are well cared for – this flowery one, 'Rothesay 8' near Rhubodach and 'Rothesay 1' on the way to Port Bannatyne.

There was just one more stone that I'm not sure about putting into the database. The lady at the wonderful B & B at Ascog Farm where we stayed told us of a stone on the minor road round by Kerrylamont. It is smaller than the rest and as I was taking a photograph the man in the nearby house came out and smilingly told us he had put it there. We never asked if he was the Mac of 'Mac's Bar  $6\frac{1}{2}$ '.



Because of the near uniformity of the Bute stones the photographs would have been pretty boring but I tried to include nearby spring flowers, some Highland cattle, sheep and one with a curious cow looking over the hedge.

Now the photos are printed and arranged I have found one from our 1999 visit to the island when I didn't put positions and GRs on the back. Oh dear me! This bears the legend Rothesay 10 by Mt Stuart 8 by Birgadale. It can only be on the unclassified road from Kingarth Church to St Blane's. We turned back after looking at the stone circle with two stones because we had been to the end last time. The 10 is inscribed so must be measured round Kerrylamont but there are no other stones on that road apart from Mac's. So is there a stone Rothesay 9 or 7 by the Suidhe Plantation? If you are visiting Bute please have a look for it.

### The Trossachs Milestone Refurbishment Project.

Via Terry Keegan.

The first phase of this project, repainting the eight Victorian mileposts from Aberfoyle to Stronachlachar was carried out by National Park Coordinated volunteers over last winter. During the spring a number of the mileposts on the A821 between Loch Katrine and Callander and on the A81 between Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith were similarly resurrected. All were given a bright new coat of paint (in fact one coat of oxide, two coats of primer and one coat of gloss white – before finishing by delicately painting in the letters and numbers in black). Countryside Ranger, Craig Walker who coordinated the project, is delighted with the results. "It has been great to see the milestones come alive again", he said. "The results really light up the cultural aspect of the route". Craig hopes to extend the number of refurbished mileposts when funds allow. This will include more of the posts on the A81 and some on the A873. He is even negotiating for the casting of replacement posts where the original ones have been lost.



[Left] Countryside Ranger, Craig Walker beside one of the taller designs of milepost between Aberfoyle and Stronachlachar and [right] volunteers Mike Macmanus and Irene McKenzie repainting on of the smaller types between Callander and Loch Katrine.

## THE MILESTONE SURVEY ON ANGLESEY

John Higgins. July 2008

John Higgins, in conjunction with Glyn Jones of Llangristiolus in Anglesey, has completed a survey of the milestones in Anglesey. Milestones still survive on four routes, and these are analysed as follows:

- Route 1: The Old Post Road from Holyhead to Menai Bridge prior to Thomas Telford's route;
- Route 2: Thomas Telford's Holyhead Road;
- Route 3: Menai Bridge to Beaumaris; and
- Route 4: Llanerchymedd to Amlwch.

From a ground survey, and search of old maps, there appear to have been more turnpike routes in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century; however, no milestones are recorded on any other routes on old maps, and apart from one instance mentioned below, no others remain on the ground. By 1840, only two turnpike trusts were recorded: The Holyhead Road of Telford, and Menai Bridge to Beaumaris. The Old Post Road had by this time been superseded by Telford's route, explaining the former's demise; however, the route from Llanerchymedd to Amlwch is not mentioned, leading one to assume that these stones may have been private markers. It can be reasonably surmised that the above four routes are the only ones ever to have sported mile markers.

**Route 1, The Old Post Road** had been surveyed by Glyn Jones prior to John Higgins' involvement in the county, and it was with his considerable help that the existing stones were located. All are well hidden in summertime, and many are built into dry stone walls, obscuring them from the casual passer-by. The 23 or 24 stones that originally graced this road were made from Irish Granite in 1752, and shipped to Anglesey as a gift from the Irish people. The route from Holyhead was via Trearddur Bay, Four Mile Bridge, Valley, Bodedern, Bodffordd, Llangefni and Ceint Bridge, at which point the original route ran via Pen-y-Garnedd and Llansadwrn to Beaumaris. From here, a ferry crossed over to Aber on the mainland. This ferry was replaced in 1718 by one across the Menai Straits from Porthaethwy (now also known as Menai Bridge) to a point west of Bangor, so by the time of the delivery of the milestones, a new route direct from Ceint Bridge to Porthaelwy had been made.

The route was called the Great London Post Road until Thomas Telford route took the post traffic away; from that time it was referred to as 'The Old Post Road', and is now for the main part represented by the B4545 and B5109 from Holyhead to Llangefni and the B5420 onward to Menai Bridge. The distance is 24 miles, and the milestones, all measuring around four inches in thickness and fifteen inches wide, are all on the south side of the road. All carry a large single number. The current stock has been recorded as follows:

From the original port, the route headed towards what is now the modern development of Trearddur Bay, south of Cweryd Villas, at SH25058077, is no.1 [right]. It lies in front of a dry stone wall and is only 14 inches above ground level. It is often overgrown with lichen. The next stone (no.2) is missing, and no.3 is easy to spot, being immediately in front of the modern Trearddur Bay sign at SH26657833. A further mile brings us to Four Mile Bridge, this name being obviously derived from the no.4 stone. Unfortunately, due to rebuilding and widening in the past, the stone is now lost.

Four Mile Bridge takes us across a narrow strait from Holy Island to the Anglesey mainland. Prior to The Stanley Embankment, this was the only route into Holyhead from the rest of Anglesey. We now approach the modern development of Valley, and the subsequent site of the no.5 stone, lost to modern village walling. Crossing the modern A5, the road



divided and continues on what is now the A5025 to Llanynghenedl. This area was marshy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and so a hide tide route was also used via Newlands. No stones ever existed on the high tide section, and with the upgrading of the A5025 at the time of construction of the Wylfa Nuclear Power Station, nos.6 and 7 were also lost.

From Llanynghenedl, the route turns inland along the B5109 towards Llangefni. In the centre of the village of Bodedern is a junction, and immediately before this, a wall around a house incorporates stone no.8, the number being clearly visible. It is at SH32298044. We now have a run of a further six stones, the first (no.9) being opposite Tan-yr-Allt Newydd at SH34838016. Although incorporated into a wall, it should be easy to find, although the number 9 is obscure. Nos. 10 and 11 will prove more elusive: both are incorporated into walls and not easy to define: no.10 is at SH36387994, and no. 11 is just to the right of a modern gateway at SH37987994, and now forms part of a revetment that is totally overgrown. When the vegetation is peeled away, the number 11 can clearly be seen as identification on the stone. We then pass the remains of the Gwyndy Inn, a stabling and coaching stop twelve miles from Holyhead, and midway between there and the ferry crossing to the mainland. Just past Llandrygan School, a wall built in the 1970s incorporates the top portion of no.12. It is a pity that it is placed several feet off the ground; however, we must be thankful that it has been saved; at SH39207951 it is near to its original position.



Nos. 11 and 12 illustrate the difficulty in finding Anglesey's stones.

No.13 is one of the easiest stones to spot in this series. It stands proud of a grassy bank at Pen-Rhôs, and at 32 inches high is one of the tallest in the run. Less than a mile away from Bodffordd village, at SH41907793, is no.14, once again now incorporated into a dry stone wall but clearly visible as a milestone, even though the number is no longer visible. Just east of Bodffordd, minor ground and wall work has removed stone 15; stone 16, a mile from Llangefni has met a similar fate.

Stone 17 stood in Llangefni, close to where Thomas Telford's spur road to the town met the original Post Road. It is not difficult to imagine that there would have been no desire to keep stone 17 in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, it was apparently incorporated into a doorstep in the town, and there it languished for many years until its removal and breaking up. The bottom portion, just a piece of roughly hewn granite, does survive though. It has now been replanted on a grassy bank outside Llangefni Library. Although not of the

same measurements as the rest of the stones, it is of the same granite, and so is obviously the base.

Proceeding towards Ceint Bridge, the next stone, no.18, is east of Pencraig at SH47447545, and although only 15 inches above ground, does stand in front of a wall, making it clearly visible in winter. At Ceint Bridge, the original route left what is now the main road and continued to Beaumaris, and stone 19 is here on the bridge abutment. As is common with many others, it is well hidden, very low in the ground, and now forms part of the bridge wall (SH48867486). Only the faint no. 19 still visible tells us that this is the milestone. Approaching the straggling village of Penmynydd, no.20 is at Dragon-wen (SH50447462) and has recently had its no.20 painted in black. The stone, at 29 inches tall, is broken horizontally across the centre, although the surrounding wall keeps both portions in place.



The stump of stone no.17 and no.20

Stone 21 is extremely lucky to have survived. The position of road at SH51817393 at Castell has had a lump removed, so the road at this point is several feet lower than the original. However, the dry stone field wall to the south has survived at its original height, now at the top of a steep bank, and fortunately the milestone in front of it is still in situ. The undergrowth and tree cover at this point makes the stone very difficult to spot, and close inspection is impossible, although unusually for milestones, you have to look upwards! No.22 at Braint (SH53047350) is usually hidden with a shroud of ivy covering a low wall, but still sports a bold 22 when found. We are now approaching the modern town of Menai Bridge, and stone 23 has been lost. It is not certain whether a stone 24 close by the ferry ever existed. Mention has been made above of another possible Milestone. The original route from Ceint Bridge to Beaumaris was, as we have seen, abandoned in 1718. However, some years ago, Glyn Jones discovered a stone standing apart from any others on the roadside east of Pen-y-Garnedd. Upon close inspection, the number '4' appeared visible, and as the stone is some four miles distant from Beaumaris, it could be assumed that this is a milestone. Although, a date of pre-1718 is early, the stone is roughly hewn; more research into this is obviously needed; suffice to say that if this stone does represent an early milestone, then it would have been one of probably eight along the section from Ceint Bridge. If this is the case, then it is likely that the 19 between Ceint Bridge and Holyhead also existed prior to the current 1752 stock, and that mileage was shown to Beaumaris and not Holyhead. It is worth noting that the No.4 is not a

Roman numeral, which normally indicates a mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century date.

**Route 2 is Telford's Holyhead Road.** There is much documentation regarding the road, and an excellent publication on the North Wales section is available<sup>1</sup>. All milestones on the Welsh section are indicated, together with measurements and legend; so only a brief resumé here will be required. 22 of Telford's stones were originally constructed – all gave distances between Holyhead, Mona and Bangor. The route now crossed the newly re-erected Stanley embankment and ran south of the former post road, bypassing Llangefni on its way to Porthaelwy, which now also assumed the English name of Menai Bridge, after the construction of that structure by Telford. All of the original stones except one survive, although two have been moved.

The first stone, Holyhead 1, Mona 12, Bangor 24, is situated in Holyhead town close to the railway station. Although we would now consider this as being 'Holyhead', distances were given to the port. From Holyhead, the route has been diverted around the aluminium smelter with the subsequent loss of milestone 2. Although a new replacement should have been made in 2003 it was subsequently decided not to replace it as the road now follows a significant diversion from the original. No.3 is at the western end of The Stanley Embankment, having been moved from its original position, but all stones from no.4 to no.14 are in their original positions with original plates. No.14 at Llanfawr was removed to the Highways department at Gaerwen during the construction of the new A55, and replaced in a wall as close to its original location as possible. Enroute, the former coaching house at Mona is passed. Stones 15 to 22 are all still in original locations with original plates. All Telford's milestones in Anglesey were erected in 1826, and are of limestone from Red Wharf Bay, Anglesey.

**Route 3: Menai Bridge to Beaumaris** was an independent turnpike with a length of five miles. Four stones are still to be found, the first at Menai Bridge at SH55747216. It is outside a house called 'Mile End', and tells us that it is four miles to Beaumaris and 3 furlongs to Menai Bridge (the bridge itself). These stones are remarkably similar to Telford's, although the place names are carved into the stone. This leads one to assume that either Telford copied the design of this turnpike trust's stones, or vice versa. Telford is reputed to have remarked that prior to settling on his milestones' design; he had travelled throughout England looking for suitable stones for four years without finding anything he liked, but the close proximity of these shapely stones to Telford's final design does make a correlation distinctly possible. The remaining three stones are all of the south side of the present A545: Beaumaris 3/ Menai Bridge 1 mile 3 furlongs at Carig-y-Don (SH56717324), Beaumaris 2/Menai Bridge 2 miles 3 furlongs near the Gazelle Hotel at SH58067412, and Beaumaris 1/ Menai Bridge 3 miles 3 furlongs at Glyn Garth (SH59417496). All are easily visible from the road.

**Route 4 is a series of five stones from Llanerchymedd to Amlwch**, a route that is some distance from the all other turnpike milestones. They are quite small; all are on the east side of the road and carry a simple number stating the mileage from Amlwch. Although it would seem reasonable to assume that the series would have continued southwards to Trevor, Llangefni or Beaumaris, this does not appear to be the case, leaving the exact nature of these stones somewhat of a mystery. Amlwch at the time was being developed as a port to export the copper mined on Parys Mountain a short way along

this route to the south, so these stones may have formed part cannot be supported; moreover, Parys Mountain is a mere two miles from Amlwch, yet there were originally another three stones to the south of this.

The survey starts from Llanerchymedd, just six miles from Amlwch. No stone still exists here, and it is not clear whether or not one ever did. One mile north, just past the Capel Park road junction is stone no.5. It is usually well concealed in undergrowth, but is clearly marked with a '5' (SH42278563). A mile to the north, the road has been disturbed with the consequent loss of stone 4. In the centre of Rhosybol village, stone 3 is very prominent at SH42708873; and stone 2 stands in front of a wall at SH43449019, Parys Mountain. Stone 1 has been moved slightly to the north of its original position, and is now to be found, broken in two, at Llyn Llaethdy SH44159145.

The survey was carried out by John Higgins during the summer of 2008; the Old Post Road had already been surveyed by Glyn Jones prior to this time. John travelled between Crewe and Bangor by train and walked most of the distances; some of the Old Post Road was surveyed with the help of Glyn Jones in his car. The records are kept by John in paper form and Mike Faherty has completed the database with the relevant information. Ian Jolly, the Society representative for North Wales also has copies of the findings.

From a total stock of 53 or 54 milestones originally along the four routes (plus eight possibles along the abandoned

of a tariff for the copper mined there. This theory, however, turnpike from Ceint Bridge to Beaumaris), 45 still exist, taking Anglesey's current stock, albeit small, a large percentage of the original number.

<sup>1</sup> *'Thomas Telford's Holyhead Road – The A5 in North Wales'* Jamie Quartermain, Barrie Trinder and Rick Turner. Published in 2003 by the Council for British Archaeology. ISBN 1-902771-34-6.

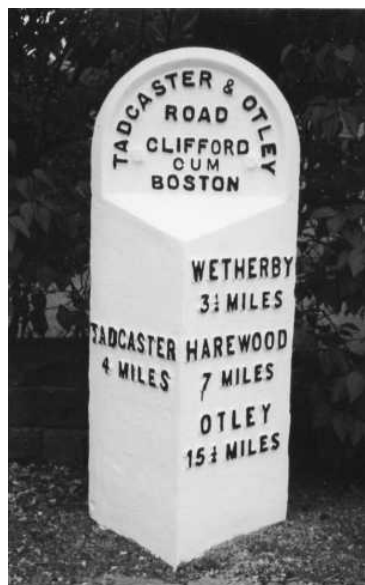


Stones 3 and 9 on The Old Post Road.

## YORKSHIRE – THE WEST RIDING COUNTY MILESTONES

Christine Minto. Yorkshire representative.

**West Riding County Council Milestones.** Prior to the 1972 reorganisation of counties the West Riding of Yorkshire spread from Sedbergh in the north-west to Bawtry in the south-east and from Ripon in the north nearly to Worksop, Nottinghamshire in the south. On the west it included the Forest of Bowland and Saddleworth and in the east stretched to the River Trent's confluence with the Humber.



Over most of this area are the ubiquitous West Riding milestones consisting of a rectangular round topped stone with a protruding metal attachment with a semi circular flat top. Research continues to find out when the WRCC decided to replace older turnpike stones and put milestones on roads that had never been turnpiked but had become main routes

Two of the main founders of the attachments cast their name on the bevel. They

were Brayshaw and Booth of Liversedge and William Towler of Leeds. Others may have been produced at the John Sturgess Bowling Works foundry in Bradford. Lugless, Bolton; Brown of Derby and Currie, Dewhirst and King, Mirfield made three obvious early replacement castings.

Perhaps when these were needed the original founders had gone out of business.

Several members have tried to find out more about Brayshaw and Booth with limited success. We know where the foundry was in Liversedge and that they were definitely in business from 1889 to 1917. No-one has researched William Towler but we do have a picture of the Bowling Ironworks in Bradford in the 1880s and another from 1897. However this firm was in trouble in the 1890s. Their reserves of coal were running out and cheap iron ore was being imported from Sweden. From making engines, cannon for the Napoleonic Wars and the ironwork of a hospital in Jamaica they must have made smaller items such as mileposts. Three posts surviving on the Chatteris to Downham Market turnpike have their name on the back. I've never seen inside the back of the 'anonymous' attachments in the West Riding but their name may be there.

Not much thought however was given to the backing stones. However in the West Riding Archives in Wakefield reference was found to payments to G & F Stead "on account of contract for fixing milestones: £200". This was in the Minutes of a Finance Accounts Sub-Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1894.

Then early in March an exciting email was sent to Jan Scrine. Brian and Lesley Whittaker who live in Stoke had found some old family papers. Brian's great grandfather was Gill Stead and he was a master stonemason in Mirfield in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He won the contract with the newly formed West Riding County Council to supply and erect milestones and fix attachments to them. The agreement is dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 1893. With his son Frank he agreed to supply 619 stones and erect them in 12 months between 1893 and 1894.

Part of the agreement was also to give the attachments another coat of paint once they were fixed on! An interesting fact here is that they would be painted dark blue by the founder and the Steads would put on another coat of blue. The letters were to be picked out in white. Over a century has passed but no remnants of blue paint have been seen so maybe the County Council changed their minds and specified black on white.

And what were they paid for this immense task? £1,140 in instalments and a penalty if they didn't complete the job in 12 months.

The roads they had to work on extended to Sedbergh, Harrogate, York, Thorne, Bawtry, Wales (the Yorkshire one), the west of Sheffield, Saddleworth, Hebden Bridge, Earby and to the boundary with Lancashire near Kirkby Lonsdale.

The stone had to come from the Horsforth Quarries or had to be of equal quality and approved by the county surveyor. Each one had to be 6 feet high and 6 inches thick. It had to be rough boasted except where the iron plates were fixed and those parts had to be smooth.



The stones still in situ that have lost their attachments clearly show this. [Picture left] There were to be four bolt holes and the stone set two feet into the ground.

This was a tremendous undertaking and one wonders if they made any money out of it; or whether indeed they had to pay any late penalty.

Of the roads in the contract it seems that no new milestones were erected on the two miles of Yorkshire road from Sedbergh to Kirkby Lonsdale, and 11 miles of the Kirkstall, Otley & Shipley turnpike as they still have most of their original stones. The Wakefield and Sheffield turnpike that was to have two stones, somewhere, has two different styles of V shaped cast metal post that never had backing stones. Also the solitary stone for the Staley(bridge) road and four on the Holme Lane End and Heckmondwike road are no longer there, even if they were put up.

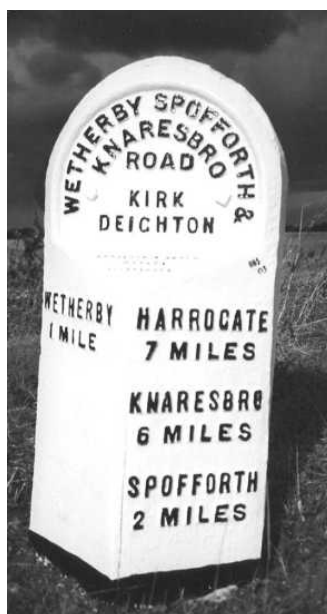


[Left] A lot of patience required to paint up to 160 characters and [right] an example of the flat type used where space was limited.

The other sixty three roads have evidence of the work of the Steads. Some stones have been lost completely or the attachment has disappeared but over half are still there. There are about 350 with three more in private hands. Of these 17 have no attachment, 13 are quite badly broken and four have slight damage to the metal. A number have been re-painted by our members and other agencies. Rotherham council is particularly good at looking after its stones. This is no mean feat when you see how many words and numbers are on some of the stones – up to 160 characters to be picked out in black.

One complication when erecting the stones was that some had to be placed in very restrictive places for instance on a footpath in Sherburn in Elmet, on the old narrow bridge over the River Holme in Holmfirth and on the canal bridge in Uppermill. In these places larger stones had flat attachments. Eleven of these are still in place.

Looking at these milestones carefully has thrown up another query. On some of the Brayshaw and Booth castings the legend is horizontal and on others it is at an angle. There is no pattern to where these two styles were used and it doesn't seem to relate to the amount of lettering. [Examples below left and right.]



From the evidence that we have it would appear that once the West Riding was formed they set about 'improving' their image. In the last decade of the 19C they financed the erection of these spectacular milestones along many of the major routes. Hopefully Gill Stead fulfilled his contract within the allotted time and didn't have to pay any penalties. But Chris Marcus tells me that the Saddleworth area was divided into four parts, Friarmere, Quickmere, Shawmere and Lordsmere in the early C20. The B & B stones there have those names on but these roads were in the Stead's contract. Another puzzle to be solved.

Since Christine submitted the original article to the editor of OTG Stephen Skellern has done further extensive research amongst the WR Archives and unearthed the following: -

12<sup>th</sup> October 1892. County Councillor Ellis proposed. County Councillor Frank seconded and IT IS RESOLVED:-

That 643 Milestones six inches thick, with iron plates, bolted, showing the name of the road, township and mileage to nearest towns according to the design in diagram B presented to the West Riding Highways



Committee be obtained and fixed at an estimated total expenditure of £1446.15.0 and that tenders be invited for the supplying and fixing of Milestones accordingly with power to the Chairman of the Highways Committee to accept such tender within the above estimate as he shall think fit. *(If you can remember how to work out £sd that is £2 5s 0d each)*

11<sup>th</sup> January 1893. Purchase of Road Measurer, Labour etc £70.0.0

10<sup>th</sup> January 1894. Highways Committee confirming Report on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1893 G & H(sic) Stead. On account Contract Milestones: £100.0.0

14<sup>th</sup> March 1894. Accounts approved by the West Riding Highways Committee (26<sup>th</sup> February 1894) G & F Stead. On a/c Contract Milestones: £100.0.0

2<sup>nd</sup> May 1894. Finance Committee continued. G & F Stead for J Vickers Edwards. On account of Contract for fixing Milestones: £200.0.0

25<sup>th</sup> June 1894. Highways committee continued. G & F Stead. On account of Contract for Milestones: £200.0.0

10<sup>th</sup> October 1894. Highways Committee continued (24<sup>th</sup> September 1894). G & F Stead. Balance of Contract for new Milestones: £540.0.0.

That adds up to the sum in the contract. And if you work it out they were paid only £1 18s 0d per stone. So the careful West Riding Councillors had saved 7 shillings on each stone from their original estimate!!! This also shows that the Steads completed the contract on time with the last payment being less than two months after they were contracted to finish the work.

Also in 1894 on 26<sup>th</sup> February the Highways Committee approved a payment to Charles Squires for the sum of £5.2.8 for Wooden Stakes for Milestones and on 17 December a further payment of £0.8.8 for Wooden Stakes. What were these stakes for? Perhaps they were for the surveyor to mark where each stone was to be erected.

Then on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1896... From the Schedule to the Finance Committee's Reports relating to the Highways Committee: Messrs Stead. Discharge of all claims £68.0.0

At a Highways Committee Meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> February 1896. The Minutes state: 'Mile Stones – Steads' Contract. It was reported that a claim had been made by Messrs. Stead, the Contractors for the supplying the new Mile-stones in the West Riding, amounting to £126 for extras upon their Contract in respect of castings which had been condemned by the West Riding surveyor. Resolved – that the consideration of Messrs. Steads' Claim be delegated to the Accounts Sub-Committee with full power to deal with the matter as they may decide.

23<sup>rd</sup> March 1896. The Highways Committee of the West Riding County Council met and decided according to the Minute: - Milestones – Steads' Contract. The Accounts Sub-Committee reported that in accordance with the delegation of the Committee at their last meeting, and after very careful investigation, they had agreed to pay Messrs. Stead, the Contractors, the sum of £68 in full and complete discharge of all claims they might have against the County Council in respect of the Milestones Contract, and that a settlement had been brought about upon those terms.

So there is a lot of detail about the Steads' part in the erection of the County Council milestones but Stephen has been unable to find any references to payments to the various founders of the castings. That piece of the story may never be known.

There is a table with details of the roads listed in the Steads' contract, the number of stones to be erected, those still in situ, those that have been lost and who made the castings. Copies can be obtained either electronically or by post from.

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Tel: 01226 753599 – email [frankminto@talktalk.net](mailto:frankminto@talktalk.net)

## SOME MORE REMOTE MILESTONES

**On the Zeal Tor Tramway, Dartmoor.** In response to the request to find a milestone that is furthest from a metalled road, Tim Jenkinson from Devon has found two contenders in fairly close proximity. In 1847 a short stretch of tramway just over three miles in length was constructed between Crossways and Shipley Bridge on South Dartmoor in order to transport peat from the high moor. The trucks laden with the 'black wood', as it was known locally, trundled over the wooden rails bolted onto stone sleepers. It seems that milestones were erected along the track to guide the workers



and two are still extant. The furthest into the moor can be located at grid reference SX 6609 6488. Standing at 1479 feet above sea level it is 1.9 miles from the nearest metalled road. It had fallen in recent years and the stone was reset on 30 April 2004 by members of DNPA and the Dartmoor Society. It stands on the north side of the track bed and is inscribed with '2 / Miles'. It is thought to measure a distance to the old peat works at Shipley Bridge which operated until 1850.

The second stone can be found about a quarter of a mile east of the '2' milestone at SX 6645 6468. It is a pointed, leaning, black-faced marker set on a small mound beside the tramway and has the curious '3/4' legend. Successive Dartmoor commentators have argued that this stone either measures a distance to Crossways or is set at the one and three quarter mile point from Shipley Bridge. Given its position both interpretations are correct.



**Remote in Scotland.** Ron Westcott of Coulsdon, Surrey suggests that the series of milestones to Cape Wrath lighthouse in the extreme north-west of Scotland should be regarded as most remote. The eleven miles route has no connections with any other road and the only access is by foot or by the little ferry across the Kyle of Durness.

The granite stones appear to be of fairly recent origin and it

has been suggested that they were erected by the military whose presence on Cape Wrath is well known. They are numbered from 1 to 11 from the lighthouse. When Ron cycled the route a few years ago he observed numbers 1, 2, 3, 10 and 11. The condition of the road (track) was such that he decided that keeping an eye on the road surface ahead took priority.

## POINTING THE WAYS – The Fingerpost Column

After much consultation the fledgling fingerpost database has now been formatted by Alan Rosevear. The most notable difference from the milestone database is the removal of dimensions. Free text columns, as used in the toll house database, allow for entering any extra relevant information not covered in the other fields. A recording sheet for use 'in the field' has yet to be produced.

One delay was in the creation of abbreviated entries for the description of fingerpost parts. The most complex concerned finial descriptions numbered over twenty different types.

Finds of pre-1939 iron fingerposts made by Royal Label Factory keep turning up nationwide. They are mostly singular survivors, examples have been found in Dorset, Essex, Kent, Bucks and Lancs. At the time of writing two near Abersoch are being renovated by Signpost Restoration Limited. Ayrshire still has many extant Royal Label posts.

**BERKSHIRE.** No pre-1939 fingerposts were known to survive in 'old' Berkshire until John Nicholls happened upon one while completing his survey of the Bucks county boundary. The A308 between Staines and Old Windsor parallels the River Thames and a few hundred yards into Berkshire may be found a cast iron post with two arms. It was made by W H Smith of Whitchurch, Shropshire and probably 100 years old. It displays a couple of significant features; the makers mark has the addition of SALOP that has not been noted on other W H Smith posts in Cheshire and Staffs. The legend on the arm pointing to Egham and Staines is also of curiosity value – EXCEPT AT / HIGH WATER. Presumably the A308 was prone to flooding from the Thames along the low lying side of the river opposite Runnymede Island.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.** [John V Nicholls] A survey of Buckinghamshire's pre-1939 cast iron fingerposts was carried out in 2007-08. The results showed that surviving old posts were not quite as rare as first thought. The condition of them varied greatly and many are in dire need of attention. A total of fourteen were located. Of these eleven were by an unknown maker (but could be Hub Ironworks of Chipping Norton, Oxon) with broad annulus finials with the legend 'BUCKS / COUNTY' and arms with rounded corners similar to those found in Oxfordshire. A twelfth one of similar design was also recorded at Mursley. That one has a slightly different finial and two of the three arms made by Franco Traffic Signs Ltd. The third arm is a replacement made by Gommies Forge, Princes Risborough. The main difference is the materials of the attachments; those in Bucks (except the Mursley one) being cast iron while those in Oxon appear to be (zinc?) spelter. The pillars are generally taller than those in Oxon and have additional ring mouldings. Archive photos indicate that this type of post was once common throughout Bucks.

At Preston Bissett there is a single survivor manufactured by the Royal Label Factory (RLF) of Stratford-on-Avon. It is in less than fair condition with its annulus finial now broken off. Archive pictures show that there were other RLF posts at West Wycombe and near Marsh Gibbon, the latter probably only disappearing in the past twenty years.



Another rare survivor is the post at Slapton. It was made by Ellacott of Plymouth Foundry. Photos in Rodney Marshall's collection show that about twenty years ago this post was in poor condition and on the opposite side of the road. It has an unusual stylised pine cone finial as shown in the inset below.

Thanks to Helen Hyre [Bucks] for helping to discover some of the posts.

Known Bucks Pre-1939 Fingerpost Survivors		
Place name	Grid ref	Notes
Fawley	SU750858	Good condition
Chalfont St Peter	TQ005958	Arms missing
Penn	SU907936	Good condition
Penn	SU905942	Good condition
Chenies	TQ017983	Good condition
Marsh Gibbon	SP646230	Good condition
Preston Bissett	SP666283	Only fair condition
Slapton	SP932204	Fairly good condition
Soulbury	SP882274	Single arm – rusty
Wing	SP890224	Single arm remains
Hanslope	SP802471	Very rusty
Mursley	SP815289	Fairly good condition
Lee Green	SP900042	Good condition
St Leonards	SP904066	Recent restoration

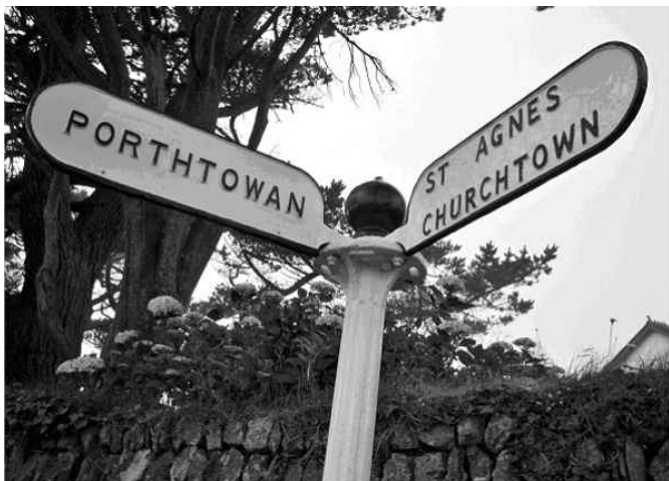
**CORNWALL.** [Ian Thompson] **New arms for an old post.** Cornwall has a fantastic collection of granite milestones and guide stones. The survival rate is very high, thanks to the good work of Cornwall County Council. The same cannot be said of its fingerposts.

Narrow roads, sharp corners and ever higher and longer vehicles have meant that the arms of fingerposts are broken off. If the column is broken, it may be replaced with a scaffold pole inside a resin replica column and fitted with plastic arms. The situation is not good.

The village of St Agnes on Cornwall's north coast is fortunate to have a privately funded Improvement Committee.

The Committee bought and maintains countless benches at suitable viewpoints and locations around its beautiful parish. It enhances the village with flower beds and gardens. It paid for new street name plates. The latest project is to have new arms made for a special fingerpost.

The fingerpost stands at a crossroads to the west of St Agnes in front of the Lamorna House Hotel at SW713499. The shaft of the fingerpost is fluted and splays at the top to form a horizontal disc pierced with vertical slots. Each arm is attached to this disc by two large bolts and nuts. The arms have semi-circular ends. The finial is a large ball with a point, like a very big onion.



The fingerpost was listed in 1988, when it had three of its original four arms (IoE Number 63749). The photograph on the 'imagesofengland' website, taken in 2002, shows only two arms. The St Agnes Improvement Committee has engaged a foundry at Hayle to cast two replacement arms, which the Committee's Clerk of Works will paint and install, so that once again all four directions at the crossroads are indicated.

Six foundries are known to have made fingerposts in Cornwall. Just visible above the grass at the base of the column of this fingerpost are the words CARN BREA, reading up the column. The rest of the inscription is buried, suggesting that the column was broken and re-erected at some time. This must refer to F. Bartle & Sons, Basset Foundry, Carn Brea who were in production between 1860 and 1951. They were not a big manufacturer of fingerposts and this is a very rare survivor.

**EAST SUSSEX.** The post at Flimwell (see MSS newsletter



No.15) next to the A21/A268 crossroads received a well deserved facelift in late 2007 or early 2008. The post was manufactured by Royal Label Factory and a plaque nearby

details its recent history. It reads: 'This Sussex guidepost was rescued in 1986 / and restored by J.Alsford Ltd. Craftsmen. / Originally erected at / Flimwell crossroads 1931-33 / unveiled 31<sup>st</sup> August 1987 / Now preserved as an item of historic / interest on this present site.' The restorer seems to have used a bit of licence in the manufacture of a new finial that incorporates a stylised fir tree with the letter 'A' (initial of the restorer?) in the centre. It is almost certain that the original finial would have been a narrow annulus, characteristic of Royal Label Factory posts. The latest refurbishment involved the making of at least one new wooden arm.

**MIDDLESEX.** Colin Woodward reports that Middlesex has scattered examples of fingerposts of varying dates. There have been recent restorations including four in the L.B. of Harrow. The L.B. of Hounslow has restored the last remaining one at Bedfont and also replaced another at Feltham that had disintegrated during dismantling. Luckily the annulus finial survived and Colin Woodward was able to obtain it and pass it on to John V Nicholls. A number of posts were also fully restored in the Southgate area during 2006-07. The work was carried out by Signpost Restoration Ltd. During the strip down of parts in the workshop it was revealed that one of the finials was a recycled item. When the old paint was removed an old ground out legend HUNTINGDON became visible.

**KENT.** Although a dedicated fingerpost survey has yet to be undertaken in Kent the list of finds has slowly increased during the past twelve months with over 100 located. Colin Woodward (Middx) has been photographing further posts while carrying out his Kent milestone survey. Colin noted that the post in Loose, near Maidstone, had been painted since it was recorded by John V Nicholls in 2007.



The iron fingerpost in Wittersham is surmounted with a crude 'homemade' annulus finial. A rescued finial of the right type and legend is set into paving near the village war memorial. John Nicholls suggested (via the Tenterden TC town clerk who lives in the village) that the finial be lifted and fitted to the post. It was raised at the parish council meeting where it was decided that the correct finial was the wrong size and should not be

moved. As a concession they agreed to remove a large 'neighbourhood watch' sign from the fingerpost, another recommendation by John Nicholls.

In August 2008 a post belonging to West Kingsdown was advertised for sale on an architectural garden centre website. The details were accompanied by an image showed the post in its original roadside location, which set off alarm bells. The parish clerk was contacted by email who expressed concern and a desire to have the post back. The following day the post was withdrawn from the website. As this issue of OTG was being finalised no further details had been obtained.

**NORTHUMBERLAND.** Iain Davison reports (via an article in 'Coastal Views' publication for The Northumberland Coast AONB) that three old fingerposts have been restored. The restorations were carried out in 2007 by Signpost Restoration

Ltd at Glororum and Embleton. The project was funded by Northumberland County Council and Natural England. New parts were produced for those broken or missing and the assemblies then given seven coats of paint. A pilot 'new' historic sign at Embleton could be used in the future to replace ugly, modern signage in the AONB.



Before [photo David Gosling 2007] and after [photo Derek March 2008] at Embleton.

**OXFORDSHIRE.** The survey of pre-1939 Oxon fingerposts carried out by John Nicholls, Derek Turner and Robert Caldicott continued into late 2007 and early 2008. A total of 25 have been located (OXFO03 at Bix being an old cast arm re-used on a later steel pillar) although there are a few more potential sites yet to be visited. All have been placed into the database. Derek is going to extend the entries and add the later post-war fingerposts with the 'OXFORDSHIRE' annulus finials. Some of these are very recent in origin.

Oxfordshire CC continues to refurbish posts, for example, the two in Deddington, which is the good news. The bad news concerns the post at Bletchington (or Bletchindon – either spelling is correct) that was badly damaged by a JCB digging holes close by. Two arms were smashed during the uneven confrontation. The finial was also knocked askew but probably salvable. The parish council have matters in hand and are working to have new arms made. Work was underway by mid-August when Derek Turner observed that the post had been stripped down and the empty pillar awaiting reassembly. Before and after pictured here.



The two posts in Eynsham have both lost their finials but if new can be made then the posts are not beyond redemption.

Another that has lost its finial is located on the A436 at Cornwell. Although certainly an Oxon post it actually stands a few metres inside Gloucestershire. Perhaps it was moved from one side of the crossroads to the other to improve the sight line at the junction. The post is of the short type and the arms could block the view for drivers. So the question is who will take responsibility for it?

John Nicholls also observed a variation in one of the OXFORD / COUNTY types. The finial atop the post in Sibford Ferris has a slightly smaller diameter and its single arm has square ends rather than rounded corners. Immediate thoughts were that the parts might be replacements. It is now known that this is not so after seeing photographic evidence. There was one standing in the centre of Chipping Norton in the late 1930s with the same features.

The Hub Ironworks of Chipping Norton may have been makers of the Oxon posts although this cannot be positively verified.

The table below shows the finds. The oldest are likely to be OXFP01 and OXFP02 in Woodcote that could date back to the late 1890s. OXFP01 is in a sorry state with missing finial and arms. As can be seen below, OXFP02 is in good condition with a pawn finial and cast into the pillar is a shield with the legend CR / DC that is believed to be for Crowmarsh Rural District.



Known Oxon Pre-1939 Fingerpost Survivors		
MSS I/D	Place name	Grid Ref
OXCO1	Deddington	SP467315
OXCO2	Deddington	SP468314
OXCO3	Islip	SP527139
OXCO4	Islip	SP527139
OXCO5	Sibford Ferris	SP360375
OXCO6	Highmoor Cross	SU699843
OXCO7	Watlington	SU685944
OXCO8	Britwell Salome	SU670932
OXCO9	Kingston Blount	SU739995
OXCO10	Middle Assendon	SU739857
OXCO11	Bletchington	SP501177
OXCO12	Cornwell	SP259277
OXCO13	Eynsham	SP434092
OXCO14	Eynsham	SP432092
OXCO15	Swalcliffe	SP369379
OXCO16	Tadmorton	SP402372
OXCO17	Lower Tadmorton	SP390379
OXCO18	Glympton	SP426215
OXCO19	Oxford (County Hall)	SP510061
OXCO20	Stonor	SU736893
OXCO21	Cuxham (south)	SU664953

OXC22	Cuxham (north)	SU659961
OXFP01	Woodcote	SU656827
OXFP02	Woodcote	SU644819
OXFP03	Bix (Re-used arm only)	SU732845

**SHROPSHIRE.** A start has been made to determine the locations and photograph the remaining original cast iron



fingerposts, one of which in the Claverley parish (recently repainted by SCC Highways) is illustrated here. There is an SCC shield cast into the post near to the base which is not visible in this photo.

## TRADITIONAL FINGERPOSTS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

David Start, Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire

In common with many English counties, Lincolnshire's rural fingerposts survived largely unchanged into the 1990s. However, the 1994 revision of the Traffic Signs Regulations heralded the start of their replacement with a modern counterpart – a grey coated steel pole with reflective arms of sheet aluminium; without doubt, more efficient, but completely lacking in character. In Lincolnshire our traditional versions come in a range of cast iron, concrete and timber and many have county, RDC or parish names incorporated. In the smaller details of their design they are distinctive of Lincolnshire – even particular to the old counties of Lindsey, Holland and Kesteven, with variations right down to parish level.

About ten years ago, local historian Jean Howard began to notice the steady losses of traditional fingerposts and launched a campaign to try to save the survivors from extinction. She joined forces with the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire and together we consulted with the county's Highways and Planning Dept. Although they were at first mystified as to why we would want to keep the old signs, the idea slowly grew on them and in 2000 a working group called "Traditional Roadsigns in Lincolnshire" (TRIL) was formed with the County Council and the Heritage Trust together with Jean Howard and interested elected members. An agreement to save the traditional guideposts was drawn up and published in the form of a 'Memorandum of Understanding'.

To our surprise we found there was no official record of where fingerposts were situated other than that shown on old O.S. maps; thus it was impossible to say how many there were or how many of older types survived. Clearly the first task was to undertake a survey and this work was undertaken by the County Council through the staff of the Historic Environment Record. They visited every fingerpost location shown on O.S. maps and noted whether the original guidepost survived and its form and construction.

The results of the survey are fascinating. They recorded 106 cast iron fingerposts, 11 of timber and 229 of concrete with wooden arms surviving in the county. The distribution is distinctive with most of Lindsey with concrete, Kesteven a mix of cast iron and concrete and Holland largely (and most

**STAFFORDSHIRE.** John Higgins has been adding further finds of old posts to his Staffordshire data including many wooden examples. Although some may be of recent origin John has decided to go for a 'catch all' method to ensure that older posts do not slip through the net.

**SUFFOLK.** Only three pre-1939 iron fingerposts are known to survive in the whole of Suffolk. These were duly recorded on Boxing Day 2007 by John V Nicholls.

**WILTSHIRE.** Mike Faherty has been recording old rural fingerposts found during his milestone surveys in south and west Wilts. All finds have been entered in the new fingerpost database. Rod Smith reports that away from rural parts five pre-1939 cast iron posts survive in Swindon. These will be re-surveyed and added to the Wilts data.

elegantly) in cast iron. In Kesteven and Holland the posts often bear an annulus with the old county (and sometimes parish) name. The cast iron posts are often datable as many bear maker's marks. The earliest, dating to around 1900, were made by James Coultas Ltd of Grantham. Others were made by Stanton (1920s to mid 1930s), Duckerings (1920s to 1960s) Royal Label Factory (1921 to 1939) and several by unknown makers. The concrete posts are of two types, octagonal and square. The former are thought to be earlier, probably pre-war, while the latter are likely to date from the 1950s.

The Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was chosen as a pilot area for the refurbishment of signs and funding was found through the county council and the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service. Not only were surviving signs refurbished but some recent losses were reinstated, particularly in sensitive areas. New moulds for square and octagonal concrete posts were commissioned and excellent facsimiles were produced by Woodside (Precast) Concrete Ltd of North Lincolnshire.



'Lindsey' type (concrete and timber) fingerpost in the Lincolnshire Wolds before and after refurbishment.



Virtually all the surviving concrete and timber guideposts in Lincolnshire have now been refurbished and we are steadily working our way through the cast iron posts, although progress with these is slower because they are about three times more expensive to refurbish than a concrete and timber post. New arms and fittings are being cast by local firm, Rundles, at New Bolingbroke, near Spilsby.

Lincolnshire County Council Highways Department have been immensely supportive throughout this project and particular praise must be given to the staff of their Technical Services division who have set and maintained high standards of workmanship for the refurbishment and reinstatement of traditional guideposts.

A spin-off from the TRIL project has been a growing awareness of the condition of milestones and mileposts in the county. Currently we only have partial survey data for the south of the county and virtually no data for the north. It is hoped that this situation can be remedied in the next couple of years and that a similar campaign of repair and reinstatement

can be undertaken. For now, milepost repairs are being dealt with on a case-by-case basis.



Refurbished cast iron mileposts at Horbling and Swarby

## THE FINGERPOST FINIALS OF DORSET

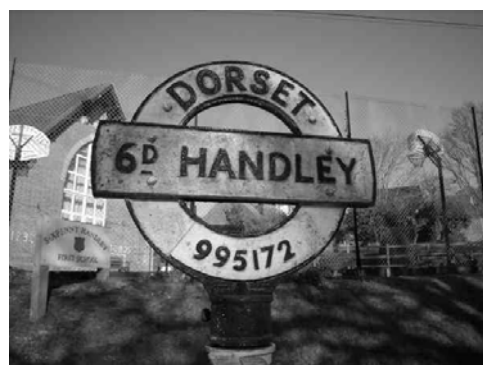
John Tybjerg – Dorset Representative

### Introduction.

The increasing range of the Society's interests over the past few years means that fingerposts are now a well established subject. Dorset is a very rural county and nearly every small road junction between, and in, the numerous villages seems to have, or has had, a fingerpost. I had not originally intended to add a full county survey for fingerposts to my repertoire, as there must be close to a thousand of them and Dorset County Council is repairing them when the need is reported.

One noticeable, and often quoted, feature of Dorset fingerposts however is the finial. This is a hollow centered circular plate approx 310 mm external diameter and 190 mm internal diameter with a horizontal plate approx 410 mm x 100 mm across the middle. In May 2007 I was contacted, through the Milestone Society's website and Robert Caldicott, by Mr. Brian Toop from Dorchester. Brian used to work for DCC and in 1975 became concerned that many of these finials were being lost, due to theft, damage or the introduction of modern reflective signposts, and not replaced. He set about researching their history and touring the county to photograph surviving examples. This produced both an accurate record of how they came into being and a wonderful collection of 260 black and white close up photographs of finials that contained the Regional Authority, the place name of the fingerpost and its six figure Ordnance Survey grid reference.

Brian kindly loaned me his collection to copy, along with two articles he had written for



Dorset magazines and newspapers, a number of letters he had written during his research and copies of some DCC letters of the

1950s that referred to the naming of the locations.

### History.

The design of the Dorset finial originated from Mr. J J Leeming, the County Surveyor in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He informs us that the marking of place names on signposts was not unusual at that time. In Gloucestershire and Devon it was put vertically down the Post, which did not make it easy to read. Mr. Leeming decided to put the place name on the finial and a design incorporating the name on a horizontal plate across the centre of the circular finial was worked out by the manufacturer, The Royal Label Factory at Stratford on Avon. The suggestion to put the grid reference on came from a friend of Mr. Leeming – Professor A.N. Black of Southampton University. Mr. Leeming also said in his letter to Brian Toop that his design was copied by the then West Yorkshire, who asked his permission, and Berkshire, who did not.

The finials were manufactured by the Royal Label Factory from sand cast aluminium and were primarily used on 'fingerposts and direction signs, particularly those incorporating anti-rotation devices'. The main period of use, according to the Royal Label Factory, would probably have been about 1948-1964, when revised traffic sign regulations were introduced.

The ex-works cost in 1961 was about £2, which by 1975 had risen to £6.70 and today a replacement cast aluminium finial costs about £150.

The original names were checked with Colonel Charles Drew, the Curator and Secretary of Dorset County Museum in Dorchester. They decided to generally follow the names shown on the then current Ordnance Survey maps rather than go too far back in time to original spellings. To quote Colonel Drew "You could hardly change SWANAGE back to SWANWICH or POWERSTOCK to POORSTOCK, however desirable it may be from the viewpoint of pure English".

The first two finials to be put in place were the ecclesiastical pairing of Hell Corner, near Yetminster and God's Blessing Green near Wimborne. Both still exist today.



Hell Corner and God's Blessing Green.

A booklet was issued in 1964 by the then Ministry of Transport called 'Information Signs for use on all purpose Roads'. It said that finials may still be used at the discretion of Highways Authorities and also stated that 'this practice is a useful source of guidance and interest on roads which do not carry heavy volumes of traffic and are not therefore signed to the highest standards; it should only be adopted in rural areas and then not on primary routes. The finials should always have black lettering on a white background.'

Despite the various re-signing schemes since then the Dorset policy has been to incorporate the existing finials within their re-signing programme wherever possible. This explains the small number of original Finials that exist today above green and yellow reflective signs.

### The Situation Today.

Brian Toop's record of 260 finials was taken as the starting point from which Mike Faherty and I searched the county. Brian had divided the county into 10Km grid squares and numbered them 1-37 for recording purposes and this system was maintained, with the addition of 26A and 26B to cover parts of Dorset which were originally in Hampshire and have retained Hampshire style finials.

Whilst exploring the county other likely junctions and crossroads were checked and new finds duly recorded. We also recorded another style of finial not recorded by Brian, namely that without a horizontal plate and place name. Some of these have DORSET C.C. around the top part of the circle and a six figure Grid Ref around the lower part of the circle but others have only DORSET C.C. on them as shown below.



'DORSET C.C. / 914 972' has lettering with serifs indicating recent manufacture whereas the plain lettering on the other example would possibly be made at an earlier period.

Numerically the situation today is:

- Of Brian Toop's 260 original photos 110 exist today.
- Further named finials found 68.
- DORSET C.C. finials recorded 50.
- DORSET C.C. plus grid ref finials recorded 43.
- Total finials recorded 271.

Unfortunately since we started the current survey in June 2007 at least two named finials have gone missing. There is however a positive effort by DCC to restore and replace finials where possible (more of this later) so hopefully numbers will rise, although the format may be more DORSET C.C. finials and less named finials.

### Finial Styles.

Within the three basic designs there are subtle variations in layout and lettering style, which actually give 16 different styles, plus 1 more for the ex-Hampshire finials now situated in Dorset. (I have sent many photographs to the Editor but must leave it to his discretion on space available as to how many can be shown!)

The most popular style is the full hollow circle (annulus) with a horizontal named plate and grid reference. The Grid reference may have no space in it, e.g. '842375' or a space as in '992 980'. A few have a hyphen at the start and finish of the name, more likely where the name uses two lines, e.g. FARNHAM / -MINCHINGTON FARM-. Three other minor variations are one finial that has the horizontal cross plate but no name or grid reference, two finials that have a name plate and a grid ref plate fixed on separately and of course Dorset's famous Red Post which has a red finial with white lettering.



The 'DORSET C.C. + Grid Ref' style may have the grid ref with or without spacing as above, the lettering can be with or without serif and there may or may not be full stops after the letter C's. Within these options five variations exist – all of which look like fairly new replacements. Some older style finials have a grid ref painted on or applied using adhesive numbers. One local variation has had a circular centre plate inserted with the name place on it!



The DORSET C.C. style has the wording cast into the plate at the top over an approximately 135 or 180 degree sector.

The five ex Hampshire Finials now in Dorset are all of the same design – a circular Finial with HAMPSHIRE at the top and the place name at the bottom. Interestingly two of these have only the place name in black, not 'HAMPSHIRE' but three have both place name and 'HAMPSHIRE' in black. The Hampshire finials are made of cast iron – not aluminium like Dorset.

### Arm and Pillar Styles

Arm styles and construction vary greatly. The original arms were wooden with wooden letters screwed on. Recent repairs are more likely to be plastic arms if the whole arm needs replacing, with either raised or flat stick on plastic letters or, on original wooden arms, raised plastic screw on letters. (I can also assure you that if DCC could find a suitable environmentally friendly material finials would be plastic as well!)

There are however two extremely fine examples of well restored fingerposts where arms and letters are a single cast

iron piece.

Most pillars are plain cylindrical metal posts but nine have been found that are cast iron and have the makers name cast into them. Eight of these are by 'LOTT & WALNE ENGINEERS DORCHESTER' and one is WIGHTMAN & DENNING CHARD. As always it is not until you spot the first example that you look a little closer at every new post so it is quite likely that a few more older posts exist.

#### **The Future.**

I wrote to Eastern and Western Highways Areas at DCC and both replied to me. The Eastern Area reply said that they replace them as and when they can when it is brought to their notice. Jon Munslow at the Western Office invited me to visit him (8 years of trying and finally a foot through the door!) He is an extremely pleasant person and explained that in many ways Eastern and Western Areas work as one and he is the Asset Manager for the whole of the county. He will now be my point of contact for all fingerpost, milestone and bridge plate inquiries. He has a large map database with all fingerposts marked and their details available but not unfortunately in a format that at the moment can easily print off a list of finials. I have agreed to feed him all the information we have on finials, milestones and bridge plates and we will, as much as we can, act as the eyes and ears for Dorset.

Jon is committed, as much as his budget will allow, to maintaining all these items and thinks that by working with the Conservation Department and the Dorset AONB Team there may be scope to increase the budget.

On the way home I updated some photographic records but overshot one fingerpost, as it was flat on the ground. A vehicle had recently hit it but all the pieces were still there. The arm and finial were safely removed and will have been returned to DCC by the time you read this article.

#### **Names.**

The greatest fascination for me throughout the search has been the wonderful variation of names found on finials. I have already mentioned the name of the first two finials made and the checks carried out when allocating a name. Some of the names are obvious, like Charminster Cross, Farnham and Horton but others capture the rural delights of the county. The finials at Edmonsham The Stocks, Dark Lane, Alderholt Batterly Drove, Holme Lane Toll Bar and (my favourite) Long Crichel Guffhams Lane still exist. Unfortunately the names of Manston Lighthouse (22 miles from the sea!), Burials Drove, Cranborne Dead Man, Stagg's Folly, Pig Oak, Cuckoo Lane, Dick O'The Banks, Coombe Keynes Crate

Barn and Coombe Keynes Maggot Hill are probably lost forever.

Some finials have had a name change since Brian Toop took his photographs some 33 years ago, indicating that they have definitely been replaced. Horton Balls Pond is now called Three Legged Cross. This is the village name but a check on the 1920s OS Map shows Balls Pond – an actual pond – close to where this finial is today.

#### **Missing Finials.**

What then replaces a missing finial? In some cases it has been another place name finial or a DORSET C.C. style finial. In many cases however the answer is either nothing, the broken remains stay there or, where the fingerpost itself has been repainted, a small black or white hexagonal plastic cap.

With the support of Dorset County Council we may now be on the road to reversing some of these trends and will hopefully see an increase in the number of finials in Dorset. As Jon Munslow said to me, "They will be useful for everybody that has a grid reference position available from their GPS but doesn't really know where they are!".

#### **Postscript – A cautionary note.**

Peter Nelson of Newbury photographed this Dorset post at East Morden on the B3075. The grid reference on the finial reads 913 094. Beware if you are absolutely relying on the grid references on the finials as this one was obviously cast in error. 913 094 is about ten miles to the north in the fields between Pimperne and Blandford Camp.



## **MARKING THE BOUNDS – Boundary Markers**

**BERKSHIRE.** Peter Nelson (Newbury) has continued in his quest to locate the remaining county boundary markers of Berks. All routes crossing the boundary with Wiltshire and Hampshire have now been checked. A sample of the now lost Berks and Wiltshire boundary (now Berks and Oxon) crossings were checked but no markers were located. The boundary with Surrey was checked out by John V Nicholls and a further two 'lollipop' markers were located (with thanks to Lionel Joseph for confirming the one near Runnymede). A third was later located in Sunningdale by Peter. This one is no longer on the county boundary; the boundary was extended into Surrey in 1991.

Totals so far are 17 cast iron 'lollipops'; one new plastic composite lollipop; the ancient 'Imp Stone' (recorded as

'Nymph Stone' on Roque's map of Berks of 1761). Next to the lollipop at Summerlug is what is probably a rural district boundary stone that records (Berks side) B/BRDC and on the Hants side H/BRDC. So far not fully recorded or photographed is a modern granite lollipop marking the Berks and Oxon boundary set into the west parapet of the Thames bridge at Sonning, east of Reading. It is believed to have been set in place in 2000.

Peter noted that the lollipop on Welshman's Road (SU 6162 6404) had toppled into a ditch in February 2008. After he reported it to West Berks Council it was quickly re-erected.

See Peter's website at <http://pnelson.orpheusweb.co.uk> for his map and illustrations of the Berks boundary posts and

also for the Buckinghamshire boundary he is hosting on behalf of John V Nicholls.

**DEVONSHIRE.** [Tim Jenkinson] **Plymouth City Boundary Stones Rescued.** Two boundary stones mysteriously disappeared in January 2008 during supposed building work in Elm Road, Plymouth. The stones which are dated 1893 and 1875 respectively are from a series of similar markers that are quite randomly positioned across the city streets to commemorate the reigns of various Victorian Mayors and recognise the valuable contribution of local historian R.N.Worth to the history of the city. Shortly after their disappearance the stones were reported to Plymouth City Council (PCC) by fellow Devon Milestone Society member Mark Fenlon who was able to provide photographs and details of their exact locations.



An ensuing investigation by Police revealed that the stones had been 'acquired' by a local person, were duly recovered by PCC, and are now firmly set at the roadside in a concrete base. Mark is pictured beside the rescued stones, an excellent result but how many more are at risk in the city from unscrupulous developers? There are tentative plans afoot to furnish PCC with details of all city stones of this type. But, shouldn't they already know where they are?

**GREATER LONDON.** (Colin Woodward & John Nicholls) Some London Boroughs have large numbers of surviving boundary markers of all types. Notable for parish boundary stones are Ealing, Hammersmith, Camden and Greenwich. It is currently not practical within the resources of the Society to record all of these. Rodney Marshall (Luton) loaned John Nicholls his small collection of boundary marker photos among which were a number of London examples. The photos were taken over the last couple of decades and it is hoped the status of these markers will be determined once specific locations are determined.

Many of the Victorian London coal tax boundary posts, plates and pillars now lie within Greater London. The last 'official' survey of survivors took place in the 1970s when over 200 were still in situ. Several were recorded by John Nicholls during his survey of the Buckinghamshire county boundary where it abuts the former Middlesex.

**STAFFORDSHIRE.** John Higgins reports that boundary posts are being included as part of the Staffordshire milestone painting programme. The Staffs group has refurbished eleven Stafford Borough boundary posts like this one illustrated here in Sandon Road, Stafford, dated 1917.

## 'BEATING THE BOUNDS' OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

John V Nicholls

It was not quite beating the bounds but certainly involved beating up and down the roads and lanes crossing back and forth across the Bucks county boundary. At least petrol was cheaper in late 2007 and the opening of 2008 when a project to record all the surviving county boundary markers was decided upon.

Why Buckinghamshire boundary makers? The search was partly motivated by Peter Nelson's survey of the Berkshire boundary. [See *'On the Ground'* 2007, p26] I was aware of four of the iron 'lollipop' boundary posts (three on the Bucks and Oxon boundary and one on the Bucks and Beds) so curiosity was probably the main motivator. Were there more surviving lollipops and if so were there any on the other county boundaries with Northants, Herts, Middlesex, Surrey and Berks? And would there be other types of marker lurking in the roadside undergrowth?

Very little research was carried out before undertaking the survey other than to determine the shortest route from one county boundary crossing to the next. Buckinghamshire is not a large county but still has a boundary of nearly 200 miles. Use was made of OS Explorer maps and the MAGIC and Old-maps websites to find boundary stones (BS) and boundary posts (BP) although once 'on the ground' these sources proved to be unreliable.

The survey was carried out over a period of nine trips; the first two were combined with final searches for pre-war fingerposts in Oxon. The trips were frequently random so a search along the Northants border might be followed by a trip to the Middlesex border. For the sake of clarity the results of

the survey below will shown as a continuous clockwise route from the River Thames near Henley-on-Thames to the River Thames near Staines. No boundary markers associated with Surrey and Berks were found where the old Bucks boundary follows the course of the River Thames. Only roadside marker locations were checked; some are shown off-road on maps but these were not sought out.

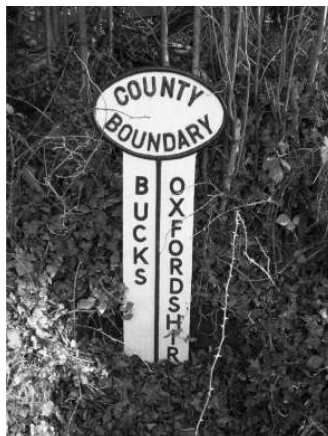
**Up the BUCKS/OXON boundary.** The first target was on the A4156, a mile east of Henley. Nothing was found so a minor road towards Fawley was taken until a nice cast iron BUCKS / COUNTY fingerpost was reached. The turning towards Lower Assendon was taken but a BP shown on the Explorer map was missing. On reaching the B480 turn right to Middle Assendon and then right again at the cast iron OXFORD / COUNTY fingerpost. A little way up the lane on the east side of the road can be found the first 'lollipop' boundary post. It in very good condition and bears the legend BUCKS / OXFORDSHIRE.

The map indicated a BP on the next boundary crossing but nothing was found although the next two in Turville parish were where shown on the map and duly recorded.

No further markers were located until the lollipop on Thame Bridge. The road over the River Thame is now just a footway since the closure of the road when the Thame bypass was built. Painted to match the bridge paint colour it has the legend BUCKS / OXON. No markers found at the next two boundary crossings.

The boundary markers on Ickford Bridge, south of Ickford village, are certainly the most interesting and the oldest of any

around Bucks. The narrow bridge over the River Thames is a listed building and a pair of boundary stones are set into a refuge over the eastern cutwater. One reads 1685 / HERE ENDS THE / COUNTY OF OXON and the other HERE BEGINETH THE / COUNTY OF BUCKS / 1685.



The two styles of 'lollipop' markers to be found on the Bucks and Oxon boundary,

The next series of boundary crossings include several stretches that follow along roads. No markers were found and one shown on maps on the old route of the A41 near Blackthorn did not materialise. North of the A41 the parish of Marsh Gibbon did come up trumps. Two BUCKS / OXON BPs were still in position on bridges over the river. The added bonus is a pre-war BUCKS / COUNTY cast iron fingerpost in the village although another iron fingerpost made by Royal Label Factory that stood half a mile to the east is no more. The only other marker in the area is a National Cycle Network post at Poundon. The black-painted marker is one of the type with a 'star' top and the space for extra text has the following: 'MILEPOST IS ON COUNTY / BOUNDARY (OXON/BUCKS)'

Of the remaining Bucks/Oxon boundary crossings just one further lollipop survives. This is at Tingewick and has been concreted in place.

**Along the BUCKS/NORTHANTS boundary...** Two



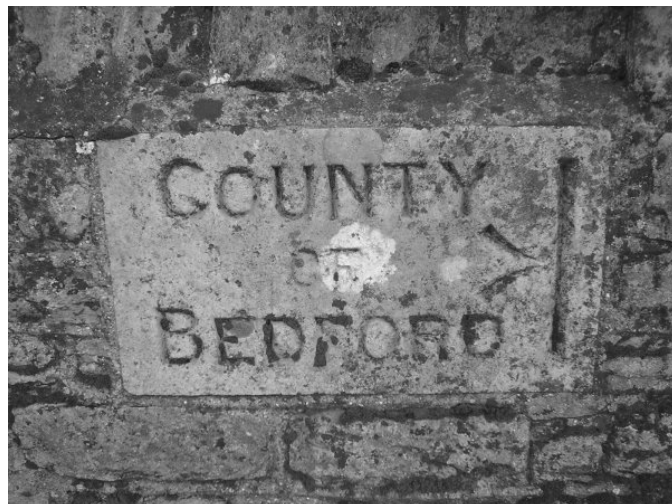
lollipop markers both bearing the legend NORTHANTS / BUCKS were located on bridges at Turweston [pictured left] and Biddlesden. They are slightly different from other lollipop BPs in that they do not have the vertical support brace running up their backs. One BP shown on recent maps near the Silverstone motor racing circuit was not found. It probably disappeared when major

road improvements were carried out on the west side of the venue.

**Down the BUCKS/BEDS boundary...** The first marker along this section, a BEDS / BUCKS lollipop on the minor road between Lavendon to Harrold, showed that the boundary surveyor was subject to fallibility. Overlooked during the survey but fortunately Michael Knight (Beds rep) coincidentally included a photo in his contributions for OTG.

The next marker was found on the centre of Turvey Bridge. It is a rectangular stone set into the parapet with BEDS and an

arrow head on edge against a vertical stroke. Strangely there was no evidence of a Bucks boundary mark.



The Bedfordshire boundary stone set into Turvey Bridge.

Two BPs are shown on the Explorer map west of Cranfield but only one was located. It was a BUCKS/BEDS lollipop in North Crawley.

The next two shown on Explorer no longer exist. The first would have been on a former boundary now re-routed to run along the centre of the M1 motorway. The second loss is one of two marked on the map within a hundred yards of each other in Wavendon. Its companion BUCKS/BEDS lollipop survives.

A detailed study of the boundary was not carried out in the Woburn Sands area where it runs through mostly housing. The next two on the map were missing. The first alongside the road from Little Brickhill to Woburn was close by a boundary oak tree. The tree is still there but no sign of the boundary post. The next is shown where the boundary crosses the busy A5 road. This particular site might be worth another look when the grass is not so high.

Continuing south and a lollipop may be seen at the entrance to Shotgrove Country Park. Due to its prominent position it would benefit from a new coat of paint.

The last boundary markers on the Bucks and Beds boundary are on bridges. The first is in the form of a stone plaque set into the eastern footway on Slapton Bridge. Legend reads; BEDS – BUCKS / RESTORED 1881 / RECONSTRUCTED 1990





There are two stone plaques on the parapets of Eaton Bray (Beds) Bridge. Both are weather beaten and difficult to read. One bears the legend BUCKS-BEDS / REBUILT 1898 and the other (unsurprisingly) BEDS-BUCKS / REBUILT 1898.

**The disappointing BUCKS/HERTS section...** Just three markers were found and all were concrete posts bearing the legend 'HERTS / CC / BDY'. The Milestone Society has an entry for a Herts/Bucks boundary post on the edge of Tring town although its existence is not verified. There appears to have been a small change in the boundary at this point (possibly after the Tring by-pass was built) so a further search will need to be undertaken as the MSS database indicates the possibility of iron lollipop markers.

**And finally BUCKS/MIDDX...** Initially there was little hope of finding anything significant on this partly urbanised county border. The most numerous markers to be found were London coal tax posts and bridge plaques. Two bridges at Uxbridge bear interesting plaques/markers but neither bears any relevance to the county boundary



The north parapet of Colnbrook Bridge with the BUCKS-MIDDX legend in the parapet copings and coal tax plaque below.

The most interesting boundary point has to be on the bridge in Colnbrook with no less than five markers and legends. Carved into the parapet copings are the legends 'MIDDX - 1777 - BUCKS' on the south side and BUCKS - 1777 - MIDDX' on the north. Also on the north parapet is a

Victorian coal tax plaque with its associated coal tax post on the Middlesex side of the bridge. And finally, there is a recent plaque on the south parapet commemorating the strengthening and refurbishment of the bridge by Surrey County Council in 1993. Yes, those boundary changes can get confusing!

Coincident with the old Bucks and Middlesex are a number of the City of London coal tax markers; bridge plaques, posts and one obelisk. They have not been included in the Bucks county boundary survey as they deserve a separate survey of their own. The last marker found on the Bucks survey was in fact a coal tax post on the B376 on the boundary between Wyrardisbury (now commonly Wryasbury) and Staines. On the opposite side of the road and just off the boundary is a final artefact worthy of mention. It is a large a coal tax obelisk of the type placed next to railways. A legend at its base records it was re-erected at the site in 1979 by the Meadhurst Club and Wryasbury History Group. It was originally located near Wyrardisbury station..

Significant markers on the Bucks boundary		
Location	Type	Grid ref
Fawley	'Lollipop'	SU742860
Turville	'Lollipop'	SU737898
Turville	'Lollipop'	SU728928
Thame Bridge	'Lollipop'	SP703065
Ickford Bridge	Stone plaques	SP648064
Marsh Gibbon	'Lollipop'	SP636200
Marsh Gibbon	'Lollipop'	SP629235
Poundon	NCN post	SP632247
Tingewick	'Lollipop'	SP640326
Turweston	'Lollipop'	SP599379
Biddlesden	'Lollipop'	SP631402
Lavendon	'Lollipop'	SP934546
Turvey (Beds) Bridge	Stone plaque	SP938524
North Crawley	'Lollipop'	SP947439
Wavenden	'Lollipop'	SP930378
Soulbury (Shotgrove)	'Lollipop'	SP908280
Eaton Bray (Beds) Bridge	Stone plaques	SP964203
Slapton Bridge	Stone plaque	SP932216
Little Gaddesden (Herts)	Herts CC Bdy	SP982142
Little Gaddesden (Herts)	Herts CC Bdy	SP978129
Tring (Herts)	Herts CC Bdy	SP877176
Colnbrook Bridge	Parapet legend	TQ027770

## FINAL SNIPPETS

And another issue of 'On the Ground' completed. I hope that there is something for everyone within its pages and I always welcome feedback. Thank you to all contributors and if your submissions have not been included then they will either be held over to next year or sent for possible use in the newsletter. Thank you also to Mike Hallett for indexing all five OTGs to date and for proof reading this issue.

Now a few last snippets to even up the bottom of this page. Firstly some milestones news from the pages of the **GLOUCESTERSHIRE** newsletter. The survey of West Glos was completed by members Keith Walker and Ruth Hirst. 71 milestones were located from a total of 125 locations. David McDougal, a trained conservation officer, undertook the restoration of a milepost in the parish of Redmarley. The work was promoted by the parish council and partly funded by the local district council.

**More boundary marker** observations have been received from Mike Knight during his travels. One interesting find was an iron 'lollipop' boundary post of the type surviving around Bucks and Berks. Along the A52 near Donington may be found one such post with the old Lincs boundary names HOLLAND/KESTEVEN. Mike points out that concrete boundary posts are common across the UK and many line the A1 in Huntingdonshire. Perhaps a unique survivor is one with the legend 'H & PCC'. The Hunts and Peterborough county councils only came together for a few years after the 1974 boundary changes.

## Unidentified photographs from the Ken Diamond collection.

When we set about indexing the Diamond Albums, one of the identifying fields was the county in which item was situated. Most of the pictures had an inscription that helped with this and that together with our reasonably good grasp of UK geography saw most of the sites identified. However there were still a number of pictures that gave us no clue as their location. Having taken the albums to various meetings we had filled in a few of the gaps but there were lots still to go.

Our Chairman (David Viner) suggested making up a sheet with a number of these “unknowns” for circulation with a future Newsletter. This was done and the sheet published. There was an instant and remarkable reaction. The first messages came through on the day that we had received our copy of the newsletter. They kept coming and in fact I had a rather belated one only in mid July 2008.

The response to the question of identification was a bit mixed. In the case of 13 out of the 31 pictures presented there was a unanimous vote for the location. However that left 18 (of the 31) with either a mixed response or, in a few cases, no response at all.

Some of the respondents had clearly misunderstood the purpose of the search and had just looked up some directory of street names and so were able to tell me that there were (say) 20 places where picture x and 15 possibles for picture y could be situated. I had hoped that someone with local knowledge would be able to say “I know that post and here is a picture of it today”. That did happen in some cases. As an example my first picture “Mount Vernon” brought forth a mix of 5½ votes for Glasgow, 2 for Lancaster, 1 for Hampstead

and ½ for Thurso. I could have added 1 for Barnsley but I didn’t because I *knew* that the sign was not for that Mount Vernon. On the other hand I learned that I seemed to be only person in the world who didn’t know that Three Mile Stone was in Cornwall.

The results from the first set circulated is:

Certainties:

Holmsley Station - Hampshire

Threemilestone - Cornwall

Hogpits Bottom - Hertfordshire

Gaspar - Wiltshire

Twentypence Road - Cambridgeshire

Knockhundred Row - Sussex

Endless Street - Salisbury

Pennyfathers Lane - Hertfordshire

249¾ miles to London - Cornwall.

There were no suggestions at all for:

Furlong Road (incidentally there is a Furlong Road only a couple of miles from Wombwell. But I know that it is not that one).

Diamond Road

County Gate.

All of the others brought forth suggestions from almost the length and breadth of the UK

Below is another small selection from the collection awaiting identification. Your responses please to:

Frank Minto 10 Derwent Place, Wombwell, Barnsley S73 0RT Tel: 01226 753599 – email [frankminto@talktalk.net](mailto:frankminto@talktalk.net)



## INDEX VOLUMES 1-5

The first volume of **On The Ground** did not have numbered pages. For the purpose of this index, the pages of Vol. 1 are treated as if they had been numbered in order to give the reader a general indication of where within the publication to find an item.

	Vol , Page	Vol , Page		Vol , Page	Vol , Page
Aberarth, Ceredigion		3, 16	Cape Wrath		5, 19
Adlington, Cheshire		5, 2	Carn Brea, Cornwall		3, 5
Advisory Leaflet 6/05		3, 3	Castleford, Yorks.		4, 6
Aluminium plates		2, 10	Caxton Gibbet, Cambs.		3, 4
Amlwch		5, 13	Caxton, Cambs.		4, 8
Anglesey		5, 13	Ceint Bridge		5, 15
<i>Arran, The Milestones of</i>		2, 12	Cenarth, Ceredigion		3, 16
Ashcombe, devon		3, 6	Ceredigion		2, 13
			Charmouth, Dorset		3, 7
Babbacombe, Devon	1, 8	3, 6	Chatteris, Cambs.		4, 7
Banbury, Oxon.		3, 10	Chellaston		2, 11
Bangor		2, 13	Chineham, Hants.		3, 8
Basset Foundry, Carn Brea		5, 20	Chipping Ongar, Essex		4, 11
Bath	3, 10	5, 10	Christchurch		4, 22
Bathford, Somerset		4, 26	Clapham Common		3, 8
Beedon, Berks.		3, 12	Coleford, Devon		4, 21
Biggleswade, Beds.		1, 6	Colnbrook		5, 28
Bill Bradley memorial		1, 16	Colyford, devon		4, 10
Blandford, Dorset		3, 7	Compton Pauncefoot, Somerset		5, 10
Bletchington, Oxfordshire	5, 8	5, 21	Concrete		2, 11
Bodmin Turnpike Trust		4, 20	Conservation work		2, 3
Boreham Forge, Essex	3, 18	4, 22	Copyright		1, 14
Borrow Bridge stone, Yorks.		3, 14	Cornwall Painting Partnership		5, 2
Boundary markers	3 19	4, 25	Cotland, Monmouthshire		4, 18
		5, 25	County boundary markers		4, 26
Bowes, Yorkshire		1, 14	County milestones		5, 16
Bowling Ironworks	4, 8	5, 16	Covan Bridge stone, Yorks.		3, 14
Box, Wilts.		4, 26	Customary Miles		1, 13
Brackley, Northants.		3, 10			
Bradfield, Essex		3, 8	Dartmoor National Park	3, 6	4, 10
Bradley Green, Worcestershire		5, 11			5, 3
Bradley stone	2, 9	3, 20	Database		2, 1
Brayshaw and Booth	4, 4	4, 17	Deppers Bridge		1, 2
		5, 16	Diamond Collection		5, 29
Brenchley, Kent		1, 15	Didcot, Oxon.		4, 13
Bridge plates		4, 27	Dinmore, Herefordshire		3, 8
Bridgwater		5, 9	Doncaster to Saltersbrook Turnpike		3, 14
Bristol Turnpike Trust		3, 10	Donovan, John		5, 1
Bruton, Somerset		4, 15	Dorset fingerpost finials		5, 23
Buckingham to Banbury Turnpike		3, 10	Dorset fingerposts		3, 3
Buckinghamshire boundary markers		5, 26	Dunoon Pier mileposts		4, 18
Bugford Bridge, Devon		3, 6			
Bute		5, 12	Eagle Foundry, Northampton		4, 25
Butterleigh, Devon		5, 4	eBay	2, 2	5, 9
			Ellesmere, Shropshire		4, 14
Cadw		1, 11	English Heritage		3, 5

	Vol , Page	Vol,	Page		Vol , Page	Vol,	Page
Epping & Ongar Highway Trust		4,	11	Iwerne Minster, Dorset		4,	11
Erpingham, Norfolk		5,	7	Izod's post		3,	1
Farnley Tyas, Yorks.		4,	4	Ken Diamond Collection		5,	29
Farringdon, Oxon.		3,	13	Kenilworth, Warwickshire		3,	13
Fibreglass		2,	11	Kennington, Oxon.		3,	13
Fife		2,	12	Killinghall, Yorks.		4,	16
Finch Seamans foundry, Braintree		4,	22	Kimbolton, Cambs.		3,	4
<i>Finding Worcestershire Milestones</i>		5,	11	Kineton, Warwickshire		3,	14
Fingerpost database		5,	19	Kirkby Lonsdale		1,	13
Fingerpost finials		5,	23	Kirkheaton Moor Top		4,	17
Flimwell, East Sussex		5,	20				
Flockton		2,	14	Lanreath, Cornwall		3,	5
Fosse Way		1,	2	Leigh-on-Mendip, Somerset		3,	10
Four Lane Ends stone		4,	16	Lincolnshire fingerposts		5,	22
Franco Traffic Signs Ltd		5,	19	Liskeard Turnpike Trust		4,	8
				Liskeard, Cornwall		3,	5
Gaydon, Warwickshire	1, 2	3,	18	Little Bentley fingerpost		3,	3
Gillingham, Dorset		3,	7	Little Chalfont, Bucks		3,	4
Great Torrington Turnpike Trust		4,	10	Llanerchymedd		5,	13
Greater London		5,	5	Llangefni		5,	14
Guisborough, Yorks		1,	12	Lollipop markers		5,	27
				Long Ashton, Somerset		5,	9
Haleworthy Turnpike Trust		3,	5	Lower Caldecote, Beds.		4,	6
Halford, Warwickshire		3,	13	Luxulyan, Cornwall		3,	5
Halo post		3,	2				
Halton Shields, Northumberland		5,	7	Maldon Ironworks	1, 15	4,	22
Harrogate to Ripon road		5,	12	Manchester		4,	12
Hawkspur, Yorks.		4,	5	Marcham, Oxon.		3,	12
Hebden, Yorks.		3,	15	Membership		4,	1
Heckingham, Norfolk		2,	5	Merridge Common, Somerset		3,	11
Hemingford		5,	5	Micro-chipping		5,	3
Heritage Protection Agreement		3,	5	Middelton Stoney, Oxon.		3,	9
Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire		5,	22	Middleton, Yorks.	3, 15	4,	17
Hertfordshire representative		5,	1	<i>Miles to go</i>		5,	8
Highway Authorities		2,	3	Milestones Museum		2,	9
Hingham, Norfolk		4,	13	Motcomb, Dorset		2,	4
Holyhead Road		5,	13				
Honingham, Norfolk		5,	7	National Grid		4,	24
Horbling, Lincolnshire		5,	23	Newquay, Cornwall		4,	8
Horseport, Hants.		3,	8	Newton Bridge, Somerset		3,	10
Horsham St Faith, Norfolk		3,	9	Noah's Ark		3,	12
Hosier, Audrey		3,	5	Norton Heath, Essex		4,	11
Hub Ironworks, Chipping Norton		5,	19	Norwich to Cromer Turnpike Trust		3,	9
Hundred House Trust		1,	7	Norwich to North Walsham Turnpike		1,	8
Hunstanton, Norfolk		4,	13				
Huntingdon		3,	4	Ockham, Surrey		3,	11
<i>Hutton Moor Road</i>		4,	9	Old Frome Road, Somerset		3,	10
				Orwell, Cambs.		5,	2
Industrial Archaeology, Association for		4,	2	OS Maps		1,	14
Ingram of Ripon		5,	12	Oxfordshire Turnpikes		1,	3



	Vol , Page	Vol , Page		Vol , Page	Vol , Page
Parish Councils		2, 4	Stone Hill Gate, Hants.		3, 8
Pelynt, Cornwall		3, 5	Sutton, Beds.		4, 6
Pendle. Lancs.		4, 26	Swanage, Dorset		1, 10
Petrockstow, Devon		5, 4	Swarby, Lincolnshire		5, 23
Plymouth Eastern Turnpike Trust		3, 6			
Plymouth, Devon		3, 18	Tedburn St. Mary, Devon		5, 3
Plympton, Devon		3, 6	Telford, Thomas		5, 13
Postcards	1, 10	4, 1	Temple Herdewyck, Warwickshire		3, 13
Povey Cross, Surrey		3, 11	Tenterden, Kent		5, 7
Powys		2, 13	<i>The Measured Mile</i>		3, 5
Publicity		2, 14	Theft	1, 4 2, 15	1, 11 5, 1
Quantock Hills		3, 11	Threlkeld, Cumbria		4, 9
			Torquay, Devon		3, 7
Red Post	3, 4	5, 24	Traditional Roadsigns in Lincolnshire		5, 22
Redmarley, Gloucestershire		2, 5	Traffic Advisory Leaflets		2, 15
Replacement plates		2, 11	Tring		5, 28
Restoration		3, 17	Trinity Hall		4, 7
Rigton Ridgeway		3, 15	Trossachs milestone refurbishment		5, 13
Road Traffic Act		2, 10	Turnpike toilet		5, 5
Roman milestones		4, 6	Tusmore stone		5, 8
Rothsay		5, 12			
Royal Label Factory	3, 20	5, 19	Verge cutting		2, 16
Runnymede		1, 15			
			Wadebridge, Cornwall		3, 5
Salisbury ox drove		5, 11	Wakefield and Sheffield turnpike		5, 17
SALVO		3, 13	Warwickshire Turnpikes		1, 3
Sawtry, Hunts.		4, 25	West Challow, Oxon.		3, 12
Scawsby, Yorks.		3, 14	West Kingsdown, Kent		5, 20
Shepton Mallet, Somerset		4, 15	West Riding County Council		5, 16
Signpost Restoration Ltd		5, 19	Weston-on-the-Green, Oxon.	1, 5	3, 9
Silk Willoughby, Lincs.		4, 27	Wetherby, Yorks.		4, 17
Sixpenny Handley, Dorset		4, 27	Whixley, Yorks.		3, 15
Skillingtons		5, 5	Winder Foundry of Gaitbeck		4, 20
Smith & Patterson		4, 17	Wittering, Cambs.		4, 8
St Ives obelisk, Cambs.		4, 7	Wittersham, Kent		5, 20
St. Agnes Improvement Committee		5, 19	Wix, Essex		4, 11
Stafford		5, 10	Wooden replica		2, 11
Stainsacre, Yorks.		4, 16	Woodman's Corner, Devon		3, 6
Stanford Rivers, Essex		4, 22	Worcester cathedral		5, 11
Stanton, Ilkeston		4, 24	Wraysbury		5, 28
Stead, G & F		5, 16	Wroxton, Oxon.		4, 14
Stirton, Yorks.		4, 19			
Stock, Essex		3, 18	Zeal Tor Tramway		5, 18



County council cooperation in Devon. Council workers repositioning the milestone on Brandis Hill, Petrockstowe. The stone had suffered damage in October 2007 but since re-erection it will be highly visible to grass cutting machinery drivers.



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