

# MILESTONES & WAYMARKERS

The Journal of the Milestone Society

incorporating On the Ground

Volume Seven 2014





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incorporating **On the Ground**

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## MAIN CONTENTS

Emergency Powers and the Milestones	3
A Cheshire milepost	6
It happened at the milestone	7
The A34 – A Tribute to Ogilby?	11
From the Archives	
Lost mileposts of the Middx & Essex Turnpike	12
On the Ground	13
Scotland	20
‘Crossing the Pennines’ Heritage Trail	21
Milestones from Overseas	
Sri Lanka, Malta, New Zealand	22
Book Review: Moving Miles	26
The Roehampton Mounting Block and ‘Milestone’	27
Modelling the Roehampton mounting block	33
A new milestone for Bucklebury, West Berkshire	34
The history and restoration of Desborough Cross	35
One Hundred Years On...	
Waymarkers with World War One Connections	37
Wayside Stones at Alderley Edge, Cheshire	39
Marking the Bounds	
Brighton and Hove - A Boundary Stone Tour	48
A new Boundary Stone for Penzance	49
Presentation of the 2014 Terry Keegan Award	50
From the Archives: A First World War postcard	50
The Story of Beyond Graffiti	51
Feedback and Updates	53

## INTRODUCTION

This latest issue of one of the Society's two principal publications in print marks ten years of publishing this Journal, now firmly established as an annual publication and permanent place of record, especially as since 2011 it has incorporated the valuable *On The Ground* section, previously published separately.

Its seven issues between 2004 and 2010 together with seven issues of *Milestones & Waymarkers* since 2004 represents a significant archive, especially when taken together with the Society's six-monthly Newsletter, which by the turn of 2014/15 will have published 28 issues since the very early days of the Society in 2001.

Much has changed over that period, not least the growing use of the website to share new information and increasingly to record activities. The Editorial Panel endeavours to encourage all these forms of publication and is always looking for good-quality reports and articles as well as short write-ups, and appeals again for contributions. A good flow of material has been very welcome in recent years, which we hope will encourage others to join in. Support and advice is all part of the offer!

Looking back it is interesting how wide a range of material has appeared in these pages, testament to the Society's own growing confidence and interpretation of waymarkers in all their forms, as well as its core commitment to the physical evidence of the turnpike age. Articles in this issue reflect that, such as the research study at Alderley Edge and the Roehampton stone, a significant survivor.

More is always welcome, such as studies of individual routes, short as well as long (the A34 is currently a topic in focus), good old-fashioned accounts of runs of milestones and posts, especially where there is current preservation activity, and analyses of the success or otherwise of individual routes (perhaps local to you) as part of the highways network. Feedback on what has gone before is always welcome too, an indicator of a healthy dialogue.

*JVN & DV*

Cover Picture: This milestone, located in Victoria Park, Widnes, Lancs was damaged by a bomb dropped from Zeppelin L61 on 12 April 1916. 2014 commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of The Great War and there are a number of waymarkers showing various ways of memorialising the war. Pages 37-38 in this issue show three examples.

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# Emergency Powers and the Milestones

Keith Lawrence

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The Emergency Powers (Defence) Act of the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1939 enabled the government to control many aspects of the country by creating a series of Defence Regulations and Orders. This Act was similar in intent to the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) introduced on the 8th August 1914, at the beginning of the Great War. DORA had given the government a taste for control which they had applied during National Emergencies. DORA was never used against milestones and guideposts but it gave birth to the 1939 Act that subsequently caused much destruction and loss of stones under the Removal of Direction Signs Order (30<sup>th</sup> May 1940). This article tells the story of the Order from the announcement in the National Press to the reports in the Regional and Local Press. There is editorial comment about the need to remove guideposts in the weeks leading up to the announcement of the Order, a consideration of the reasons behind the timing of the Order and comment from around the country.

The Removal of Direction Signs Order 1940, made under Defence Regulation 4B, required the removal or obliteration of all direction signs which could be seen and understood from a highway, except such as are exempted from the Order by a chief officer of police. It is for chief officers of police to decide whether proceedings should be taken in any particular case where a sign is displayed in contravention of the Order, and in addition to taking proceedings the police may themselves obliterate, remove, or conceal any such sign. The maximum fine for contravention of the Order is £100 on summary conviction and £500 on conviction on indictment. This Order was to prevent the signs from being of value to an invading army.

The date of the Order has to be seen against an historic backdrop. The Dunkirk evacuation (Operation Dynamo) started on the 27<sup>th</sup> May through until the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940. The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had been defeated in France and the survivors had retreated to Dunkirk to be evacuated. The BEF lost nearly 70,000 men with some 330,000 repatriated over the nine day period. However it was the soldiers who came home; their equipment, over 2,000 field guns and half a million tonnes of supplies, remained behind in enemy hands. The danger of invasion of England by Germany was very real in the mind of the politicians and military planners, even though the British navy and air force were still potent entities. It is no surprise that the Removal of Direction Sign Order was announced on the 30<sup>th</sup> May - especially as during the first few days of the evacuation relatively few men had been returned to Blighty. Indeed the Daily Express headline for Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 1940 was TENS OF THOUSANDS SAFELY HOME ALREADY with subheadings *Many more coming by day and night* and SHIPS OF ALL SIZES DARE THE GERMAN GUNS. The other story sharing the front page was entitled 'Signposts to be removed.'

The removal of signposts was being discussed in local papers from as early as the 25<sup>th</sup> May as had already

been done in certain parts of Switzerland, a neutral country. There was a concern for motorists, especially after dark, but there was also a more pointed comment that no one should be undertaking pleasure trips. It was a general consensus that business drivers probably travelled along routes that they knew very well. Anyone who did get lost could always ask the way – "this would be barred to an enemy who had seized a car, unless he spoke perfect English. Otherwise his foreign accent would arouse suspicion." The immediate target of the proposed actions was German parachutists, as "even with a map they would still need the signposts to find their way." There was a marked similarity in the newspaper articles from places as far apart as Hull and Gloucester with the same phrases being used just in a different order. Indeed the *Gloucester Echo* and the *Gloucester Citizen* ran word identical articles, one as a news story the other an editorial comment. These articles were part of a softening up of the population to make them aware of the possibility of invasion as a consequence of the way the War had been going in Europe.

Figure 1. Sir John Reith. Minister of Transport.  
Ex Director General of the BBC.

The Ministry of Transport ordered the removal of all direction signs starting on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 1940. However the order cannot have come as a surprise to the local authorities as it was reported that the work in



Oxfordshire had been completed by the next day. This was the day that Sir John Reith, Transport Minister, had officially announced the signpost removal on the floor of the House of Commons – see Figure 1. In an answer to a question by Mr Hammersley as to "whether he will give instructions for the removal of sign-posts and direction indications", Sir John just stated that the instructions had been given and the work was put in hand on the 29<sup>th</sup> May. In the following speech Mr Richard Law, Finan-

cial Secretary to the War Office, reported that the action was being taken to “guard against the danger of parachute landings of men.”

The removal of direction signs was undertaken by a variety of agencies including Parish Councils, the District Surveyor's Departments of the County Councils and the A.A. and R.A.C. scouts. Many of the village signs had been erected by the A.A. Indeed they estimate they were responsible for more than 30,000 in 1939 as well as nearly as many direction posts. As quoted in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* – “millions of the familiar wooden posts and enamel plates are going in to store until the war is over. ... gangs of road workers have been busy digging up posts and taking them away by the lorry load.” As May turned in to June there was report after report that the work had been completed and comments about how it was done started to appear. Under the heading “Naked Posts” in the daily column ‘Diary of a Yorkshire Man’ (*Yorkshire Evening News*) it was quoted “that the latest types of metal signposts it had been comparatively easy to lift off the vital arms, leaving the posts looking strangely naked. The only thing to do with the older wooden signposts has been to uproot them. The sight of such a post lying in a ditch with a finger directing the traveller to Pateley Bridge via the Pole Star comes as something of a shock.” The milestones after the removal of the angular metal facings “looked even more naked than the armless signposts.” There was some counter-evidence in this article as direction posts lying in a ditch do not suggest they had been removed for storage. This local dumping was also suggested by a photograph in the *Western Morning News* of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1940 entitled the Graveyard of Signposts where metal posts had been uprooted and dropped into a moorland thicket – see Figure 2. It was also reported from the West Riding of Yorkshire that milestones were being “chipped with a chisel ... and now they are dumb.” The article then went on to comment on what was clearly seen as an act of vandalism. “Never since milestones were first put up on the rolling English road have the milestones lost face – except when old age has made them speechless. Their gashed faces now have brought the war to the quietest of country lanes.” Similar sentiments were evident in Derbyshire their concern being that – “Many of these stones represented an interesting link with the past and one wonders whether it will ever be possible to restore them in their original condition.” What was of particular concern was that the “old-time spellings and the quaint abbreviations” were not lost forever. This damage had never been the intention of the Government as the instructions for milestones are quite clear – “a chisel should not be used to cut out lettering on milestones, it is in direct conflict with instructions. Heavy stones should be removed beyond the fence of the road, or to some place where they can be hidden from view, and those of light construction should be placed in storage.” Indeed, by the middle of June articles “from the authorities”, started to appear in the local press assuring the readers that there was no excuse for wanton damage of milestones. Leeds Corporation had provided a good example by taking the trouble to unearth the more noted milestones for storage in a depot. The Leeds Highway Engineer did comment that these milestones were very heavy. “We raised a three cornered

one from Otley road which weighed 1½ ton.” The most interesting stone had apparently been removed from Kings Lane end of Alwoodley Lane (approx. SE 286 407) and was inscribed:

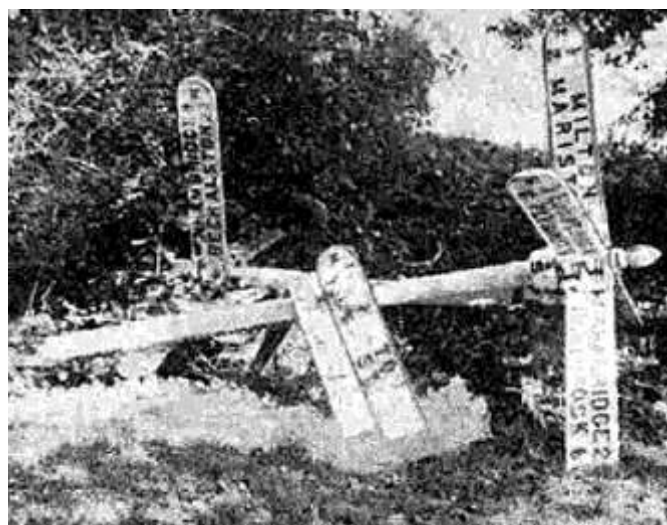


Figure 2. Graveyard of Signposts. *Western Morning Mail* (12<sup>th</sup> September 1940). Somewhere to Nowhere – Like relics of a past age, these signposts, uprooted in the cause of national preparedness, lie in a moorland thicket, pointing their fingers crazily to earth and sky.

I.B. 1764. To Leeds 4 m  
To Otley. 5 m  
To York. 20 m  
To Wetherby. 9 m

The Cornwall County Surveyor reported in July 1940 that the milestones had been left, but the iron plates taken away and stored. He assured the Cornwall Highways Committee that “no milestones had been disfigured”. While many of the Direction Posts and Milestones had been in place for many decades the new signposts around Exeter erected to define the recent extension of its boundaries were removed only two weeks later.

There was an interesting aside to the removal of the milestones as quoted in the *Nottingham Evening Post* (4<sup>th</sup> June 1940). “Silver articles, stolen 40 years ago from the house of the late Mr. Bryan L Acland, of Saffron Walden have been unearthed in the removal of a milestone three miles from the scene of the robbery.”

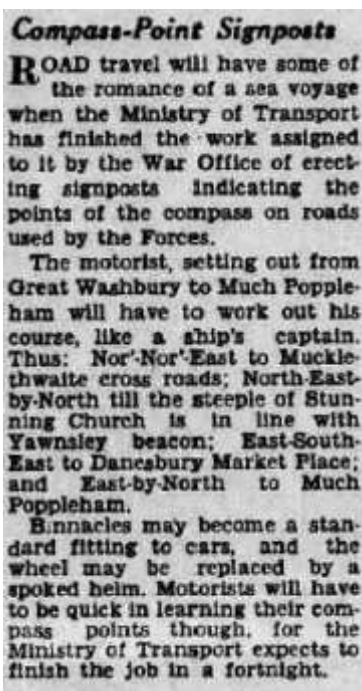
Certainly by August 1940 the interest in the removal of direction signs had waned but comments started to appear in motoring columns suggesting that the removal of signposts, “which has been undertaken with such meticulous thoroughness throughout the country”, could be seen as an opportunity. The proposal was to simply melt down all the metal signs to support the war effort and to renew the signage at the end of the war. “What price a uniform signposting system when Hitler has been relegated to his rightful place and motorists can buy unlimited petrol again.” From the motorist's point of view the direction posts were confusing, badly kept and badly sited. “They were placed right on junctions – the best signs give prior notice of what lies ahead.” It is perhaps fortunate that the advice on uniform signs was not followed until many years after the war and that both old and new signage now co-exist.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> June, on the floor of the House of Commons, Major Sir Jocelyn Lucas asked the Minister of Transport whether he is satisfied that the covering over of Automobile Association signposts on main roads, with brown paper, is a sufficient precaution against an invader? The Minister of Transport (Sir John Reith) replied. "I presume my honourable and gallant Friend has in mind a particular series of signs erected in Greater London. These signs have not been covered because they might have been of any service to the enemy. They have been provided for a special purpose, and the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis has issued instructions that, in order to avoid confusion, they should be temporarily covered until they are required." A mystery – nothing more was said in Parliament. The first indication of what these signs may be emerged in late August and early September when additional special signposts were placed on roads important to the military. They did not have place names on them but "eight points of the compass, such as 'To North-west' or 'To South-east'." The signs were produced by the Automobile Association having black letters on a yellow background. *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (31<sup>st</sup> August 1940) had their own take on the matter in London Notes and Comments – see Figure 3.

There is a much bigger story to tell on the removal of direction signs during the Second World War. It is hidden in the minutes of the Highways Departments, local newspapers reports and Parliamentary written answers. There is also the story of the replacement of the signs after the War. Figure 4 shows a local volunteer painting a wooden direction post after its replacement in 1946. This article is just a short introduction to the subject. However perhaps we should finish with a poem and a joke.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY (the crossing out is deliberate)

The little roads of England.



They twist, and turn,  
and wind.

And valleys dip before  
them.

And hills rise up be-  
hind.

Figure 3. *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*.  
31st August 1940. Pg 4.

Some of these signs have survived. For example in Bere Ferrers, Devon there are two in the village. They are DV\_SX4563A and DV\_SX4563B on the fingerpost database.



Figure 4. After the War – just needs a quick coat of paint.  
1946 Hertfordshire.

(Paul Townsend – Brizzle born and bred <http://www.flickr.com/photos/brizzlebornandbred/5313127093/in/photostream/> )

The signposts' painted fingers  
Stand here and there to show  
The way to men bemused – or did  
A little while ago.

The little roads of England.  
They rumble through the shires.  
They amble through green counties.  
Their hedges thick with briars;  
From parish unto parish.  
The way is clear to all  
And all the miles were measured  
Since Hadrian built the Wall.

The little roads of England.  
Are now anonymous.  
Because a comic housepainter  
Has put a curse on us;  
The signposts are dismantled,  
And no man knows the way  
By which he strode in confidence –  
Ah! Was it yesterday?

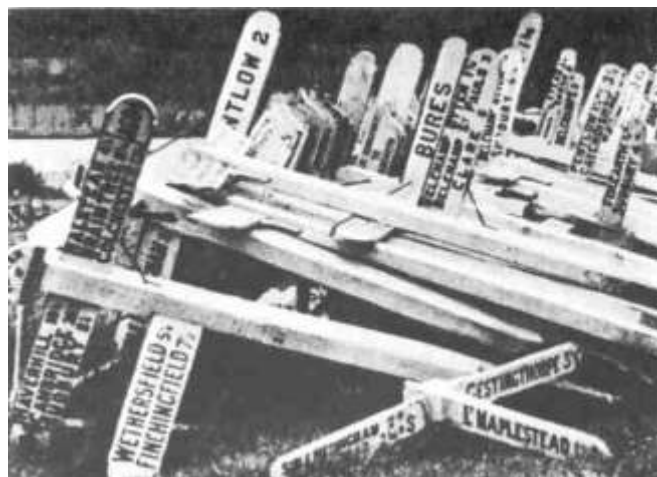
The little roads of England,

Into confusion thrown.  
 Go out from every village,  
 The course they take unknown;  
 They're mapped within our hearts yet.  
 Though nameless now they be.  
 And, labelled not, they point one way  
 Which is ..... To Victory!

RATZ

A Lancashire man motoring in the Yorkshire Dales stops at a crossroads, completely baffled. He asked an elderly native which road leads to Oldham. The native contemplated him steadily for a few seconds and then carried on his way, remarking, "If they'd wanted thee to know t'way to Owdham they wouldna' 'ave taken t' signpost down!"

However as a Lancashire man I happen to know that this is the normal way we are treated by Yorkshiremen, he did not need "The Removal of Direction Signs Order 1940" to act that way.



More 'casualties' from 1940 stacked 'somewhere in the north of Essex'.

## A Cheshire milepost

*Christine Minto*

Every year Frank and I sit for about 4 hours opposite this milepost CH\_CHTP06. You may ask, "Why?"

At 17 I joined a cycling club, Birdwell Wheelers. Birdwell is where the tallest milestone stands and is on our club badge. I went on long rides and holidays with other club members and then started racing from 10 to 100 miles. I also helped in the local 12 Hours Time Trial where the riders follow a set course until the last 2 or 3 hours when they ride round a finishing circuit where timekeepers are placed about every 2 miles so that the distance covered in exactly 12 hours for each rider can be calculated. Then in 1966 I heard that the following year there was to be the very first 24 Hours Time Trial for women in Cheshire and Shropshire. I was one of three entries and did the greatest distance.

In 1968 and 69 I rode again, on each occasion upping my mileage and winning. In subsequent years I have helped in the '24' together with Frank and then our son Philip. On the first day we marshal the riders to keep them on the correct route then on the second day we are timekeepers on the finishing circuit. A few years ago a circuit was established based on Farndon south of Chester and knowing our interest we were given the station opposite this milepost. There are several Cheshire CC posts still in place but we noticed this year that the one at Farndon on the A534 is sadly lying in the

long grass.



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## It happened at the milestone

Carol Haines

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In an age when there were far fewer roadside landmarks, milestones provided convenient site locations and reference points for many activities besides their main purpose of counting the distance between towns. Putting “milestone” into the subject box of the British Newspaper Archives<sup>1</sup> produced a wide assortment of references. It also provided proof that a milestone was in place by a certain date, particularly on roads that were never turnpiked, and brought to light some whose former existence was previously unknown. The advertisements and articles also gave an interesting insight into other activities taking place along Norfolk roads in the first half of the 19th century. Unless otherwise stated, all these were found in the pages of the *Norfolk Chronicle*.

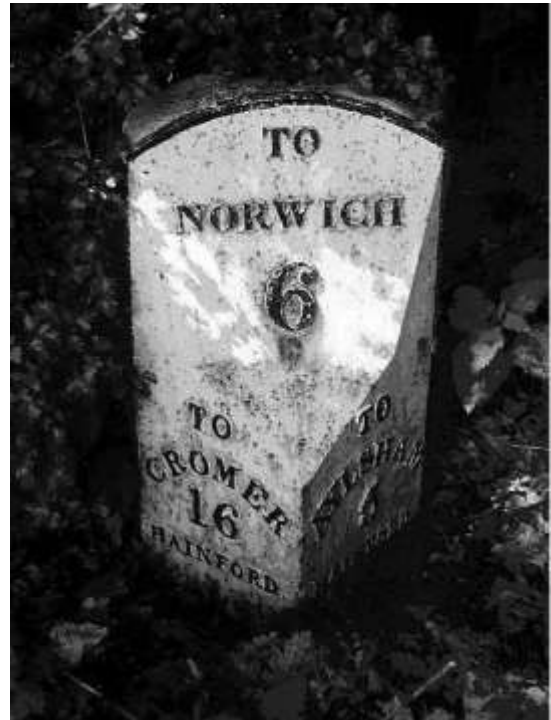
### Beside the road

The writer of a short article in February 1818 expressed great concern about canker in apple trees and “mealy insect of the cochineal tribe [which] is spreading its baneful effects very rapidly in other parts of this kingdom”. He noted that it “deserves the notice of the Horticulturist; and so attention is hereby directed to some trees of that class in the hedges at Tuck’s wood Farm, Lakenham, on the right side of the road by the first milestone from this city [Norwich].” A milestone is marked here as “Norwich 1” on the OS 6” map of 1882. It is thought that the Norwich to New Buckenham Turnpike, which started at Ber Street Gates and crossed the Norwich to Scole Turnpike south of the 2-mile stone, came down this road (now Hall Road). The milestone is not shown on maps later than 1908, and the area was completely developed just after WW2. A rather unusual event probably involving the same milestone was reported in August 1844 when the funeral of Samuel Hart, “late a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, took place with the usual honours paid to the deceased brother. A procession of the brothers, 60 in number, belonging to the Friend in Need Lodge, Duke’s Palace, proceeded to the house of the deceased in King Street, accompanied the body from thence to the first milestone on Prussia road; 12 of the brothers being bearers. The procession then returned, the body being conveyed to Hapton for burial.” From King Street in Norwich, the most likely route for the cortege would have been on the Norwich to New Buckenham Turnpike. In the 1840s an inn called the King of Prussia was situated near the crossing of that and the Norwich to Scole Turnpike. It was renamed the King George in 1914 when soldiers tore down the sign.

The following advertisement appeared on 27 July 1833: “Lost on Thursday last, between the Six and Seven Milestone on the Aylsham Road. A silk bag, containing a Handkerchief and a Bunch of Keys - whoever has found the same and will bring it to R Bowman, the Wood-man at Mr Marsham’s, will be well rewarded.” Both these cast iron posts survive (NO\_NC06 at Hainford and NO\_NC07 at Stratton Strawless). They were made for the Norwich to Cromer Turnpike in the

1820s. Mr Marsham lived at Stratton Strawless Hall.

Milestones feature as a convenient location marker in sale and auction notices. An advertisement in March 1819 publicised the auction at North Tuddenham of “58



NO\_NC06: lost bag at Hainford  
Ash, elm and alder trees and about 200 small ash trees lying in a plantation next to the turnpike road leading to East Dereham, opposite the 12 mile stone”. The milestone here, a replacement dating from 1868, is lost. An auction of wood was to take place on 11 March 1831 at Haveringland: “Upwards of 9,000 faggots, in lots of 60 each. Also, several lots of large alders and other poles. To meet at the 8th milestone on the Cawston road, at 11 o’clock.” Another auction of timber from Haveringland Wood was advertised for 9 March 1832, this time with the sale commencing at “the Nine Milestone on the road between Norwich and Cawston Wood row at 11 o’clock in the forenoon”. Although the woods at Haveringland filled a large area between two non-turnpiked roads with milestones, the directions indicate the road branching off the Norwich to Holt road at Horsford and leading into the village of Cawston. Only the defaced 10-mile stone survives (NO\_HoRE10), but early OS maps show a series of milestones, the 8-mile being next to Milestone Cottage and opposite Milestone Covert.

House sales also contain milestone references: “To let in the pleasant village of Thorpe. A genteel commodious dwelling-house ... seven good sleeping rooms neatly papered ... commands a most pleasant and extensive view of Whitlingham and the river to Yarmouth. Enquire of Mr Steward, near the 2 mile stone.” This appeared on 5 November 1831. Beside the same turnpike (Norwich to Gt Yarmouth) a “desirable estate” was

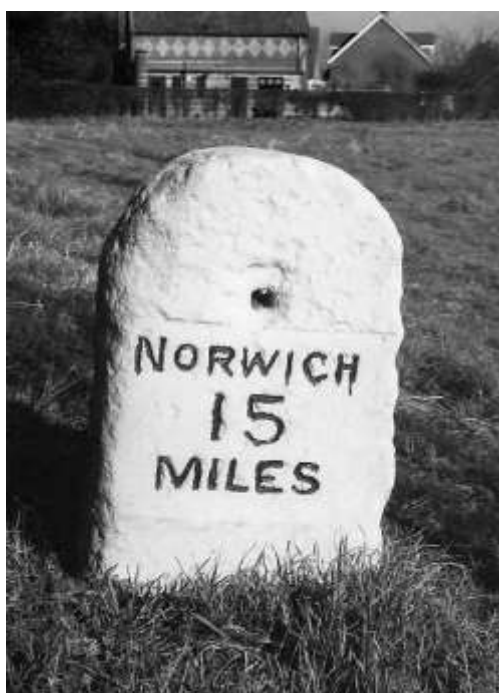


auctioned at Plumstead in August 1834, “pleasantly situated near the fifth milestone”. Neither of these stones survive, although the 2-mile stone can be seen in a photograph taken in the 1950s. It was probably lost during road alterations. A small farm for sale in June 1833 had a field called Mile-Stone Close in the parish of Tasburgh (Norwich to Scole Turnpike). Land to let featured in a notice in August 1834. Some was opposite the first milestone on the Norwich to Watton Turnpike, an area which was extensively developed in the 1930s. The milestone, however, is not marked on maps after 1886. The advert goes on to say that “as several of the above lands abut on the Turnpike roads they are admirably adapted for building upon; and there being plenty of Marl ... a lime kiln might be worked to great advantage ...” Proximity to a main road seems to have been a major selling point, and two more advertisements in 1841 highlight this location. “Desirable property. To be sold by auction. Bergh Apton. Building ground abutting on the High Road from Norwich to Loddon, and lying near the seventh milestone.” The road from Norwich to Beccles never became a turnpike, but milestones were erected down as far as Loddon, and NO\_NBE7 still stands in Thurton, just east of Bergh Apton. The second auction featured a “double cottage with shed, garden and about 2 acres of arable land. Opposite first mile-stone on the Turnpike road leading from Hingham to Watton ... it is admirably adapted for building upon, having a considerable frontage next the Turnpike road.” This would refer to NO\_NW15 west of Hingham on the Norwich to Watton Turnpike.

### Boundaries

By the early 19th century the enclosure movement was well under way and as ancient roads had frequently been used as parish boundaries, milestones also became involved in the process.

An advertisement on 18 June 1808 requested the enclosure commissioners to meet at Tivetshall St Margaret on the turnpike road [Norwich to Scole] near the 13th



NO\_NW15, Hingham. Cottage was for sale opposite

milestone to perambulate the boundaries. The Roman road for over three miles provided parish boundaries in this area, and NO\_NIP13 is still in place. The commissioners at Congham were to “begin on 6 August [1812] at 10 of the forenoon at the 5 mile stone by the side of the turnpike road leading from King's Lynn to Hillington.” The boundaries of Congham, Roydon and Castle Rising converge near the Lynn 5/Fakenham 16 stone, which is lost. More enclosure boundaries mentioning a milestone occur on the Holt to Dereham road in Hindolveston (March 1812). This would be NO\_HD7; the road here forms the boundary with Swanton Novers parish. A legend on the rear of this stone reads **117/ MILES/FROM/LONDON**. The road never became a turnpike, but a stagecoach service ran from The Feathers in Holt to London, although it is not known when it started. In 1836 “The Magnet” went via Dereham, Brandon, Newmarket, Saffron Walden and Epping, while in 1841 “The Regulator” ended its journey at the White Horse, Fetter Lane in London.<sup>2</sup> In 1813 milestones at Decoy Common, Besthorpe (NO\_NT13), and Morley (NO\_NT12) are mentioned in connection with enclosure boundaries. On 31 March 1827, two JPs met



at NO\_HD07, Hindolveston. On parish boundary with Swanton Novers.

The Dog public house “for stopping up, as useless and unnecessary, the five several public highways and the bridleway and footway lying in the parish of Easton”. One of these roads began “on the north side of the turnpike road leading from the city of Norwich to Dereham ... at a point on Easton Heath, distant about 511 yds from the 5th milestone there”. The present milestone (NO\_NSM05) was not installed until 41 years later. A similar meeting took place in April 1829 at The Globe public house, Blofield for the purpose of “diverting and stopping up part of a public highway in the parish of Witton ... leading from the turnpike road between Norwich and Gt Yarmouth ... a little beyond the 5th milestone ... past the parish church of Witton to Lt Plumstead ... making a new highway”. This stone has not survived. There are also a good number of notices from



turnpike trustees concerning road alterations which use milestones as markers to pinpoint the locations of the changes to be undertaken.

### Racing and Hunting

Running and walking races gained popularity during the 18th century. In the 19th century a servant often ran behind his master's coach, and an aristocrat would "set his man" to race against another. This is thought to have given rise to professional runners and "pedestrians" undertaking prodigious feats of endurance for large wagers. What more convenient markers to race between than milestones?

In the pages of the *Norfolk Chronicle* for 1813 is an account of Mr Colledge, surgeon, of March who "undertook for the trifling wager of £20, to go 40 miles in 12 hours. He started at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, at the 7th milestone from Wisbeach [sic] and went to the second milestone from the same place, making a distance of 5 miles; this ground he traversed 4 times, and completed his task, without taking any refreshment, in 9 hours and 55 minutes". It is not clear from this exactly which road he was using, but it could well have been the turnpike linking Chatteris, March, Wisbech and Downham Market. Another trial of endurance in 1818, however, made the road quite explicit: "Robert Skipper, the Norwich pedestrian, has undertaken to walk 1000 miles in twenty successive days. He will commence his arduous task on Tuesday next, from St Stephen's Gates to the 25th mile-stone on the Thetford road and back". The Norwich to Thetford Turnpike had been in existence since 1767 although the present milestone (NO\_NT25) would have replaced a previous one some time after 1818. In the 1860s athletes became more organised and amateur athletic clubs were formed.

A very bizarre race in Suffolk was reported in an article in December 1847 when an innkeeper from Sudbury undertook, "for a trifling wager, to walk from the first milestone on the Melford road, to the Castle Inn". The innkeeper weighed 21 stone, and his opponent, George Moulton, was to carry on his shoulders the difference in weight between the two men. "Moulton chose a bag of old rags to supply his bodily deficiency, which amounted to eight stone, and notwithstanding the heavy load he carried, had the pleasure of coming in first, leaving the publican a few yards in the rear." The milestone referred to was probably SU\_SBBU01 on the road going north from Sudbury towards Long Melford.

Horses also featured in these contests, and an account in October 1834 deserves to be quoted in full, if only to wonder at the literary capabilities of the reporter: "A match against time - some time since, a Mr Green of Well [Lincs], made a match that he could find a pony, 12 hands high, that could gallop 18 miles within one hour. Tuesday last was the appointed time for the match to come off, and the road leading to Downham, from the first milestone near New Common Bridge, four and a half miles and turn. Betting before starting was in favour of time. The pony coming to the winning post the first time seemed a little fatigued, having taken the turn went off again in good style, and then betting altered; the pony again made its appearance, and won the match by two minutes and a few seconds. The pony was rode by a son of Mr Green, of Well, a lad about 12 years



SU\_SBBU01: Sudbury - race against 21 stone innkeeper

of age and a wonder; the pony is the property of a Mr Wright of Manay [presumably Manea, Cambs.]. This could have been on the turnpike linking Chatteris, March, Wisbech and Downham Market.

Features along the roads were used as meeting places for hunts, and included Horstead Tollbar, Bacton Abbey and assorted mills and bridges. Milestones were also used as gathering points, and the Bagge family's Harriers met at the five- and six-mile stones on the Stoke road in the winters of 1835 and 1836. It is not made clear whether the mileage was from King's Lynn or Stoke Ferry, but given that the Bagges lived at Stradsett Hall, and still do, it must be assumed that the Stoke Ferry distance is intended. NO\_SFKL5 survives in Stradsett, while the 6-mile in neighbouring Shouldham Thorpe has gone.

### Accidents

The greatest amount of column inches was given to accidents and crimes, usually going into minute, often gory, detail. Waggoners seem to have been particularly prone to accidents. From the pages of the *Norwich Mercury* in April 1823 comes an account of a driver whose clothes got entangled with the wheel of his waggon, drawing his leg under it and fracturing the limb. The accident happened near the one-mile stone at Earham (Norwich to Watton Turnpike), from where the man was immediately conveyed to the Norfolk and Norwich hospital. In another accident, the horses pulling a waggon-load of manure became restive and the driver, who was seated on one of the shafts, was dislodged and a wheel went over his left arm and thigh, causing injuries which necessitated the amputation of his arm. He died 15 hours later. As reported on 2 July 1836, the accident happened on the road from King's Lynn between the second and third milestones near Rising Lodge, and the casualty was taken to an inn at nearby South Wootton. This would place the accident on a branch of the Lynn East Gate Turnpike, and both are marked on the OS map of 1885. None of the above milestones is there today.

Accidents to stage and mail coaches were frequent, sometimes caused by reckless driving. Few accounts of coach accidents mention milestones, however, and one of the few that does appeared in the *Norfolk Chronicle* on 15 March 1823 when “the Leicester mail coach was upset yesterday morning near the 8th milestone on the Wisbeach road and precipitated into a deep pit, fortunately no one was seriously hurt, although there were four inside and two outside passengers. The bags were conveyed hither on horseback, and a chaise was dispatched for the passengers.” Not all Royal Mail routes affected London. There were some cross country services, such as Leicester to Gt Yarmouth which in 1823 went via Oakham, Peterborough, Thorney, Wisbech, King’s Lynn, Swaffham and Norwich.<sup>3</sup> It is not clear which side of Wisbech the accident happened.

## Crime

Robberies were also described in grizzly detail in the press of the day. In May 1808 four ladies in a post chaise were stopped by a highwayman armed with pistols near the three-milestone in Costessey on the Norwich, Swaffham and Mattishall Turnpike. He “immediately demanded their money and valuables, threatening them at the same time with instant death if they attempted to secrete any part of their property”. The robber was dissatisfied with the three guineas they initially gave him so he “dismounted, opened the chaise door, and demanded their pockets. Miss Robertson gave him a valuable brooch, but Mrs Robertson was so much agitated that it was some little time before she could take her pockets off, at which the villain expressed his impatience, and Miss R tore them from her mother's side and delivered them up with the contents”. This seems to have been a popular place for robberies because Parson Woodforde notes in his diary in January 1781 the theft of two guineas from a farmer's wife by a footpad near the same milestone.<sup>4</sup> The turnpike was created in 1770 and the present stone (NO\_NSM03) was a replacement in 1868 and now stands near a roundabout in a built-up area, but on early OS maps the road was lined by trees and surrounded by fields.

It was reported in February 1821 that as Mr Leeds, the Coltishall Carrier, was returning from Norwich, a man approached his cart near the mile stone at Catton (Norwich to North Walsham Turnpike). Thinking the man had something to say about a parcel, “he stopped his horse and leaned forward, when the villain instantly seized hold of his coat and dragged him out of his cart, two other men rushed upon Leeds and assisted in holding him down; they took from him a purse containing 4 one-pound notes and some silver, and a pocket book, ... then ran off towards Norwich.” The milestone no longer exists.

The road near Diss in south Norfolk was “infested by three robbers” according to a report in December 1831. Thomas Clarke Brettingham Esq. of Brockdish had been held up when returning from Diss market. His horse's bridle had been seized but he had aimed a blow at the robbers with his whip and accidentally hit his horse which darted forward and allowed him to escape. A few days later Mr Smith, a corn merchant of Dickleburgh, returning from Eye market, was not so lucky. He was

held up near the 21 mile stone and relieved of £20, his watch and some important documents. He was probably travelling on the turnpike road in Suffolk leading to the Waveney bridge to cross into Norfolk at Scole, but which milestone was it - the Ipswich 21/Norwich 22 (SU\_IWNO21) in Yaxley, or Ipswich 22/Norwich 21 (SU\_IWNO22) in Brome? Both would then have been in open country. People returning from markets seemed to be at particular risk of highway robbery, and in October 1839, “Mr Robert Ashley of East Walton was returning home from Lynn Market between six and seven o'clock, when he arrived near the four mile stone from Lynn, he was stopped by five men, who took from him his pocket-book, his watch, and between two and three pounds in cash. Some other person approached just as the robbers were making off, but they took across the fields and escaped.” East Walton lies about a mile north of a branch of the Lynn Southgate Turnpike, and he was therefore probably travelling on this route. The 4-mile stone was in Middleton parish but has not survived.

The only crime concerning a milestone itself was a report from Wymondham Petty Sessions in 1852 when John Cooper junr and Henry Hooke of Wymondham, labourers, were charged by police constable Parsons with an offence against the turnpike act by defacing a milestone on the Norwich turnpike road. They were fined 2s and 6s costs each.

## Conclusion

From most of the descriptions given in the newspapers, it was possible to pinpoint the exact milestone mentioned. Some locations, however, were not immediately obvious and detective work was required to try to find the location, an exercise that added a great deal to local knowledge, and which brought to life the day to day activities and dramas along the roads in and around Norfolk in the first half of the nineteenth century, from the hazards of travel to the attempts to sell a house. Did a funeral procession or a pack of hounds impede the stagecoach? Did slower moving carriers, or waggoners going to collect a load of timber have to give way to surveyors measuring the parish boundaries? Was a man running with an eight-stone bag of rags on his shoulders any more bizarre than someone today running a marathon in a chicken costume?

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Downloading items from the on-line archive has to be paid for, but for those with access to a library with local newspapers on microfilm, this can be a more rewarding exercise as one's attention wanders to other items on the page such as notices of turnpike trust meetings or adverts for coach services. By noting from the website the date, page number, and column number (from the small page outline on the screen with the relevant column highlighted in blue), and whether the item is in an advert or article, it is relatively easy to find the reference on a microfilm.

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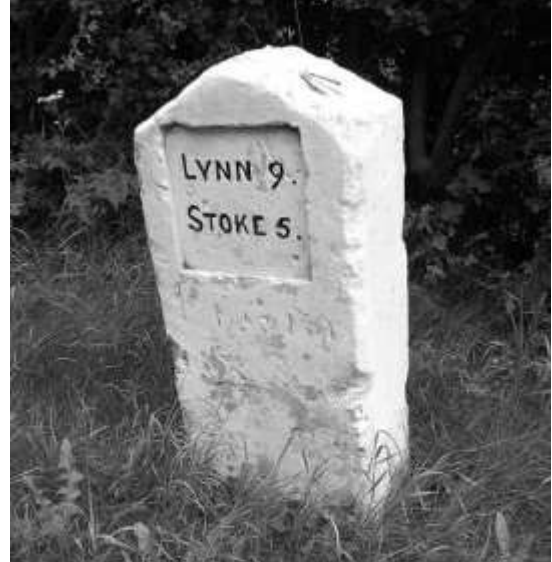
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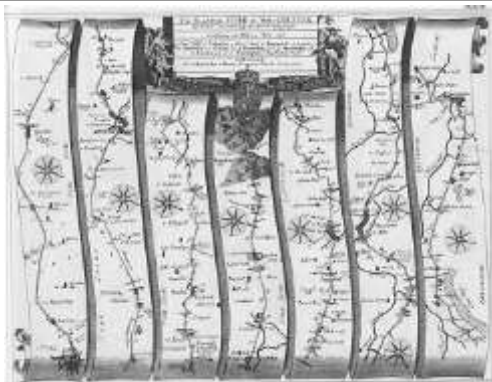


NO\_KLSF09: Stradsett - where harriers meet

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## The A34 – A Tribute to Ogilby?

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When John Ogilby travelled through England in the 1670s to produce his fascinating strip maps of the journey, he included a wide variety of interesting features along the wayside. The Milestone Society is seeking to produce a wide-ranging description of the route from Manchester to Oxford and onwards to Southampton - but ours is being assembled electronically for ease of sharing.

What can you find to contribute? Descriptions of nearby Halls? Travelers throughout the ages, from the drovers and Romans to the present day? Ghostly highwaymen, rascally toll-keepers, drunk coachmen, coaching timetables and busy inns? The potters, the canal builders, the Cannock Chase murders - lots of interesting anecdotes may be culled from newspaper archives on the web or in dusty reading rooms, from

guide books and local histories.

The destination for such gems is accessed via the Milestone Society's website [www.milestonesociety.co.uk](http://www.milestonesociety.co.uk) ; if you click on 'Around Your Region' you will see a link to 'The A34 Project' - or go direct to: <http://milestonesociety.wordpress.com/> .

Here you will find an overview and a separate section for each county, in the box on the left hand side.

If you click on any of these, you will find articles and anecdotes. You are welcome to make a comment on any of these; you don't need to register or anything else although you will need to supply a name and an email address - this is to avoid spammers.

And if you would like to contribute an item (please!) just email it to me as a Word document (any version) and attach any photos separately, in jpg format.

Lots happened at our project launch meeting in Brewood, Staffs in November last year - let's garner it !

*Jan Scrine*

# From the Archives - The lost mileposts of the Middlesex & Essex Trust

John V Nicholls

When I commenced my interest into Essex milestones back in 2002 I spent time in Essex Records Office (ERO) to see what was on offer. One file comprised a set of record cards compiled by John Booker, probably as part of his preparation for the roads and bridges chapter for his book *Essex and the Industrial Revolution*<sup>1</sup>. In essence the cards were the result of a survey of Essex milestones carried out in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Of particular interest was that only one marker was found relating to the Middlesex and Essex Trust; the



LONDON 2 (from Whitechapel Church) at Bow, still there today. Booker included a sketch of the milestone in the record and mentioned another shown in a 1910 book, *Country Rambles around Ilford*. The milestone was made by the foundry of Wedlake in Hornchurch in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

So where were all the other milestones or mileposts from the Middx. & Essex? On post

World War II maps only two others appear annotated M.S. at Chigwell but they no longer survive. Nothing else on the 18 miles along the Great Essex Road to Brentwood where the Essex Trust commenced or along the branch northwards from Stratford towards Woodford and the split towards Abridge.

Interest was revived in late 2013 when Mrs Susan King of Margaret Roding, Essex sent a scan of a photo



(pictured above) to Alan Rosevear for possible ideas of location. Alan forwarded the image which got me rather excited (I get easily pleased!). The photo, produced in the form of a postcard, included a milestone of the same type as at Bow. This seemed to indicate that the Middx and Essex had probably replaced all their milestones for mileposts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The location was easily identified by the mileages on the marker to Gidea Park on the Great Essex Road a mile east of Romford. The photo was known to be pre-war and must have dated after the mid 1930s when the houses were built.

I contacted Susan and arranged to borrow the photo so I could make higher resolution scans. This allowed me to create a reasonable enlargement of the milestone.

See picture right.

A new quest to obtain a copy of the aforementioned 1910 book was undertaken. In June 2014 a copy was found on eBay. It had been listed twice but not sold so I contacted the seller and made an offer that was accepted. As soon as the book arrived I excitedly flicked through the pages to find the relevant image mentioned by John Booker. I was not disappointed. There it was, the LONDON 10 that formerly stood near the Chadwell Heath toll house and it was a Wedlake.

Based on the above it is fairly certain that the Middx and Essex converted to iron and it is reasonable to assume that they became casualties of the 1940 'purge' and ended up in the melting



The elusive 1910 book but I paid more than the cover price of sixpence.

Below is the page from the book that illustrates the Wedlake 'LONDON 10' milestone that once stood at Chadwell Heath.



pot.

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## On the Ground

*Compiled by John V Nicholls*

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**DEVON** *Tim Jenkinson*

### **Plymouth Milestone Discoveries**

Along with the many boundary stones that the Plotting Plymouth Past (PPP) project team have discovered, there have also been two important milestone finds. Granite milestones with distances from Plymouth are fairly hard to come by as most were replaced by cast iron versions in the 1820s and later, so when Mark Fenlon and Ernie Stanton were contacted by Sally Luscombe of Plympton Civic Society regarding a stone in the village they were eager to inspect. Sally took them to the marker that is now being used as a step outside a house at SX 5446 5567 and the inscription albeit faint was deciphered as 'V/Miles/From/Plymo/'. Another granite stone of this design and similar style of inscription survives at the top of Lipson Hill one mile outside of the city on the old route to Exeter, but there are no others known to be surviving between Plymouth and South Brent (15 miles). Indeed only four of the replacement cast iron mileposts along that route (the old A38) are still extant (5 mile at Ridgeway in Plympton, 11 mile at Ivybridge, 13 mile at Bittaford and 14 mile at Wrangaton) so the discovery of an older milestone is very special.

As part of the PPP project Mark Fenlon was contacted by a member of the public regarding a fragment of a



Sally Luscombe sitting by the former milestone now used as the middle step.

cast iron milepost that he had in his possession that had been rescued from the A386 at Woolwell roundabout during widening in the 1990s on the main road between Plymouth and Tavistock. The team, then still including County Representative Tim Jenkinson, visited the home of the man and inspected the remnant in June 2013. In poor repair the main part of the post its top and base was missing leaving just the raised letters of the **Miles/From/Plymo/Miles/To/Tavi-Stock** section of the inscription. The post would have been one of 15 set along the road and stood at the 5 mile point from Plymouth and 9 to Tavistock. Sadly only one of these posts now remains at the roadside it being the next in sequence at the 4 mile

point heading into Plymouth near to Derriford.

Discussion took place on how best to restore the post for the future but the man was rather reluctant to part with it and decided to keep it for the time being in his custody. It is unclear as to what will happen to the fragment now and whether it will ever be reset beside the road but communication channels remain open.



### **Dartmoor Milestone Reset**

On a routine visit to Dartmoor in February 2013 Alan Rosevear noted that a milestone on the B3212 at Sharpitor (SX 558708) had been knocked clean out of the ground by a vehicle and was now lying face down in the turf. The milestone is one of six originally set (only four now survive) along the rather desolate road that was built to Dartmoor Gaol at Princetown from the direction of Plymouth by the short lived Dartmoor and Roborough Turnpike Trust in around 1812.

Dartmoor National Park Authority was duly notified of the need to resurrect the stone before further damage or erosion occurred but the response to this request was rather slow. Finally in June 2014 the stone was repositioned at the roadside. A fine surviving artefact inscribed with **Plymouth/12/Miles/Prince/Town/3/** the marker, which looks to have been cleaned, is in remarkably good condition given that it may have been at the site now for close on 200 years.

### **Dave Brewer's Dartmoor Legacy**

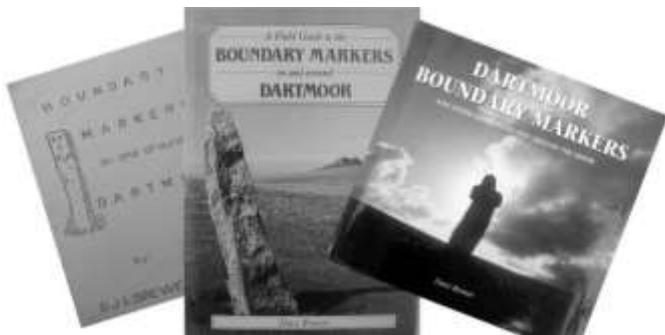
The names of Dave and Kath Brewer are well known to Dartmoor enthusiasts for they are synonymous with detailed descriptions, inventories, sketches and photo-



Before and after. Luckily the adjacent boundary stone managed to be unaffected when the milestone was felled.

graphs of the wide variety of inscribed stones that are set across the moor and have been described by the authors in a succession of articles and books since 1985. Dave who died in 1998 had his tome on boundary markers published posthumously by Halsgrove in 2002 thanks to the efforts of Kath who building on his work from 1986 adapted and provided extra detail to the pocket size publication of that year by Devon Books. Long considered as the holy grail for identifying Dartmoor's boundary stones, to this day Dave's work remains unsurpassed, his attention to detail is second to none, his eye for inscribed letters and dates acute and precise, his sketches unique and delightful.

In early 2014 Sue Viccars editor of the *Dartmoor Magazine* (DM) in Devon, for which Dave had written many articles during its formative years, acquired 16 folders of field notes and photographs that had been meticulously compiled by the author. Through his DM



connections since 1996 and his current role within the Milestone Society (MSSoc) as County Representative, Tim Jenkinson has been able to gain access to the folders through an agreement of a series of loans and along with fellow Devon members Alan Rosevear and Mark Fenlon has started to review the content of this fascinating archive. Meetings have been planned for the coming months whereby the work can be scrutinised for any insights into new stones or inscriptions, confirmation of existing sites and comparisons of photos then (late 1980s early 1990s) and now, that will enhance the existing MSSoc database for Devon.

Already, following on from the first meeting in late July, the commentary and interpretations, some of which have never made it into books or articles, have stimulat-



Alan (left) and Mark start reviewing the late Dave Brewer's field notes and photographs

ed further investigation and visits to wayside markers to confirm inscriptions. It is indeed a great privilege to have the opportunity to review such a fine collection of material. We are indebted to the Brewers for their detailed records and thank Sue Viccars for permitting MSSoc access. More detail will follow in both DM and MSSoc publications throughout 2015 as the project progresses.

## HAMPSHIRE *Colin Woodward*

English Heritage recently listed a milestone at Dummer (Basingstoke and Deane) on the south-east verge of the A30. The milestone reads **17 STOCKBRIDGE** and **15 to WINCHESTER**, the south-western face reads **50 to LONDON** and a cusped surface in the arris reads **4 to Basingstoke**. The milestone is from the Stockbridge and Basingstoke Turnpike Trust and is one of a sequence of legible, surviving 18th century milestones, retaining its original form and lettering. The milestone was removed during the 1970s when road works were undertaken and has now been repositioned close to where it originally stood, at SU 58460 47280. A photo of the milestone can be seen on the Basingstoke Heritage Society website.

The South Downs National Park Management Plan 2014 – 2019 (which includes the Sussex South Downs) has been published. It envisages the preparation of action plans for buildings at risk, with participation including community groups. The Plan encourages Local Heritage Initiatives from organisations such as parish councils, history groups and local amenity societies.

Four milestones from the Winchester area have been identified as being 'at risk' by the South Downs National Park Authority. These comprise two milestones at Owslebury (HA\_WIBW04 and HA\_WIBW02), one at Chilcomb (HA\_WIAL01) and one at Twyford (HA\_BOWI09).

## HERTFORDSHIRE

### **Berkhamsted, Sparrows Herne Trust marker.**

In August 2013 Susan Johnson of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association (BCA) emailed the Milestone Society via the Regions facility to say that the Association was preparing to restore one of only two original surviving boundary markers of the Sparrows Herne Trust which covered the A41 Aylesbury to Bushey. She sought advice on how this should be carried out and this was duly given.

The marker, along with a parish boundary stone is set hard up against the premises of National Tyres and over a period of many years had been painted with many layers including the house colours of National Tyres.

By February 2014 sufficient grants to cover the costs were in place with just the choice of contractor to be finalised. By late June the task had been completed exposing the marker and the boundary stone, and Susan sent out the following press release:

The Sparrows Herne waymark, together with the old boundary marker between Berkhamsted and Northchurch, which are set against National Tyres at 352 High Street, have been restored as part of the BCA's 90th celebrations. The BCA organised and paid for the work, with financial assistance from the Town Council and

Berkhamsted Community Partnership; and the support of the Berkhamsted History & Museum Society, The Milestone Society and DBC. Thanks must also go to the staff at National Tyres for their patience with the comings and goings. It is a small but significant part of Berkhamsted's heritage and, as a result, the BCA has made an application to English Heritage to have it listed. The waymark is one of only two original markers remaining, put up by the Sparrows Herne Trust to mark the route of the toll road that ran from Aylesbury to Sparrows Herne in Bushey, following the now A4251 (old A41), and lasting from 1762 to 1873. The Trust was set up in the Kings Arms and wound up in the old Work-



Sparrows Herne Trust marker at Berhamsted after layers of paint removed. The marker has been left unpainted and given a layer of protective varnish . Photo: Susan Johnson



Tony Statham, Chairman, Berkhamsted Community Partnership; Cllr Peter Matthews, Town Mayor of Berkhamsted; Susan Johnson, Chairman, Berkhamsted Citizens Association; Charlie Dean, Manager, National Tyres, Berkhamsted.

house, which stood on Kitsbury Parade until the 1930s; so a truly Berkhamsted venture. The toll road was no longer a going concern after the arrival of the railways, but its existence is marked as a small but significant part of transport history.

#### **KENT** *Colin Woodward*

Colin Woodward has written to numerous parish and town councils enclosing copies of the photos of their

milestones taken in the Milestone Society's survey, plus a copy of the Society's publicity leaflet and advice on how parishes and town councils can become involved in protecting and restoring their milestones. At the time of writing, several councils have responded to the consultation.

Dover District Council has produced a study of its own turnpike roads and milestones under "Appendix 1 - Theme 4.1 (Historic Roads, Routes and Lanes)" to its Heritage Strategy (Published March 2014). The study can be viewed on the internet at [www.dover.gov.uk/Planning/Conservstion/Heritage-Strategy.aspx](http://www.dover.gov.uk/Planning/Conservstion/Heritage-Strategy.aspx)

#### **MIDDLESEX** *Colin Woodward*

A Grade II Listed milepost at Edgware Road, Cricklewood, is to receive an improved landscaped setting under an environmental enhancement project associated with a major scheme to regenerate Cricklewood Town Centre. The milepost is a Barretts of London type reading **LONDON/4** and **WATFORD/10**. The regeneration is funded by a partnership between the boroughs of Brent, Barnet, and the Mayor of London. Some landscaping works have already been carried out. It is unclear whether the milepost itself, which is missing the inscription **HENDON/PARISH** at the top, will receive any restoration work (see photo).

#### **NORFOLK** *Carol Haines*

##### **Norfolk report**

A watch is being kept on the proposed route of the Northern Distributor Road round the north of Norwich. Present plans do not affect any milestones, but the hearings by the Examining Authority have been deferred because submissions from the major objectors were "lost".

Two more milestones can be added to the Norfolk list. The rumoured stone in Shepherdsgate Road, Tilney All Saints has been tracked down by Tim Richards. He reports that it is only just visible to a pedestrian at the foot of a steep overgrown grassy bank and it is too dangerous to get close. Old maps show the mileage as Lynn 9. The stone on the A10 at West Winch (**DOWNHAM 7/ LYNN 4 - NO\_KLDM04**) had been lost in dense vegetation. Nigel Ford took it home to restore, and it was put back in place by the Highways Dept. because of the dangerous location.



The terminus stone from the Lynn South Gate Turnpike at Downham Market has now had the area behind it landscaped, with plants laid out to show a horse and the town name. This is to represent the horse market that used to be held nearby. Old photographs show that the stone once stood against the wall of the Chequers Inn, Lynn Road. This was pulled down in 1965, along with several other properties, when the narrow streets of the town centre were first bypassed. The stone was moved

to the east side of the new junction. The turnpike operated from 1770 to 1871. From the south, the turnpike from Cambridge to Ely was extended to "Chequer Corner, Downham" in 1803. The Downham to Fincham Turnpike, going to the east, also came through this busy junction.



Restoration work by Nigel and his

NO\_KLDM04 no longer hidden in the undergrowth after restoration by Nigel Ford

team continues, and his report on two projects has been added. The Sculthorpe milestone (NO\_FKL01) has also been repaired and is now back in place, with the aid of parish councillors. It was painted by children from a local school.

#### Raising two Norfolk milestones *Nigel Ford*

Having painted the remaining Long Stratton milestone last year and, finding lettering at ground level, it became obvious it needed raising. Unfortunately, the Parish Council decided they were not prepared to help with funding this so it became my task to seek it elsewhere. Funding in place I with my helpers Mark & Tony (Milestone Society members) dug around the stone



then raised it successfully with my engine hoist. Whilst doing so we noticed some original inscription, similar to another stone in the same set, and probably pre 1800. We are now in the final stages of completion.

Wendling: The stone was painted for the Queen's Jubilee in 2012 but never raised. After a bit of arm twisting, in late April our Highways Department sent out a JCB to help us raise it. Owing to its estimated weight of three quarters a ton and the plinth at its base, the digger struggled somewhat. Unusually, this is an early example of pre-cast concrete and can be seen clearly on the unpainted section at the back. The photo shows how

this is one of our largest milestones to date.

My wife and I have written a book showing the restoration of sixty Norfolk Milestones with the help of children, royalty and hard work. Initially, a leather bound version was compiled for the Queen, after which we decided to print for general sale in order to raise money for continued milestone maintenance. See Book Review on *Moving Miles* on page 58 in this issue.

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE** *Helen Crabtree*



Above. Raising the Long Stratton stone. Below. The massive Wendling stone successfully lifted. *Photos: Nigel Ford*



#### Stanford on Avon Milestones

Ever since I saw two of these stones in Mervyn Benford's Shire Book *Milestones* (2002, p26) I have been intrigued by them. When I gave my milestone talk at Desborough Civic Society some years ago a gentleman told me there were originally six stones; two at Clay Coton, two at Elkington, one near South Kilworth and one at Swinford Corner. They were originally placed to show directions to Stanford Hall. Only three of the stones survive in situ. One still stands on the Rugby road just south of South Kilworth (Fig 1). The other two stand on either side of the Clay Coton road. (Fig 2)

The design of these two is slightly different to the one at South Kilworth in that there was originally a large ball placed on top of the stone with carved initials (Fig



3). Unfortunately the ball is missing from one of the stones. Michael Knight tried in vain to contact the owner of Stanford Hall to see about replacing it.

Phil Langmead, the stonemason who has worked on Desborough Cross restoration project, became interested as he has worked at Stanford Hall previously. He visited the Clay Coton stones and whilst at the site a local farmer told him that a friend had some pieces in his yard that he had retrieved from a hedgerow. A contact telephone number was provided. I rang the farmer who told me he did have two pieces but one was stolen a couple of years ago.

I made contact with Rachel Booth, Conservation Officer at Daventry Council, to see if she could throw any light on the subject. She sent me photos taken of the two pieces in the farmer's yard (Fig 4). Interestingly one of the pieces was a ball (you guessed it; that was the piece that had been stolen!) She also confirmed that they had some pieces at Stanford Hall.

and further investigations are needed.

I am hoping that we can persuade the owner of Stanford Hall to allow us to reconstruct the milestone somewhere on his property and provide a suitable replacement for the ball in his driveway so that we can re-attach to either the Clay Coton stone or reconstructed stone at the Hall.

I have also found a top piece of one of the missing stones at Elkington.

I will keep you posted!!

**SURREY** *Colin Woodward*

A milestone near Clandon Park (SY\_GULH02) has been uprooted in an accident. The milestone is part of a series of turnpike stones between Leatherhead and Guildford on the A246, most of which survive. The milestone is positioned on the north side of Epsom Road immediately to the west of the entrance to Temple Court, Merrow, near Guildford. The stone was formerly on the south side of the road, as shown on pre-war Ordnance Survey



Fig 1 left. South Kilworth. The two faces have no less than 15 destinations engraved. Fig 2 right. Clay Coton road. The one on the opposite side still retains its ornate ball

She wasn't sure how many.

When I agreed to be the Northants Rep I started to contact Stanford Hall and phoned every month but the owner was either busy or away from his residence. After about two years I finally heard from him and he agreed to let me view what was there. He told me that the ball from one of the stones was embedded in the driveway of the Hall but he didn't want to move it. It is placed to stop people driving onto the grass.

One of the office staff asked if we wanted to see the blocks of stone in the yard at the rear of the property; she didn't know how long they had been there. Off I went camera in hand to discover that there were six stone blocks on pallets amongst the weeds! (Figs 5 and 6)

Some of the carving was visible and obviously the stones fit together in some way. Whether all six make up one stone or whether there are two separate stones I'm not sure. Phil and I have had a close look at the photos



Fig 3



Fig 4



Figs 5 and 6

maps, but was buried in 1940. It was rediscovered in 1976 and moved to its current safer position by Surrey County Council Highways. The milestone has a recessed top with an arrow mark and reads **LONDON/28** and (lhs) **GUILDFORD/2** and (rhs) **LEATHERHEAD/9½**. Member Derek Renn reports that the milestone has been leaning for some time, and this is evident too in Lionel Joseph's original survey photograph.

Unusually, the milestone has a second inscription, upside-down on the back, just above the base, reading **8/ Miles 5/(F)urlongs to/ (G)uildford**. This is normally buried, but is once again visible as the milestone is lying face down on the verge. A certain amount of scrub has grown around the milestone suggesting that it has been lying there for some time, perhaps about a year (see photograph).

For more information see Derek Renn's article in *Newsletter 12* (January 2007) Pg 5 and his article "A palimpsest milestone from Bookham" in *Proceedings of*

*the Leatherhead and District History Society*, Vol. 4, No.8, (1984). 'It is thought that the milestone was originally situated near the Bookham/Effingham border, then recarved and repositioned sometime in the 19th century.

The Society has written to Surrey County Council Highways asking for the milestone to be re-erected.

Guildford Borough Council is consulting on its Draft Local Plan and the Society has written to them asking to include protection of milestones in its policies. Page 62 (4.159) of the Draft Local Plan states: "...we also have a large number of undesignated heritage assets in the Borough and the 'Delivery Development' document will look to provide appropriate guidance on how these assets should be protected and enhanced where appropriate".

#### **SUSSEX** *Colin Woodward*

Three milestones from Petworth have been added to the database. The first is a stone milestone in good condition on the north side of New Street (A283), on the gate pier to a cottage called "Milestones". It reads **49/MILES/ from/LONDON**. To the left of the milestone is a small plaque which explains that the milestone may have been



The uprooted SY\_GULH02 near Clandon Park.

wrongly inscribed after World War II, as although it is near the London route, its position is actually on the former Winchester to Brighton turnpike. The brickwork around the milestone does not match the rest of the pier, which suggests that the milestone may have come from elsewhere. The halfway point between milestones 48 and 50 on the London route is at the north end of Petworth rather than the town centre. The 49 milestone does not seem to be marked on old Ordnance Survey maps.

The second milestone is on a cottage at first floor level facing the highway on the west side of Station Road (A285), south of the lane to Frog Farm. This stone is in poor condition and barely legible but probably reads **50/MILES/TO/LONDON**.

The third milestone is on the front wall of Coultershaw Farm House, on the north-east side of Coultershaw Bridge, on the east side of the A285. It is a replica milestone made by Lionel Joseph in 2008, of stone with black painted incised lettering. It is on private land but visible from the highway. It reads **51/MILES/From/LONDON/Chichester/12½ /Petworth/1½** and is in good condition.

For further information see *Newsletter 10* (January

2006) Pg 5 "Milestone finds in West Sussex"; also *Sussex Industrial History* No 35 (2005) Pg 35.

#### **YORKSHIRE** *Christine Minto*

Probably all the milestones in Yorkshire which are by the wayside, either road or track, have been found by now. Occasionally a new one is found elsewhere and this happened in June when Jan Scrine was trying out a walk with Margaret Hill as part of the 'Beyond Graffiti' activities. In a garden in Gomersal was a metal post from the A64 York to Malton road, **YORK 10 MALTON 8**. [YN\_YOMA10] This had been rescued by the current 'owner' in the 1970s as it was being uprooted and taken away for scrap. Only three mileposts remain on this busy, upgraded route to the east coast. In 2004 **YORK 5**, **YORK 9** and **YORK 14** were in place. **YORK 5** was stolen in 2008, put on eBay, rescued, repaired and reset. **YORK 9** has disappeared and, at the last check, **YORK 14** was still there. **YORK 8** was reported to be in a garden and was tracked down in 2011 in another garden by Dave Williams and Jeremy Howat. The police recovered it (it was 'listed') and that is now back by the roadside. **YORK 10** is safe where it is now but how good it would be to see it back by the roadside.

In July, Terry Whitham reported that an 18<sup>th</sup> century milestone had been dug up in Hebden where the Yorkshire group hold the Spring Meeting. It surfaced

when a new drainage system was being put in and may establish what the local historians believe, that the main route went across the top of the village



Photo: Ron Westcott

In November 2010 a WRCC stone in Harrogate was reported broken. Brian Bradley-Smith collected the metal pieces and put them back together. The local Highways repaired the backing stone and it was back in place by May 2011. In early July this year it was struck again and broken into many pieces. However at the end of the month it had been reassembled and is back in place thanks to two local residents. Fortunately it only broke into the same pieces as before and none were lost. [YN\_LEHG14]

The intrepid duo from York, Dave and Jeremy, have repainted a number of stones this year including the three on the Tour de France route mentioned in the July Newsletter. **YORK 5** on the A19, **YORK 2** and **9** on the B1224 to Wetherby, **YORK 7** on the A1079 to Beverley and **YORK 11** on the Driffield road A166 all now look very smart.

This last one [YN\_YODF11 pictured above] was sunken into the ground at the edge of a lay-by. In 2008 Dave & Jeremy dug down to reveal the rusted plate and then the East Riding CC lifted the stone up. It is interesting in that the 'back' has **YORK XI Miles** inscribed into an oval in the stone whilst the 'front' has the plate with **YORK 11 Miles** inscribed. This road was part of

the York to Kexby Bridge and Garrowby turnpike, 1765 – 1872, and the **YORK 6** stone near Kexby on the A1079 is similar. However it has lost its plate but a plain **YORK 6 MILES** is inscribed on its 'front'. Others on this turnpike have also been turned round probably in 1866 when it was incorporated into the Beverley to York and plates were added then.

On the old stone Kexby bridge, now by-passed, is a plaque dated 1778 with the names of four 'workmen' and the surveyor. [YE\_KEXBY] The text reads:

**M PRICKIT**  
**CHARLIE CAMPLESON**  
**ROBART WOOLER**  
**JOHN MYERS**  
**WORKMEN**  
**W TAYLOR**



YN\_YOMA10



YN\_LEHG14

### SURVEYOR 1778

Yorkshire was shown at its best during the recent Tour de France coverage. Everywhere on the route was decorated. On the way from Holmfirth to the top of Holme Moss, Jean Parker spotted three new identical milestones. But they may not last long as they seem to be made of papier maché! [YW\_TdF right]



YE\_KEXBY commemorative plaque on Kexby bridge.



## Scotland

### Christine Minto's Annual Round Up

The route between Carlisle and Glasgow has changed dramatically over the years. What was the A74 is now mostly quiet B roads and along here are to be found several distinctive milestones. Most have lost their plates. The first two are in Cumberland. **CARLISLE ½** is just over the River Eden with the best example being the **CARLISLE 4½** which was removed when the A74 was made into a motorway and set up on the non-motorway road behind the 'Services'[CB\_CLGW04]. The rest are in Scotland starting at Gretna Green with nine in Dumfries and two in South Lanarkshire. **CARLISLE 10** was knocked over and had its plate stolen in 2012, **11** had its plate broken after 2001 when *Terry Keegan* photographed it and **12** is in a nearby garden after it was rescued. The latest discovery in South Lanarkshire was found by one of *Alverie Weighill's* friends after a search prompted by a 1980s picture. It is by a track that was once the road, at the side of the B7078 north of Abington. Unfortunately uprooted, it does show how much is usually under the ground and is probably reasonably secure where it lies [SL\_GWCL31]. So, just thirteen stones in 94½ miles of this important route indicate the many changes that have taken place.

The small county of Angus had only a few records.



Right: CB\_CLGW04

Above: The recumbent  
SL\_GWCL31

number have been located. But in both counties there were many new roads to explore during May.

Two nights in Dundee gave the opportunity to discover square stones north of the city some of which *Alan Rosevear* had found on the Scottish Heritage site and others unrecorded, with mileages including eighths of a mile [AN\_DDFR05k].

A delightful ride along the unclassified road to Perth only resulted in one find even though several were marked on old maps [PK\_PTDDUC12]. The ride back along the A90 was abandoned due to the heavy traffic but on a detour into Inchtute I found the stone from the A90 that *Mervyn Benford* had used on the very first MSSoc postcard [PK\_PTDD13]. Wandering about the following day the unusual mileposts made by Anderson of Arbroath between Friockheim and Forfar which *Terry Keegan* had told me about were photographed [AN\_FRFH03].

The next day to Montrose three very unusual octagonal stones were found on the Forfar road. They had no



PK\_PTDD13



AN\_FRFH03

inscription being only 18cm wide but the recesses in each side may have held wooden arms. However the tallest was only 54cm high [AN\_MNFR03].

Into Aberdeenshire, amazingly, a stone remains on the A92 5 miles south of Stonehaven at Roadside on the Catterline. Crossing over the hills from Stonehaven on the A957 there were six of the typical Aberdeenshire granite columns before reaching the A93 Aberdeen to Braemar road [AD\_SHBN09]. The 'last' stone, **58**, [AD\_ADBM58] on the A93 is opposite the tollhouse just outside Braemar [SAD\_BRAEMAR - see back cover] and **27** are now recorded from Aberdeen though some are barely visible sunken in the verges.

Terry had given me pictures of the stones in Strathdon. It was a tough ride, and walk, over the Grampians but along the valley of the Don and then north to Huntly was very pleasant. There were lots of milestones and also several tollhouses. [SAD\_GLENKINDIE - see back cover]

Huntly has four tollhouses and an old stone on some parkland that may have a mileage to Keith



AN\_DDFR05k



PK\_PTDDUC12

marked on the OS maps and on previous visits a good





AN\_MNFR03



AD\_SHBN09



AD\_ADBM58



AD\_HNDT00

[AD\_HNDT00].

That day's meander to Banff and back again via Turriff and Aberchirder resulted in several new discoveries of milestones and tollhouses. [SAD\_BANFF and SAD\_TURRIFF - see back cover]

The A96 south of Huntly had some MSs marked but only one was found before I turned off, lying at the back

of the verge [AD\_ADHN30]. It was undamaged so it may have been uprooted to make verge cutting easier as its hole was not distorted. More roads were explored on the way to the coast but a number of the milestones on my OS map were not found. Just out of Mintlaw I stopped to check where the next one would be and almost put my foot on its top peeping out of the soil. There may be more milestones on the A90 between Peterhead on the way to Aberdeen but it is difficult to check, even on the bike, on such a busy road. The road nearer to coast past Cruden Bay had just one stone [AD\_ADCR20] but lots of birds to watch at the nature reserve at the mouth of the River Ythan.

In spite of several journeys around and across Aberdeenshire there are still roads that warrant exploring so if anyone visits the county please keep a good look out and let me know what you find. Also, like Carol and Alan



Above: AD\_ADHN30 awaits some TLC.



Right: A very weathered AD\_ADCR20

Haines who have recently visited Fife, let me know when you see or photograph any milestone or tollhouse north of the border.

## 'Crossing the Pennines' Heritage Trail

Members of the Milestone Society are leading a group of local community organisations, establishing a Heritage Trail in the scenic valley of the River Colne in Yorkshire. The trail is called "Crossing the Pennines" and will showcase the travel and transport history that shaped the West Riding.

There's plenty to see, on foot, by bike or by car, with fascinating evidence of the Romans, the medieval packhorse trains, the Turnpike Trusts and clever engineering by Blind

Jack of Knaresborough (including an 18th century milestone) and Thomas Telford who worked on the Canal. The milestones along the present Manchester Road were set up by the 'new' West Riding County Council 130 years ago and today there is the



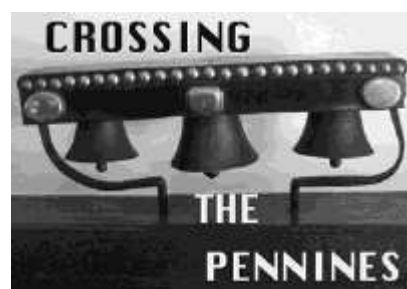
Milestone Society member *Brian Slater* of Acomb sprucing up a B&B milepost along the route

Stanza Stone route, starting on Marsden Moor.

But there is one section of the Trail that our volunteers alone cannot repair, the ancient packhorse track from Cop Hill to Netherwood Lane. The surface has been reduced to rubble by generations of travellers and the group are endeavouring to find funding for 'authentic' restoration.

You can view the route online and follow progress at [www.CrossingThePennines.co.uk](http://www.CrossingThePennines.co.uk)

Or you can like/join our CTP Facebook Group at [www.facebook.com/groups/crossingthepenninesheritagetrail/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/crossingthepenninesheritagetrail/)



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## From Overseas

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Overseas milestones have not been part of the *Milestones & Waymarkers* or *On the Ground* publications but in the past occasional column inches have appeared in the *Newsletter*. The most recently was the article about the Sydney, Australia marker that appeared in *Newsletter* 25 (July 2013).

It could be argued that the Milestone Society should concentrate entirely on the milestones of the United Kingdom but as British influence spread worldwide in

the days of empire so did miles as the form of measurement. And along with miles it follows that distance markers, be they MILEstones or fingerposts used the imperial system.

Milestone Society members certainly take the milestone bug with them on holiday as the following short articles show.

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### On a visit to Sri Lanka

*Mike Faherty*

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In the autumn of 2012, I was fortunate to be able to spend a fortnight with my son in Sri Lanka, travelling around part of the southern half of that beautiful island. We travelled by bus, car and train. I had no idea of what to expect in the way of Imperial way-markers; perhaps all had been removed, as seems to be the case in neighbouring India; or perhaps there were survivors.

Our first destination was the enchanting religious city of Kandy, home to superb Buddhist temples and monuments. Directly opposite our hotel in the city centre was my first surprise (fig.1). This stone is square, with a pyramidal top and the inscription **72 MILES from COLOMBO**; the back also bears an inscription, probably of a later date, giving distances around the neighbouring lake, which was presumably a weekend walk for our colonial forebears. The style of the stone would not look out of place in Britain, and can be dated as post-1815; it forms the terminus of the Colombo to Kandy road, now A1.



Figure 1

The lake, incidentally, was built on the order of the last ruler of Kandy kingdom, Sri Wickrama Rajasinha. Locals who refused his kind offer of working on its construction were impaled on stakes in the lake. Not surprising, then, that the arrival of the British in 1815 was initially welcomed. The lake is bordered here by distinctive stucco walls, visible behind the stone. These walls are usual around Buddhist sites.

A few miles south of Kandy is an interesting outdoor museum of road transport, near the village of Kiribathkumbura. This contains two more examples of stones similar to Kandy, miles 68 and 69; stone 68 also bears a familiar device, the benchmark (fig 2). Nearby, still in situ by the roadside, is an Imperial guide/milestone (fig 3), with arrows and distances to Kandy and Alagalla. This stone is square, with a tiered top and hollow interior; it looks much more modern than those seen earlier.

Another route we travelled was the A2, from the

southern plains, then along the coast via Galle to Colombo. We travelled this route by bus; many sightings of old stones were made, all on the opposite side of the road from their modern metric counterparts. One at least seemed to bear a relief figure of an elephant's head. A fortuitous traffic jam allowed a picture of stone 102 (from Colombo), with a projecting tombstone top (fig 4).

The final route which showed stones was A11, in the east centre of the island. Stones, or rather posts, were also on the opposite side of the road from their successors; triangular and concrete. (Fig 5) shows 38 miles, probably to the road's terminus at Polonnaruwa; probably post-independence (1948).

Modern metric posts are ubiquitous, and usually well-tended. All seem to be V-shaped, and concrete. (Fig 6)



Figure 2



Figure 3

shows 98km to Colombo, on A1.

Boundary stones are frequent alongside roads; black on yellow, with stylised staggered crossroads (Fig 7). RDA stands for Road Development Authority; these posts are presumably intended to prevent encroachment from adjacent properties.

This is just a snapshot of what must be still on offer. What better excuse for visiting a country of great charm, friendly people, beautiful scenery, fascinating wildlife, delicious food, and a pace of life (at least outside Colombo) far gentler than in other South Asian destinations?



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

## The Milestones of Malta

*Tim and Ann Jenkinson*

On two recent visits to Malta in June 2013 and 2014 Tim and Ann Jenkinson of Devon have discovered a handful of still extant milestones whilst exploring the island on foot and by bus. The island along with neighbouring Gozo and Comino lies in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, approximately 58 miles to the south of Sicily and 186 miles to the north of Libya. At its longest Malta is 17 miles from its north-west tip to the south east and little more than 9 miles at its widest.

With the exception of one marker, eleven of the milestones that Tim and Ann have found are free standing pillars of Maltese coralline limestone with gable tops and of varying heights, each now with obliterated inscriptions that would have once showed a distance from the capital city of Valletta. During the Second World War and following the fall of Crete in May 1941, there were concerns that Malta would suffer a similar fate so road signs and milestones were either removed or defaced as a precautionary measure with the intention of disorientating the enemy should they invade. Despite the intense bombing raids of early 1942 and thanks to the resilience of the Maltese people the island was never invaded, but by then the damage to the milestones had been done.

The British influence in Malta begins around 1800 when following the capitulation of the Napoleonic forces the British occupied the island and in 1813 appointed Sir Thomas Maitland as the first British Governor which led to extensive reforms and the establishment of Malta as a British Colony. This status continued until 1964 when political independence for the island was finally achieved. It is unclear as to whether milestones were ever set in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but certainly the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 meant that Malta was soon to become an important port on the route to India. It is possible that inland distances to the capital would have been advantageous for travellers around that time.

In the north of the island five surviving milestones have so far been located along what appears to be a route between Marfa through the village of Mellieha to the town of Sliema. Now part obscured a flat faced plaque, MS1 (fig.1) can still be seen in the south facing wall of

the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Wied Mousa Battery at Marfa. Originally built as a coastal fortification, the now ruined square building faces into the South Comino Malta Channel and at some point in the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century the blockhouse was extended and a small hotel constructed for the benefit of people travelling between Gozo and Malta. The marker most probably dates from around this time but is unusual in so much that it shows mileage from the capital 'VIA NAXARD' (Naxxar) and 'VIA MUSTA' (Mosta), these inscriptions remaining intact on the light faced tablet that has been inserted into the fabric of the wall.

MS2 is free standing and set on the north side of the main road just off the top of Mellieha heading downhill towards Xemxija above St Paul's Bay. Far too dangerous to survey on foot it is however visible from the bus but almost impossible to photograph, the words 'Miles/



Figure 1. MS1 at Marfa

From/' are still discernible on its face.

Another in the series stands in Triq St Pawl in St Paul's Bay (MS3) on part of what is the old road that runs through the village as the main bus route. The stone is set on the south side between a small chapel and a bus stop, its inscription is completely illegible but it stands at around the nine mile point from the city. A

fourth stone (MS4) is located on the western side of Bugibba at the St Paul's Bay end of the coastal road beside a house known as 'Blue Seas' on the north side near to Gillieru Harbour and Hotel. Completely defaced this part sunken stone is set at about eight and a half miles from Valletta. [fig.2 left]



The fifth stone on this route (MS5) was discovered purely by chance whilst walking through the old part of Sliema. It is set at a point known as 'Three Trees' in the centre of a small triangular traffic island where three roads converge, Triq Santa Marija to the south, Triq Il Kbirra from the east and Triq Sir Adrian Dingli to the north. The stone is about five feet in height and its inscription is erased but it

stands at about the four mile point from the city although it seems that the stone has been rescued by the Sliema Local Council and Heritage Society and repositioned at this point, so is not now at its original location.

MS6 and MS7 can be found on the north side of the road either side of the village of Zebbieh in the north west of the island. In keeping with others they have both been defaced but the one at Skorba, MS6 [fig.3], retains a 'MILES/FROM' inscription whereas just 'MILES' appears on MS7.

The eighth stone, MS8 [fig.4], which is well away from other discoveries, indicating the likelihood of many more surviving, is located in the very heart of the ancient and picturesque walled city of Mdina in the mid-western quarter. Somewhat surprisingly the stone is set in the Cathedral square of St Paul's and only the 'MILES/FROM/' inscription remains with the number and destination having been removed from above and below. This is little more than 6 miles from the capital.

MS9 and MS10 [fig.5] are preserved beside one another in the Malta at War museum in the city of Birgu. MS9 originates from the Floriana area of Valletta and is unusual in so much that it retains a complete inscription. It reads '1 9/16 / MILES / FROM / VALLETTA'. MS10 which has lost most of its inscription seems to have been rescued from the lower end of Melieha village in the north of the island.

The final two milestones (MS11 and MS12) can be seen at the wayside in the Marsaxlokk region in south east Malta both with their legends now totally obliterated. MS11 stands on the east side of the main road in the district of Bir-Id-Deheb just south of the roundabout and MS12 is a part sunken gable topped marker set against a wall corner opposite the harbour in Marsaxlokk at the east end of the fishing village.

This brief summary of just 12 surviving Maltese milestones reflects a simple discovery mainly on foot and largely by accident, of markers that at one time showed distances from the capital Valletta. Chances are that several others are still extant across the island (photographs of two others not recorded here have already emerged on the internet) but will have all been defaced in World War II and others will have probably



Figure 3. MS6 at Skorba



Figure 4. MS8 at Mdina

been lost since to road improvements. This possibly signals the start of a project for future visits and the opportunity to combine a relaxing holiday with a touch of milestone spotting in the Mediterranean.



Figure 5. MS9 and MS10 in the Malta At War museum



## New Zealand has milestones

*Alan and Mary Smith*

New Zealand has a few milestones. They did not have toll roads but they did have horse-drawn coaches. One such company – Cobb & Co. ran from Greynorth, on the west coast of South Island, over Arthur's Pass and on to Springfield and then presumably to Christchurch.

The road was opened in March 1866, and their coach service ran for 57 years until 1923. In that year a rail tunnel was opened and completed the rail link and the demise of coach travel. The original route was just under 170 miles – taking 36 hours of travel over three days. As the rail progressed from either side towards Arthur's Pass their trip shortened, from Springfield to Kumara and taking 14 hours.

As the original milestones were of sandstone the weather wasn't over-kind to them. Figure 1 shows one preserved in the museum at Arthur's Pass. They were replaced by concrete ones, somewhat crude but both effective and legible. Figure 2 is an example showing 'Springfield 51 miles' in Springfield Pass.



Figure 1.

Figure 3 is of concrete, on the road to Springfield a few miles east of Arthur's Pass. There are plans/rumours that this stretch of road is to be improved so the fate of this milestone hangs in the balance.

And finally Figure 4



Figure 2



Figure 3

below is of a stone about 14 miles from Arthur's Pass towards Springfield. It is situated at a prominent road junction fairly close to the railway line. The 37 is clearly visible and can only assume it is towards Springfield, but I am afraid I cannot confirm – we were heading to Christchurch at the time and were unable to make enquiries locally. Perhaps next time we will be able to glean more information.



### Milestone Society Meetings Diary for 2015

14 March – South Western Spring Meeting. Following on from the success of the inaugural meeting in 2014. Note new venue for 2015: St Michael's Church Hall, The Old School Rooms, The Green, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8PD. 8 minutes walk from Bristol Parkway station.

21 March – Inaugural Eastern Meeting. The Taylor Hall, Church Close, Dullingham, Cambs CB8 9UW

19 April – Northern Spring Meeting. Always a popular annual event. Venue: The Village Institute, Hebden, near Grassington, BD23 5DX, North Yorkshire.

16 May – Spring Meeting. Chieveley Village Hall, High St, Chieveley, West Berkshire RG20 8TE. This meeting will incorporate the annual Mid Shires event.

3 Oct – AGM and Autumn Conference. Near Wilmslow, Cheshire. Venue to be confirmed.

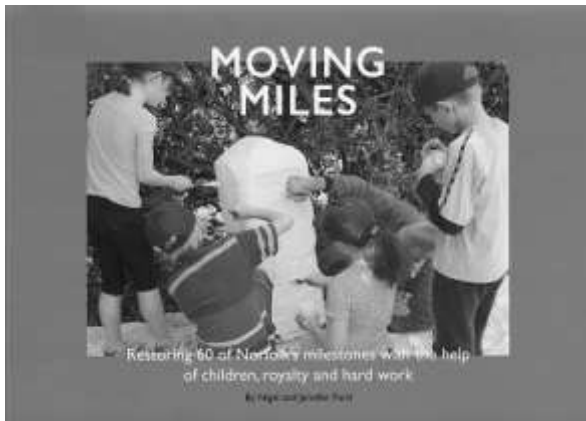
Further information and contact details will appear in *Newsletter 84* and the Spring Mailing.

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## Book Review

### *Moving Miles* by Nigel and Jennifer Ford

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In 2012 Nigel Ford set himself the task of restoring 60 of Norfolk's milestones to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A photographic record was kept of his efforts through the year. The resulting book is the most beautiful celebration of how one person's obsession can transform their local milestones and is an inspiration to others showing just what can be done.

The book is in landscape format with a double page given to full colour images and text of each restored milestone. There is one full page picture and two or three smaller pictures. The quality of the photographs and layout is excellent, with the pictures chosen to tell the story of each restoration.

An elegant contents page marks all the milestones on an outline map of Norfolk with their village name and their page number. This is simple, clear and effective.

The milestones are described in alphabetical order, which neatly places a photograph of Prince Charles painting the numbers on a milestone at Anmer on the Sandringham Estate at the very beginning of the book. Such a royal endorsement of the work of the Milestone Society is a prime example of Nigel's ability to persuade others to help him. He has been particularly keen to involve young people in his restoration work. Different groups of children helped paint over a dozen of the milestones. That is at least one group of children learning about milestones for every month of the year.

To make the most of the pictures, the text box is only a quarter of a page wide. This usually contains an historical note or anecdote about the village where the milestone is located. Nigel and Jennifer have spent many hours doing their research and the snippets make interesting reading. Usually there is space for a note about the work done, but rarely is there a history of any of the milestones. There is an occasional single sentence in italics, headed 'Did you know', which gives milestone related facts. Captions in small print give essential information about some of the pictures.

The book has a soft cover and is printed on 144 pages of good quality A4 paper. Flicking through the pages in a bookshop, a potential purchaser's eye will be caught by one of the large crisp images, led to the smaller story-telling pictures, then to the text giving the context of the village

location and maybe to the one liner about the General Turnpike Act or the Attleborough obelisk. The layout of the book is clever and well executed.

Working through the book milestone by milestone, it becomes clear just what a mammoth undertaking Nigel's project was. He did not choose the easiest milestones. Of the year's sixty milestones, twenty needed erecting or straightening or resetting in some way. Milestones will tend to sink under their own weight over the years in soft ground. Nigel does not explain how he obtained his help, but there are frequent pictures of various types of heavy lifting agricultural machinery. There are a couple of JCBs and at Hethersett a flatbed lorry from the local steel stockholders is shown using its hydraulic jib to deliver a re-carved milestone to the roadside site. Sometimes there is just a gaggle of volunteers levering and rocking a milestone into a hand dug hole as at Hilgay and Keswick.

The work behind the scenes to generate local support is not recorded, but Nigel has used the local press very effectively to generate interest and awareness and has been able to recruit an excellent group of volunteers to assist. Some faces appear over and over again in the photographs, but how did he persuade the ladies of Poringland WI not just to lend a hand with the painting but to raise funds for re-carving their local milestones by a professional mason?

Lost milestones have been found, broken milestones have been joined back together or had new bases made. New metal plates have been cast. Nigel's ability to get difficult tasks done is an example to everyone.

A special leather-bound version of the book was prepared for Her Majesty the Queen in celebration of her Diamond Jubilee. The soft cover version was launched at Jarrolds in Norwich in August and is available from other local retailers at £14.99. Copies can be obtained directly from the authors at Grindstone Cottage, 68 Low St, Hardingham, Norfolk, NR9 4EL, email [legindrof@btopenworld.com](mailto:legindrof@btopenworld.com) (at £14.99 plus £3 towards postage for Society members).

*Ian Thompson*



# The Roehampton Mounting Block and 'Milestone'

Philip Evison

## Introduction

Although milestones are touched on in this article, they are not germane to the subject, since the Roehampton mounting block was only incidentally a milestone, and was set up a century before they were formally required on turnpike roads. But they provide some context.

State control of roads began with the passing of the 1555 Highways Act, which placed the responsibility for maintenance on local parishes. A century later, further legislation was passed relating to the 'amending and repair' of roads, and an ordinance of 12<sup>th</sup> April 1654 decreed that local surveyors of roads be appointed by constables and churchwardens in every parish, and defined their duties.

Thomas Nuthall of Roehampton (of whom more later) was appointed for his local parish and the same year (1654) appears to have decided to mark his appointment by voluntarily setting up a combined mounting block and milestone on Kingston Road, Putney Vale.

## 1787: First record

The stone was doubtless a familiar feature of the landscape, and appreciated by riders, though there is no known report of it until 1787, when it was noted by 'J.L.', a visitor from Kent. He excavated the earth which had built up around the base, made detailed sketches of three of the faces and their inscriptions, and sent them to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, a hefty monthly digest, founded in 1731, which offered an eclectic mix of articles and which would, incidentally, provide Dr Samuel Johnson with his first regular employment!

J.L.'s letter appeared on p. 1046 of the December 1787 issue. It was dated Dec. 3, from D—, Kent, and

addressed to 'Mr Urban' - 'Sylvanus Urban' was the pen-name of the magazine's founder, Edward Cave, and letters were traditionally addressed to this name:

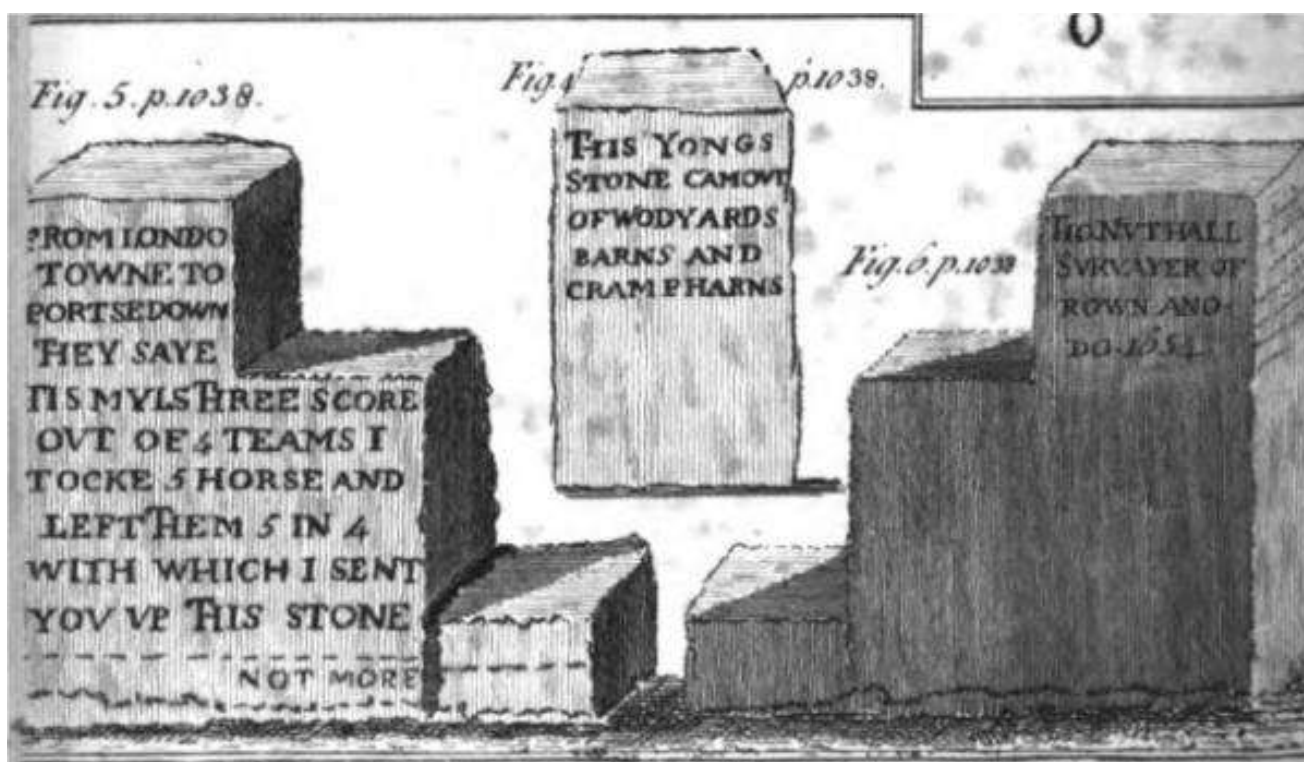
Mr Urban,

*With this you will receive a draught of a stone, which I noticed some little time since, on a journey into Surrey. (See Plate 1. \*) It is placed on Putney Common, opposite the nine mile-stone, and, by its shape, seems to have been formerly made use of by travellers on horseback in dismounting. The height of it, at least as much as now appears out of the ground, is 28 inches, and the square of the top part about 12. The stone at the bottom, making the lowest step, is detached; the rest is one piece. I suspect that the ground has been more or less raised about it since it was first here placed, as the earth, when first I saw it, was even with the bottom line, and the word STONE, I supposed, was meant to finish the inscription on that side: but, on my removing the earth, which I had some difficulty in doing, for want of a proper instrument, I found another complete line, though not legible to any degree of certainty. I however think the ending of this last line to be NOT MORE, as I have expressed in the sketch.*

*Not having myself a satisfactory thought of the occasion of the stone's being placed where it is, I content myself with having made a pretty accurate draught of it; and if any of your correspondents will favour me with his sentiments thereon, he will greatly oblige.*

J.L.

J.L. places it on 'Putney Common', which today may suggest Putney Lower Common, near which there was (still is) a 9-mile stone, on the corner of Upper Rich-



mond Road and Rocks Lane. In 1787, however, the area immediately south of Kingston Road was known as Putney South Common. Moreover, the fact that the stone shows the mileage to Portsea, just outside Portsmouth, is clear evidence that it stood on the Portsmouth (i.e. Kingston) Road. All later authorities place it on Kingston Road (now the A3).

### Where was it sited?

This is not entirely clear. J.L. says that the tall, narrow side (roadside face: THIS YONGS STONE ...) faced the road, and that the stepped side with the main inscription (east face: FROM LONDON TOWNE ...) faced west, which means it must have been on the south side. And historian Walter Johnson (of whom also more later) mentions it, though it had by then been lost, in his *Wimbledon Common: Its Geology, Antiquities and Natural History* (1912) - which he probably wouldn't have, had the stone been on the north, Roehampton side. On the other hand, J.L. says that the mounting block was 'opposite' the 9-mile stone. Corris's 1787 map (which J.L. would not have seen, despite the coincidence of dates) clearly shows the 9-mile stone on the south side. There is to this day a 9-mile stone (below), not necessarily the original, on the south side, by the NE corner of Putney Vale Cemetery. The evidence nevertheless points to the mounting block being on the south side, and perhaps, by 'opposite', J.L. simply meant 'close to'.



### Why was it placed where it was?

It is tempting to place it near the Baldfaced Stag, an inn established on the south side of Kingston Road c. 1651, so that riders could dismount and have a drink, but Corris shows the Baldfaced Stag and

the 9-mile stone 3-400 yards apart, and J.L. doesn't mention the inn either. Perhaps it was sited near Chohole Gate (still shown on modern maps), an entrance to King's Farm, in the SE corner of the recently enclosed Richmond Park. [The word 'chohole' possibly derives from the burning of charcoal.] Interestingly, and perhaps significantly, a 1663 transaction revealed that Thomas Nuthall occupied the land numbered 24 on the Corris map (below), between the milestone and the inn, where oddly, Ernest Dixon would later have a nursery (see p. 30). It is conceivable that Nuthall already occupied the

land in 1654.

### 1814: Manning & Bray

The stone was then briefly reported, 27 years later, at the beginning of the Putney section, on p. 285 of Manning & Bray's *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey, Vol. III*, published in 1814:

"At the foot of the hill going down from the heath towards *Kingston* is a stepping stone to assist travellers in alighting from, or getting on their horses. On it is the name of *Thomas Nuthall*, surveyor of *Roehampton* 1654, and other words which are mostly unintelligible, but this may be read; from *London Towne* to *Portse* Down, they say tis miles threescore."

Manning & Bray (probably Bray) did not accurately render every word of the legible part of the inscriptions, printing e.g. *surveyor* for SVRVAYER, *say* for SAYE, *miles* for MYLS.

### The inscriptions

See panel on opposite page.

### 1912: Walter Johnson (1)

As mentioned earlier, the stone was referred to in the past tense by Walter Johnson, on pp. 146-7 of his *Wimbledon Common history*, published by T. Fisher Unwin in 1912:

"Somewhere on the hill above Putney Bottom there once existed a stoop, or mounting block for horsemen. It was set up by 'Thomas Nuthall, Surveyor of Roehampton', in 1654, and bore the legend: 'From London Towne to Portse [= Portsea] Down, they say 'tis miles three score.' The stone, much weathered and barely decipherable, still remained at the time of Manning & Bray (c. A.D. 1800) and perhaps later. The jingle may, or may not, tell the truth, but what shall we say of the alliterative doggerel which I have heard from old folk, 'From Wimbledon to Wombledon is nineteen miles.'? Is it mere nonsense, like 'Go to Putney on a pig', or does it hand down some forgotten fact?"

The inference is therefore that the stone was removed between 1814 (Manning & Bray) and c. 1911, when Johnson would have been researching his book. Was it perhaps in the way of a road widening or improvement scheme?

### 1921: Rediscovery

The *Daily Chronicle* of 14<sup>th</sup> December 1921 reported that the mounting block had been found, "built into one of the walls of a barn at Wandsworth." and that its discovery was "due to Mr Ernest Dixon, a well-known horticulturalist and nurseryman of West-hill [sic], Putney, and an enthusiastic antiquary." Dixon was a founder

member of the Wandsworth Historical Society and was probably called in as a local expert, though he may already have known the owners of the barn (see p. 30). At any rate, he appears to have recognised the stone for what it was, bought it for 50 shil-

Corris map 1787



The Inscriptions. These are based on J.L.'s 1787 sketches.

West face



FROM LONDON  
TOWNE TO  
PORTSE DOWN  
THEY SAYE  
TIS MYLS THREE SCORE  
OVT OF 4 TEAMS 1  
TOCKE 5 HORSE AND  
LEFT THEM 5 IN 4  
WITH WHICH I SENT  
YOV VP THIS STONE  
[IN 4 DAYS AND] NO MORE

60 (modern) miles to Portsea, just outside Portsmouth, is reasonably accurate, measured from the stone, though not from 'London Towne'. Ogilby's 1675 'dimensuration' from the Standard, Cornhill, was 73 miles, very close to the present official 71 miles from Charing Cross. His 'Vulgar Computation', however, was 60 miles, which ties in neatly with MYLS THREE SCORE. Lines 6-8 presumably refer to the horses used to transport the stones; SENT might be 'despatched' or 'set'; the first four words of the last line were not recorded by J.L. but suggested by W J Maxton, a friend of historian Walter Johnson.

Roadside face

THIS YONGS  
STONE CAM OVT  
OF WODYARDS  
BARNES AND  
CRAMPHARNS

YONGS may be 'new', or the mason's name; BARNES may be Barnes, or the plural of 'barn'; CRAMPHARNS could be 'crampirons' - iron rods used to hold stones together. J.L.'s sketches show a separate, lower step (lost by the time the stone was rediscovered), though there is no evidence of corresponding holes in the main stone.

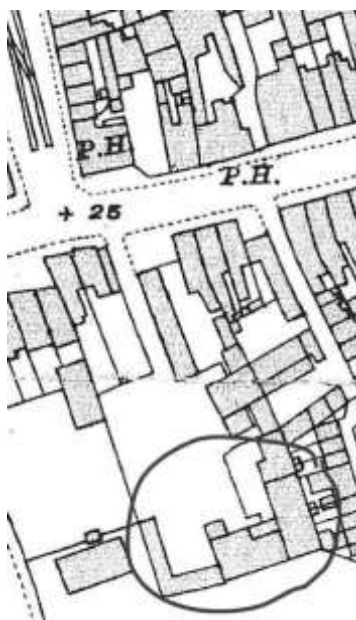
East face

THO NVTHALL  
SVRVAYER OF  
ROWN AND  
DO. 1654

lings (!) and set it up in his nurseries at 134 West Hill - site now of an Esso petrol station.

A later article in *Wandsworth Borough News* of 27<sup>th</sup> January 1922 incorrectly described the barn as being behind the Spread Eagle pub. In fact, it was much further west, just before the junction of Wandsworth High Street and West Hill, in what was then called Parish Yard (now Red Lion Square), opposite the end of Putney Bridge Road. The barn was owned, or at least used, by Anstee & Co (in some reports misspelled Anstey), who were corn and feed merchants and whose shop was at 187 Wandsworth High Street, on the corner of Parish Yard. They moved there c. 1909, at about the time the shop was renumbered from 125 to 187, and followed earlier corn merchants Hood & Moore Ltd and Goodchild & Co. A 1916 map (left) shows substantial buildings (circled) at the back of Parish Yard, which also housed a wheelwright and a farrier.

*Wandsworth, Earlsfield and Southfields: A Portrait in Old Picture Postcards*, by Drinkwater & Loobey (1993), has a photograph of the shop, with the caption: "Feed and hay merchants Anstee & Co ... closed in about 1980. It was not an uncommon sight to see bales of hay being loaded onto lorries and vans and, unfortunately, there



were a few serious fires in the large hayshed at the rear of the premises." Did one of these fires result in the barn having to be demolished in 1921? Who knows, but if it did, it would make the survival of the mounting block even more remarkable! Ernest Dixon, as a nurseryman, presumably bought straw and, since his nurseries were close by, he may already have known Anstees.

### Ernest Dixon

Dixon was born c. 1882 and became a respected horticulturalist and amateur historian. As mentioned, he bought the mounting block for 50 shillings and set it up in his nurseries at 134 West Hill, which were established by the 1910s. He also had what he described as "a little Nursery Garden" in Putney Vale (below) - close, he believed, to where the mounting block had originally stood. By the mid-1920s, the West Hill nurseries included a 'garage' (petrol station perhaps), which soon became the primary business.

In a letter to *Wandsworth Borough News* of 26<sup>th</sup> November 1954 about the 'ROWN' spelling of Roehampton (as on the stone), Dixon wrote that he had "bought the stone and erected it at the garage, where the public may see what is a rare specimen of an ancient mounting block and milestone, one of Putney's few



authentic antiquities.” It continued to be called Dixon’s Garages until at least 1980, though Dixon himself had died in 1969. The following photographs show the stone in its nursery/garage setting: 1. from Johnson’s 1924 article (see p. 31); 2. (poor quality, date unknown) behind the gates of the nursery/garage, with West Hill in



the background; and 3 and 3a. from *Passing the Milestones*, published c. 1935 by National Benzole.

### Ernest Dixon’s pamphlet

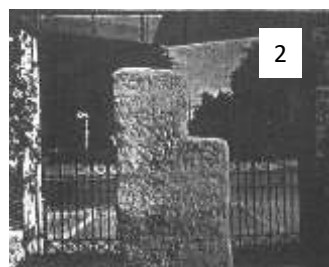
In 1928, he produced a pamphlet on the mounting block, presumably for private distribution to friends and contacts. The text read:

*“Putney is an ancient place but there are few existing relics of its past. You may be interested in these particulars of one of its few authentic antiquities.*

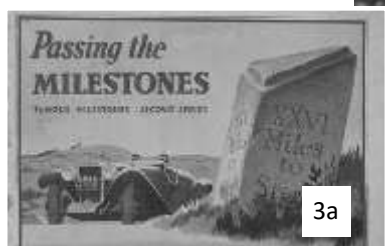
*The mounting block, illustrated, was erected by T. Nuthall of “Rown” (Roehampton), then a hamlet of 33 houses and 2 inns, in 1654. The inscription on the back*



FIG. 1. MAIN, OR WEST FACE.



page is the most complete we



have been able to find, and was copied from the stone by a writer in the “Gentleman’s Magazine” in 1787. [Shown on p. 5.]

Manning & Bray, in “Antiquities of Surrey” (1814)

mention the stone, but say that the whole of the inscription cannot be read.

*It was most likely placed near my little Nursery Garden at the junction of the two hills from Putney Heath down to Putney Vale.*

*After 1814 it disappeared, but on pulling down an old building in Wandsworth High Street it was re-discovered. I purchased it and have erected it at the Garage and Nursery, 134 West Hill, Putney, where anyone is welcome to examine it.*

*Inscribed stones of this type, especially of such an early date, are extremely rare. Mile-stones were not general until they were made compulsory in 1744, and why Nuthall should erect the stone and say it came from Barnes and add his “rhyme” is hard to see. He was suspected of being a Papist and during the Commonwealth, when he wrote it, possibly his “poetry” had a meaning which was more intelligible then than now.*

*Further details may be read in the “Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society,” where there is a note about it by Walter Johnson, F.G.S. A copy of this may be seen at the Nursery and Garage on request.”*

The charming print, showing the stone set in crazy paving, was by Gilbert Rumbold, who had previously done publicity work for Dixon.

### Misinterpretation

The *Daily Chronicle* article referred to on p.28 included an erroneous version of part of the main inscription, which would lead Walter Johnson to a false conclusion in his 1924 article, covered on the following page. They printed the lines as:

FROM LONDO(N)  
TOWNE TO PORTSE  
DOW(NE)

THEY SAYE TIS  
MILES THREE SCOR  
(E)

[illegible]

OUT OF 4TE (40) AN  
(D) SI(X)

7 OCKSFORD ...E  
LEFT THEM ...M ...4

The latter was a misreading of lines 6-8 of the inscription, which were most likely:

OVT OF 4 TEAMS I / TOCKE 5 HORSE AND / LEFT THEM 5 IN 4

The hints of ‘46’ and ‘Oxford’ (OCKSFORD, which was actually TOCKE) led Johnson to a somewhat fanciful interpretation, though he later realised his error.

### 1924: Walter Johnson (2)

Dixon contacted Johnson, gave him access to the stone, and Johnson wrote a detailed article entitled A REDISCOVERED PUTNEY RELIC; AN INSCRIBED MOUNTING BLOCK, published in *Transcriptions of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society, New Series, Vol. V Part ii* (1924), pp. 138-152. It is too long

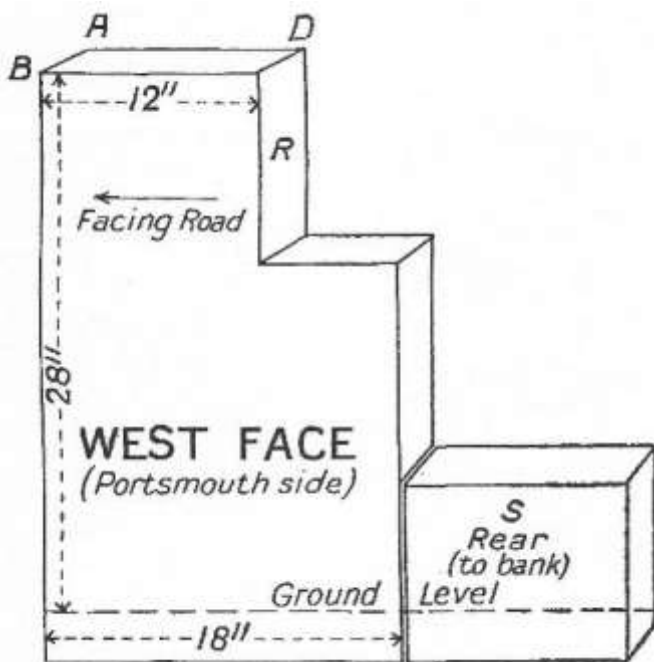


to quote in full, but an extract follows:

"Two or three years ago Mr. Ernest Dixon, F.R.H.S., drew my attention to an inscribed stone which he had found built into the walls of an old barn then being demolished in Wandsworth. A moment's inspection showed that the stone, really an old mounting-block, was a long lost relic which I had vainly endeavoured to trace when writing the history of Wimbledon Common. The mounting-block, now, along with other antiques, has its temporary home in Mr. Dixon's Nursery at West Hill, Wandsworth, and awaits the time when some public-spirited society will take the responsibility of re-erecting the stone, and of suitably protecting it from mutilation. ... The stone mysteriously disappeared at some unknown date after 1814, for it is noticed by no subsequent writer ... so that our only recognized source of information, until quite recently, was that supplied by Manning & Bray ... [and] indeed, had not the name of the erector been left on record, even this could not have been ascertained, because the face bearing that part of the legend has been reworked, and a thin slice cut away.

"The present shape of the block is that of a plain rectangular pillar, 45 inches in height, and 18 inches wide at the bottom of the main face. The narrow sides taper from 15 inches to 12 inches, and the back is indented with a step, to allow the horseman to dismount at about 16 inches from the ground ... I estimate that about a foot and a half of the stone was originally buried in the soil. To aid in ascending there was probably an iron stanchion set vertically on the top of the stone, for there still remains a hole near the off-edge, two inches square, cut diagonally. The back of the block has been badly hacked, and projects awkwardly ... damage most likely done when the block was tooled to fit some corner of the barn wall. Then also the name of the Roehampton surveyor was removed.

"A smaller stepping stone originally stood at the base of the larger stone, but this has entirely disappeared. The remaining block is composed of a medium-grained Portland Oolite, which exhibits numerous fragments of fossils. ... A careful examination convinced the writer



Walter Johnson's illustration

that the object was intended both for a milestone and a mounting-block, and that it served both purposes from the very first."

[Johnson's theory about the square hole being intended to hold an "iron stanchion" is open to question. Firstly, J.L. doesn't show one in his sketches; secondly, the hole is quite shallow; and thirdly, one could argue that a stanchion would have been more of a hindrance than a help to the rider! A hole for a tethering ring perhaps? It is even possible that it was a later structural modification - and Johnson himself mentions "damage most likely done when the block was tooled to fit some corner of the barn wall."]

### Thomas Nuthall

The Putney parish registers, according to Johnson, show a Thomas Nuthall in Roehampton ('ROWN') in 1654, who died in 1672, leaving a son of the same name; the latter died in 1712, leaving a family which included a third Thomas. The Nuthalls then vanish from the records, and Johnson could find no trace in the neighbouring parishes of Mortlake, Richmond or Wandsworth. The Court Rolls of Wimbledon Manor, of which Roehampton was a part, apparently mention the name of Thomas Nuthall 14 times between 1645 and 1709, containing only the forename Thomas, so presumably all three generations were included. After 1709, the name disappears from the Rolls.

Johnson raised a point which he considered significant: "It is afforded by a note made by the late Mr Cecil T. Davis, until recently librarian for Wandsworth, and widely known as a painstaking local historian. The note runs: 'Nuthall, Thomas, on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1648, is reported to be a Papist, and has £1500 in the Earl of Portland's hands. He is possibly Thomas Nuthall, surveyor of Roehampton, 1654.'" [Johnson was quite certain he was.] The second Thomas Nuthall was, he wrote, "but a youth in 1648" and therefore obviously, "the person 'reported' was none other than our surveyor. The Earl of Portland was a strong Royalist ... [from] 1642 to June 1646 ... was with Charles I at Oxford and sat in the Royalist Parliament there. ... He owned Putney Park until 1640, in which year he sold it. Moreover, as revealed by a [1649] Parliamentary Survey ... he still held property in Roehampton. There is a fair presumption, then, that Nuthall was involved in the Earl's affairs ... The basis of the charge was probably ... that Nuthall was locally known to have strong Stuart sympathies." Johnson however concludes that his Roman Catholicism, if existent, "was not of an aggressive kind."

### Meaning of the west face inscription

A friend of Johnson's, Mr W J Maxton of Hayling Island, thought there might be a reference to Charles I's time in Oxford (OCKSFORD), which he left in 1646 (4TE AND SIX) and thus a risky allusion, at that anti-Catholic time, by the 'royalist' Thomas Nuthall to his late sovereign. At that point, they hadn't seen J.L.'s letter to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, with its detailed sketches, but when they did, Johnson realised they were mistaken, and that the lines were incorrectly rendered in



Photo: Philip Evison

the *Daily Chronicle* article. No-one knows the significance of the stone's curious doggerel. Perhaps the 'architect' (YONG? WODYARD?) wished to put on record the effort and implied expenditure he had invested in its creation, transportation and erection, in case he were not paid.

### The Horses

Johnson wrote: "The statement about the teams indicates that there were 10 horses in four unequal teams, and that half the animals were taken to drag the two stones. Since these did not weigh, on a liberal estimate, more than half a ton in all [my estimate is 350-400 kilos], the burden was not heavy, even for bad country roads." Maxton suggested that the final line of the doggerel may have read IN 4 DAYS AND NO MORE.

### Wandsworth Historical Society

The mounting block was included in an article on 'Putney Stones' in WHS News Sheet no. 4 of 1960, whose anonymous author averred:

"Nuthall's puzzle is of course easily solved:

Out of 4 teams	2 2 3 3
Took 5 horses	<u>1 1 1 2</u>
Leaving 5 in 4	1 1 2 1"

The present author confesses that the solution is not quite so obvious to him!

The article quoted the year of rediscovery as 1926, though in fact it was 1921, and went on to say: "Recognising its antiquarian value, he [Dixon] acquired it and had it set up in the forecourt of Dixon's Garage on West Hill, where it may be seen today." As stated earlier, 134 West Hill was probably both a nursery and a garage by the mid-1920s.

Ernest Dixon died on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1969, at the age of 87. An obituary in *Wandsworth Historical Society News Sheet* no. 2 of 1969 recorded:

"His outstanding contributions to local history were perhaps his identification of 'Old Man's Well' behind a garage in West Hill Road, and his discovery in Anstey's barn in Wandsworth High Street in 1926 of the stone mounting block which originally stood by the Kingston Road in Putney Vale, with its quaint inscription dated 1654. The stone still stands inside the gates of Dixon's Garage on West Hill, a fitting memorial to a zealous local historian." Thus incorrectly repeating 1926 as the year of discovery, from the article of nine years earlier.

### Recent History of the Stone

There are still gaps to be filled. The stone remained at Dixons Garages, as the premises were still called after Dixon's death in 1969, possibly into the 1980s. At some point, the garage was bought, by a lady it is thought, who sold it to the present owners (Esso) and had the stone moved to her garden at 8 Princes Way, Southfields. [A letter from Peter Thomas of Wandsworth Historical Society in *Wandsworth Guardian* of 24<sup>th</sup> March 1983 refers to the stone as "... now removed from the site of Dixon's garage and probably destroyed." - which happily it wasn't!] Mavis Mellor occupied the house from 1964-90 (1964-81 with Constance Smith and 1968-90 with William Cooper); it stood empty -

vandalised - for two years, until bought in 1992. It was probably Barry Sellers, a Council conservation officer, who alerted Wandsworth Museum to the presence of, and risk to, the stone, and between 1990 and 1992 (probably nearer 1992), it was moved to the Roehampton Library, which it was hoped would be its final destination. Unfortunately, for various reasons, this was not possible and a week later, it was moved to Wandsworth Museum, in The Old Courthouse, Garratt Lane, and later to the new West Hill Museum, where it is now stored (below).

### Condition of the Stone

17<sup>th</sup> century milestones are very rare, though, as mentioned earlier, this was only incidentally a milestone and was set up a century before they became compulsory. Nevertheless, apart from extant dated Roman milestones, it is, with one exception, the oldest dated milestone in the country. Its survival has been little short of miraculous. Set up in 1654, recorded in 1787 and 1814, removed some time between 1814 and 1911, rediscovered in a barn in 1921 (having survived a fire?), displayed in a nursery/garage for 60 years, moved to a garden in Southfields, transferred to a library, and finally to two different museums! Along the way, it has inevitably suffered weathering and physical damage. [How it came to be in a barn in Wandsworth will almost certainly never be known.]

Parts of the inscriptions have however survived - mainly lines 1-5 of the main inscription. On the right is a composite image of these lines - crudely lit by a hand-held torch; almost nothing else is decipherable. Most of the word WODYARDS, from line 3 of the roadside face, can also be made out. Nuthall's name and the date had disappeared by the time Johnson examined the stone in 1922/3. It is clear that the stone needs henceforth to be treated with great care.





**Editor's postscript.** Since this article was written Philip Evison has continued to add more knowledge to the story of the stone and this will appear in the Updates/Feedback column in the 2015 issue of *Milestones & Waymarkers*.

Viewing the stone is currently impossible because Wandsworth Museum closed its doors in early summer 2014. The future care and preservation of the stone remains uncertain.

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## Modelling the Roehampton mounting block (upping stock)

*Lionel Joseph*

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I get the impression, being a member of the Milestone Society, that when an unusual discovery is made or there is a need, it has become a case of, "Let Lionel know and something will probably happen" that is, especially if it is of a practical nature. An instance of this was the discovery in a museum store, of a half ton upping stock bearing an inscription which included mileage between London and Portsdown. Whilst it is thought that there is a stone in Oxford bearing a mileage and dated slightly earlier than the 1654 on the upping stock, this was worth trying to do something about. Dates on milestones are normally after 1744 – the date of a Turnpike Trust Act which made erecting milestones compulsory so the upping stock is very early indeed.

There were conflicting reports of its original location, one of which was near the inn "The Bald Headed Stag". The only possible way to get the original back to where it was placed by the Roehampton surveyor in 1654, presuming that it is in a fit condition to do so, was, I thought, to offer the Wandsworth Museum a reduced size replica. There were also several sources of conflicting information about its history and what was engraved on the stone, but at least one included a reasonable photograph to assess shape and measurements, along with traces of the lengthy inscription. Fortunately all the engraving readable had been recorded in 1779 and published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, an up-market publication of that period.

The greatest problem facing any miniaturist is that; whilst reduction of measurement is normally not a problem, one cannot reduce the raw material, original or otherwise. This especially affects stone engraving where the smallest standard lettering for limestones and sand-

stones is about an inch and a half in height. The replica required letters of five-eighths of an inch in height. The upping stock stone was quoted to be 'Portland, Base Bed' a prized oolitic limestone stone, another lesser quality building stone in the Portland series is the Whit Bed which overlays the Base Bed with intervening beds of sands. Whilst the Base Bed is practically fossil free, the Whit Bed is a mass of mostly tiny fragments of oyster shell and that of bivalves, around which the limestone ooliths were formed by precipitation. When cutting small letters this conglomeration of hard centres and soft outsides is a problem, for tiny splinters of the stone are apt to fly off and one loses the 'centres' of A's, P's, B's and R's and engraving S's are, shall we say, difficult!

Bearing all that in mind, a miniature to the scale of 30% was thought to be a possibility. For such experimental purposes one doesn't order a block of high quality Corsham stone costing probably about a hundred pounds or more at the quarry gate, one nips into the Garden Centre and rummages the 'Rockery' stones. Thus a chunk of 'Cotswold' was acquired, actually recognised as inferior oolite, probably from the Stanton-Chipping Campden area. A thin slice soon revealed its texture to be too coarse, a second attempt was a chunk of walling stone labelled Purbeck, actually Portland Purbeck a stone noted for its high chert (*flint*) inclusions and again unsuitable. I knew of a couple of houses with stones outside of a Portland nature being used to protect the verge and where a swop might be arranged one was quickly dismissed on inspection, as it was Portland Roach which is tuffa like and full of cavities. Tuffa is where lime in ground water is precipitated out through

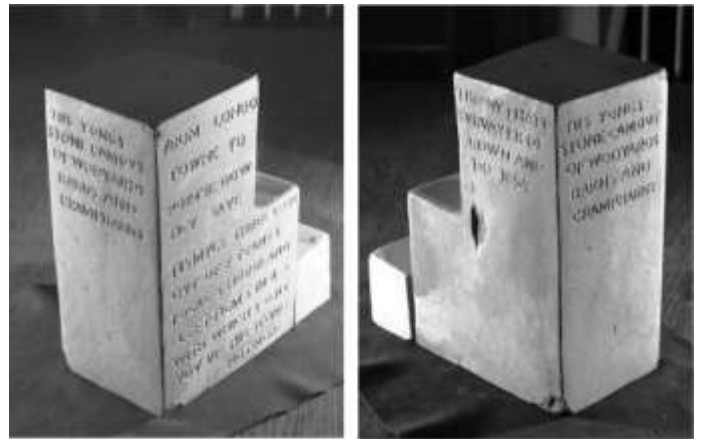
evaporation as it passes through the atmosphere. One finds it on some cliff faces such as at Aust by the Severn Bridge. The second option was better, being Portland Whit Bed and which, although the original was claimed to be Base Bed, it is in fact, Whit Bed, so was matched exactly by accident. One month of chip, chip, chip and we had a suitable deliberately 'aged' miniature for the Museum. A precision diamond sawn block, with computer managed machine engraving, would be inappropriate in the extreme as museum display for something dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There were nearly two hundred characters to engrave of which the normal commercial price of £5 per character would apply. As shown below there were aspects which would have ruled out a computer job anyway.

Of the engraving there was a question of irregular spacing and the absence of the 'N' of LondoN and also of Portsea DowN, probably due to an afterthought to make the milestone an upping stock, perhaps when a lump got knocked off accidentally, or maybe it was deliberately cut away to make the upping stock. These 'N's had been re-engraved, and by the standard of engraving that was at a later date, and sited around the corner on the riser. Further some, but not all, of the 'th's' had been engraved as a diphthong, i.e. joined up capital letters. I have never met that diphthong, has anyone else? Nowhere in Ogilby's two hundred pages of text printed in 1675 do they appear!

The stone was placed in the hands of a very surprised Philip Evison, Wandsworth Historical Society member 'for his attention'. The distance quoted of "MYLS THREE SCOR" is surprising accurate for London to Portsdown. Ogilby's vulgar computation quotes sixty miles, but interpreting that distance one must remember that the calculation was made up of the sums of the distances between places, the likes of the distance through Kingston on Thames, Guildford and Petersfield,

the last of which is actually quoted as four furlongs ( $\frac{1}{2}$  mile), not being included. It may be anticipated that my menial efforts will be on display at the Wandsworth Museum on West Hill, Wandsworth in the not too distant future.

**Editor's postscript.** Wandsworth Museum insisted that the miniature had to be donated rather than loaned. With the closure of the museum (see previous article) and the distribution of its contents unknown there is concern over the future of both Lionel's scale replica and the original stone.



## A new milestone for Bucklebury, West Berkshire

*Lionel Joseph*



A private commemorative milestone for the birth of Prince George has been completed in the grounds of Bucklebury School, Berkshire. Bucklebury was the home of Kate Middleton, now the Duchess of Cambridge.

The details are: The pillar made of handmade bricks 42 inches high and 18 inches wide. The tablet (made and engraved by Lionel Joseph) 12 inches wide and 24 inches high is of magnesium limestone from the Huddersfield area, alias York stone. The inscription reads

**BUCKLEBURY / 52½ / From / KING CHARLES / STATUE / WHITE-HALL / LONDON / THIS STONE / CELEBRATES / 22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2014.**

Located at NGR: SU543686.

The purpose of using just a date is making people reading it to think and apparently it is being successful at that. It also avoided permissions and red tape in using Prince George in the legend.

Unfortunately the milestone will not be accessible to the general public as such due to recent Government regulation on access to schools for security reasons. There will be a formal unveiling at a later date.



# The history and restoration of Desborough Cross, Northants

Helen Crabtree

Desborough Cross stands at the corner of Buckwell Close and High Street, Desborough. When the old village cross was removed, a pillar from Harrington Hall was erected in its place but locals continued to call it the cross. It was on the Market Harborough to Brampton turnpike and played an important part of history in the town. Until the 1930s it was situated in the middle of the street. The mileages inscribed on three sides were **81 miles from LONDON, To Harboro 5 and To Kettering 6**.

The toll gates were in use from the 1700s until 1878 and when removed the toll house became Kilborn's painter's shop and later Burt Harvey's hardware store. It was lived in until 1968 when so much of Desborough's lovely old buildings were demolished. At one of my talks I met a lady who lived there: she was Burt's daughter. Recently whilst standing at the cross one day, I also met her brother. It was a focal point for many people and in the 1800s a large proportion of the parish were on poor relief and they would stand around the cross hoping for some work. Employers, usually farmers, would come along and choose suitable people.

Silk weaving was an important trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in homes at first and then large factories were built. John Jarman, a zealous missionary from Clipston came to Desborough in the 1850s and spoke to the silk weavers, who were intelligent people, about the principles of the Co-operative movement. They all gathered around the cross to listen and the Desborough Co-operative Society was formed in 1863.

Young boys used to meet at the cross on Guy Fawkes Night and scatter gunpowder on the street and set light to it.

One pound ten shillings was collected in 1904 by the Desborough band who held concerts around the cross.

In the autumn months of WW1 residents used to gather nuts from local woods and the men then went to the cross to chat and eat the nuts. The road was littered with nutshells for a while.

On the feast of St. Giles in September many people

came from nearby villages to join local people for celebrations at the cross.

It was also the meeting place for the policemen in the 1920s; the sergeant would meet the three constables there and they would go off on their bicycles to given areas.

In 1939 with increasing traffic, it was decided to move the cross to a safer location. It was dismantled stone by stone and information was buried inside it. Recently a lady told me when it was re-erected the stones were put incorrectly and the writing was on the inside so the stonemason had to turn the stones round!

Many people over the past few months have told me they used to sit on the steps of the cross when they were children. You can see where the steps have been worn down over the years because of this.

Over the years the carvings had faded and almost visibly disappeared. It was only on a sunny day that you could actually make out the words if you stood within two feet of the cross. See figs 1, 2 and 3 below left.

Moving on to 2011, I decided it would be interesting to see if we could make the writing more visible: very few people knew it had writing on it. Some newer residents hadn't even noticed it was there which is surprising as it is almost fifteen feet tall.

The Cross is Grade II listed and my initial enquiries about getting the wording repainted were met with a barrage of legal do's and don'ts. Undeterred I pressed on! I found a stonemason willing to do the work but unfortunately he had suffered a brain tumour and was unable to proceed. Phil Langmead from Barham Stone Ltd was recommended to me; he is very experienced and has worked on York Minster.

We created a 3 step plan to cover the restoration of the Cross which was to

- 1.Re-carve and paint the lettering and numerals.
- 2.Steam clean the stone.
- 3.Replace previous botched repairs.

As it was Grade II listed we had to approach the local council and find out their opinion on the proposed plan. Fortunately the Council sent along a sympathetic Conservation Officer, Martin Ellison, who firmly got behind the plan and confirmed that as we were repairing the Cross we didn't need to fill out authorisation forms etc. He agreed to Phil carving two characters to test stone quality. The carving was excellent and in fact part of the L of London was carved for the first time on a previous infill repair (fig 4). Martin was very happy with Phil's carving and gave the all clear to complete the re-carving of one side. Once carving was finished, Martin gave Phil permission to paint the two characters (fig 5).

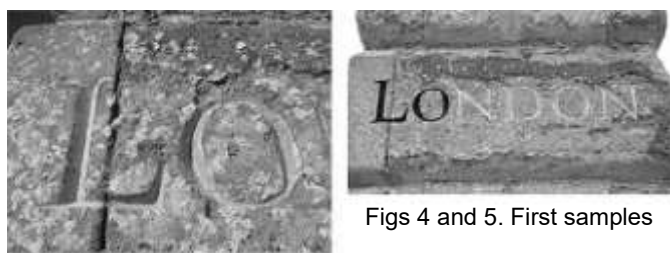
Again after site visit Martin agreed to one side featuring **81 miles from LONDON** to be painted (Fig 6). All parties were very happy with the finished side so permission was granted to re-carve and paint the remaining two sides. At the end of stage 1 of the project the Cross was looking much better! (Figs 7 and 8)



Figs 1,2 and 3. Before...



Desborough folk of all ages were starting to notice



Figs 4 and 5. First samples

the restoration work and the number of people who had memories of the Cross in Desborough's history was quite amazing: old pictures and photos were produced to back up their tales. On the first day, Phil didn't achieve much because he had to stop to explain what he was doing! Whenever Phil scheduled work sessions after that, I set up my table alongside with Milestone Society membership leaflets and a collecting tin! Donations amounted to £50; I also put a tin in the Desborough Heritage Centre which raised £30 and the local chemist,



Fig 6. With the 'London' side completed stonemason Phil Langmead makes a start on the remaining two sides



Figs 7 and 8. The other two sides completed

next to the cross, agreed to have one and £40 was donated there. The whole project is costing over £3,000; I have already obtained funding for half of it and have applied for more.

After my initial worries about raising so much money, by talking to friends and local residents I knew who to apply to for funding. I knew of one local charity trust and was told about another one, they both gave a generous amount. The Co-op have a community fund which I applied for in April and was pleased to receive a generous donation from them. I was also pleased to find that local councillors have an allowance for worthwhile causes and they are put some money aside until I had heard from the Co-op. Desborough Civic Society have given a donation as have the Desborough Community Development Trust and Desborough Twinning Association. Many local organisations use the Cross on their letterhead. I opened a bank account to receive donations.

Phase 2 was completed on 24<sup>th</sup> June when a cleaning company from Kent came along and using the Doff cleaning system (heated spray not jet wash!) proceeded to clean base and steps. It was felt by Martin that the ashlar pillar shouldn't be cleaned in case of damage. Apparently English Heritage has had some bad experiences with the process! Needless to say the process worked fine and the before and after pictures (figs 9 and 10) confirm the process was successful.

We then reached the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final stage where Phil attempted to replace some of the unsightly stone probably used when damage was done when it was moved years ago. This phase was successfully completed by the end of September.

However when Phil went to measure up the stones to be replaced he was surprised to see that someone had been there with cement and pointed the stones! I contacted the police because there is a CCTV camera there and they said they would see if they had the time to have



Figs 9 and 10. Before and after base cleaning

a look but we had a five day slot. Meanwhile I was there on a market day and chatting to the stallholders I found out that two men had done the job on a market day so we knew the date. The CCTV had captured them but they couldn't see the licence plate of the vehicle. The word quickly spread around the town so we hope to find out who was responsible.

Phil, the stonemason, was so interested in the project that he joined the Milestone Society and came to the Rothwell meeting.

The tallest milestone in Northamptonshire is now back in business, fully restored for the next 200 years!

All photos: Helen Crabtree



# One Hundred Years On

## Waymarkers with World War One Connections

Colin Woodward and John V Nicholls

### The First World War: A Milestone Memorial

As the mounting carnage of the Great War became evident, thoughts were already being expressed about how the dead should be commemorated. On 25rd December 1916, a letter to *The Spectator* expressed the following: "..... may I suggest that some of the simple wayside crosses which once beautified England would in many cases be a most, if not the most fitting memorial ....". War Memorials take many forms, but the 'wayside cross' theme has been highly influential. In some areas such as South East England, the frequent sight of public war memorials has effectively reintroduced a wayside cross tradition into the landscape that had almost died out. Many war memorials can be found in churchyards, and Christ Church, Shooters Hill, Greenwich is unusual in having two of them close to each other. One is in the form of a cross, but the other one is a milestone. The milestone long pre-dates the First World War and is from the New Cross Turnpike (1758).

This stone (KE\_LD08) was once on the north side of the road opposite near the church. In 1905 the stone was smashed into two pieces by a steamroller and would have probably been lost but for the efforts of the vicar. He arranged for the stone to be rescued and pieced together by a local civil engineer. The milestone for a time was removed to alongside the path leading to the church door, but later moved near the road. Its plates were then renewed, giving distances **7 / MILES / TO / DARTFORD** and **8 / MILES / TO / LONDON BRIDGE**. A third plate was added, reading: **150 MILES TO / YPRES. / IN DEFENDING / THE SALIENT / OUR CASUALTIES WERE:- / 90,000 KILLED / 10,500 MISSING / 410,000 WOUNDED .** (see photograph).

A modern milestone (KE\_LD08a), made of concrete, now stands on the north side of the road, with plates giving distances, as before,



to London Bridge and Dartford. Shooters Hill is the only place on the London to Canterbury road where milestones can be seen on both sides of the highway.

This memorial is not the only one giving distances to Ypres. The War Memorial at Ashby-de-la Zouch has a plate giving 220 miles to Ypres, and a plate on a house wall near North Cave in East Yorkshire gives Ypres 347 miles and also lists the casualties. (See *Newsletter* 7, July 2004, p14). How the distances were measured is unclear.

Bibliography: "The Stones of Shooters Hill" by Jack Vaughan (in *Aspects of Shooters Hill* by Shooters Hill Local History Group, 1989).

Colin Woodward

### Combyne Rousdon War Memorial

At Rousdon in East Devon, near Axminster on the A3052, there is an unusual war memorial which also acts as a milestone (DV\_EKLR25z). It lists thirteen villagers of Combyne and Rousdon who died in the First



Photo: Tim Jenkinson

World War plus one from the Second World War. The memorial, which is Grade II listed, takes the form of a squat ashlar pillar, square on plan with a pyramidal cap and finial and a flower in the frieze below the cap.

The listing description makes it clear that the milestone is earlier and was later adapted to become a war memorial. The north elevation reads

**COMBYNE: / 1 AXMINSTER: 6½,** the west elevation **SEATON: 4½ / SIDMOUTH: 12** and the east elevation **LYME REGIS: 3 / BRIDPORT: 11½.**

The lettering is in the Arts and Crafts style and instead of the colons after the place names there are four dots in diamond shape. A flower is engraved before the mileage figure for SEATON. The south elevation has the word "ROUSDON" in large letters, and the inserted granite memorial tablet. The milestone inscriptions do not face the traveller, and suggests that the milestone may have been rotated through 180 degrees to enable the war memorial tablet to face the main road.

The milestone is thought to date from c. 1880. In the 19th century Sir Henry Peek (1825 – 98), philanthropist and son of the founder of the Peek Frean biscuit factory, bought the Rousdon Estate, which included the whole of the village of Rousdon. He commissioned Sir Ernest George and Thomas Vaughan to build a large mansion, set in a park with landscaping and ancillary buildings. It would seem that the milestone originally formed a focal point opposite the drive to the North Lodge.

Colin Woodward

### The Bomb Damaged Milestone in Widnes



Left shows the west face and right the east face.  
Photos: Tim Jenkinson

A unusual commemorative relic of the First World War stands near the war memorial in Victoria Park, Widnes, Lancs. It is a bomb damaged milestone.

Two metal information plates in front of the milestone tell the story.

Plate one.

#### *'Zeppelin Bomb Damage*

*This was the fifth milestone standing beside the A.57 Prescott to Warrington road at Bold on the 12th April 1916, when five German naval Zeppelins made the last*



*effective airship raid on England.*

*Zeppelin L61 from Wittmundhaven, commanded by Kapitanleutnant Erlich with a crew of 19, crossed our coast at Withernsea and flew almost to Crewe before turning north and crossing the Mersey at 18,000 feet above Halton.*

*At 11-17 P.M. the first of its bombs fell damaging the milestone, the road surface, a watermain and doing some minor damage to adjacent property. There were no casualties here.*

*A second bomb dropped three minutes later made a crater seven feet deep and fifteen feet across in a field at Abbots Hall Farm, Bold.'*

Plate two.

*'The Zeppelin went on to bomb Ince and Wigan, before returning safely to her base.*

*The night was dark and overcast, added to which the effectiveness of the official blackout prevented accurate navigation, so that the airship commander reported in his log that he had bombed Sheffield. The light from blast furnaces of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company, which had received no air raid warning, attracted L61. Seven people were killed and twelve injured at Wigan and a further four injured at Aspull. The milestone was kept for many years in Victoria Park at Widnes as a reminder of the second of the only two Zeppelin raids on Lancashire.'*

But this leaves many unanswered questions.

1. Why and when was the milestone taken from its original location at Bold?
2. Plate two states that the milestone was kept for many years in Victoria Park. This suggests that it was displayed elsewhere at some period.
3. In 1978 the milestone was reported as laying behind a greenhouse in Victoria Park and there was a campaign to have it re-erected in a prominent place. Is this when the information plates were made?

*Text and photos: John V Nicholls*



Despite the bomb damage TO PRESCOT V MILES and TO LIVERPOOL XIII MILES are still discernible

# Wayside Stones at Alderley Edge, Cheshire

Jeremy Milln & John S Adams

## Alderley Edge and the Landscape Project

Alderley Edge is a prominent sandstone escarpment south of Manchester overlooking the Cheshire Plain. It has a gentle dip slope to the south-east given to pastureland and a steep scarp to the north-west which is largely wooded. Known to many through the novels of Alan Garner and popular with visitors today, the Edge has a fascinating mining and social history. Copper was extracted here during the Bronze Age and Roman periods and indeed, intermittently, into the early twentieth century, by which time cobalt and lead were also being recovered. The surface of the Edge is therefore scarred and sculpted with a rich archaeology and abundant folklore, by its historical association with the landed Stanleys and de Traffords and by the feet of its many visitors.

This study of a discrete group of mostly boundary stones arises out of a multi-disciplinary research project of the University of Manchester and the National Trust

as the major landowner of the Edge. Initiated in 1996 and published chiefly as *The Archaeology of Alderley Edge* (Timberlake & Prag 2005, referred to hereafter as *ArchAE 2005*), the Landscape Project sought to enhance understanding and underpin conservation across some four square miles of the parishes of Nether and Over Alderley. This is to be strengthened by publication in 2014 of a substantial book which will deal with the natural and social history of Alderley Edge (Prag, forthcoming).

The Project therefore gives us a management strategy for the care of all significant natural and historic features of Alderley Edge, be they woods, tracks, mines, quarries, steadings or stones. The intention is at once to make the place more accessible physically and intellectually, and better looked after, so that it may continue to be understood and enjoyed.

## Alderley Edge: Wayside Stones – a checklist. Part one

The numbers in the text and captions enclosed within square brackets, e.g. [2] refer to the details in the checklist

No	Name & place	NGR (all start SJ)	Type or purpose	Description
1	Golden Stone, Alderley Edge.	8621 7763	Parish boundary	Enormous conglomerate boulder on Over Alderley/Nether Alderley parish boundary
2	Saddlebole Stone	8602 7806	Parish boundary	Large conglomerate boulder with an equal armed cross deeply incised into the top of it. Set into ancient and badly eroded boundary bank at junction of Over/Nether Alderley/Wilmslow parishes.
3	'Druid's Circle', Alderley Edge	8603 7778	folly	Small 19 <sup>th</sup> century circle of large rough hewn sandstone boulders
4	Stone beside road at corner of Finlow Hill Wood	8626 7696	Parish boundary	Granite erratic. Over/Nether Alderley Parish boundary stone. (next to modern service indicator post)
5	Recumbent pinkish stone in field to W of Finlow Hill Wood	8612 7675	Former enclosure boundary?	Local sandstone conglomerate about 40 m south of the Over/Nether Alderley Parish boundary, now an area of pony paddocks
6	Stone in ditch at Finlow	8603 7678	Parish boundary	Natural sandstone rock outcrop perhaps once noted as on Over/Nether Alderley Parish boundary
7	Alderley Park, probable merestone	8527 7524	Parish boundary	Over/Nether Alderley Parish boundary. Identified by OS 1 <sup>st</sup> edition 1:2,500 map but JSA considers lost
8	Standing stone beside road opposite Dunge Farm on B5087.	8702 7633	Land ownership boundary	Local grit-stone slab like a grave-marker, slightly damaged. Apparently marking the edge of Broadheath Common in the 17 <sup>th</sup> century.
9	Standing stone on the right hand side of the gateway to Dunge farm.	8703 7636	Land ownership boundary	Sedimentary rock in the form of a large hewn cube, with a pyramidal head standing to about two and a half feet. (Not found when checked in June 2013).
10	Corner of field next to bloomery site, Bradford Lane	8516 7670	Land ownership boundary?	Large, dark coloured granitic erratic boulder.



### **Individual stones at Alderley**

Peculiar stones with arresting shapes or at significant sites have always exercised fascination. The antiquarians William Camden (1551-1623) and later William Stukeley (1687-1765) wondered what drove the Wessex prehistoric cultures to drag huge sarsen boulders large distances across the Wiltshire downs. We, in a more modest way, are puzzled by large stones and hoary rocks sometimes seen on their own at the sides of lanes or in hedge banks.

Stukeley explored megalithic Avebury and Stonehenge. Alderley has its own diminutive version of Avebury in the faux 'Druid's Circle' [3] between Stormy Point and Beacon Hill, but it also has a number of individual stones at sites of genuine antiquity. Some have been hewn and shaped for their purpose, while others are found in natural state and have simply been hauled to, or hauled at, a boundary or track.

Those known around Alderley Edge were recorded by the Landscape Project (*ArchAE*, 2005, 154-5). Let us look at them together and explore the nature, origin and purpose of a group of stones used mainly to mark the way of lanes and boundaries, rather than define ceremonial or funerary sites.

### **Definition and variety**

There is much variation in the geology, situation and date of stones found around Alderley, and it is their geography and function which define them as a group. Some are rough hewn boulders of sandstone or pebbly conglomerate quarried from the Triassic outcrops of the Edge. Others are rounded 'erratics', that is they are foreigners of Cumbrian granite or similar hard rock left by retreating glaciers. Most stones are recumbent while others have clearly been stood upon an end, or set atop banks and along roadways to mark boundaries and routes. Few are marked, let alone inscribed, yet most speak of the significance of territories, particularly parishes and the roads between them.

### **Standing stones**

Standing stones may be gateposts, war memorials, menhirs, obelisks, wayside crosses, orthostats, rubbing stones, grave and mile markers. At Alderley some are



Clare Pye at Golden Stone [1]

small enough for a man to lift, while the Golden Stone

[1], which has never moved, weighs about thirty tons. The smaller ones tend to be glacial, while the larger stones are usually of the local conglomerate, are derived from the sandstone of the Edge itself.

Locally quarried sandstone was also used for gateposts and mileposts at Alderley. These are characteristically flat faced and finely dressed with rolled or rounded tops and belong to the processes of enclosure and turnpike improvement. Rougher stones seen standing in open areas which in Wales or the West Country might be prehistoric, today rubbed by stock, are absent at Alderley perhaps because the local sandstone has not endured so well.

### **Age & Origin**

Definition by age is most uncertain. A stone-marked boundary mentioned in a sixteenth century *perambulation* may have originated much earlier. A stone gatepost may have evidence of earlier hangings or of conversion from/to a different purpose altogether.

While milestones, tombstones, memorials and the like will be easy to date, indeed some are obligingly dated by inscription, Alderley's boundary or 'mere' stones are much older and more enigmatic. There is growing evidence of the antiquity of many pre-enclosure boundaries in the western half of the country and parish boundaries are likely to be in excess of a thousand years, their markers dating from when they were first established.

With archaeological skill the purpose of most stones will be apparent. It is a common thread that all the curious and solitary stones of Alderley Edge which have been recruited by human agency, have been required to mark the way. Most were – and many still do – denote the course of administrative, tenancy or ownership boundaries. Others mark (or at least are found adjacent to) roads and tracks, while others denote nothing more significant than a gateway to a field.

### **Stones marking boundaries**

So the Alderley stones are by and large the markers of estates, parishes and fields and the course of route-ways. This was an area of ancient common land shared by civil parishes but disputed between landowners. One may imagine the fun of 'beating the bounds' held during Rogation Week where natural features were scarce and boundaries followed made-made ones over open ground. The common lands of Alderley were sandy heaths with extensive pockets of glacial clays forming peat bogs. It was also an area where, until enclosure – a process completed by 1780 – the routes of tracks across the Common may have required definition.

Significantly many large merestones are found at changes of boundary direction, the spaces between having been open ground lacking permanent features. Ill-defined boundaries could lead to disputes especially as the complex rights over mineral extraction, grazing, and turf cutting held by commoners and land-owners will have been jealously protected. We recognize this still in the modern use of awkward irregular rocks to protect private verges and gardens from motor vehicles.

So early boundary stones played an important part in agreements for the transfer of land or rights. In the medieval period the practices of assarting, that is the clearing or 'ridding' of patches of woodland for agricul-

## Alderley Edge: Wayside Stones – a checklist. Part two

No	Name and place	NGR (all start SJ)	Type or purpose	Description
11	Cross at Nether Alderley, junction A 34 and Welsh Row	8435 7692	Wayside preaching cross	Large stepped sandstone base to medieval wayside cross of which the stump only now survives. MSSoc database ref CHMA_NET
12	Stone at Spenser Brook, Whirley Grove, close to B5087	8850 7540	Parish boundary	Over Alderley/Macclesfield Parish Boundary stone. Finely made and lettered, dated 1789.
13	Pilkington Memorial stone, Stormy Point	8602 7794	Built memorial	Commemorates donation of Alderley Edge to the National Trust in 1948
14	Beacon cairn, Alderley Edge	8586 7773	Memorial	'From a friend, now in California', dated 1961
15	The 'Piece Steps'	8640 7676	Stepping stones	Three large shaped and heavily worn sandstone steps forming a stile
16	Stone on A 537 at Knowlsley Farm	8280 7430	Parish boundary	Modest granite erratic boulder on Nether Alderley/Chelford parish boundary
17	Junction Birtles and Hocker Lanes	8713 7558	Land ownership boundary	Small smooth black granitic stone. Boundary of Broadheath Common, defining Leycester and Stanley lands
18	Junction Birtles and Hocker Lanes	8715 7559	As above	Small brown stone, as above
19	Junction of Birtles and Wrigley Lane, Windmill Farm	8740 7583	Route marker?	Small granitic erratic boulder in roadside verge
20	Birtles Lane, by chapel	8743 7591	As above	Another, as above
21	By Hare Hill Garden Lodge, same side of road	8794 7668	Parish boundary	Small finely made early 19 <sup>th</sup> cent stone with an 'A' on one side and a 'P' on the other, marking the junction of Over Alderley/Prestbury/Macclesfield Parishes
22	By Hare Hill Garden Lodge, opposite side of road	8794 7667	Parish boundary	As above, but with an 'A' and possibly an 'M' on other side
23	On A 537 just E of Monk's Heath cross-roads	8479 7415	Milepost	Cast iron open book and acorn post of c. 1820, listed. TO MACCLESFIELD 4¼ MILES TO KNUTSFORD 7 MILES MSSoc database ref CH_KFMF07
24	On A 34 close to Astra Zeneca Alderley Park site	8410 7523	Milepost	Cast iron Cheshire County Council post of 1896 MSSoc database ref CH_AECO02
25	Hare Hill Park, close to NT car-park	8737 7678	Land ownership boundary	Large glacial granitic erratic marking boundary of Broadheath Common and old track.
26	Engine vein Mine, Alderley Edge	8616 7756	Gate post	Tall and broad upright stone inscribed with the head of a man, believed to be a portrayal of Mussolini, the Italian dictator.
27	Withinlee Farm, Hare Hill	8794 7670	Gateposts	Pair of tall sandstone gateposts standing at field entrance almost opposite eastern Lodge to Hare Hill. Iron gate hangings
28	Hare's Chase, Over Alderley	8775 7602	Gateposts	Pair of squat sandstone gateposts with rounded tops: 940 x 355 x 240 mm and 1090 x 330 x 140 mm.

Sites surveyed by John Adams (JSA) and others in 2002. Most were revisited  
by Jeremy Milln (JM) with Clare Pye on 20 June 2013.

ture will have been marked. So too the limits of turbarry in - or 'intake' of - the moss; that is the taking of turf from the bog.

'Moss 'rooms' were places for the cutting of turf for burning in lieu of coal. At Alderley it is known that occasionally the 'room' marker stones were removed illegally, to the consternation of the owner of the turf although one would suppose them to be just as liable to sink into the ground. The *Stanley Estate Book* (Cheshire CRO ref D8065) records one or more merestones being removed and destroyed by a tenant in 1611. This despite the Biblical injunction: 'Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark...' (*Deut. xix. 14*). A turf room on Soss Moss to the west of Alderley Edge was marked with merestones belonging to the Rectory in 1771.

### ***Stones marking the way***

The A34 road running north through Alderley Edge towards Manchester is marked by a medieval preaching cross where it is met by Artists' Lane in Nether Alderley [11]. This stone cross weathered to a stump atop a stepped plinth much repaired from vehicle damage is a rare survivor, for other wayside crosses in oak-rich Cheshire were probably timber. More modern are the milestones marking the way on the A34 and the A537 which crosses it at Monk's Heath to the south of Alderley Park. These include a Cheshire County Council casting of 1896 [24] and an 'open book' post of c.1820 [23].

### ***The Golden Stone***

Alderley's chief landowning family, the Stanleys, saw



Alderley Cross [11] at junction Artist's Lane and A34

their family archives burnt by disastrous fires in 1779 and 1936 and it is possible we have lost the evidence of others, but the Golden Stone [1] happily remains well known. The stone itself sits high on the Edge, at a place where paths from Engine Vein, Stormy Point, Adders Moss and Clockhouse Farm all meet. It marks an angle in the Over Alderley/Nether Alderley parish boundary and is itself bench marked by the Ordnance Survey at 606ft 10in (184.96 m). This long low un-golden green-gray monster is some three yards in length, a yard high and more than a yard deep.

The origin of its superb name is a mystery, but a great cleft across its middle, as though a deliberate attempt was made to open it up, might offer a clue. A large chunk is missing and a hole, recognisable from the mines nearby, has been drilled as though for an explosive



Acorn topped open book milestone [23] on the A537



Cheshire CC milestone [24] of 1896 on the A34

charge. We owe its recognition to Alan Garner who, in 1955, began to research the legend of Alderley (1997 & 2010). Garner recalls that an oak tree had long rooted in the cleft, so its assault had not been a recent event.

In the legend the Golden Stone is one of the fixed points on the path of the Wizard as he makes his way to a secret cave barred by iron gates wherein lies a host of mounted warriors in enchanted sleep ready to save their king at his hour of peril. Romanticised, as such traditions came to be, the warriors became Arthurian knights on milk-white steeds, the wizard Merlin and the name Iron Gates became attached to a mining cave that is unlikely to predate the Tudor period.

The name can probably not now be explained, but it is worth provoking some possibilities. Are the Golden Stone and Shining Tor, visible in the distance, linked by



The Golden Stone [1] viewed from the east

connotations of light? Alternatively, like the Cheshire settlement of Guilden Sutton, could the name refer optimistically to richness, splendour or fertility (Dodgson 1972: 126-7). Perhaps the stone is a prayer to good fortune for the Alderley copper mines and those who worked in them, for the copper mineral pyrite, commonly known as Fool's Gold, is in many cultures considered a protector of health.

### ***Stones of the 1598 Perambulation***

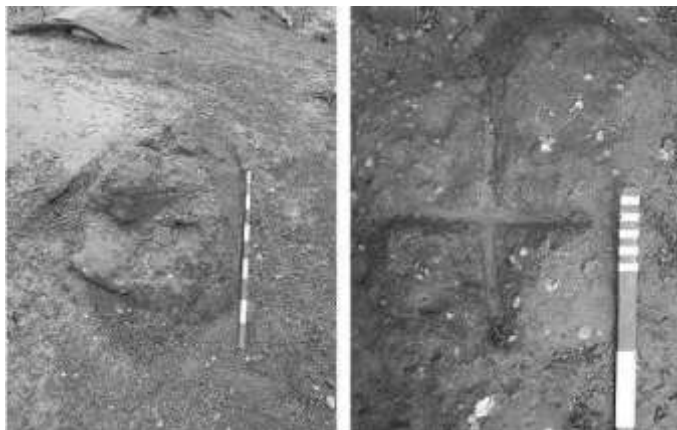
Certainly the 'Golden Stone' name is old enough. It is mentioned in a perambulation of the 'Mearns of Alderley

Edge' made in 1598, the 40th Year of the Reign of Elizabeth: 'and so to a great stone called the Golden Stone...' In this document some eighteen boundary stones are mentioned including the Castle Stone, which probably equates to a boulder or now lost standing stone at Castle Rock, or indeed the Rock itself about half a mile to the north-west. The perambulation goes on to state tantalisingly, 'and so to another merestone which many of the jury do remember stood on the end and is now fallen down....'

Mention is also made of a stone at the top of a ridge known as the Saddlebole [2]. This stone marks both the boundary between the parishes of Chorley and Over Alderley and the lands respectively of Trafford and Stanley. Befitting its double function, it is large and, as excavation has shown (*ArchAE* 8.20a, 171-6), well embedded into the boundary bank. The Perambulation mentions 'crists' [crosses] marking the stones or trees and the cross carved on the Saddlebole stone, mentioned in a perambulation of 1768 (Stanley n.d. [1830-44]), is still visible. It is of equal-armed form, suggested by Winchester (1990) to be perhaps medieval in date.

The 1598 perambulation mentions a stone on Finlow Hill '...up the old ditch up to another to the mere stone in the bottom of the Sicke (syke or ditch) at ye old ditch'. It is by the side of Finlow Hill Lane, where it is crossed by the parish boundary to the south-east of Mottram House [6]. Looking to the west the bank of the old boundary between the enclosed fields and the common lands of Alderley Edge is still visible, but to the north-east where it crossed open ground, it is absent.

It is intriguing to note that at the end of the 1598 perambulation one reaches '...the hedge between the Inheritance of Sir Edward Ffitton (*sic*) in the holding of Reginald Ffindlow and the lands of Edmond Trafford Esq.' The merestones were in fact only part of a system of land definition which included significant or cross-



Saddlebole Stone [2] viewed from above and close up of the equal-armed cross

marked trees and named features such as a Beacon at Alderley identified by Saxton in his map of 1577.

### ***Recumbent erratics***

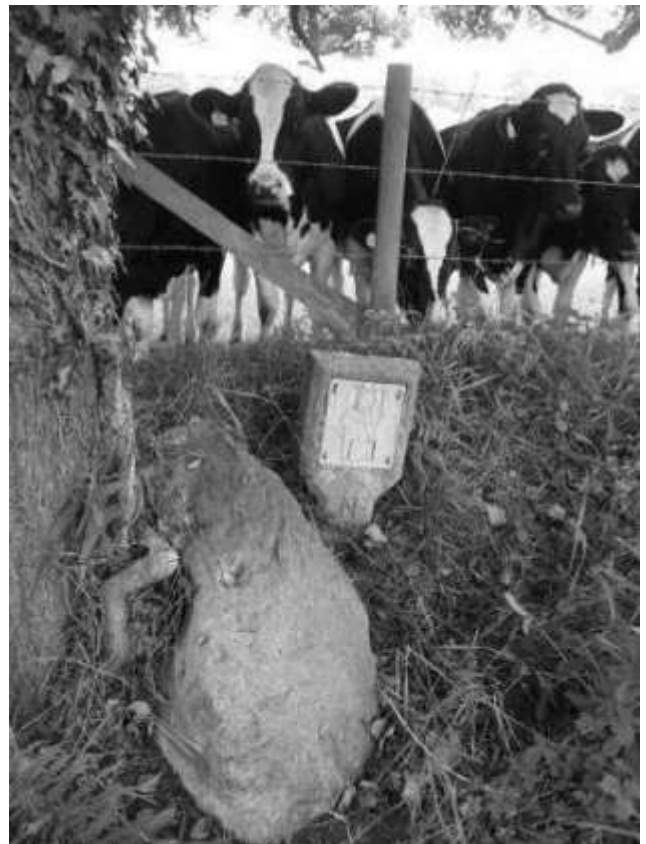
Most of the erratic boulders are hard igneous rock from Cumbria. Although often weighing well over a ton, they were carried to Alderley Edge from the area of today's Lakes District by ice sheets during the Devensian glaciation 25,000 - 13,000 years ago.

Following the Nether Alderley/Over Alderley parish boundary due south from the Golden Stone, a large lump of igneous rock is found jammed between an oak tree and a clutter of modern service indicator posts by the B5087 Macclesfield Road [4]. Here the boundary turns sharply east on the northern edge of Finlow Hill Wood. The rock, which is identified with the word 'stone' on the 1842 Tithe map for Nether Alderley and 'boulder' on the 1882 1:2,500 OS map, is of a purplish porphyritic andesite carried to the site during the Devensian glaciation 25,000-13,000 years ago. (David Thompson pers comm, 1998).

Following the boundary south-west into the large Finlow Hill Wood field is a large hog-backed erratic of pinkish porphyritic andesite from the Borrowdale volcanic series [5]. It is today a little to the south of the Nether Alderley/Over Alderley parish boundary having been incorporated into an area of pony paddocks but it seems likely to have acted as an important marker. (*ArchAE*: p.155, figure 8.20b). Next in this series where the boundary turns near Mottram House comes number 6 of the native rock.

In the corner of a field at Bradford Lane is another very large dark granitic stone weighing over two tons [10]. Its purpose is more obscure, but it lies adjacent to an early metal-working site where it appears to delimit a slag-rich area of smelting from an early water-powered bloomery furnace.

Other, smaller erratic boulders around the Edge are



Bovine interest through the fence at the Alderley Parish boundary stone [4] on the B5087 Macclesfield Road

found pushed to the edges of fields following land clearance for cultivation or enclosure. On Bradford Lane, not far from the Bloomery Stone [10], a resident has observed a group of probable field boundary stones

roughly the size of rugby balls as they were unearthed while digging for a telecom cable. However a series along Birtles Lane [17-20] would seem to denote the limits of Broadheath Common with 17 and 18 sentinel either side of Hocker Lane at the junction of the two roads. Perhaps the largest erratic boundary marker of



Pink stone [5] near Alderley Parish boundary at Finlow

Broadheath Common is the huge lump which stands guard by the path into Hare Hill Park from the National Trust's car park [25].

Sir Peter Leycester's 1636 *Map of Over Alderley* is a key document to understanding why, with multiple landed interests in this parish, there are so many more mere-stones than in Nether Alderley where Lord Stanley's interest went unchallenged.

#### ***Shaped and standing sand-stones***

Dunge Farm on the Macclesfield Road, to south east of the Edge, was formerly also part of Broadheath Common. Enclosed from 1661 a stone has been recorded on the right hand side of the gateway to the farm, protected by a hedge [9]. It is perhaps the most unusually shaped stone in the area: a large hewn cube, with a pyramidal cap standing to about two and a half feet. In the gateway itself three others were noted, now whitewashed. Another

The Dunge Farm stones seem to mark the location of an entrance way to the Common recorded on the 1636



Hare Hill merestone [25] with Clare Pye

*Map.* This extraordinarily detailed map provides a *terminus post quem* for enclosure of Broadheath Common and therefore by inference for their openings and gate furniture which should all be later.

Huge slabs of bedded sandstones fashioned to act as gateposts by tracks and at the entrance of fields occur at Alderley, some stranded by removal of associated hedgerows, most generally with relict iron pintles. Most will date from 1780s enclosure, recognisable by their tooled faces and rounded tops such as those at Engine Vein [26] and a matching pair at Hare Hill [27]. Another pair of stone gateposts – in this case rather unlike one another – may be seen further along the Macclesfield Road at Hares Chase [28] apparently also co-incident with a gateway shown on the Leycester Map of 1636.

Much smaller are the pair of tiny early 19<sup>th</sup> century boundary stones [21 & 22] standing outside the eastern entrance to Hare Hill Park where meet the parishes of



Stone [17] on Birtleslane - Hocker Lane junction. Its shiny surface probably caused by vehicle tyres running over it

er stone [8] is just across the road on the grass verge. It resembles a small plain gravestone standing upright in, and parallel to, the hedge line.



Land ownership boundary stone [8] Dunge Farm, front view

(Over) Alderley, Prestbury and Macclesfield. The letters 'A', 'P' and 'M' are crisply inscribed on their faces according to their setting.



Three large worn sandstone ashlar blocks, one atop the other two and set within a modern timber stile, are seen at the side of Finlow Hill Lane [15]. Resembling a mounting block, they give access to the Finlow Hill Wood and are known as the 'Pea Steps' (Garner pers comm, 1.3. 2002). The 1840s tithe map shows that the field opposite is called 'The Piece'; a common enough field name, so evidently the original name was 'the Piece Steps'.

### ***Stones in maps & documents***

Maps are an essential tool to the stone-hunter. Most valuable in the understanding of the bounds of the Common of Broadheath, is the map of Over Alderley commissioned by Peter Leycester of Tabley in 1636. This was originally linked to a handbook of fieldnames, now in the Cheshire Record Office.

Although the Leycester map does not depict merestones, it has been possible through its delineation of ways and properties to identify a number of previously unrecognised stones, particularly around Broadheath and at the corners of lanes already extant in the 1630s [17 & 18]. In contrast to Nether Alderley, where the Stanley family controlled the township and could order boundaries as they wished, Over Alderley had multiple lord and land ownerships which seem to have worked to the benefit of the survival of merestones in this area.

A few stones, such as number 4 on the Macclesfield Road, appear on the Tithe Maps of c. 1842, but maps of the Ordnance Survey are by far the most valuable. At its larger scales and earlier editions, contemporary boundary and mile stones were conveniently marked where they

Documentary sources can also provide primary evidence for stones. The finding of the two stones [17 & 18] at the junction of Birtles and Hocker Lanes, which may once have been an important crossroads, was implied by the 1590 *Perambulation of Broadheath* which mentions that there was once a cross here, held in local memory as a marker in the landscape (CRO DLT A75/5).

A manuscript ledger book compiled in the 1830s by Sir John Thomas Stanley (1766-1850), the first Lord Stanley, survives in Cheshire (CRO ref D8065). Effectively a compilation from earlier sources now lost, it refers to a charter of 22 Ed I, that is, the year 1294 which refers to intakes of common land which will have been marked out with stones. It is noteworthy that the enclosures and use of merestones came at a time of population growth just prior to the Black Death:

*Agreement between John de Arderene and Hugh de Birchall and others. Roger Hugh and others concede to John A[rderne] 40 acres of Land and Wood, ... in common between said John Aderne & his tenants in Nether Alderley and said Roger Hugh and others tenants on Over Alderley and marked out by mere stones....*

Finally a small footnote and map in a cramped hand in Sir John Thomas Stanley's ledger book, records a stone on the Chelford and Nether Alderley Parish boundary at Knowlsley Farm [16]. Although found in 1998, the erratic seen in 2013 by the gatepost opposite the Farm is unlikely to be in situ.

### ***Stones as memorials***

No prehistoric stone cairn or chamber seems to survive at Alderley. However such stones are believed to have been used to mark the grave of Ellen 'Nell' Beck, as recounted by Lord Stanley's daughter Louisa (1843). Nell was reported to have taken her own life in the previous century and was denied a consecrated burial. Instead she was interred in a field under a 'hollow bank' near Brindlow Wood:

*'Ellen's Grave is well known by all the people thereabouts - any one will point it out. Some years ago three upright stones marked the spot, but one Dewsbury took them up and threw them into the lane - they are no longer to be seen.'*

Sadly the folk tradition has passed out of local memory for nobody attending the local history meetings in 1998 about the Landscape Project in Alderley could locate her grave.

There is record of a curious, but sadly mislaid, stone on Lindow Common, a little outside Alderley proper. It is mentioned by Christina Hole in *Traditions and Customs of Cheshire* (Hole, 1937). Engraved only 'E. S. 1665', it is taken to be the last resting place of a woman, the unfortunate E. Stonaw, whose name appears in the parish registers as dying on 17th July of that year. She was buried: 'at her own house, she being suspected to dye of the plague, shee but coming home the day before.'

Most recent of all the stones on the Edge are the two built memorials. The first is on Stormy Point which commemorates the donation of the Alderley Edge property to the National Trust erected by the Pilkington family in 1948 [13]. The second is perched atop the old Beacon mound, a mortared cairn of stones recovered from the 16<sup>th</sup> century fire-beacon tower which collapsed in 1931 [14]. The cairn, erected in 1961, has a damaged



'Piece Steps' [15], Finlow Hill Wood make a handy stile step

were known at the time. The first edition of the 1:2,560 (25 inches to one mile) series of the 1870s and 80s is most valuable although the example shown on the Nether/Over Alderley boundary in Alderley Park [7], now occupied by AstraZeneca pharmacology research unit, could not be found in the deep undergrowth.

metal plaque with the words:

SITE OF ARMADA BEACON THIS RECORD IS  
THE GIFT OF A FRIEND OF ALDERLEY EDGE  
NOW IN CALIFORNIA 1961

### ***Other stones of tradition and association***

We sometimes find that certain rocks (and trees) of great age, association or landscape value have names of their own and some that have been borrowed by the local settlement or even public house with many a Royal Oak



Parish boundary stone [16] on A527 at Knowles Farm

or Longstone Inn. One such on White Moor in North Yorkshire is known as the Blue Man (from *Plu men*) i' th' Moss, a parish boundary stone, although in origin a prehistoric standing stone. A frequently occurring English stone name is a *Hoarstone*, or 'whorestone', its boulderised variant. There are hoar stones at Chirbury, a stone circle in Shropshire and at Enstone in Oxfordshire in origin a neolithic chamber tomb. A 'hoarstone' at Caterham in Surrey used to be rolled annually by its menfolk. 'Hoar' here is usually held to imply that the stone was 'aged', 'hairy', such as could be said of one which had developed a good covering of lichens. The word also occurs fixed to the names of woods, valleys



Pilkington memorial cairn tablet [13]

and fields, and at Alderley we may have it in Hare Hill, Harden Park, Harepasture and Harebarrow Farms.

The rather eerie *Trafford Stone of Destiny*, not far from Alderley was, by tradition, held to tie the fate and prosperity of the Traffords, neighbours of the Stanleys of Alderley. Once it was moved in the 1890s the estate, theirs for a thousand years, was sold, and the Hall closed up.

Further along the B5087 road towards Macclesfield is a finely shaped stone little more than three feet tall [12]. It is on the edge of Spenser Brook near to Trugs-i'-th'-Hole and marked 'BS' on the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map. It carries the inscription 'M' and a date – 1789. Local tradition has it that it marks the grave of a dray horse, for 'trugs' were hitched for extra power to wagons climbing out of this rather steep and sharp little valley. 'Trugs' is figured in the wind-vane of the house at this spot. Dodgson's *Placenames of Cheshire* (1970: 102, 184), however equates 'trugs' with 'troughs.' There may of course be some truth in the story of an extra horse being kept here, and perhaps over time the colloquialism converted to a name. More prosaically the primary purpose of the stone is to mark the boundary of Macclesfield and Alderley.

Finally mention must be made of the Druid's Stones near Stormy Point [3]. This group of twelve large undressed stones arranged in a circle 23 feet in diameter owes its origin to the use of the Edge as an extension of Alderley Park. Here the Stanleys would enjoy picnics or games in the style of *fêtes champêtres*, popular in the Georgian period and early Victorian periods. So the circle is pure fancy and the rocks of which it is comprised came most likely from Church Quarry nearby.

Louisa Stanley commented: 'an author, who was writing some account of Cheshire, put down in his book these stones as real remains of antiquity, and was far from being well pleased when he was undeceived'. That author was surely the Rev. William Marriott, who in 1810 published an illustrated description of the stones in *The antiquities of Lyme and its vicinity*, and who had presumably visited the Edge early in the nineteenth century when Louisa was perhaps ten or twelve years old (Stanley, 1843: 18).

Nonetheless the stones, unimpeded by their pseudo-history, have entered modern folklore and constitute one of the most popular destinations for visitors to the Edge.

### ***In conclusion***

The evidence is that individual stones on the Edge have an overwhelmingly utilitarian purpose. 'Good fences make good neighbours', as Robert Frost said. From the evidence of Sir Peter Leycester and the *Perambulation*, the conglomerate boulders of Golden and Saddlebole and the parish boundary erratics have been in place for hundreds of years. Whether their arrival was a response to pressure on land in the medieval period prior to the Black Death or as population recovered in the sixteenth century is a matter of debate. Certainly the finer and inscribed stones of quarried sandstone are later and answer more purposes, as milestones, gateposts and memorials as well as marking boundaries.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Special thanks go to Alan Garner, particularly for his illuminating comments on the Golden Stone; to Clare



Druid's stone circle [3] photographed 20 June 2013

Pye for helping to verify many of the stones on the ground, to the AELPHER Project for invaluable background, and to the late David Thompson for commenting on the geology of some of the glacially-derived mere-stones. A version of this paper was presented at the spring meeting of the Milestone Society at Altrincham, Cheshire on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

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*Map of Over Alderley*, 1636. Commissioned by Sir Peter Leycester.

## Biographical

John Adams is a polymath, author and linguist, and a consultant to the banking sector in China. For the University of Manchester's Alderley Edge 1996-9 Landscape Project, a joint project of the Manchester Museum and the National Trust, he developed the Heritage and Educational Resources website. He currently lives in London. Email: web@amcd.co.uk

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## MARKING THE BOUNDS

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### Brighton and Hove - A Boundary Stone Tour

*Colin Woodward*

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Every year many people visit the famous seaside resort of Brighton, easily accessible from London, with numerous attractions for example its narrow lanes lined with antique shops, the fine aquarium, the renowned Regency Pavilion, the congenial pier, the pebbly beaches seething with holiday makers, and the finishing venue for cycle races and the veteran car rally. Others may prefer the town of Hove immediately to the west, a salubrious watering-hole, home of Sussex County Cricket Club, imposing street of imposing Victorian houses and the long road towards the South Downs and Devil's Dyke.

Arguably the two towns are socially a world apart; but physically it is almost impossible to tell where Brighton ends and Hove begins. The two towns have become a massive seaside conurbation. Are there any suggestions of where the boundary between them lies? Surprisingly, the answer is to look on the ground, for Brighton and Hove have a number of parish boundary stones on display for the discerning visitor who wishes to avoid all the obvious attractions.

Let us begin on the north side of Western Road about a quarter of a mile north of the sea front, outside a shop on the west side of Boundary Passage (now there's a clue!). Horizontally in the pavement is a stone reading 'HP' and 'BP' (Hove Parish and Brighton Parish) with a line between them marking the boundary between the two



Fig 1. At NGR: TQ 300045

and has been painted.

Continuing north along the boundary another stone can be seen on the south side of Temple Gardens, against a wall next to a car park entrance. The bottom of the stone is below pavement level but the 'B' and 'H' and boundary line can be seen (Fig 4). Further north, on the south side of Windlesham Avenue at the rear of the pavement adjoining a front boundary wall are two horizontal stones reading 'BP' and 'HP' (Fig 5).

If one continues northwards to Old Shoreham Road (south side) and Dyke Road there is another boundary stone reading 'PP' (Fig 6). This stands for Preston Parish. Preston is (was) a village which like Hove, has



Fig 2. At NGR: TQ 300046



Fig 3. At NGR: TQ 301046



Fig 4. At NGR: TQ 302048



Fig 5. At NGR: TQ 303030

been absorbed into the built-up area of Brighton. A Hove stone joins to the rear, but once again it cannot be read as it faces a wall. Finally, another marker can be seen at the base of the New England Railway Viaduct, on the north side of New England Road, a quarter of a mile east of the last stone. The inscription reads 'BP' and 'PP', the dividing line between them signifying the boundary between Brighton and Preston (Fig 7).

By now we are one mile from the sea so it is probably easier to take the short walk to the station and visit the beach another day.



Fig 6. At NGR: TQ303053



Fig 7. At NGR: TQ 309059

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## A new Boundary Stone for Penzance

*Ian Thompson*

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In Penzance 2014 marks the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Royal Charter by King James I in 1614.

The reason for Penzance's relative success probably stems from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries when Henry IV of England granted the town a Royal Market in 1404.

Henry VIII in 1512 granted the right to charge harbour dues, and King James I granted the town the status of a Borough in 1614.

The King James I Charter defined the bounds of the town by an artificial line formed by a half-mile circle, measured from the market cross in the Greenmarket. This cross has been moved many times since, but can now be seen outside Penlee House Gallery and Museum. The granting of Borough status made the town independent of the County Courts, a right held until County Councils came into being in 1888.

Celebrations of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary included a Jacobean Fayre with maypole dancing, period food, a falconry display AND a new boundary stone.

There are two surviving boundary stones of an origi-



The new boundary stone.

ry stone stood 13ft 6in south of the plaque, i.e. in the middle of what is now the main road, but was removed in 1865.



Dignitaries gather at the unveiling the new boundary stone on Penzance Promenade at Wherrytown

nal four that were erected in 1687 to mark where the unusually circular boundary of the Borough of Penzance was crossed by main roads. One stands at the back of the footpath, against the wall of No.8 Chyandour Cliff (SW478309) on the main road to central Penzance from the east. The other is to the north of Penzance at Nancealverne, on the east side of St Clare Street. It stands at the back of the footpath, against the wall of the cricket ground, opposite the fire station (SW466308).

Both boundary stones have the same inscription "P 16 87" – wrapped around three faces of the stone, and raised above a recessed field in a similar style to the single number West Penwith milestones.

A commemorative plaque was erected in 1867 to mark the removal of one of the other boundary stones when Alverton Road was widened. The plaque reads "B S 13FT 6IN S 1865", which tells us that the bounda-



One of the two surviving original boundary stones at Chyandour Cliff, Penzance

The fourth stone stood at Wherrytown and is presumed to have been lost when Penzance Esplanade was developed. The modern replacement for this fourth boundary stone, bearing the same "P 16 87" inscription, was unveiled by His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester on Tuesday 27 May. An information board (pictured below) next to the new stone tells the story of the stones and of the town's changing boundary. Malcolm Kewn attended the event for the Milestone Society and took some photographs.





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## 2014 Presentation of the Terry Keegan Award by the Milestone Society

Alan Reade

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The annual Terry Keegan Award to the best student on the 2-year, part-time Historic Environment Conservation course at the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage was presented on Saturday 14 June 2014 to Bill Froggatt, a free-lance joiner based in Bradford, West Yorkshire. He was selected by the course Tutor, Harriet Devlin MBE for the thoroughness and high quality of his chosen course-work project on the restoration of Kirkstall Abbey, a ruined Cistercian monastery near Leeds City Centre. Bill has also recently completed a restoration project at Lincoln Cathedral working as part of a skilled heritage conservation team.

The Ironbridge course at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire is presently funded by Birmingham University and is for mature students working in the heritage sector, including conservation officers, environmental engineers, traditional builders and tradesmen seeking to broaden their knowledge and skills in the design, specification and techniques of restoration work, subjects at the philosophical heart of Milestone Society culture regarding road-side heritage assets.

This Award was created in 2012 as a memorial to Terry Keegan, joint-founder of the Milestone Society in 2001. Under his inspiration and guidance, the Society not only located and logged almost all the UK's mile-stones but also created a digital database regularly updated for the benefit and use of Highway Authorities. The presentation was made by Alan Reade, the Society's Highways Liaison Manager and Shropshire Representa-

tive seen in the photo below with Bill Froggatt who is holding the Terry Keegan Memorial Trophy. The Award also included a certificate, a copy of Mervyn Benford's Shire book, a cheque and a year's membership of the Society.

Unfortunately, Birmingham University has withdrawn funding for this Ironbridge course from 2015. It is hoped, however that Harriet Devlin will be successful in negotiating sponsorship from elsewhere, although this may cause relocation to a different heritage site.



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## From the Archives - A First World War postcard

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The Bamforth postcard pictured left was sourced by Jan Scrine after successfully bidding for it on eBay (other online auction sites are available).

The unashamedly patriotic card was almost certainly produced during the First World War but must have been after 1917. That was the year that *'There's a Friend in Every Milestone'* was written by George Asaf and music composed by Felix Powell.

The card came from a series entitled 'Songs' and is numbered 5067/3. Perhaps we have a deltiologist among our membership who can narrow down a date for its production.

The card was postmarked St Albans 1130AM 26 July 1923. By this period most people wanted to forget the war so did the sender just happen to have it to hand to send a message locally to an address in nearby Redbourn? We'll never know.

### From the Archives

Do you have any old postcards or photos gathering dust that feature waymarkers? Please share them via the pages of *Milestones & Waymarkers*.

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# The Story of Beyond Graffiti

*Jan Scrine (aka Tollkeeper Meg)*

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I'm fairly convinced that when I reach the Pearly Gates or somewhere warmer, and St Peter asks how I've spent my declining years, he won't be too impressed when I say 'worrying about some bits of rock and metal by the wayside'! I've always tried to offer work experience and placement opportunities to young people during my working life; having more spare time now I'm officially an OAP, made me wonder whether I might combine both interests.

So the Beyond Graffiti project was born, to run stone awareness & skills training programmes for 100 less-privileged teenagers and creative workshops for 40 others, especially comers-in like me. In the hope that one day when demolishing a wall with a milestone adjacent, they might remember enough to not chuck it in the skip! The intention was also to raise awareness of milestones in a wide range of local people, hopefully creating a ground-swell of interest.

Funding was obtained through applications to the Getty Fund and private donations, then £32k from Heritage Lottery Fund made it possible, with offers of support and facilities from the Construction Department of Kirklees College and great enthusiasm from two local sculptors, Melanie Wilks (lots of public art) and Dave Bradbury (The Letocetum Stone).

The programme covered five days; first, each group went to Shibden Hall in Halifax, a wonderful Elizabethan building with Victorian extensions by Anne Lister and a splendid array of carriages in the barn, including a 1700s chaise and a stage coach. After a talk on highway history (including the Halifax gibbet!) I led them along Blind Jack's 1776 Halifax First Turnpike, spotting a milestone and a cutting for the Second Turnpike, blasted with gunpowder in 1829. The highlight for them was hanging over Lister Bridge, waving to the buses below! Then they had half a day of drystone walling tuition with Master Waller David Griffiths.

A day of learning stone masonry followed; they worked on waymarkers designed by Melanie for the new Dewsbury Country Park, geometric symbols were requested by the Council to reflect its heritage as an industrial tip.

Having handled stone, the group spent half a day at Johnson's Wellfield quarry, where they saw Yorkstone Flags being split by hand in the traditional manner as well as the latest in robot controlled cutting machinery. Some of the Construction students decide to put their names down for jobs!

Another day of stone carving was followed by a trip to see the buildings of Huddersfield. This walk takes about 1½ hours, with plenty of pauses for explanations of the twiddly bits at roof level and contrasting styles of design. Huddersfield has many listed buildings, including its station, described as a 'palace for trains'. It also has a parish church where the stone has been laid the wrong way and is continuously spalling... we also looked at the carving on the tombstones lining the path. A few participants found this tour very interesting; most



Photocall of the Construction students at Johnson's Wellfield quarry. Photo via BG Facebook page.

found the walk extremely tiring!

To date, there have been 76 participants, in five groups: 40 Construction Students, 15 Countryside Students, 6 Kirklees Council Streetscene Apprentices, and 15 from the Halifax National Citizen Service. The latter group are self-selecting 16 – 18 year olds on a costly scheme being offered to all young people to do a community project and spend time on residential adventure weekends. This group carved a sectional stone lion in relief, designed by Melanie, for the grounds of Shibden Hall.

In the autumn 2014, there is sufficient funding for another 40; places have been requested by Thornhill Academy ('Educating Yorkshire') and more Construction students. If you are a trainee brickie, you build a bit of wall and then knock it down, every week for two years. They couldn't believe that they were making something that would last – it's 'Beyond Graffiti' because graffiti washes off, carved stone lasts for generations.

We've run six creative workshops for a group of 30 multi-ethnic 8 – 12 year olds and their youth leaders (aged 14 – 17!) in an area where the Council is trying to improve ethnic cohesion. These youngsters were delightful and often brought their 6 year old siblings whom they were minding, as well as a few parents. Toll-keeper Meg told them about Finding the Way and measuring fellies for tolls; they were fascinated to handle Victorian pennies. Then they made some craft waymarkers showing direction and distance. A couple of sessions of creative writing about milestones with poet Julian Jordan were followed by four sessions modelling waymakers with Melanie, whose long-suffering husband helped cast them in concrete for painting in brilliant colours. The next project requested is to work with them to create a history map of the locality for the Library wall.

Then there were the celebrations, to tell the public about the project and raise awareness of stone in the landscape. Various friends and artists were persuaded to contribute artworks – photos, paintings, textiles, wood-

carving, and sculpture – for an exhibition at the Packhorse Gallery (on the site of the original Packhorse Inn!) in



Tollkeeper Meg with felly gauge at hand.

Huddersfield throughout July. And at Oakwell Hall (of Bronte connections) we were given the Discovery Room which we filled with the students' carvings, a display of painting-like photos of milestones by a mature student, a film about the project, explanation banners and historical bits, plus a section about Dick Whittington for the tinies. They loved hearing the story and dressing up with hat, cloak, bundle and cat, for photos! Some mums dressed up, too – and very fetching they looked...

We'd also gained some 'Arts in the Neighbourhood' funding, for events and activities every weekend, to attract interest. The first weekend was overshadowed by the passage of the Tour de France, but the Highwayman enactor was greatly enjoyed, as he told tales of his life as John 'Swift Nicks' Nevison. The Minstrel played his



Oakwell Hall - the Discovery Room display

hurdy-gurdy, pipe and drum; the 20 piece Jazz Band enjoyed their jam session, despite the heavy rain – some hardy souls listened all afternoon. Melanie ran stone carving workshops and demonstrations; a Community Choir loved singing outdoors on the Hall lawns. The dance band fiddled merrily, we had open mic poetry and an introduction to Geocaching. Then there were the walks, led by Milestone Society members. David Gar-side found a fascinating route around Marsden's milestones and Margaret Hill led a varied tour of the landscape – including viewing the newly discovered displaced Malton milestone! Tollkeeper Meg led the Huddersfield Buildings Town Trail and Chris & Paul Hor-bury's walk explored Birstall heritage.

Has it been worth all the effort? We were required to obtain feedback to prove to HLF that it had been a good use of funds. We set up a website, [www.Beyond-Graffiti.co.uk](http://www.Beyond-Graffiti.co.uk) with a Blog section for comments and we have a Facebook page, [beyond-graffiti](https://www.facebook.com/beyond-graffiti). Both have garnered valuable comments – but my favourites were from discussions; one lad said he had seen a milestone near his home, another said he wanted to take his family to



Left: HLF Officer Elise tries her hand at carving with Melanie Wilks demonstrating. Right: Dave Bradbury marks out a stone while a student stands by ready with chisel and mallet.



Shibden and he did so. Another noticed how clean the Shibden carpet was – and he was from a very chaotic background. They all found the walling and stone masonry valuable experiences and useful for their CVs. If even three young people gain career insights as a result of the project, it will have been worthwhile.

There have been spin-offs already; the Construction students have worked on a war memorial stone and the Dry Stone Wall Association has done a demonstration at Oakwell Hall.

For the Society? We now have enhanced credibility with various Kirklees Council departments, which should stand us in good stead for future projects. Will the milestones be any safer in the future? Maybe !!



Left: A happy little Dick Whittington. Right: 'Swift Nick' takes on a young apprentice



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## Feedback and Updates

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From *David Garside*

I've just received *Milestones & Waymarkers* 6 and, as usual, it's an excellent read. On page 56 the article entitled *Ending on a high note....* posed 2 questions;

1. Location of the post. The GR quoted is in the right position for such a sign with the Scafell path heading SSW and the Glaramara path NNE. The place continues to be a key walkers crossroad within the district. The other paths not visible in terms of legend would probably have been in the SE direction to Langdale and NW to Sty Head, another walkers crossroads. The final piece of evidence is from the background in the photograph - it shows the unmistakable profile of the Langdale Pikes which are approximately 3 miles away to the east, in exactly the right place.

2. Survival. The answer is sadly a negative. I first walked this path 25 years ago and have never seen a fingerpost here. My last visit was less than two months

ago on 30th August 2013 in the company of another Milestone Society member, and it hasn't returned!!

Once out of the valleys, signs simply do not exist anymore which is a great shame as I regularly meet walkers who are lost. Fingerposts at path junctions would be a great benefit to walkers and were clearly in place over 50 years ago.



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### Sparrows Herne Trust (Herts) *Colin Woodward*

With reference to Peter Gulland's article in Newsletter 27, Pg 33 (July 2014) there are three surviving turnpike markers of the Sparrows Herne Trust, providing some respite from the dearth of surviving milestones. Indeed, such markers are rare and it is highly unusual for them to outnumber surviving milestones along a former turnpike.



First is the marker at Lower High Street, Watford, pictured left, west of the railway arches, near the boundary between Watford and Oxhey. It reads simply **SPARROWS/HERNE/TRUST**, at TQ 1185 9555. It is slightly removed from its original location. A plaque adjoining states "This is the oldest remaining turnpike marker in Watford & is preserved within this development", namely a car park and D.I.Y.

store.

A second marker can be seen at SP 986 082, on the north side of High Street, Berkhamsted, west of Park Street, outside the National Tyres Building (No. 552). This has a similar inscription, but appears to have sunk lower into the ground than the Watford example. Interestingly, the top of another marker, possibly denoting Horthchurch Parish, can be seen immediately to the west. Both markers have been painted red to match the adjoining building. [See also **HERTFORDSHIRE** on pp 14-15]



Berkhamsted. The markers covered with many layers of National Tyres bright red house colour

The third marker is at Tring (SP 92655 11522) in London Road, opposite Brook Street. This is full sized and carries the same inscription. When I visited in June 2014, although secure, it was leaning and slightly loose. This marker is possibly a replica (see NL5, July 2002), which suggests that it was provided as a replacement in 1992 for the original being buried to support a pipe. If so, it is already showing signs of rust at the base.



Why were these markers positioned? It is tempting to speculate that the Turnpike Trust did not control the main streets of Tring, Berkhamsted and Watford, as to do so would have prevented the townspeople from going about their lawful business. In addition to the above markers, there is an unusual large stone marker at Bushey Heath denoting the boundary between Hertfordshire and Middlesex. This is near the start of the turnpike and no doubt emphasises its importance in days gone by.

## The Sage of Chelsea, Gaberlunzies and Mellgraves

Alverie Weighill

In “Silent witnesses: milestones and waymarkers in 19<sup>th</sup> century novels” Richard Heywood draws attention to the use in literature of milestones as resting places (*Milestones and Waymarkers*, Vol. 6, 2013, p. 43).

Readers may be interested to learn that no less a personage than Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), one of the great literary and philosophical figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, used a milestone in this way. In 1837, after a severe struggle, he completed his major work, *History of the French Revolution*. Nerves shattered, unappreciated, short of money and “steeped in woe”, he travelled from his home in Chelsea to seek rest and peace at the family farm, two miles north-east of Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire<sup>1</sup>. His journey was by coach to Liverpool, by steamboat to Annan<sup>2</sup> and by foot for the last eight miles - two miles uphill along the turnpike road towards Langholm<sup>3</sup> and six miles northwards by parish roads to Scotsbrig.

He was fondly familiar with this road from his regular walks to Annan Academy as a pupil and teacher and celebrated its fine avenue, “the kind beech-rows of Entepfuhl”, in his semi-autobiographical novel, *Sartor Resartus* (1836)<sup>4</sup>. Just before Landheads toll-house, he recounts leaning on a milestone<sup>5</sup> which “I knew so well from my school-days”, describing “the unrivalled prospect of sea and land which one commands there ..... looking on Solway Sea to St Bee’s Head, and all the pretty Cumberland villages, towns and swelling amphitheatre of fertile plains and airy mountains.....”<sup>6</sup>. His gloom was misplaced as his *French Revolution* soon guaranteed his financial security and eventually his reputation. The magnificent view, the beech avenue and the toll-house are still there but, alas for us milestone lovers, his resting place has gone.

From the lofty to the lowly, Heywood’s comment that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century tramps were sometimes colloquially referred to as “milestone inspectors” put me in mind of the time a couple of years ago when I was introduced to an old lady in Creetown, Galloway, as someone seeking milestones and was immediately hailed as a “gaberlunzie”. A gaberlunzie was the wallet carried by beggars and hence came to mean beggar or tramp. She explained the above link, thus taking the notion forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Gaberlunzies featured widely in Scottish literature and found a place in John Mac-Taggart’s quirky *Scottish Gallovidian Encyclopedia* of 1824<sup>7</sup>. Another entry which might interest road historians is “mellgrave: a break in a highway; a place requiring the genius of McAdam, the great roadman, to repair it. In roads which pass through soft country, mellgraves most prevail; it is said that a horse with its rider once sank in a mellgrave and were never more heard of”!

### Notes and references

1. Carlyle was born in 1795 at the Arched House in Ecclefechan built in 1791 by his stonemason father James who was involved in 1772 at the age of 15 years in the building of the first stone bridge over the Nith at Auldgirth eight miles north of Dumfries on the Glasgow road (Sloan, J. M, *The Carlyle Country* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1904. p.213). Refusing the honour of burial in Westminster Abbey, Carlyle lies in the kirkyard at Ecclefechan.

2. Pre-rail, boats steamed twice-weekly from Liverpool to Annan. The journey took 12 hours and cost 15/- for a cabin, 5/- on deck (Thomson J. A, *Annan: From Queen Victoria to Queen Elizabeth* (Annan: the author, 2012). p. 45).

3. Now B722. By 1775 this road was mostly finished. In 1787 Carlyle’s uncle, John Carlyle, was involved in building nine bridges on it at the behest of the Duke of Buccleuch (Robertson J, *The Public Roads and Bridges in Dumfriesshire 1650 – 1820* (Wigtown, Scotland: G C Publishers, 1993). pp. 58 and 243).

4. In this book Carlyle also celebrated the dignity of labour, inspired by the hardships endured by his father whilst building the Auldgirth Bridge.

5. NGR: NY201693, Annan 2 Langholm16.

6. From a note in Froude J.A. (Ed), *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, Vol. 1* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1883). p.76. Jane Welsh was Carlyle’s wife.

7. 1981 edition published by Clunie Press, Perthshire.



Landheads Toll-house Photo: Alverie Weighill, 2013



## THE MILESTONE SOCIETY

### AIM

*To identify, record, research, conserve and interpret for public benefit the milestones and other waymarkers of the British Isles.*

### OBJECTIVES

- To publicise and promote public awareness of milestones and other waymarkers and the need for identification, recording, research and conservation, for the general benefit and education of the community at large
- To enhance public awareness and enjoyment of milestones and other waymarkers and to inform and inspire the community at large of their distinctive contribution to both the local scene and to the historic landscape in general
- To represent the historical significance and national importance of milestones and waymarkers in appropriate forums and through relevant national organisations
- To organise and co-ordinate relevant practical projects at both national and regional/local levels, thereby enhancing public access
- To protect, preserve and restore milestones and other waymarkers through the planning process, representing their significance to appropriate authorities locally and nationally
- To manage the Society's affairs in ways which maintain effective administration and appropriate activity, including the establishment of regional groupings through which to delegate and devolve the Society's business.

## NOTES FOR AUTHORS

The Journal is the permanent record of the work of the Society, its members and other supporters and specialists, working within its key Aim and Objectives.

Submissions of material are welcomed and should be sent in the first instance to the appropriate Editor as shown on page 2.

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## Some toll-houses in Aberdeenshire

See On the Ground -Scotland inside

*All photos: Christine Minto*



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