

# The Milestone Society

**Newsletter 32**  
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Editor, <i>Milestones &amp; Waymarkers</i>	David Viner
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A series of milestones is to be found on the Dorset Coast Path in the Isle of Purbeck, part of the 630 mile South West Coast Path National Trail. The example on the front cover near Church Knowle is 168 metres above sea level at a point which affords wonderful views across both Poole Harbour and the English Channel.

*Photo: Mike Hallett*

## FINDING THE WAY 2017 EVENTS PROGRAMME

There was a short delay while the Warwickshire Three (Robert Caldicott, Mike Buxton and Mervyn Bedford) sorted out the consents for working on the single 'listed' milepost, including providing detailed descriptions of exactly what style and size of lettering was to be applied onto the arms – no mean feat, since we only have one fuzzy photo of the originals. A metal detector will be used to check the verge for any other remains of the badly damaged post – then all six mileposts will be sent to Derbyshire for restoration by Leander Architectural. It is hoped that they will be ready for re-installation in the Spring.



An Easter exhibition is planned for Shipston museum, to tell local people about the project. We'll be including the 'Dick Whittington selfie kit' that was so popular at Oakwell Hall as part of the West Yorkshire 'Beyond Graffiti' project – the kit is currently in use in Bromyard, where the eponymous panto is being staged at the Conquest Theatre! Although the link to the real Richard Whittington's fictitious milestone is somewhat tenuous, it catches the imagination of youngsters when accompanied by our selection of Ladybird 'read it yourself' books.

Alongside this, Mike has devised a couple of interesting walks along the route (in Shakespeare Country!) and will be testing these out, hopefully with support from local rambling groups, before having them written up and published as leaflets or on the project website.

The detailed rules for the national Poetry Competition are now in place, shown on the website of WriteOutLoud, who are running the competition for us. It's really simple – a poem or blank verse of up to 40 lines, incorporating a milestone or milestones - those lumps of rock or rusty metal sitting quietly by the wayside, OR an event in someone's life or activities. The entry fee is £5 for a single poem or £10 for three and the prizes are generous - £500 for the winner with runners-up prizes and one specially for the best Under 16 entry. We really hope to encourage schools to participate – the students will learn about milestones as a by-product of the competition – so please tell all your family and friends about it! Tell them to look on the website, [www.writeoutloud.net](http://www.writeoutloud.net)

The really serious part of the development of the educational resource is well under way; consultant Mairi McLeod is being very creative as well as very thorough – her sternest critic is her 9 year old daughter! She is working within Key Stage 2/3 of the National Curriculum, linking a range of lesson plans to The Highwayman poem, including in geography, local history, maths and design.

We plan to film our splendid Highwayman enactor Paul Macintosh in early April, in the Yorkshire Colne Valley, weather permitting; the film is being produced by Kyle Warwick of Kirklees Local TV, who did such an excellent job on the Grand Opening of the Crossing the Pennines Trail. The film and Mairi's work will then be uploaded to various teachers' resource websites, to help those who demonstrably struggle with teaching this violent narrative, though apparently much enjoyed by their young charges (must be those gory details!)

The Highwayman will visit a couple of Midlands schools to entertain the pupils authentically, then will make an appearance at Long Compton Village Fete, on Saturday 1 July, accompanied by Tollkeeper Meg and an exhibition celebrating the successful outcomes of the project. Everyone welcome of course!



By the time our Annual Conference comes round on 7 October, the Poetry Competition will have been judged and we will hear all about it from one of the judges, along with readings of the winning entries. The Conference will be held at Long Compton, so you will be able to see for yourselves some of the restored mileposts, as well as hear about their history at the meeting. Continuing the theme of 'travel', Anne King will tell us about Postal History.

So please tell your family, friends, schools and local organisations about the Poetry competition now; the 100 short-listed entries will be printed as an anthology. Dip those quill pens in the inkwell and put on your thinking caps! And to keep up to date with our progress and events as the year goes on, look on our project website, [www.FindingtheWay.org.uk](http://www.FindingtheWay.org.uk)

*Jan Scrine*

### ENRICH THE LIST

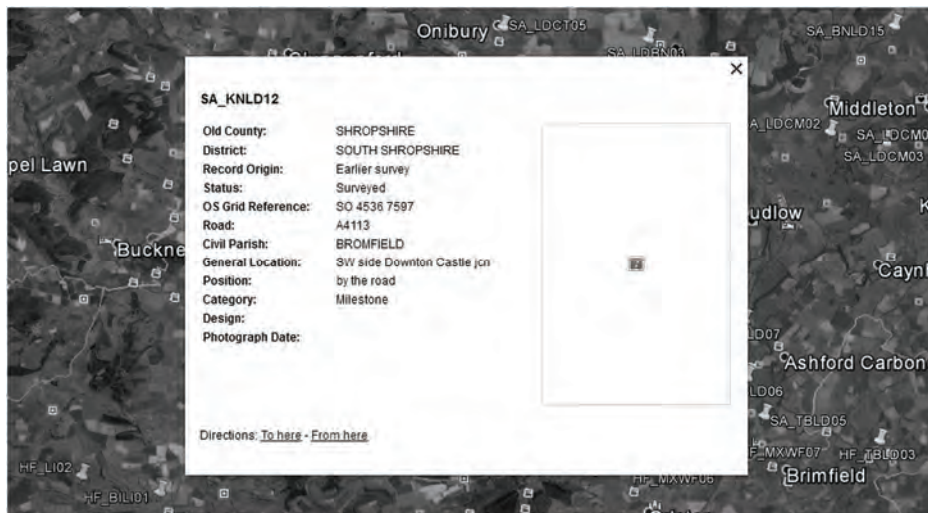
You will be aware that many milestones are listed by Historic England but did you know that you can add your own text and photos to the listing? Your contribution isn't part of the official listing text but it does appear on the Historic England website. See <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1127854> for example. You will need to scroll right to the bottom of the webpage to find the photo. Photos must be in landscape orientation. Photos in portrait orientation can get badly cropped. So let's get all our listed milestones photographed and added to the listing. Find out more at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/>

*Mike Hallett*



## A THOUSAND PICTURES?

When we were checking through our Milestones databases to prepare them for inclusion on the Geograph website, we discovered that there were a THOUSAND records for which we have no photograph or only a very old one that hasn't been verified.



Help !! Val Best is working hard to produce a printable list of the milestones in each county, showing which don't have a photo. These will shortly be available on our Society website. Please would you, your family and friends print off the list for your county and pop it in the car dashboard pocket? Then it will be ready when you are out and about as the weather improves, to use your photographic skills. A portrait or upright view is preferable. Finally please email your contributions to Mike Faherty, [mf@milestonesociety.co.uk](mailto:mf@milestonesociety.co.uk) with the Society's unique Identification as the subject – you can find this on the list. If you can send them as low resolution or razored, that would save Mike a great deal of additional effort.

The databases are our Crown Jewels; please help us add the final few diamonds !!

*Jan Scrine*

## YOUR NEWSLETTER

Carol and Alan Haines started the *Newsletter* and edited it successfully for 8 years. Chris Woodard was editor for a short while and then I have been Editor myself for 7 years. But with my increasing involvement in Parish Council activities it is now time for me to move on. Richard Raynsford has kindly joined the Editorial Panel but more people are still needed to help produce the *Newsletter* and also *Milestones & Waymarkers*. Could you produce one of our publications? If you are able to help please contact me.

*Mike Hallett*



**DAVID BEACHAM**

Members will be saddened to learn of the death of David Beacham at the age of 84 after a short illness. One of the early members of the Society, he took over the chairmanship of the Worcestershire Group following the death of Terry Keegan and steered that group to complete a number of major re-plating projects. Born in 1932 in Cheltenham, the family moved to Twyning where both his father and mother were employed on the manor estate so he had an idyllic childhood. He attended Tewkesbury Grammar School and afterwards completed an apprenticeship with the local major employer Smiths Clocks and Watches. After a spell there he felt the urge to change direction and duly qualified as a teacher of metal work and crafts. He did that for 17 years and again feeling the need for change set up his own business until retirement, repairing and servicing clocks and watches.

On the milestone front he was the county coordinator and was instrumental in tracking down the local milestones and organising the transfer of information and photographs to the national database. David's other passion was bell ringing which he started at Twyning aged 12 and over time he rang in most towers in Worcestershire and many beyond. He was church warden at All Saints in Worcester from 1966 until 1998 and tower captain from 1964 until 1990 and many ringers throughout the county benefited from his expert tuition. He had many interests and served on the Diocesan Advisory Committee on Bells and Clocks. He liked the challenge of projects and undoubtedly a major one involved replacing the bell frame at All Saints and on completion re-hanging all twelve bells and later introducing a thirteenth. He rang his last peel of 5057 Grandsire Caters in November 2015 to mark the 200th anniversary of the 8081 G Caters rung there and his last quarter was at All Saints in July this year.

All this activity could not have been achieved without the active support at home of his family and tragedy struck there with the death of his daughter Sarah aged 17 in a cycling accident and then his wife Kitty less than a year later. He married Jenny in 1989 who now knows all the milestones in the county and is fully conversant with the re-casting processes carried out at Ironbridge. An incalculable loss for Jenny, Jonathan his son and five grandchildren, we all shall sadly miss his wise counsel, sense of humour and friendship.

*Alan Scaplehorn*

## ENGLAND

**Buckinghamshire** (*Colin Woodward*)

Colnbrook with Poyle (Slough) Parish Council has objected to a proposal by Highways England to convert the M4 (junctions 3 to 12) into a Smart Motorway. Its objections include loss of a milestone in Bath Road on the south-east side of junction 5, which is Grade II listed and BU\_LB18 on the Milestone Society's national database. There are proposals to reposition the milestone. The Secretary of State gave approval to the Smart Motorway project and work is expected to start in March 2017.

**Cambridgeshire** (*Mike Hallett*)

The milestone CA\_LK44 seven miles from Cambridge was orphaned in the middle of a new cycle path alongside the A10 at Foxton. It has now been beautifully restored and replaced at the back of the path out of harm's way.

As you may have read in *Milestones & Waymarkers 9*, work has now started on the improvements to the A14 between Ellington (near Huntingdon) and Fen Ditton (near Cambridge). Archaeological mitigation works are scheduled for the first quarter of 2017, so a careful watch will be needed on milestones in the area.

**Cornwall** (*Ian Thompson*)Mileplates on B3302

The triangular granite milestones on the Hayle to Helston road lost their cast iron mileplates in the 1970s. Using a photograph from the archives of the Courtney Library at the Royal Cornwall Museum, patterns were made for replacement plates. These were cast at Irons Brothers' foundry in Wadebridge and fitted to the milestones with wood plugs, screws, silicone adhesive and mortar by the Milestone Society team. The mortar round the edge of the mileplate is the main fixing medium. The screws and adhesive are belt and braces. We didn't want to lose these plates!

We made a point of talking to local people about our work and asked each of the parish councils if they would keep the milestones clean and free of weeds, to which they agreed. A formal application to the parish council puts the item in their minutes and may help to ensure someone keeps an eye on the milestones in the future.



## County News

### Painting defaced milestones

In *Milestones & Waymarkers* 7 (2014), Keith Lawrence quotes the Cornwall County Surveyor stating that in 1940, when milestones and signposts were being removed or buried to confuse an invading enemy, 'no milestones had been disfigured'. The County Surveyor was wrong. During this year's milestone painting programme four milestones with inscriptions chiselled off in 1940 were re-painted white. This shows that they are more than just random bits of discarded stone beside the road and helps to protect them from damage and possible theft. It would be nice to have them re-carved.

### Dated Guidestones

Hidden in the back roads near Falmouth are two unusual guidestones, one quite monumental and one rather insignificant, but carved in the same peculiar way. Both guidestones are right-angled triangles in cross section, made by cutting away half of a rectangular block of granite. Both have pointing hands and the same date, 1828. The larger stone has directions on three faces, suggesting that it once stood in the middle of the junction at Crill Corner. The smaller stone has only one inscription, serving to mark the turning to Mawnan.

### 1839 Hayle to Redruth Turnpike



SW577386  
*reset and repainted*

One of Cornwall's last new turnpike trusts, the Hayle to Redruth turnpike of 1839, upgraded the spine road in the west of the county. This turnpike became the A30 trunk road, but is now bypassed by the A30 dual carriageway, leaving its elaborate triangular milestone rather battered but in place. Each stone has the distance to six destinations and is rather lightly carved in an exaggerated Roman font which is the very devil to repaint. The milestone one mile to the east of Hayle was almost completely buried in the verge when the dual carriageway was built in 1999. It has now been reset by Cormac and repainted by the Milestone Society.



SW740343  
*A394 Stithians, defaced  
in World War II, but still  
marking the way*



SW786329  
*Small guidestone*



Damage reported at St Columb Major

Our links with the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies across the county gives us many more eyes looking out for milestones. Phil Ellery of St Columb Old Cornwall Society reported a broken listed milestone to Milestone Society member Andrew Langdon. When Ian Thompson went to see the damage, he found not one but two broken stones within a few yards of each other. Both stones were collected by Cornwall Council's contractors and taken away to await pinning and gluing back together again.

Milestones and a new dual carriageway

The Milestone Society was very fortunate to be involved at an early stage of a proposed road improvement to the A30 between Chiverton and Carland Cross in mid-Cornwall due to be built in 2020. This section of road was never a turnpike, but has a run of very special pre-turnpike milestones, so we were keen to ensure the milestones survived the road works intact. In February, Jeremy Edwards of Cornwall Council and Jim Lee of Highways England visited Ian Thompson to



At SW797502 on A30 at Perranzabuloe

talk about the project. In March, James Biscoe surveyed the milestones and sent his report to Highways England in Exeter. This was followed by a site visit when Ian Thompson travelled along the road with a car full of engineers, imbuing them with milestone culture, and spotting milestones.

The first public consultation meeting was in October. Here Ian was greeted like an old friend, and saw that the new dual carriageway had been mapped out to leave all the milestones untouched, the new road weaving first south and then north of the current road. It is possible that there may have been other considerations in adopting this policy(!), but the outcome for the milestones could not have been better.

**Cumbria** (Terry Moore)

CU\_CLCM10 on the A595/B5305 junction near Wigton, was severely damaged following a vehicle collision in 2015. Terry Moore and a local retired farmer managed to remove it to enable pinning the main part of the sandstone column to a new concrete base. The curved metal plate had a small crack and the stone



*CU\_CLCM10  
before and after*

over the years to move it. All parties were satisfied except that the original location is a ¼ mile away at a known vulnerable location!



*CU\_PRCL06 plates*

Hesket CU\_PRCL12 was found and completely detached from its base. After some digging no base or any of the two numbered plates could be found.

**Devon** (Tim Jenkinson)

This is essentially an end of year review for 2016 outlining some of the challenges that face the county in the coming year. The Plotting Plymouth's Past project which has just completed its fourth year of surveying inscribed stones

base was in two pieces and unsuitable to bear its weight. Repairs were carried out in October 2016, painted and reinstated to the same location.

CU\_CLCMa07 on the A596 east of Wigton at Low Whinnow farm was rescued from landfill by road contractors some 40 years ago and has been cared for in the garden ever since. This is not listed by English Heritage and after some persuasion by Terry Moore the farm occupants allowed it to be moved 3 metres to the other side of their garden wall in full view of passing traffic. The local council were aware of this and also had difficulty in persuading the occupants



*CU\_CLCMa07*

Milestone CU\_PRCL06 on the A6 south of Knowe Farm, near Plumpton has been found, but damaged. During survey work along this route Terry Moore had to dig for the two mile plates 6 and 12. The stone is severely damaged, probably from grass cutters, like many more along this busy route before the M6 was constructed. Work to restore this with the parish council is being sought.

Further north by Causeway House near Low Heskett

within a five mile radius of Plymouth faces a new challenge from proposed redevelopments at a number of sites in the city. One of the main aims of the project was to raise awareness among the public and developers alike of the existence of the markers by creating a Council-run website through which people can access information and location details.

In the summer of 2016 there were announcements in the local press that at least three areas of the city are to be targeted for redevelopment including the Royal Marine Barracks at Stonehouse, the old reservoir at Western Kings and the build of a new road passing through Pool Farm. All of these areas have inscribed boundary stones that have been surveyed by the project team and are now at risk of loss or damage.

Ernie Stanton, one of the original project members, has written to the Planning Department at Plymouth City Council to express the concerns and to date has received a favourable response which will hopefully ensure safe custody of all the stones that will be affected by the new builds. Yet despite this the threat remains and the next couple of years will determine their fate. Close monitoring of developments will be necessary along with consistent liaison with Council officials and developers.

Broken and missing milestones in the county are currently a concern. The milestone on the A380 at Eagle farm near Kingsteignton in South Devon (SX 870759) remains in three pieces. There has been no news regarding the missing milestone on the B3212 at 3 miles from Moretonhampstead (SX 787874) despite an appeal in *Dartmoor Magazine*. The perished milestone on the B3327 at Pork Hill at SX 529 752 has yet to be replaced by Dartmoor National Park Authority. The old stone has been removed and hopefully the new one will appear at some point in 2017.

In August 2016 Ivybridge Heritage and Archives Group undertook steps to recover three granite Ivybridge Local Board markers from perilous positions. One of these was rescued from the River Erme where it had fallen 20 years ago and was lifted and repositioned after consultation with South Hams District Council and the Milestone Society. A cast iron milepost 11 miles from Plymouth (SX 641563) was also repainted by Barrie Wilson of the group in early September. More on these initiatives appears on pages 25-27.

The above success illustrates the importance of encouraging local history groups and parishes to care for their stones. Along with Ivybridge there have been encouraging developments within the North Devon parishes of High Bickington and Burrington where a series of milestones inscribed with distances to Barnstaple (BARUM) are set. Details on the location of all stones on that route have been passed to the parishes and they have agreed to inspect and uncover the markers if possible.

Two articles by Mark Fenlon and Tim Jenkinson have now appeared in *Dartmoor Magazine* (Autumn and Winter editions for 2016) providing details of some of the finds made as a result of reviewing the Dave Brewer Archive in 2014. This too has generated some discussion and helped raise awareness about some of the lesser known inscribed markers in the Dartmoor area.



*The Quays stone at Colcharton Cross*

Local author Simon Dell MBE has contacted Tim regarding the various milestones in West Devon that show distances to 'The Quays'. These unusual stones were erected around 1840 to help with directions to Morwellham Quay (SX 446 697) where minerals such as lead, arsenic, tin, silver and copper from mines in the area would have been transported along the River Tamar into Plymouth. Simon is currently writing a series of articles for 2017 to commemorate 200 years since the opening of Tavistock Canal and has agreed to include information on the stones along with photographs.

**Herefordshire** (*Jan Scrine*)

Mentioned in the Domesday Book, the name Bromyard derives from the Old English, 'a field covered with Broom'. The surrounding flora caught the attention of the multi-skilled John Ogilby (dancing master, impresario, classical scholar, printer, cartographer...) as he travelled the country producing the first road atlas in the reign of Charles II. In the strip maps of his *Britannia*, when describing the highway between Oxford and 'Aberistwith', he noted that Bromyard Downs were a mass of 'Furrs and Ferns'.

The layout of the market town itself has changed little since Ogilby's day; it has buildings dating from his time as well as half-timbered coaching inns which served the Welsh mail coaches. A number of radial turnpike roads stretched out, to Tenbury Wells, Stourport, Malvern, Ledbury and the county town of Hereford, as well as Ogilby's route between Worcester and Leominster. Correspondingly, tollhouses ringed the town centre, one for each route. The surviving Petty Bridge tollhouse is particularly impressive, standing on the main A44 which now by-passes the town. Many of the original Hereford plated milestones also survive; the plate on the A44 at Linton (Bromyard 1 Mile) has recently been restored.



*Petty Bridge tollhouse*

The picturesque National Trust property at Brockhampton stands near the town.



The '2 miles' stone against its perimeter wall was in very poor condition, standing high above the steep road to Bringsty Forge (no doubt another busy trader in earlier times!). It has recently been replaced with a modern stone and the 'plate' has been painted on – so not a reconstruction, a replica.

Despite the efforts of former Herefordshire Rep Robert Walker, the Herefordshire database lacks photographs of many of the existing milestones; we will shortly be making an appeal in the press for the public to download a list from our website and go snapping! We are also hoping to gain funding for a Heritage Trail around Bromyard, showcasing its travel heritage – a pleasant trip into the past!



### **Hertfordshire**

*Colin Woodward* reports that East Herts District Council has updated its Heritage at Risk Register (formerly entitled Buildings at Risk Register) to 2016/2017. The register relates to listed buildings only and includes eight milestones, all with a Grade II listed status. The Milestone Society's database identifications for each of these are: (1) HE\_LK32 at Cottered, (2) HE\_LK19 at Great Amwell, (3) HE\_X24 at Sacombe, (4) HE\_LK26 at Standon, (5) HE\_LK23 at Thundridge, (6) HE\_LK21 at Ware, (7) HE\_X25 at Watton at Stone, and (8) HE\_X26 also at Watton at Stone.

The report outlines recommended works for each of the milestones. This includes advice to contact the Milestone Society and Hertfordshire Highways, but does not stipulate who should carry out the recommended works or who should apply to the Council for Listed Building Consent if this is required. The report includes descriptions and photographs of each milestone, some taken in 2006 and the remainder in 2016.

The register can be downloaded as a PDF file at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/buildingsatrisk>

### **Kent** (*Colin Woodward*)

East Peckham Parish Council has renovated a milestone KE\_WMTB033 on the west side of the A228 at Beltring, opposite the road to Beltring Station. This milestone is on the former Branbridges Turnpike (1767) and when surveyed by the Society in 2008 could not be read. The milestone has been cleaned, with the engravings renewed and together with the arrow mark and rivet hole all highlighted in black paint. The milestone now reads '33' on the northern elevation and '53' facing the carriageway. 33 miles is the correct distance from London but '53' is a mystery and is most likely to be a mistake in the engraving with '5' instead of '3'.

Middlesex (Colin Woodward)

Last November the Society received news of a 'Milestone' depicted on an antique tobacco pipe dug up from a site in Nottinghamshire.

The design of this pipe includes a version of the 'Whittington Stone' This commemorative marker MX\_WHITcm can be seen on the west side of Highgate Hill, Islington, near Archway Tube Station. It bears the inscription 'WHITTINGTON STONE/SIR RICHARD WHITTINGTON/THRICE LORD MAYOR/OF/LONDON/1397-RICHARD II/1406- HENRY IV/1420-HENRY V/ SHERIFF IN 1393/THIS STONE WAS RESTORED/W HILLIER/1935'. In 1964 a statue of a cat was added to the top. The stone bears a date (1821) on the side.



Photo: M Faherty

The stone as depicted on the pipe has a similar shape to today's Whittington Stone but the in-



Photo: Peter Ludlam

scription is not the same. One side reads 'WHITTINGTON/STONE/HIGHGATE HILL /IV/MILES/TO/LONDON' next to which is a man leaning against the stone, obviously Dick Whittington himself. The other side reads 'R\WHITTINGTON/THRICE/LORD MAYOR /OF/LONDON/BORN 1350.'

The stone and pipe give salient facts about Dick Whittington, but the story of him related in pantomimes is mostly fictional. There it is common for him to be portrayed resting against a milestone, listening to the distant bells of the City, which he believes are calling him back. So he 'turns again' and thus achieved fame and fortune, greatly helped by his pet cat.

He could not have rested by a milestone as these only became prevalent more than 300 years after he died in 1423. Nevertheless, the distance shown on the pipe is accurate. 18th and 19th century maps indicate a milestone, not existing today, only a very short distance north, four miles from London. On Victorian OS maps the site of the commemorative marker is shown 'Site of Stone 'Whittington Stone' Pedestal' on the corner of the now demolished Salisbury Road. Today's marker is not the first commemorative stone here. The Hornsey Historical Society in its publication *Highgate Walks* writes: 'the (current) stone seems to be the successor to the marker that stood in front of the old leper hospital at the foot of the hill, c.1670 or earlier'.

No doubt the pipe was produced in considerable numbers and would have been a popular souvenir for visitors to London and to pantomime theatres everywhere.

**Norfolk** (Carol Haines)

In October the renovated Lynn 17 milestone (NO\_KLW17) at Old Hunstanton was installed. The stone had been broken off at ground level about 30 years ago, and despite several appeals, there was no trace of the top half. As the stone was thought to be from quarries at Ancaster, Nigel went to Lincolnshire to acquire a suitable piece, which was then shaped and carved by conservation mason Jack Rolfe. The new top was then joined to the surviving base, which had the parish name inscribed on it, using stainless steel rods and resin. The stone has been placed 103 yds west of its original position beside the A149 (TF 7152 2551). Although this is just beyond Milestone Society guidelines, its former site



was on a long bend, and after discussion with Norfolk Historic Environment Service and the local landowner this was the nearest place considered safe. Funding came from Norfolk County Council, Old Hunstanton Parish Council, and the LeStrange estate, among others. An article appeared in the *Eastern Daily Press*.



*NO\_KLW06 before and after*

Martin and Miranda Skillings have painted several of the stones with wrought iron numbers between King's Lynn and Heacham – NO\_KLW06, 07, 08 and 10. The numbers were secured into the stones in lead. The numeral on the 6 mile had fallen out and Martin has replaced it in new lead.

A new addition to the county records is NO\_FKL14 at Hillington on the A148 (TF 7152 2551). It is a stone

tablet in a brick and carrstone wall, and not easily seen as it has suffered erosion. It reads: 7/MILES/TO/LYNN.

**Oxfordshire** (*Derek Turner*)

News from Oxon has been scarce in the last year or so but there have been some recent developments, for the time being at least more negative than positive, and coincidentally all from the same area of the county in historic Berkshire on the borders of the Vale of the White Horse and South Oxfordshire, near Didcot.

Firstly, a worried local parish councillor approached the Society about the threat to a milestone (BE\_WAW07) at East Hendred from minor roadworks related to a new housing estate. Despite representations to the various relevant authorities no provision for the preservation and necessary relocation of the stone was made in the agreed planning application. However, all is not lost. The ever-helpful Oxon Highways (official title: the bloated Environment & Economy, Highways & Transport), who seem not to have been consulted despite the stone being their property, has agreed to ensure that the stone is protected while the work is being undertaken and moved to a new location once the work is completed. Following a site visit with another parish councillor, it proved quite easy to find a much safer and accessible new location for the stone within a few yards of its present position. As the stone is not listed, the amount of bureaucracy required is small. The conservation officer seems content with the proposal. We now await notification of the start of the works. Either while the stone is 'in limbo' or once it is in its new location the parish plans to clean and repaint the stone, so hopefully this is a story that will have a happy ending in the not too distant future.

Around the same time, and only about six miles away at Blewbury but on a different turnpike road, Oxon Highways reported a fractured stone (BE\_HWST04) and asked for advice as to whether it was repairable. Derek was away at the time so it was a while before he was able to make a site visit. This determined that the stone can be repaired but both parts will need to be removed to a safe, temporary location to undertake the work. Funding and a mason to do the repairs have still to be found but Oxon Highways have agreed to give it a temporary home. Putting it back where it now is would probably repeat the vehicle strike that most likely caused the fracture so an alternative location will need to be agreed. This is more of a problem than at East Hendred and will need further thought and discussion. The conservation officer – the same one – accepts the need for the stone



BE\_WAWL07



to be moved but as it is listed there is likely to be the usual hassle with the planning authority. This story therefore has many months, perhaps years, to run without any certainty of a happy ending.

For the third stone, between Didcot and Harwell village, a 'sibling' of the East Hendred stone (BE\_WAWL07) the happy ending has already arrived after a traumatic period early in the century when it was twice knocked down and twice re-instated by Oxon Highways. Like the stone at East Hendred, it was threatened by a new housing estate – on a vast scale. Once again Oxon Highways were on to the case early, the stone was taken into custody by Oxford Archaeology, a suitable site found and the stone restored to close to its original position, in good condition, apart from the scars inflicted by the hard knocks it has received in recent years.

### **Somerset** (*Janet Dowding*)

The Somerset Group met on 26 Nov. 2016 and the first item on the agenda was for all members to sign a birthday card congratulating our member Mary Jackson on her 100th birthday! We consider she should be considered an 'Honorary member' now!

A couple of old newspaper photos were passed round showing a long gone fingerpost in Coxley (near Wells) and one showing a very battered and broken one with 'Church / Village Hall' on it but no indication of where it is!

Colin Woodward, after browsing the internet, had notified us of the following: 'GCR Auction Sale 211 4/6/16 Lot 13: an early road mile post 'To Bath 4' cast iron 11½ x 17¾ in original condition though the lower left corner absent £80-£120 sold for £160'. Another mile plate lost!

Regarding the repositioning of the A396 '4 miles to Minehead' milestone at Kitswall Farm, Timberscombe (West Somerset), Nic Wall of Somerset County Council had reported that they are still intending to re-erect this milestone but it is on hold for now. But they do have the support of the adjacent landowner at Kitswall Farm who keeps the verge tidy.

Member Peter Banks reported that the old Bruton Turnpike Batcombe Gate toll board is now in Bruton Museum for all to see, having been 'lost' for some years.

Our fingerpost photographing continues and we have now done 1069 of the possible 1700+ remaining in Somerset.



*Repainted fingerpost at  
Evercreech*

Peter Banks also gave the following report: 'These rather financially constrained times have led Somerset County Council Highways Dept. to rely on local parish councils to take on the role of maintaining the fingerposts in their areas. Some parishes are prepared to do this by covering the cost of paint; provided, that is, volunteers step forward to take on the task of applying it. This has occurred in several areas, including Evercreech Parish where local Society member Peter Banks has been supported by a small team of volunteers to begin the task on those signs which are close to the village. The appearance of a few freshly painted signs has been welcomed by local residents but disappointingly few new volunteers, from outlying hamlets, have stepped forward so far to help extend the project. The facility to have missing or broken arms recast in iron is also available if a parish is prepared to cover the cost.

We understand a guidance leaflet is being prepared by the Heritage Conservation Department at County Hall; this will include advice on safety aspects of carrying out work'.

Our next meeting will be in April/May 2017 and visitors are very welcome.

### **Staffordshire** (*Howard Price*)

Full funding has now been secured from the Peak District National Park Authority and Staffordshire Moorlands Council for the restoration, decoration and installation of the Leek 6 Buxton 6 listed bobbin post. Work is expected to commence after March 2017.

### **Surrey** (*Janet Dowding*)

The Surrey Group met on 29 October at Send Manor. Before the presentations, there were a few notices about milestones. The first was that in August Colin Woodward, David and Janet met up and went to Hampshire to view the Surrey milestone that has been on Hazeldown Farm since c.1970. It had originally stood from the 1930s at Hill House Farm, Esher, and when the farm was demolished, the stone was rescued by farmer Simon Green and taken to Hampshire. Since then many attempts have been made to get it returned to Surrey with no avail. In 2016 Colin once again took up the correspondence with the Historic Buildings officer at Surrey History Centre. As a result we decided to visit the stone and confirm what lettering was on it and measure it to determine its size and therefore an estimated weight for its later removal. Before a 1933 map, the stone is not shown on old maps as being at Hill House Farm, Esher. This means that there is uncertainty about the original position of the stone and Colin has suggested to Surrey History Centre some other locations in Esher for its return. We await now the results of all this. It was also reported that the big stone milestone that had been sited outside the derelict Putney Hospital and encased in wooden protective boards for about the last 8 years has finally been rescued and resited further east in front of a new development a short distance

away, with its own gravelled surround and protected by a temporary wire fence. It can now finally be seen by all. Tim Dodds gave two short presentations, the first being on Ian Thompson's talk at the recent AGM on 'Replica or Repair' (see *Milestones & Way-markers* 9 p30), together with photos and a print - out of Ian's talk for all to read. He then told us how he came to be on BBC Surrey radio news, talking about the 'Hugging a Milestone' campaign launched by Surrey Heath Museum to encourage local people to take 'selfies' hugging local milestones! We saw a photo of Tim doing just that himself!

This was followed by Paul Smith (a Sussex member) giving a very interesting presentation on street signs, with their great variety of shapes, designs and materials, mostly Sussex ones, but with a sprinkling of Somerset, Wilts and Kent examples too. He showed us some very early ones now in Horsham Museum, showing 'Victory Road' (commemorating the victory over Napoleon),

through the 1930s and later ones familiar to us all; and then to ultra modern ones in Sussex some of which are large squares of bright colours e.g. orange (as in Crawley which are there to identify each different neighbourhood in the town) and some which have bright blue poles with blue and white lettering. There were even two obviously put up in 2016, one commemorating the birth of Princess Charlotte (Charlotte Drive) and the death of Alan Rickman (Rickmans Drive). There were some intriguing and amusing ones such as 'Labour-in-vain Lane' (possibly relating to a now non-existent inn), 'Spronketts Lane', 'The Drang', and 'Busty Lane'. He also told us that 'Plat' on a street sign refers to an area behind a farm and 'Forstal' to an area in front of a farm. Paul said that all this barely scratched the surface of his collection of photos and his talk could be expanded for a future event.

The next Surrey meeting will be in April / May and all are welcome.

**Yorkshire** (*Christine Minto*)

Some time ago Frank Minto was given several pre-war *Cycling* magazines. During a recent re-read he found this picture (YS\_SFCH04, overpage) of one of the metal posts that were set up on the 'new' line of the Sheffield to Hathersage road. The turnpike road, first enacted in 1758, originally followed the packhorse route



*Resited milestone outside the derelict Putney Hospital*



into Hathersage but that had a very severe gradient and was rerouted quite quickly to give a slightly easier route into and out of the town. An octagonal toll-house, called The Roundhouse was built in 1795 at Ringinglow where the Sheffield and Buxton turnpike, abandoned in 1812, left the Hathersage route. You can read about milestones 6, 7 and 8 which survive on this route in *Newsletter 27*, p18. Neither route was profitable and the toll-house became a private home in 1825.

The remaining markers at 3 and 4 miles are stone although no legend is now legible. The 5

mile stone is a replacement indicating 'City of Sheffield 5 miles to Town Hall'. Numbers can just be made out on 7 which is broken and lying in the peat banking, 8 near Overstones Farm and 10 in Hathersage.

Early in the 19C a new road, now the A625, was constructed. Although longer it did not have such steep gradients so was safer and quicker. Presumably the metal posts were set up at this time. Those remaining on the Sheffield to Chapel-en-le Frith road are very similar to those on the Bakewell road, A621, which have 'Darwin & Co Sheffield' down the front spine. One, on the now unusable Mam Tor road, is illustrated on the front cover of Carol Haines book, *Marking the Miles*.

The Yorkshire/Derbyshire boundary has changed more than once. The site of Sheffield 4 would have been in Derbyshire as there is a fingerpost just to the east with DCC on it, not far from the ancient boundary of Mercia and Northumbria, the Limb Brook. The county boundary was changed in 1935 and that ties in with similar DCC fingerposts dated early 1930s. None of the metal posts survive until Sheffield 8 Hathersage 2 which has a small 'Darwin' plaque at the base of the front spine. It is a short distance west of Burbage Bridge the current boundary and east of Millstone Edge. Here millstones were made before 'superior' French Burrs were imported. Abandoned ones can still be seen down the hillside. The road turns a sharp corner here and is called 'Surprise View' and on a clear day Hathersage and the Derwent Valley towards Castleton suddenly come into view.



**CHRISTINE MINTO RIDES THE CALDER AND HEBBLE NAVIGATION**

*Christine Minto* writes: Having been bitten by the canal bug after visits to the Leeds & Liverpool and Chesterfield Canals I decided to have a look at the Rochdale Canal in the Calder valley where I knew there were metal posts. I could also look at some of the Calder and Hebble Navigation, part river part canal which I knew had stone posts. Train to Huddersfield, a flat 4 mile ride along the Huddersfield Broad but then difficulty in finding the way onto the Calder so a very busy road to Brig-house. The milestones show a mileage from Fall Ings, (Fall Ing on the stones) the junction with the Aire and Calder Navigation in Wakefield (CHN-19). I found one half mile stone but other interesting stones along the bank are inscribed 100yds. These indicate the distance to a lock and, apparently, who has the right of way. There were also a couple of lock-keeper's cottages with one being renovated.



*CHN-19*

At Sowerby Basin the Navigation ends and the Rochdale begins. On both waterways there were some diversions after the disastrous flooding earlier in the year which damaged banks. Two old bridges have to be rebuilt. The 30 miles of the Rochdale, surveyed by Brindley, was fully opened in December 1804 but commercial traffic ceased just before WWII although coal was carried between Manchester and Rochdale until 1950. As with other canals it became derelict but in 1974 the Rochdale Canal Society decided to get the water flowing again. By 1983 Todmorden to Hebden Bridge was in water and the following year the Society became the Rochdale Canal Trust Ltd. A special lock had to be constructed in Sowerby Bridge to take the canal under the busy A58. But on 1 July 2002 the canal was fully open. The Canal Trust commissioned new milemarkers cast at Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax. As the towpath was still barricaded off, I couldn't reach Sowerby Bridge 9 but I found all the others along the Yorkshire banks. Interestingly each casting had the same legend on the faces away from the



*Lock keeper's cottage under renovation*

## On the Towpath

canal making it easy to place them correctly whichever side of the canal the towpath is (RCH-12). I did just venture into Lancashire and found an original stone west of First Below Summit Lock (RCH-14).

Another day I tried to ride on the towpath of the Calder and Hebble from Fall Ings in Wakefield. Some stretches are inaccessible due to flood damage and may never be open again. And much of it was very overgrown with thistles and nettles. So it was an almost fruitless day out except I accessed the 7 mile stone at Thornhill and then had a pleasant ride on the Dewsbury Cut

which is well used recreationally and had a lovely mural on a wall. Hidden by the vegetation at its base it reads 'Transport route for shoddy and mungo'. A West Riding person will know what they are but the definitions are in any good dictionary!



RCH-14



RCH-12



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**SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER 2016:  
AGM AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CHESTERFIELD**

In St Thomas' Community Centre at Brampton, Chesterfield over forty members assembled for the AGM and Annual Conference. They came from far and wide, including our afternoon speakers, Ann King from Wiltshire and Ian Thompson from Cornwall. The Society does not pay any expenses or fees to members who 'volunteer' to address our meetings, so these long distance travellers are doubly appreciated!

Despite the lack of a Chair or a Vice Chair being nominated at the AGM and some doubts over the future of our publications editors, the sunny nature of the meeting reflected the sunshine outside. The Conference was opened by local historian Howard Smith – his fourth talk at our meetings - and he excelled himself. Despite suffering from severe macular degeneration, he has recently published a book on The Snake Road, the formidable route between Sheffield and Manchester. He told us that the name came from the serpent on the Duke of Devonshire's arms, depicted on the Snake Inn, not from being so very twisty, and he vividly described the scenes along the way.

In the afternoon, our Terry Keegan Memorial Speaker was Ann King, who intrigued us all with 'H is for Heritage', an A-Z of wayside features (bootscrapers, anyone?!) – including many from the neighbourhood. She was followed by Ian Thompson who took us through the hierarchy of repairs, from re-painting to replica, drawing on his Cornwall case studies (see *Milestones & Waymarkers* 9 p30). We had left him short of time, but his valuable information will be available more fully on our conservation guidance web page in due course. Definitely a very good day!

*Jan Scrine*

**FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS**

The Society's interests in roadside heritage are mirrored by a number of other special-interest groups and societies, many with a high level of knowledge of vehicles used on our highways over time. One such is The Carriage Foundation, which became a registered charity in June 2015 (no. 1162356) but dates back to its formation by a group of enthusiasts back in 1991. Its primary aim is to promote the care, preservation and interpretation of carriages as an integral part of the history of transport, and 'encouraging an interest in all things connected with horse-drawn carriages'. There are obvious parallels for our own Society's interests, especially in the turnpike period on British roads. Already the Foundation has launched the Carriages of Britain project, to create a searchable and illustrated database of examples within UK collections (of which it has identified over 1,200), and published two issues of its new publication *The Whiffle Tree*. See [www.thecarriagefoundation.org.uk](http://www.thecarriagefoundation.org.uk).

*David Viner*

## Features

### WALLASEY FERRY MILEPOSTS

The Mersey Ferries have plied their trade to and from the Wirral and Liverpool for hundreds of years although they now carry fewer commuters and have a role in Liverpool's growing tourist trade. The Liverpool terminal is at the Pier Head whilst Birkenhead and Wallasey each have floating landing stages at Woodside and Seacombe respectively although it was not always so – at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth Wallasey had three ferry destinations, Seacombe, Egremont, which stopped operating during the Second World War when the pier was cut in two by a merchant ship and never repaired, and New Brighton which closed in 1971 as the day tripper market finally collapsed.

The Wallasey Ferries were operated by a local board which at some unknown date decided to place cast iron mile posts around the town giving distances to the various ferry destinations. There are around 25 of these markers in total, standing largely unseen and very much ignored at various locations in the town. Despite considerable research and writings on the subject of 'The Ferries' these mile posts defy all efforts to discover when they were put into place. Could it



*In Hoeside Road painted by  
David Hearn*

be that they were installed to 'remind' commuters that the ferries still existed after the Wirral Railway with its links to Liverpool came to Wallasey in 1888 – more research is needed.

The mileposts have been ignored for too long except for three or four that have been painted by the owners of nearby properties and David Hearn decided that they needed to be better known by being more visible which is, after all, what they were intended to be. David debated whether to ask the local authority for permission before deciding that it would be the 'right thing' to do. He approached Wirral Borough Council through his Local Councillor which elicited a speedy approval without conditions nor a request for further



information.

The mileposts are made of cast iron and are around 25 inches tall depending on how much work has been done on re-surfacing the surrounding pavements. Although the details are different there is only one design as can be seen from the photographs.

To date time constraints mean that David has only painted two of the mileposts both of which were in good condition after removal of years of dust and dirt. With hindsight a coat of red lead oxide paint may have been wise but David was looking for a quick result – a 'guerrilla decorator' effect – so he went straight for Hammerite Smooth and the traditional white back-



*Painted white on black by the publican of The Magazine, Magazine Lane*

ground with black lettering although it is worth noting that other mileposts have been painted in black with white and the only criticism David received was that the two that he had painted now stood out too much – rather the point of doing it!

As an interesting postscript is that because David had to lie on the ground to do the painting a number of people stopped their cars as they passed in the mistaken belief that he had fallen over.

*David Hearn*

*David Hearn is a Post Graduate student at the University of Liverpool and a volunteer with Civic Voice where he assists on their First World War Memorial project.*

### **IVYBRIDGE LOCAL BOARD STONES**

Two roadside boundary markers on a section of the old A38 (now B3213) in Devon have been raised from their sunken positions by Devon County Council. Both stones inscribed with 'ILB' are little more than 50 metres apart in Exeter Road just out of the town heading towards Bittaford. One of the markers (DV 259) at SX 6422 5630 has been raised out of the tarmac whilst the other (DV 260) at SX 6432 5626 has been lifted to a higher position out of a grass verge, both now clearly showing their legends. The work was undertaken on 17 August 2016.

Dave Brewer advises that the inscription on the stones refers to the Ivybridge



## Features



*DV259 before and after*



*DV260 before and after*

Local Board of Health that was set up in 1873 to determine a boundary of responsibility for the then village that had grown up at the junction of four other parishes namely Ermington, Ugborough, Harford and Cornwood and as a result it was difficult to get anything done. There are several more of the stones surviving elsewhere in and around the town, with one even set on open moorland at Henlake Down (SX 6357). County Representative Tim Jenkinson and fellow Society member Mark Fenlon were invited to visit the town on 24 May 2016 for a guided tour of the surviving stones which included the discovery of a previously unrecorded marker in Godwell Lane at SX 6456 5581. Guidance on how to prevent damage to the stones during the lifting process was provided by Tim after consultation with Alan

Rosevear. The developments here and the positive outcomes achieved demonstrate the importance of local Parishes, History and Heritage Groups being encouraged to take an interest in the inscribed markers that lie within their boundaries. Tim hopes that in the coming years other parishes within the county will follow the Ivybridge example.

Lesley Thatcher of the Local Heritage Group who was instrumental in negotiating the action with the County Council had now to cajole South Hams District Council into rescuing and resetting another of the ILB stones which has fallen into the River Erme at SX 6316 5551 to the rear of the Tennis Club. Mark Fenlon and Tim Jenkinson were invited to attend the lifting and resetting of this ILB marker out of the river where it had fallen in 1996 and had been subsequently washed downstream.

The event took place at 11:00 am on 31 August 2016 and was attended by members of the Town Council including the mayor David Gray-Taylor and the Heritage and Archive Group including Lesley Thatcher and Barrie Wilson who were instrumental in getting the salvage under way. The movement of the stone from river bed back to the bank from whence it came was kindly undertaken by the NRS Construction Group who are currently working on a nearby waste disposal site on the road to Ermington (B3211). The stone is now safely repositioned at SX 6315 5554 at the rear of the Tennis Club.



*ILB marker at Godwell Lane*

Meanwhile a cast iron milepost in Exeter Road in the town that dates from c.1820 has been repainted by the town's Heritage and Archive Group courtesy of Barrie Wilson. The post which stands at the 11 mile point from Plymouth at SX 6414 5632 is one of just four such posts now surviving along what was a 15 mile stretch of road between the city and South Brent (now B3213, was old A38). Many of the posts were regrettably taken down during the building of the A38 dual carriageway in the 1970s. The milepost was painted in accordance with the Society's recommendations and guidance on safety precautions.

*Tim Jenkinson*

## **OAKHAM TREASURES**

Back in 2011, it was reported that there were three mileplates in the newly opened Oakham Treasures private museum near Gordano Services at Bristol. All three appeared in our records as having been in place at 2000.

David Viner wrote some detailed notes; two had been reported to the police as stolen and one of these was listed on the Salvo website.

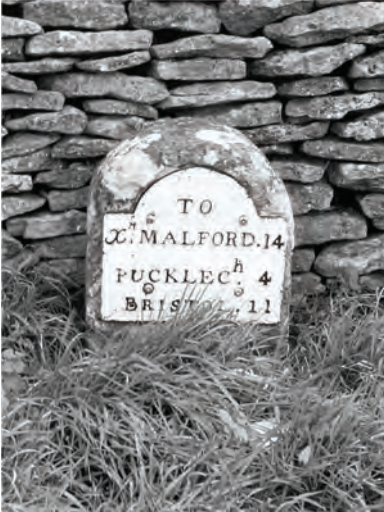
A group of four Committee members went to meet with the museum's owner on a fact finding mission, hoping to facilitate their return. The owner Mr Keith Sherrell was most unhappy about this; he had legitimately bought them for over £400 from a local friend who had found them at an auto-jumble in the Midlands. He was only willing to return them if officially instructed – and as we were not the owners of the milestones, we couldn't do that. We tried contacting English Heritage since two are listed, receiving no response, along with letters to the three Councils involved.

## Features

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And since we had no active representation in the locality, there the matter rested, other than the occasional email to various Conservation Officers, who rapidly moved jobs.

However, having a bit of spare time in Bristol at Christmas, Herefordshire Rep Jan decided to call on Mr Sherrell again; this turned out most constructively.



*Christian Malford milestone  
reinstated*

Apparently after our visit in 2011, the police raided his museum very aggressively and took GL\_CFBR14, the Christian Malford plate from the A46 near Dyrham Park, and threatened him with prison. He blamed this episode on us. Jan reassured him that we knew nothing about it and he was very surprised. Presumably South Gloucestershire Council, tipped off by us, had initiated it. Mr Sherrell was very cross because he thought it had been passed on to a collector! However, Jan subsequently got in touch with her contact at the Marshfield Local History Society, Rita Lees, and Rita checked the spot – yes, the mileplate had been re-instated and repainted, although it is now in need of a fresh coat. Rita also passed on some information about the name – apparently it points to a ford or crossing, hence the 'Christian' symbol or marker.

After chatting, Mr Sherrell warmed to the idea of reinstating the two that are still in his possession (GL\_CIBA13 and Bristol 2), with some good publicity, now that the museum is well established as a tourism destination. Jan offered to donate a replica 'Worcester Cross' plate instead, on behalf of the Society, since he genuinely purchased the three plates in good faith; he agreed that we all wished to discourage theft. It should bring good publicity for the Society too. So the Worcester Cross replica plate is on order from the Blists Hill blacksmith and we are having another meeting in late January; if this proves fruitful, we will contact Bristol City Council and Gloucestershire County Council to organise the reinstatement of their plates.

*Jan Scrine*

*(You can visit Oakham Treasures at Oakham Farm, Portbury Lane, Portbury, Bristol BS20 7SP [www.oakhamtreasures.co.uk/](http://www.oakhamtreasures.co.uk/) - Editor)*

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**SCOTLANDSPACES**

Members who are interested in the Scottish scene will be pleased to hear that ScotlandsPlaces is now free, having previously been accessible only by subscription.

ScotlandsPlaces is a website that allows users to search across different national databases using geographic locations. The user is able to enter a place name or a coordinate to search across these collections or they can use the mapping in the website to both define and refine their search. The results pages provide the data relevant to the search conducted from each of: Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the National Library of Scotland (NLS).

The original Ordnance Survey Name Books of the surveyors who were making the 1st series OS maps in the nineteenth century can be viewed. As their title indicates, the books contain information about the names of the places, their origins and alternative spellings. They are a mine of information for the road historian as there are descriptions of toll-houses, sometimes along with their associated road trusts and keepers' names. Additional information from some of the other databases can also be of interest.

Great for the laptop traveller on a rainy afternoon!

*Alverie Weighill*

**AND NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND**

Members can now receive online copies of *Cairt* which is the twice-yearly newsletter of the National Museum of Scotland's Map Department which covers maps for the whole of UK and is always adding to its online resources and viewing options. Members can register to receive this by emailing: [maps@nls.uk](mailto:maps@nls.uk)

*Alverie Weighill*

**CUMBRIA ROMAN MILESTONE**

*Carol Haines* and *David Blackburn* have both been in touch about the Roman milestone in a churchyard at Middleton in Cumbria.

Carol writes: An article in the *Church Times* (18.11.16) reported that a Roman milestone, reading 'M.P. LIII' has been moved into the churchyard of the Holy Ghost in Middleton, Cumbria for safety. The stone was first discovered in 1836 when hit by a plough. The farmer re-sited it on a neighbouring hill and added a Latin inscription which translates as 'Dug from the earth, restored by Giles Moore, 1836'. Recently the Grade II\* listed stone was knocked over by cows and was placed on Historic England's At Risk register. It is thought to date from AD 79 and is now close to its original site beside a Roman road between Carlisle and Ribchester.

Meanwhile David had noticed an article about the stone in *Country Walking* which also tells us that the stone was uncovered and fixed upright by a local

## Features

farmer in 1836. It stood in the field until it toppled over last year. According to *Country Walking* the stone was noticed by playwright Alan Bennett. Alan made a few phone calls which started a project by Historic England and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to rescue the stone. Steve Hastie of the Park Authority said that it was a tricky job and not without its hairy moments but it's the first of many they will be doing in this new part of the National Park. Meanwhile Alan Bennett said "The lesson I suppose is to keep your eyes open and don't be afraid to ask. These monuments are nobody's property. They belong to us all."

### PICKFORDS KNEW MILESTONES

We all think of Pickfords as a major removals firm. We know the trucks and vans of their system. Mervyn Benford had not realised the earlier history of the company until in the late 1970s he came across a full four-page colour supplement in *The Times* detailing a fascinating summary.



At the time of Charles II, when stones were needed for road-mending, Thomas Pickford started a packhorse system to haul them.

Later, James Pickford brought in the stage wagon called a 'caravan' which was led by a coachman, forbidden to sit in the driving seat for fear he would fall asleep. James's son, Matthew, introduced the fly-wagon which fairly sped between London and Manchester in four

and a half days, and he took the company into the canal trade with fly-boats and barges.

There was not in fact any mention of milestones but undoubtedly they were the everyday guide to distance covered and to go and a fundamental indicator of speed. The rest of the feature picks up the impact



progressively of canals and railways, international services and the general removals story of course, with many similar fine illustrations of vehicles involved.



**SWISS POST**

Anyone visiting Brig in Switzerland should take a look at the Stockalperschloss, and in particular the two restored mail coaches in the internal courtyard. Brig lies at the foot of the Simplon Pass, a mountain track until 1805 when Napoleon ordered the building of the first modern road. Kaspar von Stockalper (1609-1691) made his money mainly by transporting salt from Italy, over the Simplon to



Bex near Lake Geneva for distribution in France. He also organised the first regular mounted postal connection which took eight days to travel from Milan to Lyon.

Post coaches probably started running in the late C18 with teams of eight to ten horses. The regular changes to get over the Pass needed a total of around 150 horses and the journey from Brig to Domodossala took a good twelve hours.

During the early 1800s a former London-Dover mail coach was in use, still with its English route painted on the panels. The first Simplon rail tunnel opened in 1906, causing the demise of the mail coaches, although a horse-post continued over the Simplon until 1954. The last Swiss horse-post ended in 1962.

In the park outside the castle are granite milestones rescued from the route, one giving a distance of 109 kilometres to St Gingolph, which is on the French/Swiss border near Lake Geneva.

*Carol Haines*

**A 'LOST' MILESTONE AT THE LEA, HEREFORDSHIRE**

To the east of The Lea in Herefordshire a narrow lane branches off the A40 road between Gloucester and Ross-on-Wye and descends eastwards to a boggy hollow called Frogs' Bottom. Here it crosses a minor stream, turns to the south and continues, parallel to the modern road, first as a hollow-way and then as a terrace on a steep hillside. Near the top of the hollow-way a block of Old Red Sandstone leans back against a grassy bank (SO 667 214), its surface weathered and mossy. No vestige of an inscription remains.

The Ordnance Survey would have us believe that it is a boundary stone (25" Gloucestershire, sheet XXIII.8, 1881). It is not. The green lane was once a turnpike and this lump of rock was a milestone. This is confirmed by a 'Plan of the Huntley Mitchel Dean and Elton Districts of Turnpike Roads in the Counties of

## Features

Gloucester and Hereford with the Intended New Lines, Diversions and Alterations' by William Metcalf, dated 1832<sup>1</sup>. This shows the road and the milestones, and this one is marked as 'V Miles to Ross XI from Gloster'.



*Photo: David Mullin*

The road was old when Metcalf made his map. It began as a Roman road, part of the route from Usk (Monmouthshire) to Silchester (Hampshire), recorded in a schedule of roads throughout the Empire known as the Antonine Itinerary. In the centuries of little or no maintenance that followed the end of Roman administration it was etched into the landscape by the passage of countless feet, hooves and wheels, becoming a sunken lane, four metres deep in places.

In 1555 parishes were given responsibility for road maintenance. This road was a major through route. Keeping it in good repair must always have strained parish resources, and in 1726 it was relieved of that responsibility when the Gloucester and Hereford Road Act approved the creation of a turnpike trust. In 1767 mileposts on turnpikes were made mandatory. Presumably, the stone at The Lea was put in place not long after.

In 1823 Thomas Telford was employed to survey and propose improvements to the London to Fishguard road (now the A40), then a mail route to Ireland. It seems that the section to the east of The Lea was in particular need of improvement. Writing in 1826, Charles Heath of Monmouth likened it to one of the Biblical plagues of Egypt.

The 'New Lines, Diversions and Alterations' on Metcalf's map were similar to those proposed by Telford, and these received parliamentary approval in 1833. Cuttings and embankments were used to eliminate steep gradients. The old route was abandoned and the meaning of the milestone forgotten.

Its cast iron replacement on the new road also survives, showing the same distances to Ross and to Gloucester as its predecessor, and is



*Photo: David Viner*

cast by Nichols of Ross. It is recorded on the Society's database as HF\_RSGL05 at SO 665212 and discussed by Robert Walker in his comprehensive survey of the county's mile-markers<sup>2</sup>.

The milestone is on private land. There is no public access, but with Heather Hurley's *Old Roads of South Herefordshire* (Newent, Pound House, 1992) as a guide, several interesting excursions taking in local milestones adjoining public rights of way may be made. The same author has also written *The Green Lanes of Herefordshire* (Fineleaf, Ross-on-Wye, 2010).

David Mullin

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Copies are held in Gloucestershire Archives (Q Rum 128), Herefordshire Archives (Q/RWt 126) and the Parliamentary Archives (HL/PO/PB/3/plan 92).
- <sup>2</sup> Walker, Robert 2013. *Herefordshire Mile Markers and their makers*, Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club, 61, 40-70 (see pp.61-2).



## CROSSING THE PENNINES

The Crossing the Pennines Heritage Trail in the Yorkshire Colne Valley continues to attract visitors and Geocachers, who leave appreciative comments on Facebook. The route includes five different types of historic way-marker, Roman, 1730s guide stone, 1770s turnpike, 1890s County Council and Huddersfield Narrow Canal, as well as an Estate Boundary marker, along with new stone way-markers; [www.CrossingthePennines.co.uk](http://www.CrossingthePennines.co.uk)

The next task is to find funding to restore Scout Lane, part of the Trail that still has its original ancient paving stones in place: Kirklees Council has generously offered to pay for the materials required (about £30k) but we need to find money for the labour, about £60k including VAT.

Resident sculptor Melanie Griffiths writes:

'We have repaired the Dancing Hare sculpture that was vandalised in Spring 2016 and are hoping for the landowner's permission to re-instate it beside the junction of footpath 127 (the 'Hare Path') and the Colne Valley Circular. The Packhorse sculpture has weathered well in the landscape and the Merrydale footprints point the way through the clough, although Margaret Hill of Kirklees Countryside Volunteers works hard to keep them from

## Features

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*Cop Hill*

being overgrown! She led a public walk round the Trail in September, which was greatly enjoyed. The interpretation panels have stood the test of time too.

'The footprints carved by the Kirklees College brickwork students and Council Apprentices as part of the Beyond Graffiti project in 2013-14 are installed along the footpaths in Dewsbury Country Park with a panel near the entrance explaining their significance and naming the Milestone Society. The 'Rampant Lion' carved by Halifax students as part of the same project forms part of the sculpture trail at Shibden Hall; again, the plaque names the Society.

'And if we can find funding for Scout Lane, there will be a new waymarker by the stream at the foot of the hill, showing bobbing ducks!'

You can view four films about the Waymarkers along the Crossing the Pennines Trail on

YouTube, free, completed by Colin Parry shortly before his untimely death in June 2016, as well as a film by Kirklees Local TV on the Grand Opening Ceremony in July 2015 – start at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqNefr2IjI>.

*Jan Scrine*

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## New Books

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### **HIDDEN HISTORIES: A SPOTTER'S GUIDE TO THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE**

Broadcaster and anthropologist Mary-Ann Ochota arms the amateur explorer with the crucial information needed to 'read' the landscape and spot the human activities that have shaped our green and pleasant land. Tony Robinson says this book is perfect for anyone who's travelled through the countryside, scratched their head, and thought, 'what on earth is that thing?'

Ochota, M. 2016 *Hidden Histories: A Spotter's Guide to the English Landscape* Frances Lincoln. 288pp £20 ISBN: 978 0 71123692 9

### **MAN OF IRON: THOMAS TELFORD AND THE BUILDING OF BRITAIN**

The enthralling biography of the shepherd boy who changed the world with his revolutionary engineering and whose genius we still benefit from today. And of course we know Telford for his iconic milestones on the Holyhead Road and in Ireland.

Glover, J. 2017 *Man of Iron: Thomas Telford and the Building of Britain* Bloomsbury Publishing 448pp £25 ISBN: 978 1 40883746 7

**SATURDAY 18 MARCH, SOUTH-WEST MEETING, STOKE GIFFORD**

10am for 10:30am at St Michael's Community Hall in Stoke Gifford close to Bristol Parkway Station. Speakers include Frank Iddiols on Benchmarks, a trip to the Channel Isles with Tim Jenkinson, Ian Thompson describing parish road repairs and perennial favourite Richard Raynsford on Somerset milestones.

**SUNDAY 9 APRIL: NORTHERN SPRING MEETING, HEBDEN**

The return of the ever popular Hebden meeting to its usual venue.

**SATURDAY 20 MAY: MIDSHIES & EAST OF ENGLAND MEETING, DENVER**

10am for 10:30am at Denver village hall is just off the A10, 1 mile south of Downham Market, Norfolk. Speakers include John Nicholls on Braintree restoration work, Alan Rosevear on a digital mapping project for old roads, Mike Bardell showing boundary and utility markers and Carol Haines taking a tour along local turnpikes.

**SATURDAY 7 OCTOBER: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AUTUMN CONFERENCE, LONG COMPTON, WARWICKSHIRE**

Watch for further details in the *August Newsletter*.

**Put the dates in your diary now...**

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER FOR AUGUST 2017**

Contributions for inclusion in the *August Newsletter* should reach the editor Mike Hallett by Monday 19 June 2017. Contributions are accepted on the understanding that the editor reserves the right to modify submitted material to achieve a suitable length or style consistent with the overall size, aims and content of the publication. Submission of articles in electronic form using Microsoft Word (\*.doc, \*.docx or \*.rtf) or Open Document Format (\*.odt) and pictures in high definition JPEG or PNG format (\*.jpg or \*.png) is particularly convenient but paper copy is also accepted. Please note that due to postage costs, material submitted is not normally returned unless specifically requested.

E-mail the editor at [newsletter@milestonesociety.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@milestonesociety.co.uk) or call Mike Hallett on 01763 246521 for further information and address details.

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*And finally ....*

## HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES IT TAKE TO HUG A MILESTONE?



*Photo courtesy of South Hams Newspapers*

Surrey Heath Museum achieved widespread national publicity with its campaign to 'Hug a Milestone' (see *Newsletter 31* pp15-16) which was triggered by a damaged milestone. And now we understand that the replacement milestone in Camberley is very close to being put in place.

But just how many people does it take to 'Hug a Milestone'. This photo shows an excellent turnout at a re-sited Ivybridge Local Board marker - dog and all. Lesley Thatcher and Barrie of the Ivybridge Heritage & Archive Group are by the stone with Tim Jenkinson and Mark Fenlon standing behind Barrie.



Nor is it every day a humble boundary stone gets a Ministerial inspection, reports *Tony Boyce*. But Chris Hazzard, Northern Ireland's Infrastructure Minister, was happy to pose beside this one during a visit to South Down for an update on a number of rural road initiatives. He is seen with Cindy Noble, a senior engineer from Transport Northern Ireland. Townlands are the smallest administrative division in Ireland and, in many cases, their boundaries are marked by such stones – in this case a bilingual one at Mullaghmore, near Hilltown.

*(Photo: Dept. for Infrastructure)*