

The Milestone Society

On the Ground



Worcestershire group member Neville Billington's delightful picture of his grandson studying one of the newly plated milestones on the A443

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ON THE GROUND

A REVIEW OF THE 12 MONTHS TO JUNE 2005

INTRODUCTION

This, the second issue of 'ON THE GROUND', whilst continuing Mervyn Benford's original message in the first issue to non-active members that ...'we want them to see that we put their subscriptions to good use, to fulfill as best we can our stated aims and objectives', this one has a slightly different slant to it.

Its main purpose is to review the achievements of the County Groups which have been actively pursuing the Society's aims over the twelve months since the last issue of ON THE GROUND. It is also designed to highlight the problems which they faced :- problems such as lack of co-operation from Highway officials, theft, damage to stones by verge cutters and wayward traffic.

Each County coordinator was sent a request for information on progress made over the past 12 months towards-

- a) recording the county's milestones for the Society's important national database;
- b) progress towards restoration, repainting and replacing damaged or missing milestones by, not only the group's members, but also by other agencies such as County Highways, Parish Councils, Civic Societies, and any other local groups or individuals.
- c) how successful the group have been in

spreading the aims of the Society through media contact, talks to outside bodies, distribution of Society literature to libraries, etc.;

d) progress towards the group making contact with it's own county members through meetings, joint projects and a local group newsletter.

By having an annual survey of the activities of each of the County groups we should be able to chart the progress of the Society towards its ultimate aims of recording and conserving the surviving milestones which are such an important part of our roadside heritage.

Also, by making this report of progress towards our ultimate objectives available to all involved in the protection of our roadside heritage, it is hoped that it will open the eyes of those who have been dragging their feet and finding excuses for putting off their responsibilities—in particular, some of the County Highway Authorities.

Not every County Coordinator has been in a position to send in a report to this issue so there will be some gaps in the information on what has been achieved over the past twelve months.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

We have come a long way since forming the Milestone Society in 2001. With

around 450 members we can be proud of what has been achieved . The road so far has been a rocky one with plenty of dead ends, especially in our efforts to persuade many Highway Authorities that the milestones are worth saving as an important part of our national roadside heritage. Reports have been coming of changing attitudes towards the preservation of the milestones. A recent Advisory Leaflet sent out by the Dept. of Transport to all Local Councils highlights the importance of preserving important items of roadside heritage- including milestones. Details of the Milestone Society are given amongst other august bodies such as English Heritage, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Countryside Agency and others as a source for farther contacts. Amongst the list for 'further reading' is Mervyn Benford's book, Milestones.

Much of the credit for this change in attitude must be as a result of the great efforts put into, not only the physical hard work of renovating milestones by some members, but also the way many members have been spreading the case for preservation through the media. Outstanding in this area was Jan Scrine's talk on Women's Hour - so good that it was repeated at a later date.

The light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter all the time.

BUILDING UP THE DATABASE RECORDS OF THE NATION'S SURVIVING MILESTONES



A new addition to the database from Worcestershire

One of the first tasks which the Milestone Society set itself was to list all the surviving milestones on a database which would be of use not only to the Society's members, but also to such organizations as English Heritage, County Highways Authorities, County

Conservation Officers, keepers of National Monument Records and any other official bodies seeking information on the position and condition of the nations milestones.

Most county groups were quick off the mark sending in their records so, that by June

of this year 65% of the estimated 7000+ surviving English milestones featured on the Master Database.

The collection of information has not been uniform over the whole country, with only patchy details coming from most Scottish counties and

DATABASE RECORDS (cont.)

many of those in Wales. This problem arises from the lack of members within those parts of the Kingdom. In the whole of Scotland we only have six members and not many more residing in Wales.

Even so, because we are able to use information gathered by enthusiasts other than Society members and information gathered by members holidaying in these areas, a good deal of data is available for inclusion on our database. A good example of this is the amount of information available on the milestones of Fife where 100% of the surviving milestones have been recorded

Those counties which have almost achieved their target of 100% surveys of known milestones include Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridge, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire and, most impressive of all, Yorkshire which has recorded almost 1200 milestones on the Society's database.

A number of counties have records of most of their milestones but not in a form which can be transferred to the database. Over the next year or so it is hoped that these records can be made compatible with the Society's own records.

It is important that we keep the records up to date especially as a number of official bodies are beginning to use the information which we have put on to the database to locate the milestones within their areas.

It would be a good idea if the county groups revised their records at least every two years.

UNCOVERING 'LOST' MILESTONES

All the time we are uncovering milestones which were believed to have been lost, many not even appearing on the Ordnance Survey maps. Most of these have emerged from the depths of hedges, hidden by overgrown bushes and a liberal covering of ivy.

In Devon an old limestone marker on the old A3 8 near Bickington showing 'IV miles to Ashburton' was recently resurrected. It had eluded successive surveys in the area because it was lying

prone in overgrown vegetation.

Also in Devon, whilst reporting the loss of a milestone outside Chudleigh, 9 miles from Exeter, to the local Police, the 10 mile marker was discovered deep in a hedge outside the Police Station.

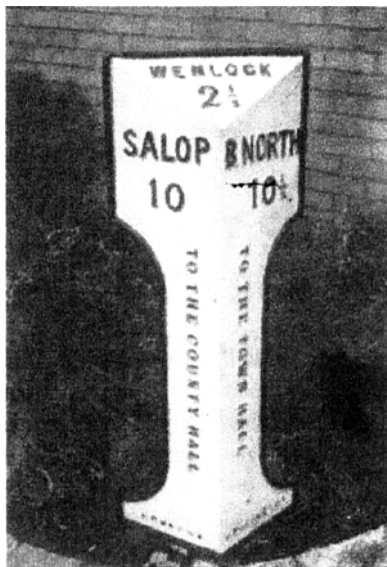
The old county of Berkshire reported two milestone stragglers turning up in people's gardens. One was reported by a local contact and the other resulting from the picture appearing in Homes & Gardens,

In Essex, after persistent searching, Brian Barrow eventually located the 'LONDON 38' stone hidden in overgrown ivy. The stone is set into a flint wall on the east side of the B1383 (former A11) just south of the junction with the B1052.

'Never give up hope when searching for that elusive stone', writes John Nicholls, the Essex coordinator. A stone was located in a dry ditch in Aveley Road, Corbets Tey. Enquiries revealed that it had proved too heavy to lift out so it was erected in the bottom of the ditch some years previously.

Dorset reported two new finds but unfortunately both badly damaged. However both have been added to the records.

In Shropshire a milepost from the A458 Shrewsbury to Much Wenlock road has been recovered by the intervention of a combined Shropshire County Council, Police and Milestone Society team following its appearance on eBay. The milepost disappeared 40 years ago and is to be re-erected by Shropshire Highways.



The Salop milepost awaiting re-erecting. Talking to the locals can unearth the sites

of hidden milestones. The Worcester Group recently were able to locate a milestone deep in a hedge and which was not marked on the OS map, after a local pensioner remembered it from his childhood.

A few of those stones buried in response to the Government directive to remove all milestones in 1940, are still being unearthed.

Perhaps the most fertile source of lost milestones may turn out to be people's gardens. Many of these are stones replaced by newer ones by the Turnpike Trusts a long time ago but a number turn out to be from a known series of current stones.

In Norfolk a few have been tracked down in gardens and the Norfolk Group feel that it is safer to leave them where they are and details of the Society given to the householders to let them know that they have something of historic significance.

The Staffordshire Group are hoping to recover two milestones spotted by one member of the Group in a garden in the town. One of these is a local mile post but the other turned out to be a 'listed' stone from Cornwall which disappeared ten years ago during road works. The Group are on to the case. They have also recovered a milepost from a site selling architectural building material and very recently reported another milepost up the driveway of local house. There is a problem persuading sometimes quite legitimate owners to part with their treasures, but the Group are becoming experts at this.

Somerset reports the finding of three milestones which had not been located in the past including one not on a known turnpike road which gives the distance to the G. Western R Station, 1 mile.

In Yorkshire Frank and Christine Minto continue to add previously unknown stones to the huge list of Yorkshire stones, including one used as a gatepost near Thurscross reservoir

One can but wonder just how many milestones have yet to be discovered hidden in the most unusual places — perhaps even hundreds. Members report great satisfaction whenever they find a milestone previously believed to have been lost. The hunt goes on.

IMPROVING CONTACTS WITH HIGHWAY AUTHORITIES

As the Highway Authorities are the legal owners of the stones it is imperative that we have a good relationship with each one if we are to achieve our aim of preserving the surviving milestones and in particular if we wish to be actively involved in the work of preservation.

In order to meet the requirements of many Local Authorities the Society upped its Public Liability insurance to £5 million. Even so some authorities are reluctant to allow anyone but their own staff do any work on the stones. Attitudes differ from one Authority to another- from the 'OK get on and do it' ,to 'Yes , but here are the rules', to 'Don't touch under any circumstances'.

A note of caution here. No matter how close a relation you may have with officials in one department in an area, make sure the correct people know of your plans if you intend working on the stones. As Alan

Rosevear found out to his cost officials within the same council do not always talk to each other. Alan stresses the importance of having local contacts, 'Local means District level at the most and Parish level preferably'.

In Worcestershire Terry Keegan has an excellent relationship with one of the District Highways Managers with whom he has regular meetings. Any proposals for work to be carried on outside that District is passed on at to the other District Highways Managers at their regular meetings. However it is at parish level that the Worcestershire Group have had most success. There is a scheme for parishes to 'adopt' the milestones within their borders and the Group feel that this is the best way forward.

Ian Thompson, in Cornwall used a subtle approach when contacting the County Council by firstly praising them for ensuring that so many fine milestones had survived into the 21st century and then listing a few minor problems which he

hoped they would be able to rectify. This led to one of the Area Surveyors making contact and advising him to pass on any milestone queries to him and he would see that they were passed on to the appropriate Area Surveyor. Says Ian, 'He was as good as his word'.

John Tybjerg reports very good contacts with Highways officials resulting in lots of conservation work on the milestones

John Donovan has good relations with all the local Hertfordshire Highways groups- ... 'but when I venture into outer Herts I end up with Environmental people (with no clout)'

Other Groups report improvements in their contacts with Highways officials.

An emerging need is to make contact with the regional contractors to the Highways Agency as in many cases they now have a responsibility for the milestones on the roads they manage for the Agency. Both Dorset and Worcestershire report success in this area.

CONSERVATION WORK ON THE MILESTONES

The current examples of conservation work being done on the milestones can be divided into five sources -

- 1 Highways Agency
- 2 County Highway Authorities
- 3 Parish Councils
- 4 Milestone Society members
- 5 Members of Civic and other Societies
- 6 Private individuals.

HIGHWAYS AGENCY

Although the Highways Agency has done some good work on preserving milestones in the past, they seem to have stepped up this type of operation.

Worcestershire report that the local contractor Amey, have a budget for a heritage improvement programme which includes renovation of all the existing milestones on the two trunk roads through the

county. The same contractor is surveying the milestones on the A49 Ross to Shrewsbury road with a programme of conservation in mind.

John Tybjerg reports having had a successful contact with the local Highways Agency contractor resulting in the renovation of 4 milestones.

Ian Thompson has had a good result from contact with the Highways Agency office in Exeter. He reported to the Cornwall County Council that the mileposts on the A38 Liskeard by-pass were in dire need of attention. As the A38 is a trunk road the report was passed on to Exeter and the Agency responded saying that they would arrange for the maintenance contractor to undertake the necessary refurbishment. A further call to Ian about the poor quality posts which had replaced the original cast iron ones, lost when

the by-pass was built was followed by a suggestion that they made new ones, using an old cast iron one as a pattern. Ian agreed that this would be an excellent idea.

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITIES

Up till a few years ago most County Highway Authorities showed a complete lack of interest in the preservation of milestones but County Coordinators are reporting a more positive attitude towards their conservation over the past year. This improvement in the way they see what is part of their roadside heritage could be as a result not only of Government directives and the work of English Heritage, but also as a result of pressure from members of the Milestone Society especially where media coverage of renovation projects has been obtained. If we keep up the pressure we



A523

A 'bobbin' milestone

CONSERVATION

will win the battle for milestone conservation.

John Tybjerg reports from Dorset that the last year has been their most success-fill to date with 33 milestones being refurbished, the majority by Dorset County Council and work on four more recently reported. Outside the Town and Borough Councils Dorset Highways are divided into four area organizations, North, South, East and West The East area was responsible for the repainting of 22 of the above total. DCC(N) moved a cast iron milestone near Shaftesbury to a safer position on a wide grass verge.



The re-sited Shaftesbury milestone

They also repaired, reset and repainted a badly broken milestone near Blanford and. DCC(W) stood a fallen milestone upright just south of Dorchester

'Earlier this year', reports John Donovan from Hertfordshire, 'a chap from Hatfield Highways organized the painting of a few of his metal mile posts and was reprimanded by the local BEAMS (a Herts County organization set up to advise on listed buildings, etc.) because some of them were listed and he hadn't checked with them first.

Devon County Council were responsible for the salvation and subsequent erection of a milestone that had been the victim of a road traffic accident. The sturdy marker, which is on a route from Totnes to Chudleigh in South Devon at Rixy Park Corner, was reinstated at the roadside onto a concrete base. Worcestershire Highways re-erected a milestone knocked over by a traffic accident on the Powick to Upton road and were also responsible for relocating a milestone in the village of Blakedown on the A456. The local Group have provided the Highways with a list of stones which have fallen over and need re-erecting and Highways have promised action when work schedules permit.



The re-located stone at Blakedown- Providing information to Highway Depts on stones needing attention too often fails to bring results. The Norfolk Group provided their Highway Dept. with a list of stones needing attention (mostly fallen) last November but have seen little progress.

Chris Woodard reports that Ceredigion repaint their milestones every two or three years. Most of the stones on the coast road between Cardigan and Aberystwyth have been refurbished this year by the Council.

Powys CC., through the good offices of the Highways Dept. have reinstated a milestone on the Whitton-Monaughty rd. 'It is not in its original place but it is back and is in good condition', reports Sadie Cole, the county coordinator. Sadie hopes to build on this good relationship and encourage the preservation of other items of roadside heritage.

North of the border ,Fife Highways continue to show up the other Highway Authorities by their continued care for their milestones. Most of the stones have metal caps displaying the mileage information, but even those which have lost their caps in the past are given a regular coat of white paint. When missing caps do turn up they are reinstated on to the original stones. To help keep the stones visible during the growing season a curtain of stone sets is being laid around the stones whenever finances allow.

Elsewhere in Scotland maintenance of the milestones is sporadic. Many of the mileposts on the roads into Dunoon have recently received a coat of paint Also, milestones and stone waymarkers on the A76 between New Cumnock and Kilmarnock have been renovated recently.

Unfortunately enthusiastic schemes to refurbish a series of milestones too often lack any plans for subsequent maintenance and in a few years time they are in just as sorry a state as they were origi-

nally. From Scotland Nigel Bishop sends this example. Ten years ago Stirling District Council refurbished a series of mileposts which had 'fallen into disrepair' They form a loop between Stirling, Doune, Callander, Aberfoyle and back to Stirling in a very popular tourist area. Sadly, since then they have had no maintenance and the optimistic comment in the news report of the time was, 'I don't think they'll fall into disrepair again'. They have.

THE WORK OF PARISH COUNCILS

Most milestones are of a parochial nature and it is only right that Parish Councils should take an interest in their survival. Most parishes take a keen interest in their local heritage and milestones come under that heading.

In Worcestershire there is a scheme where parishes are encouraged to 'adopt' the milestones within their boundaries and to maintain them. Only a few parishes have joined the scheme so far, but those that have, have restored eight milestones in the past year. There is also a lengthsman scheme where parishes can employ a man for so many hours a week to, amongst other things, keep road signs (including milestones) clean and clear of vegetation. This is a helpful step towards making the milestones visible to the operators of the verge-cutting machines.

When the Worcestershire Group planned to replace the nine missing plates from the milestones on the A443 from Worcester to Great Witley, it was to the parishes along the route that they turned to make the project a local community one. Each of the five parishes involved agreed to pay for the new plates and to arrange for them to be fixed to the stones. They now take a pride in the milestones they were responsible for renovating. The Group are planning a similar project involving another eleven milestone.

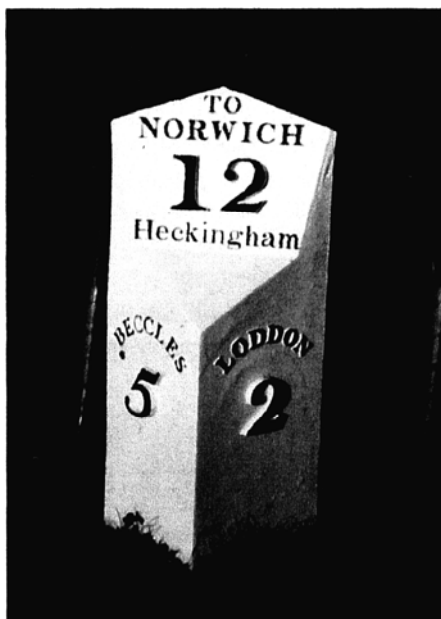
Herefordshire also have a parish lengthsman scheme and in Leintwardine the lengthsman has painted up all the milestones as well as keeping them clear of vegetation

A similar scheme is in operation in Shropshire. In the leaflet produced to explain the scheme they list the 'Type of work involved' and this includes- 'Carry out periodic painting of... and possibly milestones'. Alan Reade, the Shropshire coordinator is in the process of sending each parish a list of the milestones within their boundaries.

Carol Haines, the Norfolk coordinator, finds that writing to Parish Councils about milestones requiring restoration seldom elicits a reply, but a letter to Heckingham PC about their MP which had been lying under a hedge for years brought a reply to say that the post had been raised and repainted and 'looked

Conservation (cont)

splendid!



Restored milestone on the B1136 at Heckingham in Norfolk (TM 387971)

In West Gloucestershire, Redmarley Parish Council decided to refurbish two local milestones on the A417. The District Council insisted that planning permission was required and the cost rose to approximately £535 per stone. The Parish Council did however receive good cooperation from the County Highways Dept. and the District Council gave a grant to cover two thirds of the cost. David McDougal, a Society member and a trained conservation officer, undertook the restoration of the first milestone.



The refurbished mile post at Redmarley showing the quality of David McDougal's work.

From chipping off the old paint down to the bare metal it took seven further visits by David to complete the preservation process. David is hopeful of winning the contract to complete the renovation of the remaining posts.

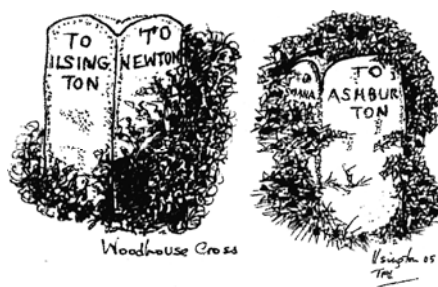
The West Gloucestershire Group intend writing to every Parish Council who have surviving milestones in their area making them aware of their milestones, and of the possible help available to restore them. Perhaps this is a route other Groups should be pursuing

In Dorset, Shaftesbury Town Council set to and painted a cast iron milestone which the County Highways had moved from a dangerous situation close to the road to a wide grass verge. The Council also painted up one of a similar style in the middle of the town. It is interesting that whilst the latter post uses the more modern term Shaftesbury, the other uses the old name Shaston.



One of the mile posts newly painted by Shaftesbury Town Council

Devon report a most positive response from Ilsington Parish Council on the edge of Dartmoor to include photographs and short descriptions on the unique cluster of six granite guide stones within their boundaries, on their Parish website



Two of the Ilsington stones sketched by Tim Jenkinson

Also from Devon comes the news of an important repaint of a cast iron mile plate in

Kingswear. The plate, which is fixed low down in a wall at a point known as the 'Banjo' in the town, had been neglected for many years and as a consequence had rusted badly. The intervention of Torbay Borough Council was well received in response to local concerns

CONSERVATION WORK BY MILESTONE SOCIETY MEMBERS.

Amazingly, there is as much conservation work being done on the milestones by enthusiastic members of the Society as there is by all the Highway Authorities put together. A few of those involved have contracted to do the work with the Council's approval. Most prolific of all has been John Higgins, the coordinator for Staffordshire who has, over the past two years repainted nearly 120 mileposts in the Staffs Moorland area and East Staffs. The basis on which he works in with the local councils is that they pay for all the materials and he does the work of rubbing down the mileposts, giving them a coat of Hammerite white paint and then picking out the letters and numbers in black Hammerite. John is also always on the lookout for damaged posts and those hidden away in people's, gardens. Another member of the Staffs team, David Wright is currently negotiating with the city of Stoke-on-Trent to do a similar job on 17 mileposts and 2 finger posts.

Another prolific restorer of milestones is Alan Rosevear, who created and maintains the Society's database of the nation's milestones.

Alan wrote a long report of his work on restoration in the old county of Berkshire and adjoining areas and it is worth recording it here as it covers many of the problems he had to surmount before he could even start on the work of conservation.

Alan starts his report by explaining that clearing vegetation has been the most important factor in halting damage to the stones since they have become more visible and people more aware of their presence. However, full restoration has the greatest impact and generates more interest.

Each Local Authority has responded differently to the challenge. In The Vale of White Horse, the District Planning and Conservation departments have been proactive, helpful and generous with grants. However they stick to the tightest interpretation of the rules and have required a full planning application for each of the stones (5 forms each). However, getting this approval has simplified getting £400 in grants so far,

CONSERVATION WORK by members (cont)

with another £100 potentially. This is Alan's home District so he gets access to local Heritage and Environmental Trust Grants for materials. These are payable in retrospect against invoices for paint, tools, etc. The success here has also been dependent on individuals who are sympathetic to the need for improved roadside environment.



Alan Rosevear complete with safety gear, clearing the vegetation from around the Jude stone which he has recently restored.

The Vale story also illustrates how crucial it is to keep everyone informed. Alan had restored four stones in early 2003, learning as he went. The second grant appeared with planning permission in Spring 2004 from District Planning and Heritage departments. Six of the planned 15 stones had been restored when he got a call from the Southern District of Oxfordshire Highways telling him that he needed permission from them to work on the highway. He had assumed that Local Authority departments communicated on these matters. He immediately provided the work schedule, method statement, risk assessment etc. It has taken him just over a year to jump all the hurdles. It happens that Oxon are going through a step change in their approach to roadside safety and Alan was treated like any other contractor.

The result is a much more robust risk assessment. Work is now restricted to locations well back from the road edge, the 'men at work' sign needs deploying with cones, the COSSH assessments complete, the work schedule lodged for when and where the work will be done and the <£5M liability insurance on

file. The approval was only forthcoming after Alan e-mailed to say he was pulling out of work on Oxfordshire roads after the Safety Officer insisted that he did a 3 day competency course (costing £200 a day). The senior engineer had the authority to say—come on lets get on with the easy ones, whereas the more junior staff, hard pressed by other problems were sticking to the cautious interpretation of the rules. So now six more stones have been done and two more are ready to start.

Alan found the attitude in Kennet District quite different. He gained credibility by recovering and restoring at home a snapped-off stone. This time he told the District and Highways what he was doing. When the restoration was complete he sent a fully illustrated report to both Authorities, who expressed their thanks. A nearby property owner offered to look after it.

Wilts Highways then got a request from the nearby parish of Aldbourne asking to have their milestones similarly treated. The Highways manager saw the Society as a good way of fulfilling his responsibilities and contacted Alan. After some discussion over how to buy new material, he found a slot in his maintenance budget. Alan went ahead and restored the 4 stones. The Parish provided the support to arrange for one of the stones to be raised three feet to its proper level. These 4 stones will be well kept by the parish given that they have been involved and taken ownership of the project. News spreads and the neighbouring parish of Liddington now want their stones restoring. This has created a new challenge for Alan as the village is in a different District.

Alan has a great affection for the area's impressive Bath road milestones so he put together a package to use the Kennet material on a few deserving eases. As a result two of the 18th century milestones above Marlborough are now back in a readable state and a direction stone close by and two stones near Avebury are restored. A plan to do three more has just been approved by Highways and Conservation.

Some projects take a while to mature. Almost 3 years ago Alan advised a Parish councilor at Beedon on how to

restore their 2 milestones. A month ago a letter arrived from the Parish Council, with approval from West Berks Conservation and local highways to tackle these stones. The significance of this to Alan is that two years ago he had offered to re-erect and restore a stone near Hungerford but his offer was turned down by West Berkshire's conservation officer — the Council would do it (properly) - but they never did! At Beedon there is no indication of how to pay for materials, but Alan had previously advised on costs. Importantly, Highways wanted



A recent 'simple straighten, clean, paint and letter job' by Alan

to see the £5M insurance certificate and risk assessment, Then all he had to do was to fill in the form to tell them the date of planned work.

Another case of advice maturing is at Wokingham. After Alan had given a talk to the Historical Society on turnpikes a local 'activist' was inspired to replace the missing stone east of the town. He is a carpenter and made a wooden template of the surviving stone in Wokingham. He used this to cast a concrete core with a cement cover, which he carved. Once painted it looked a perfect match and fills a gap in a series on a road across Windsor Forest. Being a local resident, Trevor had good contacts and support from the town council and local highways. This should mean a continuity of care (and perhaps more restoration of original stones).

In Bucks Norman Tippin has been able to act locally, canvassing Milton Keynes directly over milestones at risk and because he is very local, being taken seriously.

CONSERVATION WORK by MEMBERS

Yorkshire is our largest county and the Yorkshire Group is not only the largest but also one of the most active. There are over 1200 known milestones, mileposts and waymarkers within the borders of the county so the task of conservation is a mammoth one. Nonetheless, if the members of the Group tackle the problem with a quarter of the enthusiasm with which they tackled the surveying of the milestones for the Society database, then they should begin to make inroads into the mountain of conservation work that is needed on the milestones. Two of their members have already accounted for nearly 100 repaint jobs.

Brian Ellis gets great satisfaction from painting up milestones. Being retired he spends a lot of his time out in the open working on the stones. He has developed a very close relationship with his local highways department and they provide him with the materials to renovate the stones. Most of the Yorkshire milestones are faced with a cast iron front shaped to the stone backing. Brian is a great cyclist



Brian Ellis putting the finishing touches to one of the 50 typically Yorkshire milestones which he has renovated

and notes which milestones deserve his attention before returning in his car with all his tools and paints in the boot. Occasionally the Highways pass on requests from local parishes to do up a particular stone, but mainly he decides which ones he would like to renovate. Because of the media exposure which has been given to his efforts he quite often is approached directly by a Parish Council to have their milestones painted. Though a number of his neighbouring Parish Councils take a pride in their milestones, his own Parish Council seem to regard them as a roadside hazard. Brian first gives the iron work a coat of 'Owatrol' (a Norwegian product recommended

by the Highways Dept.), an anti-corrosion solution then a coat of primer followed by an undercoat before a final topcoat. Then comes the time consuming task of painting all the letters and numbers. At this point Brian often enlists the help of a tolerant wife to do the fine work on the lettering as, 'she has a steady hand'. Nearly all of the cast iron was produced at the Sturgess Foundry and occasionally the foundry attached a small plate direct to the stone with their name on.

Brian Bradley-Smith is another prolific restorer and painter of milestones in Yorkshire. To date he has painted at least 53 milestones, concentrating his efforts in the Harrogate area where he has a very good relationship with the local highways department. They furnished him with a set of rules saying what he was allowed to do and what was to be left to the Council. In



Brian Bradley-Smith, sporting his regulation day glow jacket, seen working on one of the 53 milestones in North Yorks. Which he has renovated.

theory he is allowed to work on stones not less than 1.5 metres from the carriageway though he does bend the rules occasionally if he can work on the stone in complete safety. Brian has even been known to dig up a stone or two to get them home and into the dry of his garage whilst he is doing the restoration work. His biggest challenge to date has been to re-assemble the cast iron parts of a milepost which had come off second best in a traffic accident. Brian could find no one prepared to weld the pieces back together again, so he set about drilling holes in the cast iron ('a very tough job') so that he could bolt plates to the back which would keep the pieces together. A couple of coats of paint later and milestone was as good as ever. The Council provided a quick setting concrete into which the repaired stone was set. Brian is rightly proud of his efforts. One of the few problems he met with was when he proposed to the chief engineer that a vulnerable milestone, uprooted in a traffic

accident, should be re-sited further up the road in a safer position. The engineer refused so the stone lay where it was until some time later, after a change of personnel brought a more tolerant view of the problem and almost the next day the stone was planted in the position originally suggested by Brian.

Also on Brian's list of restorations are numerous parish boundary markers and a couple of finger posts. Brian says that the motivation for spending so much of his time in retirement on doing up the stones is the satisfaction of seeing them in their bright new coats of paint. His efforts were recognized recently when a local councillor put his name forward for a civic award to thank him for his services to the community.

Member David Whitlock runs a business Cleveland Corrosion Control and we wrote about the work done by his company to the mileposts on the Guisborough to Whitby road in the first issue of ON THE GROUND, David has since won a contract to similarly treat a number of other mileposts in the North York Moors National Park. These include all of the posts on the A170 Pickering to Scarborough road, several of the posts on the A169 Pickering to Whitby road, ten posts on the A170 between Helmsley and Thirsk, one or two on the A174 coast road between Loftus and Whitby, two on the B1257 Helmsley to Stokesley road and a few small ones on back roads in the Whitby area. This now means that all the mileposts in the North York Moors National Park have been renovated and painted. The work was funded jointly by the National Park, local parishes and the Highways Department.

Where possible the mileposts are taken away to the company's works where they are shot blasted and given several coats of a very high quality industrial paint. The posts are then returned to their original sites and set in a very weak concrete mix.

The general reaction of the public to this work being done by David's company is one of delight and it has created a lot of interest.

David also reported that Redcar and Cleveland have embarked on a programme of refurbishing the mileposts and finger posts within their area.

The Worcestershire Group have had a busy year painting and re-plating some of the milestones within the county. Their first major project, to re-forge the chain of eleven milestones on the old

CONSERVATION WORK by MEMBERS

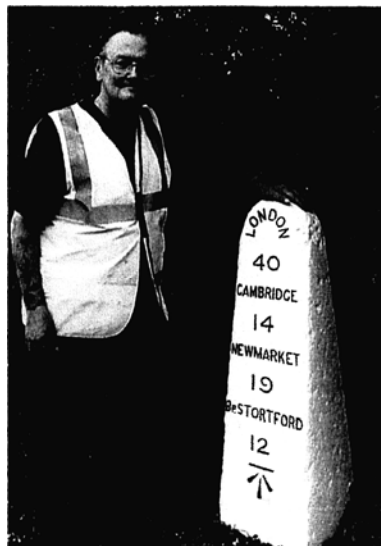
turnpike from Worcester to Great Witley was completed in April. The occasion was marked by Sir Michael Spicer MP unveiling the re-plated five mile stone. In his opening remarks Sir Michael praised the members of Milestone Society for the work they were doing for the cause of preserving our roadside heritage. The whole project took two years to complete. Five of the original stones had survived the ravages of time and these had had their cast iron plates removed during the war. The Group treated the project as a community effort involving the five parishes along the route as well as Worcester city Council. The County Council provided a grant to cover the cost of producing a pattern for casting the new plates.

In Essex permission was provisionally granted in 2004 for the repainting of one listed and two unlisted mileposts fronting stones in the Borough of Brentwood on the former Great Essex Road. Advice was sought with regards to paint type from the listed buildings officer at County Hall and John Nicholls duly refurbished two in August 2005. They were the Grade II listed LONDON 21 at Mountnessing and unlisted LONDON 22 at Ingatestone. Both were stripped completely of old paint and rust treated (Kurst). The LONDON 21 was cracked and broken. It had been repaired with back straps and bolts prior to 1960.



The refurbished LONDON 22 stone.

Two -part epoxy filler was put into the largest cracks and the post was painted with Hammerite red oxide. The LONDON 22 was in fairly good condition and did not get the red oxide treatment. Two coats of white Hammerite Smoothrite were applied (two hours between coats) and the lettering painted with Japlac enamel.



John Nicholls at a restored stone in Littlebury, Essex

From Dorset, John Tyjberg sends news that after Dorset CC had re-erected a fallen milestone just south of Dorchester, Group member David Fox cleaned it up and painted it.

John also put his talents to use by painting a milestone at St. Leonards and a local lady painted up a milestone near Wimborne.



The milestone near Wimborne painted by a local lady

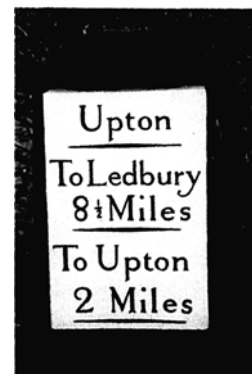
RESTORATION by CIVIC Socs.

In Shropshire Church Stretton Civic Society repainted five of the milestones in close proximity to the town.



Milepost restored by Stretton Civic Soc.

Another excellent, but difficult restoration project was undertaken by Upton-on-Severn Civic Soc. When they agreed to carry out the work needed to re-unite the 2 mile stone on the road to Little Malvern with its original and very heavy plate.



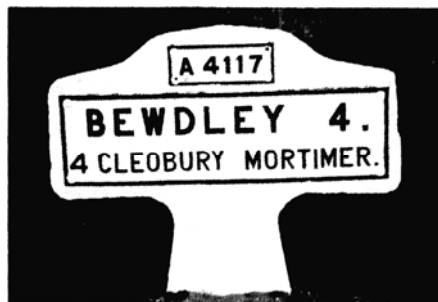
The stone restored by Upton Civic Soc.



The 9 mile stone seen as originally found lying in the ditch and how it now looks after re-erection by Worcs. Highways and re-plated by Little Witley Parish Council

Where the stones were missing, the plates were attached to nearby structures. One new stone was purchased by means of a grant from the Diageo foundation topped up by the Group members. The Group are planning to repeat the exercise on the eleven stones between Worcester and Bradley Green.

Other conservation projects carried out by the Group in the last twelve months include the re-painting of five of the concrete Bradley stones and two of the third generation cast iron mileposts placed by Hartley RDC in 1898.



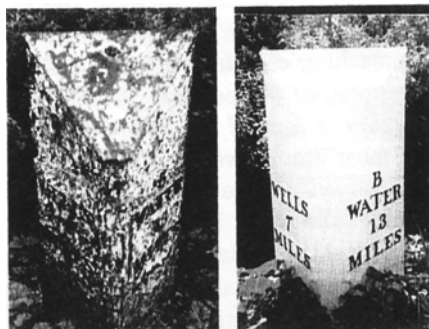
The restored Bradley stone at Far Forest, near Bewdley. Only the top third of the stone was visible before it was raised to its correct height by Wyre Forest Highways Unit and painted by the Worcs. Group.

PICTURES – BEFORE AND AFTER



Milestone at Bishop's Sutton. Plate replaced. The 'Milestones' Museum at Basingstoke holds the Tasker collection, an iron-founder that used to be in business in Andover. The series of stones from Alton to Winchester had plates cast by Tasker and a number have been recently re-plated.

mile posts that have sunk so low.

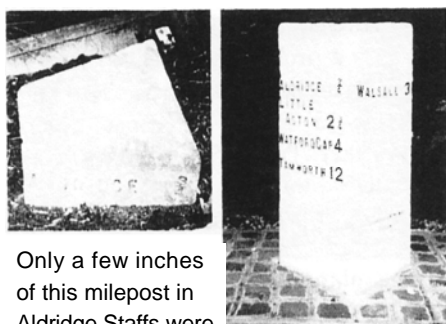


From Somerset comes this example of a milepost that has been allowed to rust away for years before receiving a complete overhaul from Highways when it became known that a minor member of the Royal family was due to pass it on the way to an engagement

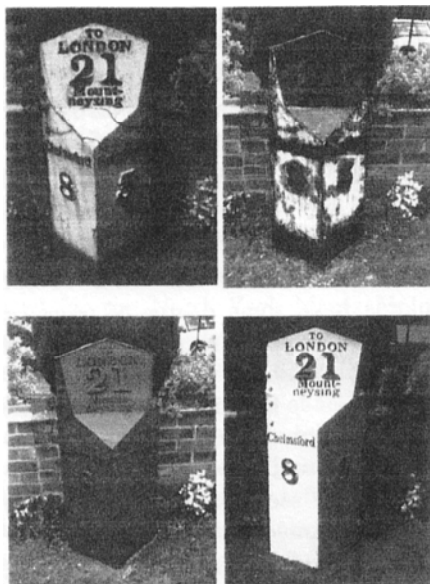
starting. 2) Strip completely of old paint and rust treated (Kurust). 3) Fill largest cracks with epoxy resin and add an undercoat of Hammerite red oxide. 4) Add two top coats of Hammerite Smoothrite and paint lettering with Japlac enamel.



Many mileposts are broken beyond repair, but this casualty from near Christchurch seems to have been brought back to life.



Only a few inches of this milestone in Aldridge Staffs were visible above the pavement before the local highways dug it out and re-set it in a tidy surround of stone sets at its proper height and gave it a new coat of paint. A second stone was similarly raised to its proper height a couple of miles away on the Lichfield road. It is not uncommon to find heavy milestones that have sunk below their original ground level, but it is unusual to find



Four stages in the of renovation of a milepost by John Nicholls in Essex- 1)Before



From Worcestershire comes an example of renovation of one of the concrete Bradley stones with two cast iron plates.

HAVE MILESTONES WILL TRAVEL



The Worcestershire Group have broken new ground by taking a display stand out to events around the County in an attempt to boost membership and interest in the work of not only of the Group but also of the Milestone Society nationally. To date the stand has made an appearance at three locations and a fourth one is planned . The most successful visit was to a Shelsey Hill Climb event where the display emphasized the need to re-plate the four stones on the unclassified road leading to the site. There was plenty of interest shown by the good crowd and apart from handing out Society leaflets and a new Worcestershire one, a few milestone books were sold and donations of £ 20 towards the re-plating programme received,. One new member was signed up to the Society. The life size models of Worcestershire milestones and the banner were all made and paid for by Group members.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT by the Editor

There are a number of debatable issues concerning the maintenance of milestones and replacement of their plates and even of the complete milestone which are worth airing.

The legal obligation to erect a marker every mile on turnpike roads dates back to 1767. During the turnpike era a damaged, worn out or stolen marker had to be replaced. Whether this law is still extant nobody seems to have found out. What is certain is that milestones still feature in the Road Traffic Act. Section 131, part IX, states that.... 'If a person without lawful authority or excuse pulls down or obliterates a traffic sign....or a milestone... he is guilty of an offence.'

Throughout their history we have seen changes in the materials used to comply with the law to provide mile markers on the turnpiked roads—,from wood to stone, to cast iron, to concrete. Other materials used in more recent times include aluminium and, very rarely, bronze for the plates. Fibre-glass has also been used successfully to re-create missing stones.

Many of the early turnpike trusts used wooden mile markers and even to this day there are still a number of markers which are made substantially of wood, though these now have cast iron attachments. There are Society members in Sussex who are involved in the replacement of the sometimes fragile wooden supports for the 'Bow Bells' series of markers. Would it be safer to use concrete supports in place of the wooden ones whenever the need for replacement arises?

The vast majority of early markers were of stone and so the general term for these mile markers became 'milestones'. The information on the stones was carved into the dressed face of the stone. The local stonemason who would be actively providing grave stones, was the source of these early milestones. The quality of the hand carving varied from crude to flamboyant.

Today, to hand carve a stone would be a very expensive operation though there are now cutting machines that can do an excellent job by using information provided by a computer programme.

When, at the end of the 18th century, the turnpikes trusts were seeking a more permanent way to show the information on their stones they turned to attaching cast iron plates to them. Many of the plates were attached to the carved face of the original stone, but most stones were either replaced or reversed and re-dressed before attaching the plate. Many thousands of these cast iron plates have survived throughout the country, but they do need regular maintenance if the information they supply is to be easily read. Too many of the surviving ones are so covered with rust that they are difficult to read unless you are standing beside them.

Presumably during the turnpike era the Trusts had an obligation to keep, not only the information on the carved stones but also on the cast iron plates, readable to the passing traffic. Was this legal obligation passed on down to the succeeding generations of custodians of the milestones? Presumably not, or there would be prisons full of negligent highway officials!

Cast iron varies and most of the plates have some degree of porosity. So, no matter how many coats of paint are applied to the visible surface, water can make its way through from the back and cause rusting. The Worcestershire Group have been very disappointed to see how quickly many of their repainted cast iron plates show rusting marks- even after applying two coats of anti-rust undercoat and two coats of Hammerite.

Whilst most of us are satisfied to give the cast iron a quick coat of paint, to do the job properly can be an expensive operation. This involves removing all the old paint and starting the conservation process from the bare metal. By doing so the applied layers of paint will considerably outlast the a quick coat of new paint over layers of old.

The use of aluminium to cast new plates could be the answer to rusting. One South Shropshire parish renewed missing cast iron plates with aluminium ones fifteen years ago and it is now very difficult to tell one from the other. The paint on the aluminium ones is still perfect whilst that on the cast iron ones shows considerable rust

marks.

The use of aluminium for casting plates is not a new practice. Around Abergavenny aluminium plates were attached to the stones in the early part of the 20th century. Had aluminium been as plentiful and cheap as it is today, when the Turnpike Trusts were considering plating their stones would they not have used this lighter and maintenance friendly material?

To the purists nothing but the original materials should be used, particularly when dealing with listed stones. However, the use of some of these old materials such as lime wash and red lead can be hazardous and require special training. Less hazardous substitutes have been around for years and had the Turnpike Trusts been around today they would have moved with the times.

There is a problem with those stones which have been listed in that the attitudes to listing by conservation officers vary. To some the listed stones must not be touched in any way without going through the unbelievably slow and complicated process of obtaining planning permission. This is bound to be off-putting to many who are willing to do the conservation work, especially when the stone or its plate is crying out for a coat of appropriate paint to halt the deterioration process. A few Conservation officers sensibly consider the application of a coat of an approved paint as a maintenance job not requiring planning permission, and so the job gets done.

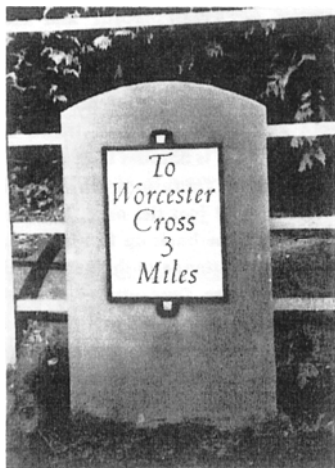
Another argument going the rounds is whether we should visibly mark the (unlisted) milestones which we have restored with such information as ;-date of painting, or a record of who did the restoration work by attaching a small plaque in an unobtrusive position on the stone. There are very few examples of this type of information being provided in the Turnpike Trust days, so why do it now. If we keep the information on the database up-to-date and include the information on when and how replacement plates were attached would this not be a better and less unobtrusive way of recording those changes? Does it matter if replacement plates are so good that

the purists amongst us argue that there should be some way of telling that they are not the originals? We have no way of telling if a 150 year old plate is after all the original one or a 140 year old replacement. Will it matter in 150 years from now if a plate we replace today is not obviously marked for future generations to be able tell its origins?



A replacement plate on a Hampshire milestone showing the year of replacement.

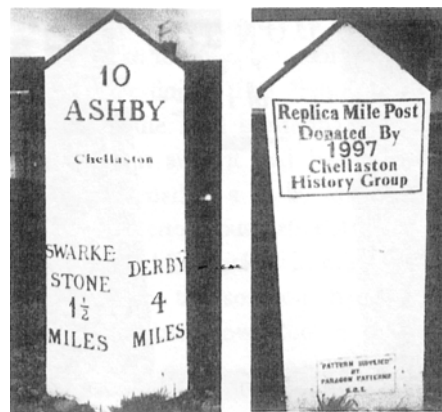
A number of series of milestones are complete except for maybe one that has disappeared over the years, or has been damaged beyond repair in a traffic accident. To what extent should we be campaigning for a complete replacement and in what material? Already we have many examples where stones or posts have been replaced by



A new stone and plate at Hallow on the A443 Worcester to Great Witley road.

new ones. There are examples of replacements in stone in, amongst other places Worcestershire and on the Isle of Arran.

Complete new cast iron mile posts can be found in Derby, Staffordshire and Norfolk. There is even a company



New cast iron milepost at Challaston with details of when and by whom it was replaced.

which has produced a glossy brochure illustrating a cast iron milepost amongst the other items of street furniture which they can now supply.

Fibreglass has already been used to make a replica milepost. It was made to replace a missing post in the series from Guisborough to Whitby renovated for the North York Moors National Park by Cleveland Corrosion Control. Without going up to this replica and examining the back, you would be hard pressed to tell that it was not an original cast iron one like all the others. Is there a future for fibreglass or would it be cheaper and more appropriate to have such replacements made in cast iron?

And how about wooden replicas of mileposts. Take a close look at the picture below. It is a replica of a York



Wooden replica of a milepost by the A61 shire mile post made by Brian Bradley-Smith out of exterior 3/4 inch ply

which has a life span of approximately 15 years. It has been undercoated a given a top coat of Dulux gloss. The back is painted with wood preservative. The replica milepost is now in situ on the A61 close to the site of the original one.

Another material which has been used to create milestones is concrete, notably by Worcestershire County Council in the 1930s when they produced what the Worcestershire Group have called the 'Bradley' stones (after the Deputy Surveyor who is believed to have designed them) These 'stones' are reinforced with steel to give them added strength. The Worcestershire Group are in the process of working out how to reproduce these stones as they have been given a grant by a national company to repair one which was allegedly damaged by vehicles entering one of their premises. Though the concrete was shattered the cast iron plates are more or less intact. These can be salvaged to be attached to a new stone. Reproducing the design of the original will entail creating a shuttered form into which the concrete can be poured. Hopefully this form can then be used to manufacture other Bradley stones to replace others which have been destroyed by traffic accidents.

Is there a case to be argued for using concrete to replicate missing milestones as a cheaper alternative to dressed stone, particularly where a plate is to be attached?

Another issue which needs to be debated is— to what extent do we wish to push for the return of milestones to their original sites when they have been in legitimate hands of private individuals for many years? For a considerable time after World War 2, there was a distinct lack of interest in milestones by Highways officials especially when only a few years previously they had had a Government directive to get rid of them, by whatever means it took, to prevent them being of assistance to a possible invading army. The result was that many stones were abandoned by the roadside and many rescued by householders and re-erected in their gardens Others found their way into local museums. Is there a case for returning them to the roadside or are they safer where they are? Whichever option is taken their details need to be recorded.

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND

In the first issue of ON THE GROUND there was only a very brief reference to milestones in Scotland. The reason for this is not that there are few milestones there (there are lots and lots) but because we only have six members resident there who can report back on progress. What we do have is a number of our members from south of the border who just love to holiday in Scotland and spend time studying and photographing the stones. So, here is a selection of some of the recently photographed restored milestones and mileposts to whet the appetite.



One of a run of similar stones to be found on the A76 from Dumfries to New Cumnock cared for by a local resident.

Quite a number of series of milestones in Scotland are simple stones like the above with just the mileage shown from the town of origin. Deciding where this was can often test one's powers of logic.



A restored direction stone on the A76 near Cumnock



There are many of these excellent mile-posts leading to Dunoon Pier from four different directions though not all are as well cared for as this example.

Scottish foundries were renowned for the quality of their work and there are many fine examples of cast iron mileposts to be found beside the old turnpike roads. Sadly, too many of them are in need of a good coat of paint.



Another fine example of a recently painted cast iron milepost on the A811

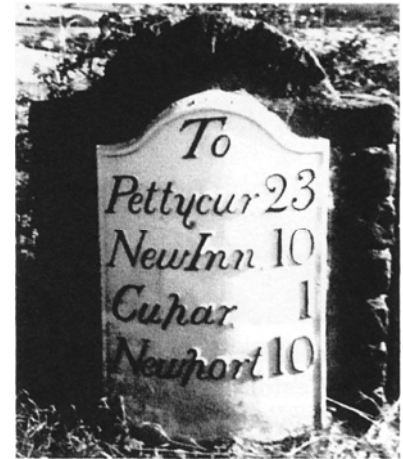
The Jewel in the crown of milestone restoration in Scotland must surely be worn by the Highways Dept. of the Kingdom of Fife. There they take a particular pride in their milestones and have a regular programme of repainting. For some time various groups have been involved in recording and restoring them and there is now a book published by one of these groups which records their history. Copies are avail-

able from the Milestone Society



One of a number of designs of Fife milestones. The cast iron cap on this one is attached to a whinstone pillar. Note the latest experiment in weed control

Before the days of the railways, Fife was crossed by the Great North road linking the ferry ports of Newport on the Tay and Pettycur on the Forth. The road still has most of its superb set of mileposts.



One of the restored mileposts on the Great North road through Fife. It is dated 1824

THE ISLE OF ARRAN MILESTONES, and RUTH and ALAN THOMPSON.

For devotion to the cause of milestone preservation the work of the Thompsons on the Isle of Arran takes some beating. Authors of the book 'The Milestones of Arran', Ruth and Alan Thompson take a very keen interest in the island's 77 milestones. Together they annually visit each stone clearing vegetation and making repairs where necessary. The road which circumnavigates the island is 55 miles long and Ruth has walked the whole route in a day to raise money for charity—not just the once, but three times. Alan has been the back up in his car and whilst Ruth walks, he attends to the needs of the stones. Since they were first attracted to the island the Thompsons have found and replaced a number of missing stones. Their devotion to the stones has persuaded other island residents to care for the stones bordering their properties. There are two cross island routes also with stones bringing the total on the island to 77.

The number of copies of their book is running low but the Milestone Society still have a supply.

NEWS FROM WALES

Although there are many more members of the society resident in Wales than in Scotland, the spread is insufficient to be able to encourage the setting up of County groups. We do have county coordinators in Ceredigion, Pembroke and Radnorshire (now part of Powys) and a recent offer to be a coordinator for the North Wales counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd. Hopefully future issues of ON THE GROUND will have more to report, but in the meantime here are some snippets gleaned from the membership.



This milestone, which had been missing for a number of years, was re-erected on the Whitton-Monaughty road by Powys CC

Through the good offices of Mr. Charlie Bass of Powys C.C. Highways Dept. a milestone on the B4356 between Forest Lodge and Pilleth church was reinstated. It is not quite in its original place but, as Sadie Cole the coordinator for the area says-... 'it's back and in good condition' The only other surviving stone in the series, two miles from Presteign, was severely damaged by a verge cutting machine. 'Unfortunately', says Sadie, 'it is beyond repair'. The local stone used for the milestones is very fragile and flakes off easily.

Ian Jolly, a recent recruit to the Society, was a Gwynedd county councilor for some years and 'knows the system' He has been traveling the area photographing the stones and keeping an eye on those milestones at risk from road widening between Llanystumdwy and Pwllheli. 'Luckily', says Ian, 'the High-

ways engineer, responsible for the project, is interested in preservation.

Ian reports the reappearance of a milestone which disappeared 18 months ago at a remote location between Pentrefoelas and Festiniog. The National Trust, who own the land bordering the road, recovered it after it had been dragged across the road to a lay-by where it was left. It is an enormous slate slab and took four men to lift it back to its original position. It seems that someone had tried to steal it but it had proved too heavy.

Another recent theft reported by Ian is one of the original plates from the Tel-ford milestone 'HOLYHEAD 25' in Bangor. The local authority is now arranging for it to be replaced with a replica They are also hoping to replace the original fixing bolts on the surviving original plates with new bolts making it harder to remove the plates (subject to approval by CADW).

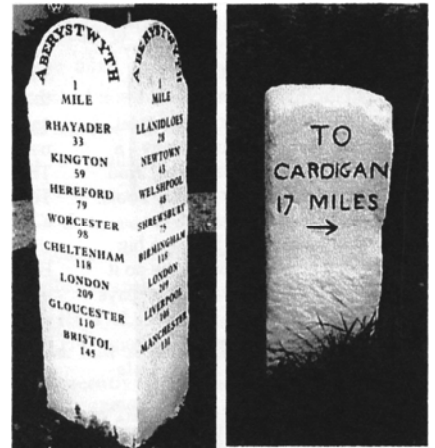


This Telford milestone in Bangor High St. has recently had its original plate stolen

Ian has also been studying the milestones in Flintshire, a small county with few mileposts. Sadly, he has had to report the loss of one of the few. Recently a Flintshire County Council cast iron mile post of 1892 on the A5119, in Northop village has been smashed by a verge cutter. A nearby milestone (possibly its earlier counterpart) has been renovated.

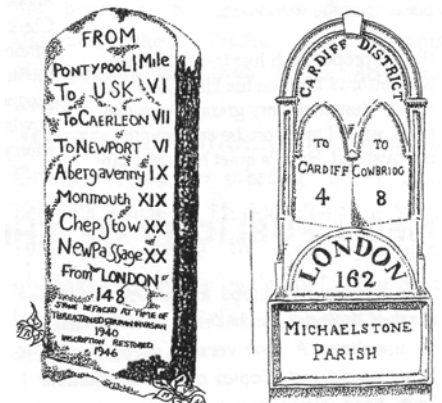
Ceredigion (used to be Cardigan) has a policy of regular painting of their mile-

stones. Most of those on the coast road from Cardigan to Aberystwyth, A487, have been painted within the past twelve months. Unfortunately, the combination of wet weather and overhanging trees often causes green algae to flourish on the stones undoing the good work of the maintenance crew.



Two recently restored milestones in Ceredigion, the left hand one is on the A44 entrance to Aberystwyth and the right hand one on the A487

Chris Woodard, the coordinator for Ceredigion, is not as physically mobile as he used to be so a lot of his energies have recently been devoted to producing a book of sketches of Welsh milestones with bi-lingual comments on the stones. His hopes are that it will be ready for next Spring.



Two sketches from Chris Woodard's forthcoming book of sketches of Welsh milestones.

Anthony Rhys-Davies, the coordinator for Pembroke reports that the milestones which were painted three years ago are already showing signs of rusting. The Council are keen enough to want them back in pristine condition, but say that they lack the resources to carry out the work.

JAN SCRINE RAN A MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT STALL AT FLOCKTON GALA DRESSED AS TOLLKEEPER MEG

Tis unseasonably cold today, just because I'm having a bit of an outing. I'm Meg and I keep the tollhouse at Flockton Green, and though I says it meself, it's neat as a new pin, both of the bedrooms, the living room and the back-kitchen, not an easy task with four growing children, bringing in the dirt from working in the fields. Now where's my hat pin? I'm wearing my best black straw bonnet and I've put a bunch of purple scabious and wild parsley on the brim, looks a real treat. I'm wearing my clean white pinny - a bit more ample than I used to be! And my eldest has shined my Sunday boots. He's fourteen so he will watch the tollgate while I'm away. It's got a big new padlock with two spare keys so it should keep folks back while they pays their money. I'm awaiting for Mrs Sheard, her from the next toll house at the Denby Dale-crossroads, on Bar Lane. She's coming on her old nag - we won't charge her the thruppence to pass our gate, though I'm not from round here meself, I'm from the Midlands. My husband was a coachman - he was on the "Lancer" mail coach from Birmingham to Leicester, when one of the horses took fright and bolted- they ran away down the hill and he was thrown off. Dead when they picked him up, God rest his soul he were a good man, always provided for us. And I had four bairns and no money. But my sister in law is in service at the Manor near Flockton and heard that they needed a new tollkeeper so I applied. Most of us tollkeepers are women, the money ain't much nowadays but there's the accommodation. And it's a deal better than the workhouse.

It's not proper posh like the tollhouses Mr Telford's built on his Holyhead Road - they look very grand, I saw one once, when I went on the coach with my husband. But it's quiet here and safe

- the Two Pokers public house is nearby and if there's any trouble, Landlord Viner will help out. That's a real worry with our job - people resent the tolls and we get robbed and murdered for it. I can see all down the road from our big windows, now where IS that Molly Sheard? It's a bit of a county fair, like, this Gala, held on the big field behind Flockton Mechanics Institute. That's where they do a bit of book-learning for the men. But I can read and count enough to do the tolls, and sign my name on receipts.

The Trustees don't make much from it. That nice Surveyor Mr Rosevear calls it a 'middling busy turnpike'. It were started in 1789 and goes from Bamsley to Grange Moor, about 12 miles. The Trustees have to be men of substance, with £400 of income coming in each year. They wanted the road to go to the White Cross, on the old priest's road from Wakefield, to join up with the Leeds to Huddersfield road over the Colne Bridge. That's where the big mill caught fire and all those poor little girls were burned to death. Fair makes you weep, don't it?

Mr Keegan, one of the trustees, is a really kind gentleman. He said I could have half a day off to go to the Gala to hand out some pamphlets. It's about a new surface they are putting on the road. Mr MacAdam invented it, lots of small pebbles bashed down. You have to water it too - sounds a bit daft to me, but the potholes do cause lots of complaints. It's those thinwheels on the carts - we have a gauge to measure the fellies and we charge them a higher toll. Everybody will be there, Reverend Buxton the Parson, Mr Benford the Schoolmaster and Mr Barrow the Parish Clerk. Even dear Mr Dopson from the Manor! And Dr and Mrs Haines from the big house. There'll be things to eat, gingerbread and suchlike, and games - bowling for the pig, I expect.

Merrydale Dick the apothecary will

probably come over in his horse and trap. I wish I could afford his potions for rheumatism, it's really bad today. I can't even have a bit of baccy - I broke my last clay pipe yesterday. Tapped it out on the milestone, I did, like everybody else does. The hunt meets there, too. And the stem broke. I'll have to catch the Jagger next time I hear his bellhorse as he leads his packhorses up the old Wakefield back road. No paying tolls for him! Now where's my big shawl? It's so cold today - this Yorkshire weather. I expect there'll be a stall selling fairings - you know, cheap metal and pottery ornaments, animals and such. I got one last year, the Three Wise Monkeys, made of brass. It's on the dresser, look. I could have sworn I heard the middle one speak, just now - I'm sure he said "d-d-d-d-do you d-do b-brazing?!!!" Poor little fellow - now where IS that Molly Sheard?!



Jan dressed for the part as Meg the Tollkeeper.

MEDIA PUBLICITY OF THE WORK OF THE SOCIETY

The Society re-vamped its publicity leaflet and most of the print run has now been handed out by members. A new version of the leaflet is being considered. Copies of Journal number 1 have been distributed to anyone who is involved with conservation, highway maintenance and to many libraries.

Wherever members are involved in work on the milestones every opportunity should be taken to get a story into the local media but, as Alan Rosevear points out in his report, whilst each of the restoration jobs he has achieved presents an opportunity to publicise milestones and raise awareness, there is a limit to how often a newspaper wants to do "another Milestone painted by enthusiasts". Restoration of the Wantage stones got a picture and article in two local papers. The Aldbourne stones got a

bit article because the Parish Council were involved. Similarly in Wokingham, the local Historical society interest was the big feature of the article and picture. Local radio phone-ins cover larger catchments and have picked up on some of the loss issues. Radio Swindon asked Alan in on a morning show after a Parish near Devizes declared someone had stolen their milestone—Alan's message was, "care for them or they will get pinched". Alan also did slots on Radio Berks and Radio Oxford during the BBC Restoration series. Another Radio Oxford phone-in arose when someone had noticed the contrast between restored and un-restored stones.

David Wright received publicity in his local paper when he attached a bronze plate to a milestone in the town of Stone. Staffordshire County Council funded the replacement plate after a similar

one was stolen. The stolen plate was itself a copy of the original cast iron one..

Brian Bradley-Smith has also featured in his local press painting one of the milestones on the A168(01dA1)

Keith Walker and Ruth Hirst were photographed by a Forest of Dean milestone in a feature on surveying of the milestones in the area published in 'The Forester'.

The Worcestershire Group invited the local press to attend the ceremony they had organized to celebrate the finish of their project on the A443. Typical of some local press they decided to come the day before and do a rather innocuous write up and a daft picture of two of the team peering round the 5 mile stone.

Terry Keegan, as Secretary, often gets requests to speak on different regional radio phone-ins.

SNIPPETS of INFORMATION

THEFT John Higgins reported a recent theft of an 1830 bobbin style milepost from north of Burton. This had the local Highways man out looking that same day to ascertain that it had definitely gone. Unfortunately it had. So then they alerted the County Council head office who contacted the police, local papers and radio stations. John gave an interview for Radio Derby the next morning.

John doesn't hide the fact that, when checking the condition of the milestones, if he finds ones loose in the ground, he is happy to lift them and take them back to his garage until such time as they can be concreted in properly. His garage is always full of bits and pieces of posts but, as he says, ... "better off there than on eBay" One, dated 1828,

languished in his garage for over six months before being returned for reinstalling.

Milestones damaged in car accidents happen frequently and John, when alerted, visits the site and picks up the pieces. A quotation has been obtained from a local blacksmith for repairing cast iron posts and this is then passed on to the Highway authority. A damaged post near Newborough is currently being repaired. Had it not been for the intervention of a member of the Milestone Society it would almost certainly have stayed in three pieces.

From Herefordshire Tony Boyce tells of two mileposts, typical of the County, that have been repainted and repositioned by the roadside at Weobley. One had been behind a fence and the other deep in an

overgrown hedge. On the Hereford to Brecon road, a cast iron milepost in front of Milestone House has been repainted. The property itself has undergone some restoration and is now known as Fourth Milestone House.

Ian Thompson discovered a neatly painted milestone next to a restored horse drawn plough in the garden of a farm next to the old Launceston to Camelford tumpike. This was the missing 9th milestone of a run of 11. It had been rescued some three years previously when it had been knocked down during a winter flood. The farmer was unaware who to contact to get it replaced. As a result of Ian's intervention the area supervisor, Tony Curtiss is due to make a site visit to locate the stump of the milestone, still somewhere on the verge, and to decide how best to effect a repair

BY ROYAL COMMAND. Janet Dowding noted that a previously very rusty milepost had recently been painted by a Somerset C.C. Highways Dept. Later, out driving with her husband, they spotted a Highways man painting a finger post and chatting to him learnt that a mile post had also been painted because a minor member of the Royal family was due to pass on the way to an engagement.

PUBLICITY OFFICER The Society is in need of a publicity officer, skilled in obtaining the best coverage for the many good stories available on the work we are doing. If there is a potential volunteer reading this, the committee would be only too pleased to welcome you on board. **TREFHC ADVISORY LEMLIET.** To get a copy of the leaflet 'Traditional Direction Signs' off the web.- www.dft.gov.uk - from the home page, click on Roads and Vehicles, then Traffic and Parking Management and then Traffic Advisory Leaflets

MEETING REMINDER. The Yorkshire Group's Autumn meeting is at Jan Scrine's house in Huddersfield on Sun. 16th Oct. 10.30 to 3.45 Speakers, displays—everyone welcome! Members free, guests £1. Bring a packed lunch, drinks provided.

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BOOKS— The following publications are available from the Secretary.

MARKING THE MILES—A history of English milestones Carol Haines. 187pp £12 +£1 p&p

MILESTONES— Covers the whole of Britain Mervyn Benford. 48pp £4.99 + 51p

THE MILESTONES OF ARRAN— An Island tour Ruth & Alan Thompson. £5.50+ £1 p&p

MANX MILESTONES— A comprehensive account Stuart Slack. 64pp £7.99+ 51p

THE MILESTONES OF FIFE— Complete list. Alex Darwood & Paula Martin. 48pp £5 + 50p

MILESTONES— A survey of 4 routes N & W of Gloucester .. £ 3 + 50p

ROADS — Archaeology and Architecture Richard K Morriss. 288pp £ 17.99 +£ 3 p&p

THOMAS TELFORD'S HOLYHEAD ROAD The CBA's research report, including a comprehensive study of the milestones, Quartermain, Trinder and Turner, 1 82pp £ 17.50 +£2.50

ROAD SIGNS— The history of British Traffic Signs Stuart Hands. 32pp £3.50 + 50p

POSTCARDS — The Society has now produced 8 post cards.-No.s 1 ,2 and 4 picture five mixed M/S. No.3, nine Yorkshire M/S. No.5 Langtree M/P. No.6 five Warwickshire examples. No.7 five Huntingdonshire waymarkers. No.8, seven examples from Worcestershire 25p each.

EDITOR'S FINALE

This is not an apology, but an explanation of how the extraordinary layout of this the second edition of ON THE GROUND came about.

Before I started to work on the follow up to Mervyn Benford's 2004 edition my only experience of producing a publication of this sort was the Newsletters compiled for the members of the Worcestershire Group. To do this I used a Publisher programme on my computer which allowed me to do all sorts of weird and wonderful things. I had all the tools to produce a Newsletter, but my knowledge on how to use them was extremely limited—so limited, in fact, that the only way I knew to produce illustrations was to set to and draw them and reduce them on a photocopier to fit the size of gap left in the text. I then had to physically paste the illustration on to a printed out copy of the Newsletter.

This was the vision of how I intended putting this issue of ON THE GROUND together. I soon realized that what was good enough for a

Group Newsletter would not be suitable for a publication like ON THE GROUND. Many of the elements of my Newsletter publication are still there but I have had to develop a steep learning curve on how to use some of the publishing tools available to me in order to scan photographs and electronically paste them into the text at the right size. This I have learnt to do as the issue progressed and I have to thank my daughter Alison for her patient instructions and also all those I had to ring up for further instructions on how to perform what was often the most simplest of tasks.

Had I not run out of time, I am sure that, if I had started again from scratch and with my greatly improved knowledge, this edition of ON THE GROUND could have been greatly improved.

My aim was to prove to the membership and in particular those not wishing to get involved in the physical side of conservation that membership of the Milestone Society is a very worth while investment

If it proves anything, this edition does prove that you can teach an old dog new tricks.

THE PROBLEM OF THE VERGE CUTTERS

The most serious threat to the survival of the milestones today is not the apathy of the Highway Authorities, is not the effects of the weather, is not damage from road traffic, nor is it from thieving, but quite simply from the use of machinery to cut the roadside verges. From all over the country come reports of more and more milestones suffering serious damage from these machines. No operator of a verge cutting machine would deliberately risk damaging his expensive machine by not taking steps to avoid a solid object like a milestone—if he is made aware of its presence.

So what steps need to be taken to ensure the machine operators are aware of their presence?

Firstly;- If the vegetation around the stone was kept down so that the stone was visible, a) Use of weed killers would be unsightly and unpopular amongst the 'greens', b) Lay a curtain of sets around the stone, (expensive), c) employ a lengthsman to keep the undergrowth down around the stones. A limited number such operators are being employed by parishes, d) Teams employed by the highway authorities in the same way that litter teams and teams of strimmers could be used to keep the stones clear.



Secondly;- Make sure that the stones are raised to their original height above ground level so that they stand out.

Thirdly;- Paint the stones white as was traditional during the turnpike days. Using the correct paint also helps to preserve the stone.

Fourthly;- Provide the operators of the machines with a plan of where the stones are and make him responsible for any damage caused.

Finally;- If all else fails. Provide the stone with some sort of warning marker. This would need to be as unobtrusive to the setting as possible. In some European countries this is done by painting a small mark on the nearside road surface to let the operator know that a stone is there.

Somehow we must stop the slaughter before there are no stone left for us to preserve.

HOW MANY MILES to LONDON?





David Wright standing by the milepost which he and Staffordshire co-ordinator John Higgins had just re-sited After rescuing it from the yard of a dealer in architectural antiques