



THE MILESTONE SOCIETY

Newsletter 12

January 2007



The Cover Picture - The drawing by Frank Patterson is from 1910 and was used as an advert for the magazine *Cycling* which was published by Temple Press. Patterson was a gifted illustrator and supplied over 5000 illustrations to the publication over a period of 59 years, starting in the 1890s. Other examples of his drawings have been used in earlier issues of the Newsletter and a short article on the artist appeared in issue number 7.

EDITORS' COMMENTS - Amongst our membership, the Editors suspect that there must exist many budding artists whose talent may stretch to producing a suitable line drawing for a future cover picture for the Newsletter. Any submissions will be gratefully received for consideration!

A member has commented as being baffled as to the distinction between the *Newsletter* section 'News from the County Groups' and the *On the Ground* section 'Around the Counties'. The Newsletter section largely relies on short reports sent directly to the Editors by County Representatives, consisting of a summary of the activities of the county group, including meetings. If these reports are not forthcoming, an attempt is made to distil and condense material from any county newsletter which might be sent to the Editors, or from other relevant information. Often, however, no contribution is immediately available from a county and not all counties produce their own newsletters. *On the Ground* has a bias to the more practical aspects of the Society's work, often includes photographs, and can report matters in greater detail. The issue editor usually sends a request to each county representative for material for consideration for inclusion. Space limitation in the *Newsletter* means that material is carefully edited to avoid undue length and to give a balance with content.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Rods, poles & perches As a final comment on these measurements (see NL11 p.3) Mervyn Hughes (Oxon) notes that when working for the Valuation Office in Oxford (part of the Inland Revenue) in about 1967 he measured fields using a surveyor's chain. It was rather rusty and very long. He now has an allotment hired from Oxford City Council and that is measured in poles, either 5 or 10, the latter being a full allotment. This appears to be usual for allotments.



What's in a name? Many houses, farms, plantations, roads etc. have been named after a nearby milestone, but Jim Lawes (Heref.) has found a name that precisely identifies its position. A house at Stretton Sugwas with a cast iron milepost outside showing 4 miles to Hereford has been named 'Fourth Milestone House' (see left). Do members know of other embellishments to the name? Diré warnings Several Dorset bridges have cast iron plates attached to them warning of the punishment that will be meted out to anyone damaging them. Shirley Melligan (Somerset) has sent the following example from Sturminster Newton: 'Dorset. Any person wilfully injuring any part of this county bridge will be guilty of felony and upon conviction liable to be transported for life by the court. T. Fooks. 7&8 Geo. 4 C30 SB.' Do similar warnings

survive in other counties? The Editors can quote an inscription that appears on the obelisk milestone on the Surrey end of Richmond Bridge: 'Any person who shall wilfully deface or damage this obelisk will be prosecuted by order of the commissioners.' This is not quite as severe as the Dorset example.

Comfort and convenience for travellers Neville Billington (Worcs.) has stumbled across a letter to *Country Life* (4.5.1940) which describes a milestone 'of uncertain age' on the outskirts of Llanrhaidr-yn-Mochant in the Tanat Valley in North Wales. It stood 6 ft high and had the following inscription: VIATORUM SOLATIO ET COMMODITATI/A SALOP XXVI/A LOND CLXXX/L. The reader stated the distances to be in English miles and thought the milestone was a relic of the days when Llanrhaidr was on the way from Shrewsbury to Bala. Is this milestone still there?

Yorkshire bridge stones Neville has also found a milestone ensemble doubling as coping stones in a bridge five miles south of Sheffield. Happily the bridge is today used by pedestrians and cyclists, the modern road being a safe distance away, which means the milestones can be enjoyed without danger. The lettering had been scarcely noticeable due to a build up of lichen but careful cleaning revealed the inscriptions. There are five rectangular stones in a row, reading as follows from the left: (1) BAKEWEL/11 MILE, (2) blank, (3) PARISH OF/TOTLEY, (4) PARISH OF DORE, (5) SHEFFIELD/5 MILES. It is assumed that stone (2) is a replacement and the original carried the final L in Bakewell and the S in miles. The turnpike road was started in 1811 at Goose Green (now Highfields, Sheffield) and completed to Baslow in 1818.

Pointing to the pub A photo appeared in the *Taverham Newsletter* (July 2006) showing a wooden fingerpost which stood at a cross-roads on the main Norwich-Fakenham road in the 1960s. Each arm, with carved pointing hands at the end, gave the name of a pub in each of four neighbouring villages; at the time Taverham had no pub. On the post is painted 'Bullards', a Norwich brewery which was taken over by Watney Mann in 1966. Has anyone come across other such signs of enterprise/discrete advertising?



New Luton markers New half-mile stones have been set up around the Borough of Luton, courtesy of Sustrans, writes Michael Knight (Beds.). Sixteen rectangular stones have been produced (see left) and each one also includes a quotation and some indication of local history or geography such as the underlying geology of the area. Sadly some of the stones have already been vandalised.

MILESTONES ON THE SWINDON TO MARLBOROUGH TURNPIKE

There are several milestones that survive from the Swindon to Marlborough Turnpike and they run from north to south across the Downs. The one at Midge Hall (formerly Mudgell) is now inside the garden fence of that property and with

conifers planted nearby it may soon be completely obscured. To photograph the stone has always been tricky due to a pair of savage dogs which roam the grounds and rush the fence at the slightest sound or movement.



At Herdswick and Four Mile Clump, recent clearing work has exposed the stones to view and the remaining three are also easy to locate. A few traces of lettering remain on the Midge Hall stone but none on the next three. Those at Old Eagle and Marlborough Common (see example left) show the distances to Marlborough and Wootton Bassett, having been painted white at some time in the past. Presumably this was done when the route across the Downs from Swindon was abandoned and the stones altered to show the present-day route from Marlborough to Wootton Bassett. North of Old Eagle eight stones of a slightly different shape line the route

to Wootton Bassett.

The Monument at Etchilhampton is included here (see drawing) as it relates to the history of the A342 at that point. The plaque on it reads: 'AD 1771. This monument was erected from a sense of gratitude in memory of James Long late of Wedhampton who promoted this new road AD 1768 by which a former tedious & dangerous way over the adjacent hill is avoided to the great pleasure and convenience of travellers.'



Rod Smith (Wilts.)

SURREY MILESTONES

The following are some further comments on reports on Surrey milestones that appeared in NL11, and particularly some clarification and further history of the complicated series around Esher (pp. 19-20) The turnpike trust for this part of the London to Portsmouth road was set up under Acts of 1748-9, and the diversion to the west of Claremont is usually dated to between 1763 and 1774. John Rocque's map of 1762 shows both of Ogilby's routes, but marks milestone 17 just west of Esher village and 18 opposite the Claremont amphitheatre. The 'White Lady' pillar, with 1767 on its ball finial, is also on Ogilby's 'alternative [western] route'.

From here for twenty miles to Sheet in Hampshire, the old A3 has a continuous series of later milestones, square columns set diagonally to the road, inscribed with plain block letters and Arabic figures. The lower faces have the name of the next village, the upper part is chamfered to a curve lettered HYDE PARK CORNER, and PORTSMOUTH on the sloping top. As Lionel Joseph says, the other earlier milestones follow the principal 'Ogilby [eastern] route' diverging from the A307 at the 'Scilly Isles' roundabout to pass east of Claremont and rejoin the main road at Blackhills. They are all square pillars with low pyramidal tops; the lettering (unless recut) is in attractive eighteenth-century style with serifs to the capital letters and the distances in Roman numerals.

1. The best preserved is that near Fan Court School on the Claremont estate; Mr Joseph has described its unique face referred to 'Newcastle House by Hyde Park Corner'. Another two faces bear the inscriptions: XVIII/Miles/From the/Standard/in/Cornhill/LONDON/1747, and XVI (sic)/Miles/III Quarters/From/Westminster/Bridge/1768. Parts of inscriptions similar to the Fan Court one appear on the neighbouring milestones; to save repetition, I will call the Cornhill one Text A, and the Westminster Bridge one Text B, giving the initial mileage and the final date if visible.

2. At Fairmile Lodge East garden: XIX Text A, with recut ESHER and LONDON/?Portsmouth on other faces.

3. One (listed as an Ancient Monument in 1955) at Hill House Farm had disappeared by 1966 but Mervyn Benford is trying to arrange for its return. The Inspector's records show that it had XV Text B, with recut COBHAM 5, ESHER and LONDON ?36 on other faces. Perhaps the last was originally an XVI Type A inscription (see no.5 below).

4. In a Broom Close (*sic*) garden, with inscriptions on all four faces, alternating: XVII Text A 1747, and XV Text B 1768. OS maps up to 1938 mark a milestone nearby on Claremont Lane-east with the same 'Westminster Bridge' distance, but are not clear; the house was called 'Milestone' in 1933.

5. Milborne Lane (party wall): XVII Text A. D carved back-to-front.

6. Littleworth Road verge: CORNHILL/16 recut above illegible inscription, of which DON can be made out; the D is also carved back-to-front.

7. Lionel Joseph kindly sent me photographs of a stone outside 'Milestone House' in Surbiton Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, which may be related to the preceding half-dozen. The inscription begins XIII/MILES [in capitals] and the words below might be Cornhill/LONDON. The problem is that it is four miles from no.5, so it may have been moved or the inscription altered.

The 1776 edition of Patterson's *Roads* says that the datum point of the Standard in Cornhill had been changed 'lately' to the Stones' End in Southwark. The explanation of the two dates seems to be that they record the original turnpike destination in the City (via the eastern route) and then the shorter (western) route through Esher village and over Westminster Bridge (opened in 1750), a shorter way to the Houses of Parliament for people like Newcastle and Clive. However, the similar mileages on the Broom Close, Hill House Farm and Milborne Lane stones show that the western route was used early on, at least from near Esher village.

The milestone in Leatherhead (NL11, p.22) actually reads LEATHERHEAD ½ (not 2), the series being measured from the Guildford end. When I read of this initiative in my local paper, I pointed out to the District Council Conservation Officer that the complete set on the turnpike to Guildford ought to be listed as a group. Others are in better condition, less at risk (this one is at the foot of a steep hill just before a roundabout) and one at least has an earlier inscription on the buried end showing that it had 'walked' six miles! But a sample seems to be considered enough nowadays.

Derek Renn (Surrey)

THE TWO 35 MILE POSTS ON THE A22

There have been suggestions as to how this situation arose; Janet Dowding mentioned at a meeting of Sussex members that she had been told that it was through overlapping measurements by different turnpike trusts.

Before I stood down last June from being the volunteer who answered archive queries sent in to the Cyclists' Touring Club, I made an extensive search for milestone items to see if there was any prior mention of this anomaly before it came up in 1979. I felt sure that someone would have made a comment, knowing the number of indignant letters received in respect of moving milestones on to bypasses where they were said to be grossly inaccurate! Alternatively, I wondered whether Charles Harper may have mentioned it in his *Touring Notes and Queries*'. No trace of anything was found, but when it was raised in 1979 a Mr Nelson Burfoot, a former Highways surveyor with East Sussex and a CTC life member, put forward the following as a possible answer: That the additional post probably came from the old coach road between Wych Cross and Nutley and was misplaced on the A22 after the end of the war in 1945.'

I followed up this line of thought when I discovered that the original survey by the OS in 1813, of which David & Charles published the 1870 printing as a facsimile, showed the mileage figures along what is now the A22. I overlaid this map with a transparency of a reduced-scale Landranger map. The map I have created here shows the present A22 with MPs marked, and the miles in heavy type from the 1870 map. It will be noticed that there is a discrepancy of about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile between present MP 35 and the heavy type 35 of the 1870 map. Mileposts still survive on both sites. From the contour hatches of the earlier map it became quite obvious why the old coach route deviated from the present day road, for it runs along the top of a ridge in a very gentle descent all the way from Wych Cross to Nutley. For this reason, it was also a recommended alternative route for cyclists in early road books in order to avoid the descent and steep climb up to Nutley.

Chelwood Gate suggests that the A275 Lewes road had a turnpike and possibly a toll house, so mileposts would be present. Since the 'Bow Bells' design of milepost is not confined to the A22 but is also found on the A26 Uckfield/Lewes road then it would not be unreasonable to expect the same design of post on the A275. Does this 'spare' 35 milepost belong at GR TQ418316 on the A275, as

measurement on part of the old coach road route, being one mile south of the heavy type '34'? I leave you to ponder the thought.

Lionel Joseph (Surrey)

[On my 1" OS map of 1960, MS is marked where the A275 and A22 meet at Wych Cross. It does not appear in the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society's survey of 1972. This survey also suggests that the reason for the extra 35 mile post was due to a realignment of the road to avoid Tilburstow Hill, Godstone which lengthened the route (see B.Austin & J.Upton: 'East Sussex Milestones - A Survey', Sussex Industrial History, Winter 1972/73, pp.2-13). Ed.]

SWEDISH MILESTONES

Celia Tanner's report of seeing a Swedish milestone (NL11 p.27) interested me as I have made a systematic study of Swedish distance markers over the last fifteen years. This is not a milestone as we know it but a stone raised to show how much of the road and its maintenance was the responsibility of the man whose land abutted on to it at that point. The matter was officially recorded with a registration number logged. They are known as 'Väghållningstenar.' Sometimes, as in this case, arrows indicated the direction of the required duty. They are far scarcer than milestones and Celia is lucky to have found one. In a village near Falköping there is possibly a unique stretch of road where several former landowners in succession remain identified by their stones, though of course the modern landowners may well be different families and the legal duty has long been abolished. However, it was Sweden's way of sharing the burden of keeping travel possible, not least in winter, as travel developed in a country with long distances and a small population.

Sweden had a milestone system, with halves and quarters in some cases, but they did not record distance to particular places. They were a measure rather of distance travelled and enabled local farmers to charge fairly for transporting goods and people in their wagons. They generally measured from inns known as 'Gästgiveri', which had also been established by Statute to assist travellers.

They were invariably stone and in many cases each stone was erected on a high stone plinth, known as a 'fundament.' Occasionally the local county administrator, legally responsible for setting them up and maintaining the system, and allowed if he wished to have his name recorded on the mile markers, did not bother with the plinth, but such markers then became very difficult to see in deep winter snow. Swedes call these markers either 'milstenar' or, because some were metal, 'milstolpar.' Halves and quarters came only later and in some counties quarters were not marked. It is important to note that though the word is almost the same as ours, a Swedish 'mil' was virtually ten kilometres, a measure in place well before the metric-system arrived. It is usual today in Sweden to talk of a journey or distance using the old measure e.g. six 'miles' rather than using the modern 60 km.

Sweden accords with us and other countries in providing directional guidance, without distance, usually at road junctions, and these are known as 'Vägvisningstenar?' Official vandalism has occurred through the same process of neglect both of maintenance and history and a whole series of such stones can be found in a small village several kilometres from their original locations, removed to form a road edge by a river with modern ripple-type galvanised sheeting fixed to the run.

Mervyn Benford (Oxon)

WERE MILE MARKERS MADE OF WOOD?

We always refer to milestones and invariably assume them to be made of durable materials such as stone, metal or a combination of both. However, is this because these markers were made only of these durable materials or because they are the only remainders of markers made of these and other less durable materials such as timber? A study of eighteenth-century maps such as the 1779 Maps of the Roads of Ireland indicate markers every mile on most of the roads indicated on those maps. However, only a tiny fraction of these markers remain today.

I have always wondered if these markers were in fact milestones at all or were they some other form of marker made of short-lived material. The House of Representatives of the State of Alabama, USA approved an Act on 12 January 1827, Act 88, being an Act 'to reduce into one the several acts concerning Roads, Bridges, Ferries, and Highways'. Section 22 of that Act stated: 'Be it further enacted, that all overseers of roads in this state, may and are hereby authorised to contract with a carpenter to make all mile-posts and index-boards necessary for his district or precinct of good durable wood, and for cutting the figures on the former, and for painting the latter, both of which shall be done in a good and proper manner, and it shall be the duty of the said overseer to attest his account, and deliver the same to the county court, who shall order the amount to be paid by the county treasurer out of any monies in the treasury belonging to the road fund.'

While it does relate to the USA and systems may have been much different between continents, it may well be the case that milestones in the British Isles were likewise made of wood and have, therefore, long since disappeared. What do other Society members think?

Maurice Barrett (Ireland)

METRICATION THREAT

With the Government's apparent desire to make Britain European and to remove all aspects of British life, a possibility is looming that milestones could fall foul of the reforming ministers. At present the DfT/Highways Agency are funding or have funded a study into the costs of converting all road signs into kilometres and kms per hour. As this has been made public it would seem highly probable that there is a serious programme to do just that. British citizens would be unlikely to benefit although they would pay the very large bill. British Waterways has already started using the metric system in its signs even though it could be argued that the canal system is both historic and traditional and that it should adhere to its heritage.

It does not seem unlikely that the removal of signs along our highways using the 'old' system would follow and that this would include milestones in a manner similar to that in which the system of weights and measures has been changed with serious consequences to some traders.

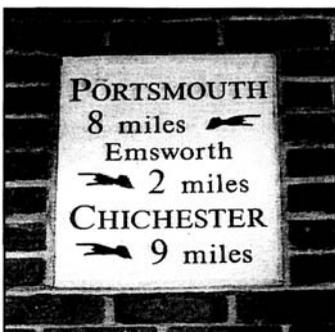
Perhaps this is just a flight of fancy but perhaps ...

Alan Crowhurst (Salop)

HAMPSHIRE INITIATIVE

Many years ago my father spoke of a 'milestone' that used to be situated above a shop in the main street of Havant. As I could never make out where it might have been I did not take his word very seriously. However, after he died another old gentleman told me the same story except that the 'milestone' was in fact a painted wooden board which had, no doubt, over the years deteriorated and been removed. Examination of an early Ordnance Survey map showed its location that was later confirmed by an old photograph.

For a long time I thought it would be a good idea for it to be replaced but realised this would be difficult. However about ten years ago I spoke about it to a friend who owned a nearby shop and who suggested I get it organised and he would pay for it. I drew up what I thought was a reasonable design and visited the local builder. Fortunately the builder looked after the local churchyard so there were a number of old Portland stone gravestones about his yard. A suitable one was



despatched to the stonemason who transformed it into the new milestone (see left). It was then installed by the builder at about the same height but a few metres along from the original. As hoped, it became an instant object of interest, in particular to schoolteachers who used it as a mini maths test for their pupils.

That, however, is not the end of the story. Two years ago a decision by my friend to sell the site for redevelopment raised concerns for the future of the milestone. Fortunately I was a local councillor at the time and was able to persuade the planners that the milestone should be transferred to any new building. The result was that the following planning condition was imposed: The milestone removed from the original building now demolished shall be reinstated on the front (north) elevation of the building hereby approved in accordance with the detail shown on plan no. 03.108.31 9RevC) prior to any part of the development being brought in to use unless any variation is agreed in writing by the Local Planning authority. Thereafter, the milestone shall be permanently retained.' I guess it is not often that a milestone is accorded such importance. Finally the developer wanted to call the building 'The Point' but was persuaded to call it 'Milestone Point'.

Following this effort, in 1998 I arranged for a new milestone at Langstone (see picture right) that was engraved on both sides so that it could also serve a proposed cycle track. Then in 2000 I organised the milestone at Emsworth to replace the one that was lost many years ago. Also at my suggestion the milestone at Waterlooville, also lost many years ago,



on the A3 Portsmouth to London road is being replaced as a feature of the precinct redevelopment. I have as well done mock ups of two other replacement milestones that I am waiting for an opportunity to have installed.

Ralph Cousins (Hants.)

SOME KENT MILESTONES IN WARTIME

I recently read a book by Kendal Burt and James Leaser called *The One that Got Away* about Franz von Werra, the German fighter pilot who crashed in Kent, was captured and taken to London for interrogation. On the way from detention in Maidstone Barracks he 'concentrated on the road, looking either ahead or behind, trying to guess the direction ... All signposts seemed to have been removed and milestones had been painted over or otherwise obliterated ... The extent and thoroughness of British anti-invasion measures were a revelation to him'.

On looking at OS maps sheets 188 (revised 1977) and 177 (revised 1968) for Maidstone and area, I see that there are a few milestones marked between Maidstone and Bexley (A20) and Maidstone and Sevenoaks (A25) and Bromley (A21). Could these be the 'painted over' or 'otherwise obliterated' milestones mentioned above as they were obviously not removed entirely during the war years, and are they still there? As there is no coordinator for Kent at present to write to, perhaps someone else has some information relevant to these milestones between Maidstone and London.

Janet Dowding (Somerset)

REPEAL OF TURNPIKE LAWS

It may come as a surprise to learn that most Turnpike Acts have never been repealed. Keith Lawrence (Hants.) has drawn our attention to The Law Commission's Statute Law Revision which is tasked with modernising and simplifying the statute book to prevent people from being misled by obsolete laws. They propose the repeal of statutes that are no longer of practical utility and consult widely before finalising the proposals. They are now looking at Turnpike Acts which expired over 100 years ago but which have not been formally repealed and their first report was published in July 2006 (see www.lawcom.gov.uk/turnpikes.htm). The investigations are on a county basis and the first to come under scrutiny are Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. For each county the report gives a brief history of its turnpike system, followed by a list of the Acts to be repealed (usually the last renewal Act for that particular turnpike which superseded its predecessors). The Turnpike Roads Act 1822 had provided a framework to govern the local Acts. Nearly all the legislation comprising this framework, including the 1822 Act itself, was repealed in 1981. This, however, did not affect the individual Turnpike Acts, many of which have never been formally repealed.

At the height of the turnpike era in the 1830s about 1,100 separate turnpike trusts in England and Wales administered about 22,000 miles of roads and brought in an annual toll income of over £1.5m. The spread of railways gradually took

traffic from the highways with a subsequent decline in toll income and from 1864 onwards there was a move by House of Commons committees to wind up as many turnpike trusts as possible. By 1871 there were 854 trusts, this figure had reduced to 588 by 1875 and was down to only two in 1890. The final turnpike, on the Anglesey part of the Shrewsbury to Holyhead road, expired in 1895.

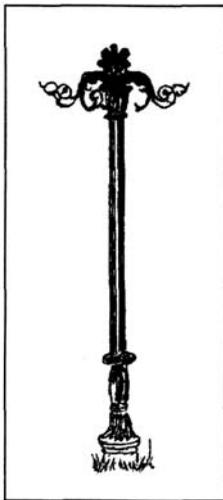
From 1878 the Highways and Locomotive (Amendment) Act stated that all disturnpiked roads were to be reclassified as 'Main Roads' which were to be maintained by the county Justices. Main roads were transferred to County Councils and County Borough Councils by the Local Government Act 1888 and the Local Government Act 1929.

The Annex to the Law Commission's report contains a very useful and comprehensive account of the legislation pertaining to highways in the late nineteenth century. Work on repealing the Turnpike Acts from other counties in England will be undertaken in due course, and County Councils will be consulted about the proposals.

The Editors

WARWICKSHIRE MILESAGE POSTS

A worrying report from the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* (17.8.06) notes the theft of an historic milepost from the A3400 near Shipston. The unusual cast iron post was about ten feet high with two elaborate arms (see illustration below). At the end of July it was cut down using an angle grinder. The local police were informed and the joint curator of Shipston History Society's museum expressed his sadness at the loss of a piece of local heritage.



This post and its companions were mentioned in NL5, p. 10 when John Calladine (Warwicks.) was asking for information about them for a forthcoming article. John and his colleague Martin Scroggs have now produced their article for the Midland (GB) Postal History Society, entitled 'Posts with Purpose?'

It has never been definitely established what the purpose of these posts was. There may once have been as many as 20 along the road between Chipping Norton and Stratford. There are now four surviving. John and Martin have considered many theories as to their origins: could mailbags have been hung from them for collection by passing mail- or stagecoaches, or for letters for local delivery to nearby villages? Were they relics of an early horse-drawn tramway? These theories have been carefully researched and no convincing evidence found. However, when Ordnance Survey maps were consulted it was noted that mileposts were marked where the surviving posts stand, and by comparing a

1972 OS map with more recent ones a total of 12 posts can be traced. It therefore seems likely that these posts were mileage markers, possibly having distance information hung from them on wooden boards.

LOCAL VOLUNTEER'S RESTORATION



I think we all find the interest shown by Parish Councils to be generally good but even if the area lacks the personal approach of a Parish Council and is situated in an area administered by a District or Borough Council (with, perhaps, not quite the same local feeling) there might often be a community organisation of some type that would be willing to get involved.

Such an area in Worcestershire is Astwood Bank which is unparished but has a thriving Neighbourhood Group (not to be confused with Neighbourhood Watch). The group found a volunteer and provided the paint etc. for a precious milestone plate on the Evesham to Redditch Turnpike to be repainted. The photograph shows the excellent job the volunteer did.

Neville Billington (Worcs.)

WELSH ROADS ON BBC



I had a good day out one Sunday in September with a presenter and producer from BBC Radio visiting old roads and milestones around North Wales. We travelled nearly 150 miles including along some roads that were little changed (other than a skim of tarmac!) since they were last used in the early 1800s as turnpike roads. One was once described as 'the worst road in Wales'. We visited early milestones on roads including on an old Roman road (not a Roman milestone but certainly pre-1770), drove roads high in the mountains, pre-turnpike roads and on the old London-Holyhead coach road from the 1700s. We also managed a couple of miles 'off road' along an old pre-turnpike road to visit one milestone - we would have gone on further to another but time was running short. They were astounded how much still survives and yet everyone just drives by or doesn't even know it is there! They kept saying that it would make an excellent TV programme or even a series on old roads. ITV made a series on old roads last year but it wasn't up to much - I just happen to know the owner of the company that made it - she was also the producer! I mentioned that they could have included so much more. Maybe the BBC will make up for it. The programme we were recording in September was initially just to have been a small mention of the work that Gwynedd Council and I have been doing restoring the milestones on the Lley

Peninsula, but after talking to the series producer, she became convinced that there was much more of interest - hence we should be filling most of one programme.

The programme went out on 12 October on Radio Wales as part of a history series. I will also end up with an original studio copy on CD as per the three programmes I made last year.

Ian Jolly (N. Wales)

(Ian Jolly has kindly supplied a Welsh version of our logo which is reproduced on the previous page - it also appeared on the back cover of the latest 'On the Ground'. Any offers for a version in Cornish or Gaelic? - Editors.)

FROM THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Although little is to be seen at the site of the extensive Roman fort of Trimontium on the edge of Newstead, what is of particular interest is that it was the hub of a network of roads including Dere Street. The markings on the only Roman milestone found in Scotland - at Ingliston, west of Edinburgh, the possible location of an as yet unidentified fort - show the distance from Trimontium. The stone can be seen in the Early People Gallery of the Museum of Scotland. Additionally, a brief history of the fort is described on a ten foot high memorial stone in the shape of an altar found at the site. This was erected in 1928 and renovated in 1997.

Chirnside, on the A6105, 8 miles west of Berwick upon Tweed, provides a contrasting piece of stonework where the usual metal village name-plate is replaced in an original manner: a stone, with a racing car perched on top, has 'Welcome to Chirnside' between laurel leaves, and on the base: 'Home of Jim Clark OBE'.

Colin Williams (Hants.)

BROOKS DRIVE, CHESHIRE

Samuel Brooks (1792-1864) was a wealthy Manchester banker and landowner. From 1856 he bought large estates in north Cheshire and persuaded the railway company to provide a station, appropriately named Brooklands. Then he constructed a new road, wide and tree-lined, south-easterly for 2½ miles from Brooklands station. It crossed the Stockport-Altrincham turnpike road (now A560) and two minor roads. An existing road, Roaring Gate Lane, was then used for ½ mile before the new road resumed for a short mile to finish at the Altrincham-Wilmslow road (now A538) between Hale and Ringway. The road was private; a toll gate and cottage were built at the junction with the A560, but residents travelled free. In fact there were not many residents in the early years: an 1880 map shows just seven mansions of the wealthy, all within easy reach of Brooklands station, and their number increased only gradually.

Maps of around 1900 mark the road as having a surface equal to, or better than, other major roads in the area. Usually there is no indication of its private status. Over a century later it is difficult to understand why a road of this stature was built in a thinly-populated area during the 1860s. The most likely explanation is

that it provided easy communication through the Brooks estates. The scale of construction and the provision of milestones suggest that it was Brooks' long-term intention to make the road into a major public highway. Samuel was succeeded by his son Sir William (1819-1900), but William's two children were daughters who married into titled families and did not live locally. By 1920 the family's north Cheshire estates had been sold.

The present day situation is that the first 1¼ miles of the road, from Brooklands station to the A560, is a busy highway named Brooklands Road, in a built-up area. South of the A560 it is known as Brooks Drive and has become a footpath threading its way for ¾ mile through postwar housing estates, then a further ½ mile through fields. Roaring Gate Lane follows, still rural, then Brooks Drive resumes as a footpath, soon becoming a tarmac lane serving large modern houses.

The 1872 6 inch Ordnance Survey map records four roadside milestones, giving distances from Brooklands Station and Prospect House (except for the fourth milestone, very close to Prospect House, which marked 1 mile to Ringway Church). Prospect House was an early nineteenth century building of no significance, apart from being about the only landmark near to the southern end of the Drive. It was demolished about 1950. Two metal mileposts survive today (there might be more that I haven't spotted). One is at SJ792898 between Nos 248 and 250 Brooklands Road: it displays 'To Brooklands Station 1 mile, To Prospect House 3 miles'. The other was not shown on the 1872 map and is at SJ803862 near the start of the tarmac part of the Drive: this gives distances of 3½ and ½. The toll cottage also remains, now beside a big roundabout. The M56 and Manchester Airport are near the southern end of the Drive. There are plans for industries to expand in the area, so the rural aspects of the Drive may nor remain much longer.

Allan Brackenbury (Cheshire)

TWO TOLL HOUSES - IN THE FAMILY

My interest in toll houses began when some years ago I discovered that my husband's forebears had lived in not one but two separate toll houses! We have a



*Toll House, Overbury, Worcs.
(SO959372)*

certified copy of a birth certificate that states that Charles Albert Oakley was born on 24 October 1851 in 'The Toll Gate, Ashton-under-Hill in the Counties of Worcester and Gloucester'. However, his father's occupation was given as 'labourer' not toll collector. The actual 'pike keeper' in early 1851 was Ann Evans, living in the toll house with her husband James, an 'ag. lab.'. (She was actually born in Overbury, Worcestershire, only a few miles away, where there is still in existence a fine stone-built toll house - see photo left.) So how this baby came to be born in Ashton toll

house is not known. His grandfather, however, was Robert Gordon and we know this from the marriage certificate of his daughter Sarah to Charles Oakley on which her father is given as 'Robert Gordon, Toll Collector'. I wrote to Gloucester Record Office and they checked the index of records concerning turnpikes but there was no mention of any items concerning toll collectors in the Ashton-under-Hill area. According to Fred Archer who wrote several autobiographical books about Ashton, the toll house was situated 'at the Dumbleton turning' i.e. off the A46 Evesham-Bishop's Cleeve road at approx. SO 995362. There is now nothing to be seen there.

The second toll house connected with our family is Toddington Toll Gate, situated not many miles away from the Ashton one, in Gloucestershire. We have a copy of an 1851 census entry for Robert Gordon aged 63, occupation framework knitter, born Nottingham, living in Toddington Toll gate, with his wife Susan. Had he given up framework knitting and taken up toll collecting solely, or did he combine the two jobs at the toll gate? Toll gate keepers generally came from the artisan class and often were fortunate enough to exercise a dual profession. Frequently toll gate keeping ran in families. Gloucester Record Office were in this instance able to give me a few details. A 1792 Act setting up Turnpike Trustees for Winchcombe indicates that a new turnpike road was to be set up from there running to the Tewkesbury to Stow turnpike road. If this road already existed by 1792, it must be likely that the toll house did as well. The Tewkesbury Turnpike trust was wound up in 1871 and the Winchcombe one in 1874 so this is presumably why the house appears for sale in a deed of 1872. The Record Office sent me a copy of a little plan as an insert to an 1872 deed of title to the toll house with its garden and showing it surrounded on the east and south sides by land owned by Lord Sudely (Document 2311/T29). This plan shows the toll house to be situated at a cross roads involving roads from Tewkesbury to Stow and Winchcombe to Evesham. This must be at SP 022325. Apparently most of the toll houses in that area were constructed of stone but again nothing is left. Could the Ashton and Toddington ones have been similar to the Overbury one?

I would welcome any details, drawings etc. of these two toll houses that anyone may come across in their own researches.

Janet Dowding (Somerset)

RECORDING THE MILEMARKERS

Members of the Society will be aware of its stated aims to identify, record, research and interpret the milestones and other waymarkers of the British Isles. However, although there are many supportive members making their contribution in a variety of ways, there are many who are not actively involved in the recording aspect, which is so vital to the maintenance of this important part of our heritage, bearing in mind that the presence of milemarkers provides information on the development of an important means of communication, i.e. the road system in the turnpike era. The formation of an electronic database containing vital information on the whereabouts and current state of the milemarkers still in existence has been one of

the major successes of our Society and owes much to the foresight and hard work of Alan Rosevear, our National Database Manager, who now has on record the majority of markers in the UK. It would seem appropriate therefore to summarise briefly the mechanism by which this feat has been achieved for members not fully aware of the process.

Important decisions were taken early on regarding the required data for each milemarker and a two-sided A4 data sheet was produced which contained boxes where appropriate information could be entered directly, or a response circled, on site by the person conducting the survey. Although too numerous to list completely here, there are around 80 items on which important pieces of information are requested. Although this may seem an onerous task for the surveyor, the good design of the form means that much data are quickly inserted, mostly on site, such as road number, OS grid reference (supported by a GPS reference where possible), the appearance (covering material, dimensions, overall shape, condition), the legends on the various faces (including manufacturer's mark when present), problems associated with damage or dangerous siting, and surface details (paint colour of marker and letters). Importantly, photographs are taken, recording the marker in close up and a context shot, and the future location of the pictorial record noted on the form in order to facilitate the compilation of a full national photographic record at a future date.

This information is then transferred, often by the individual surveyor, to an associated electronic database based on Microsoft Excel, which has cells corresponding to the paper form, and when an appropriate number of records have been gathered the Excel file is forwarded to Alan Rosevear for consolidation into his growing national database. For those without computers the completed paper forms can be sent in. The database is an important resource for the Society since it can be searched for various aspects of required data, for example 'how many stone milemarkers are located along the A1 in the county of Yorkshire?', or 'where are there milemarkers manufactured by James Bassett?'. The database has also been used to give information to councils regarding possible developments needing consideration of historical artefacts or roadside maintenance. The value of a carefully researched resource such as this database, accumulated in this case by many hours of voluntary labour in just 5 years, is not always fully appreciated but together with the eventual centralised photographic record envisaged in the future, the Society will have an accumulation of organised data which will be of value to others and of which it can be justly proud.

Alan Haines (Norfolk)

NEWS FROM THE COUNTY GROUPS

Bedfordshire - Another milestone may have been found in the county. Michael Knight is investigating whether the top end of a stone is genuine.

Cambridgeshire - Michael Knight reports that the New Bridges over the River Great Ouse in St Ives (Hunts.) has now received a Grade II listing from English

Heritage. He is sure that Bridget Flanagan's detailed research for her book on the New Bridges played a major part in getting it listed.

Cornwall - See p. 21 regarding the return of a stolen milestone.

Cumbria - Colin Smith reports that Cumbria has made good progress in surveying its milestones and much information added to the database. However it has been disappointing to see how many are being neglected, damaged, and even gone missing. Fortunately we still have a wonderful legacy left with approaching 300 remaining. Much needs to be done. The good news is that a joint project with the Keswick Historical Society and with some pump priming monies from the Society we have been successful in securing funding of over £6000 to restore the Keswick to Penrith milestones and to produce educational and publicity materials to increase public awareness of the need to cherish all the other milestones throughout the County. New stones and cast iron plates have been commissioned with work scheduled over the next 6 to 8 months. The project has received much support from three Parish Councils within which the milestones are situated, The Friends of the Lake District, The Lake District National Park, and the Cumbria County Council Archaeologist. The consultations involved have clearly raised the profile of the milestones and the Milestone Society with an increase of enquiries coming to us. Hopefully this will materialise into more members and volunteers.

Last October we were invited by English Heritage and Friends of the Lake District to make a contribution to a seminar 'Streets, roads, and the Public Realm' in Kendal which was well attended, particularly from local authority highways agencies staff. We presented a Power Point overview of the Cumbrian milestones and the work of the Milestone Society.

Essex - Apart from his continuing work on recording and restoring milestones and finger posts, coordinator John Nicholls collated and edited the latest edition (Number 3) of *On the Ground*.

Norfolk - Carol Haines can report some good news on the restoration front. A milestone at Hingham on the Norwich-Watton road which was found buried in 2004 is now re-erected and newly painted. A stone at Brooke on the Norwich-Bungay road was knocked over during verge mowing and reported to the local authorities by a concerned resident. These queries tend to end up with the coordinator, but after further correspondence with the County Council, the stone is now upright again. The 1921-pattern place name sign from Taverham which was taken up and scrapped last February, has now been retrieved. Enquiries are under way about repairing the broken plate prior to resiting it in the parish.

While queuing to cross Wroxham bridge, the top of a milestone was spotted peeping above the footpath - another for the county list. On the down side, the stone (admittedly a poor one) at Bixley on the Bungay road has been smashed by verge mowers, and the list of stones first recorded over 12 years ago which can no longer be found grows longer. Information was received about a milestone in the River Bure at Coltishall which could be seen from the footbridge beside the B1150. Out of four visits to the site something very like a milestone has been glimpsed once. Further visits will be made until water, weed and light conditions are favourable enough to reveal more clearly what is lying on the river bed.

Somerset - The county group met on 22 October at the home of Peter Banks in Ditchat, writes Janet Dowding. Much discussion took place, particularly about milestone protection and restoration, and of getting local groups who have money allocated for amenity projects to get interested. Peter is connected with a group in the Shepton Mallet area and will try to get it interested in the many milestones around that area.

Shirley Melligan sent details of a milestone she had recently discovered in Yeovil ('I Yeovil') on the A30. It has a very small shield on a small stone and is not on any recent OS map, nor is it in the Somerset Roads survey. The 'II Yeovil' and 'III Yeovil' stones are already recorded. Older maps are being studied for more sites, and there is still some way to go to complete the county survey.

An article entitled 'Historic milestone decision' appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* (14.11.06) announcing that Bath & NE Somerset Council has been awarded a grant of £3,000 by the Cotswolds AONB to survey and record locations of milestones, turnpike trust boundary markers and fingerposts in their area in an attempt to stop them being stolen. This follows the recovery, restoration and repositioning of three stolen mile plates earlier in the year. The Council have our own milestone database and additional material I have since sent, and creating their own council database will ensure that any further thefts will be spotted quickly and swift action taken to recover them.

Staffordshire - John Higgins reports that several fingerposts in the county are being restored. A photograph appeared in the *Evening Sentinel* (8.4.06) of the halo post at Endon which has had new arms cast and has been repositioned at the fountain junction in Endon on the A53. John has been asked by Staffordshire Moorlands to repaint all the fingerposts on a rotating basis, two per year.

David Wright, with a little help from John, is repainting all the mileposts in Stoke on Trent. David is very good at finding new stones. He spotted a missing listed Lathe post from Stableford in a garden at Ellenhall and agreement has been reached for it to be returned. In the Gladstone Museum, he discovered a post in their basement from Normacot. It has been there at least 15 years, but they are happy about reinstating it, and this is being negotiated with Stoke City Council.

After a meeting with the County Conservation Officer, John has been able to update the CC's records and has given him a list of 50 milestones and non-standard castings that are worthy of listing, and he is hopeful that all these will receive full listing early in 2007. There is also hope that a system of restoration can be implemented so that a programme of regular maintenance can be set up. There has also been an offer by Staffs CC Conservation Officer to include a Staffs milestones page as part of the Council website.

Surrey - A meeting of the group took place on 4 November, reports Janet Dowding. Colin Woodward brought his files on Middlesex milestones, but a member of Surrey CC's Heritage Team was not available to speak about policies on conservation. Lionel Joseph produced some excellent photos of Surrey and Hampshire stones for the records, and Colin had details of a triangular milestone in Dulwich showing V miles from both the Standard Cornhill and from the Treasury Whitehall, and on the rear 'Siste Viator/T.T./1772' ('Stop, Traveller'). It is in

excellent condition and is at the junction of Dulwich Village and Burbage Road on a roundabout (TQ 332737).

Lionel also brought two milestones he had made and painted and which he hopes will be positioned in situ shortly. One is a tablet of Whitby stone, produced with the relevant parish council approval, and reads '49 miles from London, ½ m. from M(arket) H(all) in Petworth'. It will be positioned by the Stonemason's Arms north of the A272 junction with the A285. The second is a smaller cast iron square plate, black with white lettering, which reads '36 from Westr. Bridge'. It will be placed in North Parade, Horsham.

Some more records have been made for the county survey, and it was reported that there was a coal post in Kingston Museum, and that Glenda Law's new booklet on Sussex's Bow Bells milestones will be available very shortly. Another meeting will hopefully be held in April.

Sussex - See article on p.6 regarding duplicate mileposts on the A22.

Wales - Pembrokeshire - Anthony Rhys Davies reports that repainting of milestones is underway by the Highways Dept. and it is hoped that a small semi-circle of crushed bark, gravel or something inert, will be introduced around them where applicable to keep back vegetation. It is also hoped that two re-discovered milestones in Lamphey will be resited. Both Highways and the contractors Parsons Brinkerhof at the 'Nash Finger post/Bangeston road works improvement' are to be warmly congratulated for commissioning the casting of two new milestones (i.e. four new plates) to replace the two old damaged ones which had to be removed during the works there, also for mounting them on a suitable traditional base. Photos will be forwarded to the local press when available with details of what has been done.

Wiltshire - See article on p.3 concerning milestones on the Swindon to Marlborough turnpike.

Worcestershire - More parishes are keen to sign up to the latest project of replating the stones on the old Worcester to Bradley Green turnpike, writes Terry Keegan. Presentations have been given on the project at parish meetings, and now only one parish and Worcester City Council need to be persuaded. Four Bradley stones on the A449 trunk road have recently been painted by the contractors Amey Mouchel. They had requested information on milestones from the Highways Agency as they had a budget for a 'heritage improvement project'.

Celia Robinson has permission to attach a commemorative plate to the bus shelter in Little Witley to honour Harold Brooke-Bradley who lived and is buried in the village. The shelter stands beside one of the milestones he designed which are unique to Worcestershire. Other members have also been busy, Alan Scaplehorn researching turnpike trusts for a chapter in the proposed book on Worcestershire's Milestones, and Neville Billington unearthing milestone photographs from the Worcestershire Photographic Survey. Terry led a Roadside Heritage walk at the end of May, part of the Malvern Experience walking festival. Several members of the group have combined their skills to make a replacement for the Bradley stone at Feckenham - casting the new concrete post, making a pattern for the metal plates,

contacts with National Grid Transco who produced a generous grant for the post which was outside their depot. The new post should soon be unveiled.

Yorkshire - The newsletter produced by Frank and Christine Minto notes that 45 new records have been entered into the county database in 2006. They have notes of several more milestones, guide stoops and tollhouses to investigate. Background history on such things as turnpikes and packhorse routes is also being built up. A group meeting was held in October in Rudston and another will be held in April (see Events).

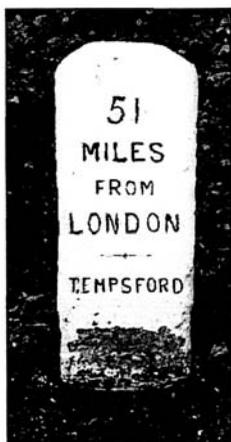
The milestone on the old packhorse route 5 customary miles from Keighley has now been restored after persistent pressure from several people including Alan Heaton (Lancs.). It had been lying in the grounds of the Retreat for two years but can now be seen at SE 112491. Brian Bradley-Smith has restored several mileposts, including one north of Spofforth on the A661. David Whitlock has renovated the milepost that was hidden in a hedge at Hawsker on the A171. Jan Scrine is trying to persuade Kirklees Council to renovate the hundred plus guidestones, milestones and mileposts in their area. They have £60,000 worth of funding over the next 5 years, and are going ahead with a pilot scheme to renovate the stones in Shelley.

CUTTINGS

Too many roadsigns Details of an article in the *Daily Mail* (12.9.06) comes from Michael Knight (Beds.). Their transport editor, Ray Massey, drew attention to the proliferation of signs along our highways and pictured 48 examples, including a blighted 7-mile stretch of the B3006 in Hampshire. Concern for this distraction has been voiced by Shaun Spiers, Chief Executive of CPRE. Fortunately no milestone was portrayed, but Michael wonders whether all groups who regard our landscape as precious heritage should press local authorities to stop this proliferation of highway eyesores, which will not go away unless a concerted effort is made.

Anti-theft measures An article in *Salon* (No. 147, September 2006) sent by Jeremy Milln (Salop) reports that police in the Cotswolds are advising owners of staddle stones and stone troughs, or buildings with Cotswold roof tiles to mark them with SmartWater, an invisible 'forensic fingerprint' to deter theft. The dry summer may have made it easier to drive 4x4s across fields to steal stone and slate from isolated farms. Meanwhile Cornwall CC has announced a project to protect medieval granite wayside crosses using microchips. There have been several thefts and attempted thefts over the last 20 years, and some of the crosses are still missing, such as that at Halvana Cross on Bodmin Moor.

Bedfordshire makes the national press! One of the few surviving milestones in Bedfordshire got a mention in *The Guardian* in October 2006. The cutting has been sent by John Higgins via Michael Knight. Derek Niemann, in his Country Diary column, describes a walk near Tempsford which was once part of the Great North Road. Daniel Defoe wrote, in the early 18th century, that landowners were trying to get the coach road between Biggleswade and Alconbury resurfaced because 'the great autumn procession of heavy-footed cattle from East Anglia' made the soft clay tracks of Bedfordshire impassable in winter. The milestone at Tempsford, 51



miles from London (see Michael's photo left), helped coach drivers to time their journeys, and a nearby toll gate provided funds for road maintenance.

Hunts boundary post Also from Michael comes a cutting from the Huntingdonshire District Council magazine (Summer 2006) which illustrates (see photo right) a renovated boundary post between Upton and Alconbury-Weston. The post, found by Michael, has now been listed and transferred to the western side of the A1(M). It was unveiled by the MP for the area,



and local communities are very proud of their post. The post was made by Eagle Foundry, Northampton which was commissioned to produce matching mileposts for this sector of the Great North Road as far as Wansford.

Derbyshire stoops In a well-written article under the heading of 'In search of England' in the *Daily Mail* (29.8.06), Roy Hattersley gives a history of the erection of guide stoops in England and praises the work of Jim McAllister of Holymoorside who has been tracking down and restoring stoops in Derbyshire. One of Jim's latest finds was a stoop that had been cut in half vertically and used as a pair of gateposts. He exchanged them for a pair of wooden gateposts and the stoop is now together again on the B5057 pointing the way to 'Alfar-ton' [Alfreton]. Another rescued stoop was found on the shores of Dam Flask reservoir being used as a jump by cross-country motorcyclists. It was retrieved by a Mansfield GP and bequeathed to Mr McAllister who has now returned it to a point close to the cross roads in Ashover parish where it was set up in 1709. As Derbyshire CC did not want it close to the road, a farmer agreed to put it in his wall which runs alongside the road. Thanks to Keith Lawrence (Hants.) for sending the cutting.

Return to Cornwall The return of a 150-year old granite milestone stolen 10 years ago from the A30 near Newquay made a brief paragraph in the *Daily Telegraph* in late June 2006. This was the stone located in a garden in Stafford. It had been bought at a car boot sale and after negotiations with the Society and Cornwall CC, the owner was pleased to see it returned to its old site. Thanks to Norman Sherry (W. Sussex) and Shirley Melligan (Somerset) for sending the cutting.

Clerkenwell churchwardens An article written by David Taylor for *Industrial Heritage* (Vol.32, No.1, Spring 2006), sent by Rodney Marshall (Beds.), sheds light on the history of a cast iron marker in Cobham (Surrey). The marker, which can be found near Waitrose, reads: Clerkenwell/1878/Wm. Jas. Harrison/George Blackie. The gentlemen were churchwardens of Clerkenwell (London), and their predecessors administered a property in Cobham which was left to them in the will of Roger Bellow who died in 1614. The churchwardens of Clerkenwell and their

successors had to pay to the churchwardens of Cobham the sum of 'twenty shillings yearly at Lady Day for bread to the poor of Cobham'. When Enclosure took place in Cobham, the Clerkenwell churchwardens were allotted two pieces of land in place of their common rights. One of these pieces of land is now the site of Oakdene Parade and Waitrose, the other was on the Stoke Road almost opposite the Esso garage and similar markers can be found here.

The turnpikes of Radnorshire Member Tony Boyce produced an article for his local paper, *The Journal* (28.7.06), detailing the history of turnpikes in Radnorshire. The roads had been in a very poor state and in 1754 the Mortimer's Cross Turnpike was formed, followed in 1756 by the turnpiking of roads leading from Kington, and the Radnorshire Turnpike Trust in 1767. Several relics of these roads still survive, including several tollhouses, and at Two Stone Pitch near Kington two white-painted boulders indicating a 'take-off point where extra horses to assist vehicles getting up the hill had to be unhitched. Two of the photographs accompanying the article show a metal mileplate at Titley, and a stone marking the County Road Boundary in the Parish of Old Radnor. It seems that the turnpikes failed to make a great deal of improvement in the conditions of the roads as complaints were still heard, and as late as 1848 a commentator noted that the Kington-Leominster road was so bad that the mud could swallow up a horse.

AA sign replaced From Neville Billington (Worcs.) comes a cutting from *AA Drive* (November 2006), a newspaper for AA employees past and present. It tells the story of the AA place name disc at Wiggaton (Devon), which had survived World War 2, and was a well-known village landmark, until it was stolen in January 2006. Fortunately one villager had a photograph of the sign, and after contacting several sign makers, AA Signs agreed to make a replica free of charge. The new disc is back in place of the original on a wall at Higher Wolston Farm.

Historic cuttings When visiting a friend in Holland, who lived in Northamptonshire as a boy, John Calladine (Wilts.) was shown a transport scrapbook, entitled 'Miscellany of Motion', compiled by an unknown Northants gentleman between the 1920s and 1940s. It covered a wide variety of transport subjects but also included cuttings from newspapers and magazines about milestones. Although the cuttings are dated, a full reference is not always given. An article entitled 'The story of the English milestone' (*The Austin Magazine*, 1933) states that the previous year was the bi-centenary of the English milestone, and then gives a history of the Trinity Hall series, and moves on to the turnpikes. It notes also that 55 Roman milestones have been found in the country. [With hindsight we could now say that the author, Edgar Stewart, should have referred to the *tri*-centenary of milestones, 1633 being the generally acknowledged date of the first post-Roman installation, and we now know of twice as many Roman finds.] The article notes that many early 'stones' were wooden, those between Epping and Chelmsford being of oak, five feet high and eleven inches broad, and 'until recently' a wooden milepost remained at Withycombe Raleigh between Exeter and Exmouth. The author ends by saying that 'if it is not worth while placing stones on our new arterial roads, at least the existing ones should be kept up.'

In a subsequent issue of the Magazine, the author, 'Amber', replies that he would like to see a more modern version of the milestone, more suited to modern needs, erected on main roads. He then applauds the clear wording on the 1932 model of milestones being adopted by Worcestershire County Council [Bradley stones], and the article is illustrated by a photograph of the Worcester 5, Birmingham 21 stone and a new Austin Light Twelve-Four car. [The Worcs. coordinator reports that this stone no longer exists.]

An article dated 31.5.1940 entitled 'All signposts coming down' is worth quoting in full: 'All signposts on the roads of Britain are being taken down so that no help is given to an invader. The Ministry of Transport instructed highway authorities to begin this big job on Wednesday, and ever since gangs of road workers have been busy digging up posts and taking them away by the lorry load. AA and RAC scouts are helping by taking away not only the signposts erected by their organisations, but village and hotel and garage signs and even the plates on the roadside telephone kiosks.' Another cutting from August 1945 from a Northants paper quoted the County Surveyor as saying that he didn't know when old milestones would be dug up and re-erected as he had only half the amount of labour and far more important jobs to be done. 'The stones were no longer recognised as traffic indicators but would be re-erected for sentimental reasons and the fact that people liked to see them.'

SOME INDEPENDENT MILESTONE RESTORATIONS

It is heartening to hear of milestones being preserved and renovated by Society members, and to see the results of their work on the ground. In the course of photographing milestones on a cycle tour in 2006 I met two people who had restored milestones purely for their own satisfaction and were unaware that the Milestone Society existed.

The first was encountered on the A595 as I approached Carlisle. A milestone stood outside a farm gate, and as I was photographing it an elderly gentleman came out and told me that it was in the wrong place. Others in the series were all on the other side of the road. 'So was that one', he said, 'until they were remaking the road a few years back. The contractors dug it up and threw it in the ditch, so I rescued it and put it here'. It had been repainted and was clearly being looked after. He was interested to learn of The Milestone Society. He told me that when he was young many vagrants walked the road between Carlisle and the Cumberland Coast and used the milestones to sit on and rest.

The second was on the A714 between Newtonstewart and Wigtown. Milestones along this road just have N and W on them, followed by a number and a directional arrow. Some were almost hidden by vegetation and hard to decipher under layers of peeling paint, but one shone like a beacon. The man from the adjacent house told me he had only finished painting the black lettering that afternoon. He too was interested to learn about the Milestone Society, and I took the liberty of thanking both the gentlemen concerned, on behalf of the Society, for the restoration work they had undertaken.

I encountered some other curiosities in Southwest Scotland. The mileage plate on the Old Town Hall in Dumfries is well known, but I came across a virtually identical one, listing the same curious selection of towns (including Huntingdon) on the wall of the Douglas Arms in Castle Douglas, and cast by the same iron founder, J Affleck of Dumfries, and is dated 1827. Painted green and gold, the same colours as the inn, it makes an attractive variation from the usual black and white. Further west along roads which once formed the main route to Stranraer, I passed a couple of milestones which have three cast iron plates attached, and again the iron founder was Affleck of Dumfries. One of the stones also appears to be cared for by local residents.

I began my ride at Lands End, and enjoyed the fascinating variety of Cornish mile- and guidestones. The OS maps had told me I was going to pass as many as 276 milestones on my journey. I didn't see them all, but there was a kind of childish excitement in finding some which were not on the map. Not only did they add a lot to the enjoyment of my ride but also they provided a further, historical, dimension to the scenery.

The last stone I photographed was at Stranraer, near the end of the A75, and its inscription begins 'London 407'. On the last page of *On the Ground* (Sept. 2006) the editor asks what is the highest milestone in terms of elevation in Britain. Can I ask what is the highest mileage figure members have encountered on a milestone between two places in mainland Britain?

Ron Westcott (Surrey)

CHEPSTOW MILESTONES

Ruth Hirst (Glouc.) notes that the two milestones along the wall of Chepstow Racecourse along the A466 (ST523948, ST520963) are said to have been part of one of Chepstow's Crosses. The Cross was dismantled in 1759, perhaps one of the first acts performed by the Chepstow Turnpike Trust to improve the roads within the town. The reference to the stones' origins comes from *Chepstow & River Wye in Old Photos* (1993) by Anne Rainsbury, Curator of Chepstow Museum. Sadly, the metal plate on the 1-mile stone near the main entrance to the racecourse, has recently been stolen.

TV MILESTONE

An episode of the TV 'Avengers' series might be of interest to members, writes Peter Nelson (Berks.). Picture the scene - a man in tropical kit being chased through dense forest with jungle noises in the background. He breaks free from the undergrowth and starts climbing a boundary fence. As he reaches the top, a shot rings out and he falls on the far side and crawls a few yards to reach - a milestone with 'LONDON 23 MILES' engraved upon it. The episode title comes up over the top - Small Game for Big Hunters. Is there any chance that they might have used a genuine stone? Steed said it was on the 'Great South Road'. The episode dates from 1966. Can anyone throw any light?

LONGEST UNBROKEN RUN OF MILESTONES

In November David Viner (MSSoc Chairman) was asked to respond to the Answers To Correspondents - a questions and answers page - in the *Daily Mail* who were recently asked: Where is the longest unbroken stretch of milestones in the UK? He e-mailed the committee who came up with a number of contenders. The winner, however, seems to be the Holyhead to Chirk road with 84. The road round the Isle of Arran, which has 55, was also in the running. Secretary Terry Keegan was asked to add a very short history of milestones and this was published, with the answer, on 22.11.06. It has already generated interest and more publicity for the Society.

FOREIGN PARTS



Australian road pegs On a recent trip to Perth, Western Australia, Shirley Melligan (Somerset) was taken to Albany and *en route* saw a mile post (see picture left) at Nannup. She writes: at Albany I enquired at the library about milestones in Australia. Receiving blank looks I then asked about mail coaches and postal runs and they came up with the 'Re-enactment in 1979' of the first postal run from Albany to Perth in 1841 which took 12 days there and back, over 257 miles, wore out 3 sets of brake pads and many horseshoes for the coach and four horses. The horses were changed every 20 miles from a team of 14.

At Arthur River it seems that there is a 'road peg' reading PERTH 115M and in 1979 it was left in the care of a Mr Preston. I was unable to search for it this time, but hope to find it on my next visit. The mail coaches stopped when the railway was built in 1888.

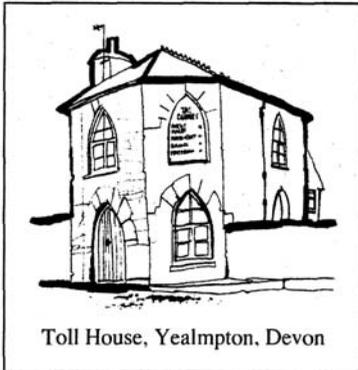
Portuguese zero-kilometre post An uprooted marker stone was seen in Portugal by David Hall and his wife (Surrey). The small square pillar with rounded top was lying on the quayside at

Alcoutim where a ferry crosses the Rio Guadiana from Sanlucar De Guadiana in Spain, the river marking the border between the two countries. The present road is numbered N124, but the post indicates the 'EN 108, 2d Classe, 0 k'. On the adjacent side is a zero and beneath it distances to Pereiro (14.7 k), Cachoro (47.3 k), and B. De Velho (71k).

PUBLICATION - NEWS

Sue Clifford & Angela King: *England in Particular: A Celebration of the Commonplace, the Local, the Vernacular and the Distinctive*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2006. Pp.528. ISBN: 0 340 82616 9. Hardback. £30.

The charity Common Ground champions local distinctiveness and encourages us to pay attention to the continuing history of our surroundings. With nearly 600 essays and over 450 illustrations, the authors aim to highlight the small details that



Toll House, Yealmpton, Devon

*Drawing of a tollhouse from the book
(illustrator: Lucinda Rogers).*

contribute to the rich diversity of England and give each region a certain uniqueness from its neighbour. The subjects range from boats to topiary, gas holders to prefabs, and are arranged in alphabetical order. Topics of relevance to Milestone Society members include, of course, milestones, giving a brief history. Bollards are also featured (from about 1815 redundant cannons were used to protect footways from horse-drawn vehicles and thus became the most popular design); boundary stones; finger posts (in 1988 Devon had 42 different sorts of road sign, including six finial designs); green lanes; hollow ways; pinfolds; tollhouses (most of them were built of materials local to the area); wayside crosses. As modern

house styles and shopfronts become ubiquitous, the richness of our surroundings needs celebrating and given greater prominence and this eclectic collection of potted histories does just as the title suggests.

Some of the many illustrations in the book have been incorporated into post cards, with four pictures on each card, 14 cards- each representing a different letter(s) of the alphabet. They can be ordered from Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21 High Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JE, or from their website (www.commonground.org.uk). Price (inc. p&p): £8 for a set of 14 cards; £4 for 7 cards (letters represented: A,B,C,F,G,H,IJK,M,O,P,R,S,T,W).

Carol Haines (Norfolk)

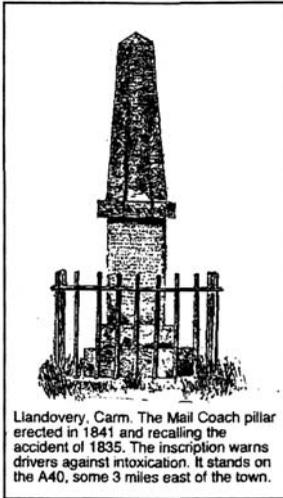
Glenda Law: *Follow the Bow Bells Toll*, 2006. £1.50. Available from Glenda Law, 73 Featherstone, Blindley Heath, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6JZ. Tel: 01342 892539; e-mail: glenda.law@tiscali.co.uk

This is a small, stapled, informative booklet about the well-known and unusual set of mileposts, mostly along the A22, with a further three on the A26, in Sussex. Starting with 29 miles from London (nos.1-28 having been lost) it gives directions on how to find each post in this series, its position, the condition of post and plate, and some local hazards for those wanting to take photos. Several plates, in addition to the 'Bow Bells', have the Pelham Buckle above the mileage number, indicating where the toll road was within the boundaries of the Pelham estates. Half the proceeds from the sale of this booklet are being donated to the Milestone Society by the author.

Janet Dowding (Somerset)

PUBLICATION - BOOK REVIEWS

Richard Barnes: *The Obelisk. A Monumental Feature in Britain*. Frontier, 2004. Pp. 192. ISBN: 1-872914-28-4. £35 (hardback).



If Sir Christopher Wren had heeded Nicholas Hawksmoor's suggestion, St Paul's cathedral would have a drum with an obelisk on top instead of a dome. Associated with the sun in ancient Egypt, and later with freemasonry, Knights Templars and other mystical organisations, the fashion for obelisks came to Britain from Rome in the 1660s. Hawksmoor was responsible for the first large obelisk in Britain, erected in Ripon market place in 1702. Other architects, such as Vanburgh, William Kent and James Gibbs, began to incorporate the columns into their plans for great estates and used them as architectural features in the landscape to give a link with antiquity. John Bell (1811-95) was a particular advocate of the obelisk and devoted much time to studying its ideal dimensions.

Obelisks moved into churches, appearing as decoration on memorials in walls, and then into cemeteries, where polished granite — red from Peterhead and grey from Aberdeen - became a popular material. The majority of obelisks today, however, are those designed as war memorials; the shape blended well with the surroundings of both town and village and was not overtly religious.

The author includes an extensive gazetteer of obelisks arranged by county, and includes some of those used as milestones. Also mentioned is the coaching monument near Llandoverly, erected in 1841, in memory of the passengers of the Gloucester Mail - although fortunately no one was killed - which was driven over a precipice by a drunken coachdriver in 1835 (see drawing above taken from the *AA Illustrated Road Book*, c.1961). Small obelisks were used to mark the meridian and were the forerunners of the OS trig points, although the latter had to do without pyramidal tops to accommodate surveying instruments. Although obelisks had their problems - they were prone to lightning strikes and some collapsed due to the use of unsuitable stone - they still provide elegant features in both town and country and deserve closer attention.

Carol Haines (Norfolk)

Chris Woodard: *You've Reached a Milestone - Welcome to Wales*, 2006. Pp. 90. Copies available at £16.00 plus £2 p&p.

As a child I spent my summer holidays in South Wales, so it was with special interest that I looked out for *You've Reached a Milestone - Welcome to Wales*. This A4 format book is bilingual English/Welsh although I suspect that we *Saesneg* might find the Welsh language quite difficult.

In a brief introductory section, the book starts with a chronology of roads, a chronology of milestones and a history of the mile. The first Welsh turnpike act was for the Shrewsbury to Wrexham road in 1752 and the book lists the Welsh

turnpike acts from 1752 to 1829. The making of turnpike roads continued much later in Wales than in England and this list could usefully have been continued right up to the late 1850s. The main section of the book covers the whole of Wales on a county by county basis. For each county there is a useful sketch map showing the turnpike roads in the county with their modern road numbering. Examples are given of the different types of milestones to be found in that county and these examples are illustrated by the author with line drawings.

The book whetted my appetite and I really would like to have found much more detail about the history of the milestones and turnpikes in Wales. It is however a very useful source book, well illustrated and filling an important gap in our literature of milestones.

Mike Hallett (Herts)

FUTURE EVENTS

It has been suggested that we publicise separately events such as talks and displays in case members from other areas would like to attend. The list depends on us being informed of these events in good time. Please send details together with the name of someone to contact for further information.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2007

Michael Knight is giving talks at the following venues. For further details contact Michael.

24 January Cambs: evening, to History Society, Eltisley.

6 March Suffolk: am/pm, to U3A, Bury St Edmunds.

12 April Herts.: evening, to Royston Methodists.

19 November Northants: pm, to Glapthorn 'Ladies'!

Carol Haines is giving the following talks:

27 February Norfolk Talk on 'Norfolk milestones' to Rudham History Society.
7.30 pm, Rudham Village Hall. Details from NL editors.

1 November Norfolk Talk on 'Street furniture' to Norfolk Ind. Arch. Society,
7.30 pm, Charing Cross Centre, Norwich. Details from NL editors.

Alan Rosevear is giving the following talk:

4 April Oxford Talk on 'Oxford Turnpikes' at the Oxford County Museum,
Woodstock, 7 pm.

Jan Scrine is giving talks in Yorkshire on 'Highways and Waymarkers' as follows:
22 February Ackworth; 1 March, Wyke, Bradford; 16 March, Clayton West.

Meetings

Sunday 22nd April Yorkshire Group meeting at Hebden (near Grassington). 10.30-15.30. Speakers, displays, chocolate cake; bring a packed lunch, beverages provided - nominal charge; Contact Jan Scrine; all welcome - make a weekend of it in this lovely area! Contact Christine Minto to let us know you are coming.

Saturday 14th - Sunday 15th April - Association for Industrial Archaeology [AIA] annual spring meeting at Ironbridge George Museum, Shropshire. The theme is roads and road traffic, under the title of '*Roads: characteristics and forms of transport*'. Speakers (subjects) include John Crompton (evolution of turnpikes and road), Peter Stanier (road diversions through the .ages), Ray Riley (evolution of road bridges), Keith Lawrence (early road legislation) and Alan Rosevear (care of turnpikes). Conference fee (including annual dinner) is £30, excluding accommodation. For further details, please send an sae to Prof Ray Riley.. Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th October - AGM and Annual Conference of the Milestone Society will be held in West Yorkshire, with opportunities for visits and walks.

POSTCARDS - There are now thirteen postcards available in the highly collectable Milestones series, representing in the sequence as published: the cover of Mervyn Benford's SHIRE book, milestones from the Ken Diamond collection, Yorkshire milestones, a selection of all-metal markers plus a 'Bow Bells' post, a superb A49 example near Wigan, Warwickshire milestones, Huntingdonshire milestones, Worcestershire milestones, Cornish milestones, Highway and Way markers of Yorkshire, examples from the Vale of the White Horse, Dorset Milestones, and Dartmoor Milestones. They may be ordered at a cost of 25p each (or 10 for £2), plus postage, from the Secretary Terry Keegan.

THE AUTUMN MEETING (Saturday 7 October 2006 at the National History Museum of Wales, St. Fagans, near Cardiff) - It is always pleasing, when a decision taken in the early days of a project, is found in later years to have been a good one. From the founding of the Milestone Society, the policy has been to hold meetings in museums wherever possible, and our visit to St. Fagans in October was an excellent choice, as was the Welsh theme for the day's programme. A notable feature of the talks was that the speakers were nearly all 'new' to the assembled membership, and probably more than any other meeting that I have attended, showed the tremendous breadth and depth of research that the 'ordinary member' undertakes, and can contribute to the Society.

A nice touch on such occasions, is when a member from the museum opens the proceedings, and tries to divert us from our obsession with milestones. This time it fell to Gerallt Nash, who led us through the history and philosophy of St. Fagans (still the Welsh Folk Museum to many), outlining the many buildings on site, and why they are important in the culture of Wales. As he was finishing, and most people were ready to rush out into the beautiful autumn morning, to see what had been noted, Gerallt spoilt it all by highlighting the re-erected tollhouse from Aberystwyth. The trance was broken, the obsession returned and more talks were wanted. So Michael Freeman set the tone for the day, and gave an excellent introductory talk on the turnpikes and milestones of Ceredigion, or Cardiganshire as it was. Venture too near to the county boundary when talking to the Milestone Society and audience participation springs up, as Michael found from going close to Radnorshire. Not criticism, but information and experience, in which we can all

share. One of the benefits of having such open and friendly meetings. The southern route to Ireland, through Wales was introduced by Chris Woodard. I am fascinated by alternative routes, but had never considered this particular route before. As I remember, it was a case of shall we take the high road or the low road, the modern A40 or A48/M4? Although Chris had prepared a detailed map, I think that an atlas on my knee would have helped, not knowing the finer points of the routes. Still, it filled in an evening the following week.

A good hour and a half was given for lunch and exploration of the museum grounds, before Ian Jolly spoke to us. His talk was very much a longer version of a radio programme that went out the following week ("three times, as it was so good"). I cannot remember seeing so many excellent slides in a presentation, resulting from endless getting in and out of cars. Ian showed that we should be very wary of what we read. He focused on a 'road' frequently written up as a coach road, but on which it would have been impossible to take a coach. We were also shown stones, which do not appear on Ordnance Survey maps, and it was not lost on anyone in the room that 'fieldwork' is an essential part of research in our subject. It was left to Mike Lister to close the day, with a presentation that showed the full value of plotting statistics and other data as graphs and diagrams. Montgomeryshire turnpikes, tolls and traffic data show remarkable differences when displayed as coloured lines, which change over time, in response to factors such as the opening of the railway. Again, presentation of research findings is as important as the research. David Viner brought the meeting to a close with both plenty of time for another look around, and with a summary that showed he had been listening closely to everything, as usual.

David Archer (Montgomeryshire)

COMMITTEE MEETING (Transport Museum, Coventry, Saturday 22 July 2006) - After formalities, details of the June meeting at Burton on Trent, which included the AGM, was considered with a view to identifying possible improvements for future events. A major question raised was if the summer meeting was the best time to hold the AGM and it was decided that in future the AGM should be incorporated into the autumn meeting in October. The summer meeting could be moved to late May. A diary of events was suggested for the Newsletter and arrangements for the coming meeting in Wales on 7 October were discussed. A broad look at the future purpose and function of the Society took place, including what members want from their subscription. The new roles that might be required (e.g. archivist) were raised. Membership statistics were reported along with financial details including locally derived funding. Other topics for discussion were the Coordinators' meeting in Banbury, theft policy, postcards, and publicity. The next meeting was scheduled for 18 November 2006.

COMMITTEE MEETING (Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester, Saturday 18 November 2006) - The usual round of items were up for discussion: membership, finance, pump priming exercises, a debrief on the previous meeting for members, venues for future meetings, and the three Society publications. There

is a strong need for a person to take on Publicity for the Society and also for someone to advise on theft. The structure and formation of Society archives (hard copy and electronic) needed to be addressed and it was suggested that a guidance note on storing material by individuals would be of value.

FUTURE SOCIETY MEETINGS - At recent meetings, the Society's committee examined the national meetings programme over the past few years, and decided to promote some changes to the timetable. The main variation decided upon is to interchange the spring and autumn meetings, so that as from 2007 the autumn meeting will also include the AGM and become the Society's annual conference. As before, it will be based somewhere reasonably central in England, where convenience of the venue is more important than any particular 'milestone' interest it may have, and we would try to attract a keynote speaker on a topic relevant to the membership as a whole. Suggestions for possible speakers are always welcome. Presentations of project work via the various members' displays would also be a key feature, with enough time to enjoy them. The target date is early to mid October each year, in 2007 on either Saturday or Sunday 6th/7th October, at a Yorkshire venue.

The 'new' spring meeting would be held around the country at venues with something interesting to show, and a programme of regionally significant stories and updates. The second Saturday in May is targeted, hoping that some members might also take some holiday to enjoy the area into the bargain. If possible, the Society would like to encourage 'milestone trails' from the venue for visiting members to follow at their leisure. All this is of course in addition to the very successful regional meetings which happen around the country (for which there ought to be some sort of annual prize!) and maybe we can dovetail in with some of these over the next few years. The date and venue for 2007 is Dorchester in Dorset on Saturday 12th May.

David Viner

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES DISCUSSION FORUM

At the Banbury meeting for county representatives it was agreed that this group could benefit from a way to share ideas, discuss matters of common interest and get help from other county representatives more often than the yearly meetings. An on-line group has been established for this purpose - come and join us at:

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/mss-coords/>

Alternatively if you prefer to use just e-mail, send mail to:

mss-coords-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

with the word subscribe in the subject box and in the text a few words saying who you are and which county you represent. If you have any problems, contact me at:

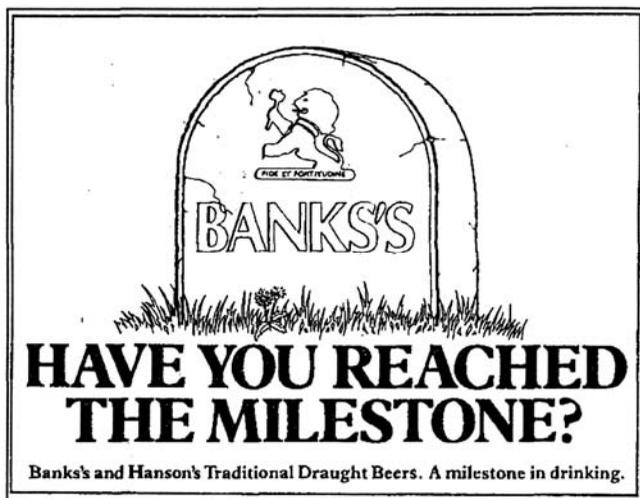
mss-coords-owner@yahoogroups.com

Richard Mudhar (Suffolk)

CONTACTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS - The following e-mail addresses appear on the website and are repeated here:

Chairman, David Viner:
Hon Secretary, Terry Keegan:
Hon Treasurer, Jan Scrine:
Membership Secretary, Brian Barrow:
Database & Recording Standards, Alan Rosevear:
County Coordination, Rob Caldicott:

DEADLINE FOR THE NEWSLETTER FOR JULY 2007 - Contributions for inclusion in the July 2007 Newsletter should reach the Editors by Monday 11 June 2007. Submission of articles in electronic form (floppy disc) using Microsoft Word is particularly convenient. However, if you have a recent PC with Microsoft Office XP or Word 97 please use the "SAVE AS" option (not "SAVE") and save files in Word 5.1 for Macintosh format. If this is not an option, please save in RTF (Rich Text Format), Word 6.0/97, or Wordperfect 5.x for Windows format.



The above advert appeared regularly in issues of the Journal of the Black Country Society. In recent years Banks's and Hanson's, of Chapel Ash, Wolverhampton, has been absorbed into the Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries. Although ale production continues, the logo has changed. Picture and information from Michael Knight (Beds.).

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