



THE MILESTONE SOCIETY

Newsletter 6

January 2004



The Cover Picture - The original turnpike from Norwich towards Great Yarmouth was created in 1768. East of Acle the road meandered north of the river Bure through Burgh St Margaret and Filby and ended at Caister Causeway, 2½ miles north of Yarmouth. The causeway itself was administered by the Corporation of Great Yarmouth under an Act of 1711. In 1828 plans were displayed for a new turnpike from Acle to Great Yarmouth, reducing the distance by 3 miles 5 furlongs. With one slight change in alignment, the road went straight across the Halvergate Marshes south of the Bure. The construction of the road was a significant feat of engineering. A dyke was dug either side of the planned road. A mattress of wicker brush was laid across the marsh, a layer of soil from the dykes placed on top, followed by another layer of willows and finally a layer of gravel. Willows were planted either side of the road so that the roots would grow into the brush layers and consolidate them. The Acle New Road was opened in 1831 with a display of speed by the mail coach. Unfortunately the coach overturned, killing the driver and postilion. Even today fatal accidents on the 'Acle Straight' are frequent as motorists see a straight stretch of road and misjudge speed and conditions. Despite campaigns for a dual carriageway, the Highways Agency has so far declined to disturb an environmentally sensitive wetland area. We must just learn to slow down and appreciate the history of our surroundings.

Carol Haines (Norfolk)

EDITORS' COMMENTS - The format of the Newsletter continues largely as before but the Editors are always pleased to receive suggestions and comments on content and treatment of material which, of course, must come initially from the valued contributors. Clearly, within the confines of a convenient size for a Newsletter, there is a fine balance to be struck between small 'newsy' items and somewhat longer articles with a more factual content. We see the planned Journal as the rightful place for longer and more in depth studies, which may often be works with references, allowing an author room to examine a more focussed theme which will stand on its own as a definitive study or as material on which to build later research. We think the Newsletter should keep the members informed of those topics with which the Committee is currently concerned and of progress in the County Coordinator network, although not so many reports from the Counties have been received for this issue. We hope that the Notes and Queries section continues to provide a useful service and that the book reviews provide a source of information on literature relevant to the aims and interests of our members.

Although the Autumn Meeting for 2003 was advertised in the last issue to take place at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal on 1 November 2003, due to circumstances beyond the control of the Society, it had to be cancelled about three weeks before the proposed date. Members who had booked were informed and fees returned. The National Trust offered, free of room charge, the alternative date of Saturday 28 February 2004, as compensation to the Society, and details of this meeting and an application form are enclosed with this Newsletter.

The Society website (<http://www.milestone-society.co.uk>) offers a further source of information for members, including application forms for meetings, and an attempt is made to display there current important information for members.

MILESTONE SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2003-2004 - Chairman, David Viner; Hon. Secretary, Terry Keegan; Hon. Treasurer, Jan Scrine; Membership Secretary, Brian Barrow; County Coordination, Mike Buxton and Mervyn Benford; Database & Recording Standards, Alan Rosevear; Conservation Advice, Jeremy Milln; Constitution & Charitable Status, Laurence Dopson; Publicity, Tony Boyce;

Newsletter Editors, Alan & Carol Haines; Journal Editors, David Viner, Terry Keegan, Carol Haines, Tim Stevens.

COMMITTEE MEETING (Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester, 21 June 2003) - Apologies were received from Alan and Carol Haines, Laurence Dopson, and Jeremy Milln; Tony Boyce joined the Committee as publicity officer. The Minutes from the previous meeting confirmed and under matters arising progress towards a charitable status was considered (there are still questions being asked by the Commissioners), and a debriefing session was held on the third AGM at Crich, in order to help future planning of such meetings. The Treasurer reported on the current sum held in the Society's account and the Membership Secretary reported that there were currently 275 paid-up members (about 50 being dual or corporate members) although renewal was awaited on a further 64 subscriptions. Encouragingly, new members continue to come forward (33 since 1st March) and a short article by Terry Keegan in a magazine generated 6 members.

Mike Buxton gave an update on the County Coordinator network, and the question of coverage in counties without coordinators, or those which required replacements was considered. The role of coordinators, and the level of activity was also discussed, and Mike agreed to organise a meeting for coordinators at Banbury in the autumn. For the coordinators, Mervyn Benford has produced, based on the series of photos on the cover of his book *Milestones*, a pack of information which includes a poster and notelets, and also has had postcards made with the same illustrations.

The National database continues to progress under Alan Rosevear's expert guidance, and matters such as the useful contact with English Heritage, copyright issues, and the making of CDs containing data and photos were discussed, as were the Jack Diamond collection and the Jack Ward collection at English Heritage.

Venues for future meetings, progress on the Journal, conservation and restoration, the looting and sale of plates, and metrication (particularly with respect to Ireland) were also considered.

COMMITTEE MEETING (Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester, 22 November 2003) - The usual formalities of previous minutes and matters arising (implications of possible metrication, logos on letterheads, and extent of insurance cover) were carried out together with a financial update. Regarding membership, as of 21/11/03 the situation was: individual members 340, Corporate members 11, overseas members 4, family members 56, but the total of 411 included 44 who have not yet replied to reminders to renew. There have been 55 new members since 1/6/03. It appears to be effective to send reminders and this should be done 3 months after the usual renewal date of 1 June. The progress towards a charitable status is proving somewhat tortuous and a letter from the Charity Commissioners was read out giving their views and essentially asking for more information. It was felt that these hurdles were not insuperable and a reply would be drafted addressing

the points raised.

A report on the successful coordinators' meeting held in Banbury on 5 October was provided by Mike Buxton and a useful summary of resolutions was available. The question of making available the individual county newsletters to other county coordinators was considered, and although e-mail offers a painless method of transmission, it was considered by some to be rather time intensive regarding downloading via the internet and it was thought that an easier method was to make copies available at the Society meetings, for interested parties. Funding of the County Coordinators was discussed - they received a sum of £10 last year and were asked to submit claims for any further expenses - and it was decided that a further sum of £10 could be made available this coming year to those people who submitted a statement summarising their previous year's expenses.

Future meetings, especially the postponed Styal meeting, now scheduled for 28 February 2004, were considered. The Styal programme was largely completed, and details should be circulated with the January Newsletter and would be given on the website. Venue possibilities for future meetings were considered, the most important considerations being accessibility and the capacity of the room hired. Possible locations at Tile Hill (near Coventry) or the Bass Museum (Burton) were to be investigated for the AGM on Saturday 12 June 2004, and a theme of 'Maps & Milestones' was thought appropriate. An autumn meeting at 'Milestones' (Basingstoke) on Saturday 9 October 2004 is proposed.

Progress on formation of the national database, in the very capable hands of Alan Rosevear, is most encouraging, full records on 3219 of the suspected total of 6632 milestones still extant having been recorded centrally, this representing 48.5% of the total. A brief report on the progress of Newsletter 6 was given and proof pages of the Journal were available for inspection. It seems that the latter will be 44 pages in length and a print run of 750 is envisaged. Mervyn Benford has arranged the printing of postcards, showing an assortment of milestones, which provide a most attractive way to promote the Society. One will be included with each copy of the Journal.

The next committee meeting was arranged for 20 March 2004.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER MATTERS - A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER.

The Society's funds are now healthy enough to enable us to operate at the level of professionalism required of a national body, for example launching a quality journal and eventually printing our 'guidance notes'. As we grow (and especially if we obtain Charitable Status) we will need an Hon. Auditor. A retired accountant would be ideal. If you know of anyone who might just be interested and willing, please get in touch with the Newsletter Editors, David Viner or with me! (*Please also see the separate notice on p. 27 highlighting this need - Editors*).

Individual Counties are organised in different ways; some (such as Worcester and Cumbria) raise substantial funding through running open meetings and social events. There is also much grant funding available from bodies such as

the Heritage Lottery Fund, for defined projects. If anyone has investigated such routes already and wishes to pursue matters further under the umbrella of the Society, please get in touch with me.

I wonder if anyone has had experience of preparing a Schools Resource Pack about Milestones / Roads etc? I'm looking into the possibility of getting funding for such a project in the West Yorkshire area, because this would give us a route for sustainability in the conservation of mileposts. All thoughts welcomed.

Jan Scrine (Treasurer)

NEWS FROM THE COUNTY GROUPS

Bedfordshire - (see under Huntingdonshire)

Cheshire - John Higgins has been photographing milestones in the Macclesfield and Congleton boroughs. He would like any information members may have from this area.

Derbyshire - Although meetings of county members are well attended, a coordinator living in the county has not yet been found, and John Higgins is still undertaking that role. Some cast iron posts have been recorded in the Wingerworth area that appear every quarter of a mile.

Devon - Tim Jenkinson, who has lived in Devon since 1988, has agreed to become coordinator for the county. He is currently in the process of contacting the five other members in the county but in the meantime has begun to record some of the surviving milestones. Devon is a vast county with a collective road length that is second only to Yorkshire. Many of the old Turnpike Roads in the county have been superseded by dual carriageways such as the A30 and A38, but most of the original routes can still be traced, often with milestones intact.

According to the Society's database, Devon has a somewhat sketchy recording history so Tim has virtually begun from scratch and has started surveying locally in the region of Teignmouth and Newton Abbot, where amongst the various mile markers there are a number of interesting guide stones in the country lanes of south-east Dartmoor. Indeed, other parts of Dartmoor retain various milestones associated with the 18th century Turnpike Trusts of Ashburton, Tavistock and Moretonhampstead although some of these have now fallen into disrepair. Tim is hoping to contact Devonian members with a view to undertaking small-scale surveys where possible and will most probably maintain contact through mailing in the first instance rather than meetings. He expects that to get Devon properly represented will be a large project but one well worth pursuing.

Dorset - County Coordinator John Tybjerg writes: This summer has seen some very good refurbishment of the milestones along the A31. This is a trunk road and thus considered by Dorset County Council to be a Highways Authority responsibility. DCC passed my letter requesting some fairly urgent work on two milestones to Mott McDonald, the company contracted to manage the A31, and they agreed to carry out the work. At the 'unveiling' of these two I 'just happened to have pictures

of the other nine available' and they agreed to carry out work on these as well. So far work on eight has been completed, including the provision of three new metal plates, and work has started on re-setting two more to their original depth.

Colin Payne has located three more milestones. The first is the top part of a milestone, with the outline of the plate still showing, built into a stone wall just north of Weymouth. The other two are on the Sherborne - Leigh route and on the Dorchester - Maiden Newton route. Both Colin and I felt that these two ought to be there somewhere but up to now they had been elusive. The plans for 2004 start with a check on the continued existence and condition of all our milestones and a get together of all our members and supporters in February/March.

Essex - In his group newsletter (now issue number 7), John Nicholls reports that several more milestones have been located in the county. One stone (inscribed SHOREDITCH CH. 5 MILES) has been tracked down to the Vestry House Museum, Walthamstow. When time allows John has been cleaning and painting stones, and is also recording old finger posts; the museum at Walthamstow also has a guidepost on display and John has researched its history. It was manufactured at the Maldon Iron Works.

Hertfordshire - John Donovan has written a short article on milestones which is to be included in a new Hertfordshire History Atlas. He also reports that the XIXth milestone out of London on the A1000 (TL 228075) was recently knocked 20 yards along the verge by a car. Although parts of the car were left behind, the stone was remarkably undamaged. He contacted Hatfield Highways and the stone is now back in its original position. John has been building up a good relationship with district Conservation Officers in the county resulting in a useful mutual exchange of information.

Huntingdonshire - Michael Knight continues to give talks, mostly to local history groups. He has also had two articles published in *Records of Huntingdonshire* [Vol.3, No.9 (2001-2)]. "The Crosshall to Brington Bridge Turnpike Road" describes the present B645/B660, the first four miles of which, from Crosshall, were originally controlled by the Great North Road Trust under an Act of 1725. In 1754 this stretch was incorporated into a new Turnpike Act covering a total 11½ miles of road up to Brington Bridge. Most of the milestones seem to have survived although some are in urgent need of restoration. They are made of oolitic limestone, probably from Northamptonshire. His second article, "Bedfordshire's Northernmost Point", deals with the Three Shire Stone marking the boundaries of Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire. The present pillar beside the B645 dates from the 1950s but there is evidence of a marker there in 1765. It is also, coincidentally, the highest point in Huntingdonshire at 270 ft.

Norfolk - Carol Haines reports: The Norfolk WI Milestone Project has been a great success (see separate article). It has provided many new lines of enquiry and hopefully has opened many more people's eyes to the plight of the county's milestones, many of which are in poor condition. Although over 20 milestones have been added to the county total through the WI and members' efforts, several others previously recorded can no longer be found. Over 140 records are now on the Society's national database, just over a third of the total of surviving milestones. I

recently had a meeting with the very helpful and sympathetic County Council Buildings Conservation Team, mainly to discuss possible repair of a damaged octagonal milestone on the B1110 at Thornage and to take them some rescued pieces of it. It was also learned that an estimate for making a replacement to the Spixworth milestone, now buried under a cycle track, is awaiting approval. It will cost about £1000 for one to be made in Portland stone.

Shropshire - Terry Keegan has repainted seven milestones/posts in the Clee Hill area.

Somerset - Janet Dowding writes: The autumn meeting of the Somerset Group was held on 22 November 2003. We are still a small group for so large a county, but two new members did attend. The Senior Conservation officer of Somerset CC, Mr Hagley, was also present and we had a great many questions and points of view to put to him and he answered them all to our interest and satisfaction, not just on milestones but all aspects of conservation in Somerset such as listed buildings in general, toll houses, Roman remains etc. He went on to explain the project of putting the Somerset Historic Environment Record, including milestones, online to increase public accessibility to archaeological information. Somerset CC welcomes any new information from our Group's milestone survey which is not actually on their database; also information on damaged or broken ones or those that have since gone missing. Leaflets on this and other aspects of Somerset CC's conservation work were given to members. As W. S. Atkins are no longer contractors to Somerset, Mr Hagley explained that such work is now back with the Area Managers in the District Councils. He did not encourage parish councils or schools to adopt local milestones because of health and safety concerns. Neither was he keen on individual MS members renovating stones for the same reasons, and any member wishing to undertake such work would have to give details to Mr Hagley for an assessment of the merits, viability and hazards.

Out of a possible 300 existing milestones in Somerset, 269 have now been surveyed and photographed, and most of these put on the database. I have also been able to supply Frank Minto with a fair amount of identification for those milestones in Somerset in the Ken Diamond collection. I decided to sell the MS postcards at 25p each to create a small fund to enable the Group to buy a small quantity of the next issue when available. We plan to hold another meeting of the Group in February or March next year.

Staffordshire - John Higgins has located 421 milestones in Staffs and wonders if this is a record. The County Council discovered a 30-year-old map showing all turnpike era milestones which enabled him to add three to his previous total. Although living in Staffs, John has also taken Cheshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Shropshire under his wing until separate coordinators can be found. He produces an occasional newsletter entitled 'North Midlands Milestones'.

Warwickshire - Mike Buxton reports that the Warwickshire Group met at the Manor House Hotel Leamington Spa on 21 Oct. Five members attended including Jan Scrine, the Treasurer of the Society. Also in attendance was Peter Samwell from the County Highway Authority who talked about his role and priorities. He donated a copy of his personal collection of early 1980's photographs of

Warwickshire milestones at least two of which members have no knowledge of and which they intend to investigate. Mike Buxton provided members with an update of the National Society news and members discussed a variety of topics relating to Warwickshire including surveying, restoration, publicity and community involvements. The next meeting is scheduled for 23 March 2004 at the Castle Inn, Edge Hill.

Worcestershire - The Editors have received issues 8 to 10 of the excellent publication '*Worcestershire Miles*', the occasional newsletter produced under the editorship of the County Coordinator Terry Keegan, for members of the Worcestershire group of the Milestone Society. This publication, containing reports on new finds, restoration and replating projects, group meetings, local parish initiatives, snippets of general information, not to mention excellent line drawings of milestones featured in the articles, is a first class example of how to coordinate the efforts within a county. Copies of this newsletter can be seen at the meetings of the Milestone Society and may be available for those interested members from other county groups. Issue 8 reports three new finds, and highlights the value of talking to locals who often have useful knowledge on milemarkers to date unknown to the Society. Issue 9 reports on progress on the milestone plate replacement project on the A443 between Worcester and Great Witley, potential cooperation between the group and the Worcestershire Historic Environment & Archaeological Service, Terry Keegan's sterling efforts on repainting milestones, reports on talks to be given by members of the group, and on a feature article in the *Worcester Evening News*, on Worcestershire Milestones. Issue 10 has a key article on the near loss of a milestone on the A456, an attempted theft which was foiled by an observant householder who saw two men in the process of removing the stone! When challenged, the men 'melted into the night', and the householder took the initiative to take the stone into safe keeping and then briefed the local council. The link between milestones and the early postal service is highlighted, and an interesting idea is mooted regarding the preparation of a book on Worcestershire Milestones, an idea that might form an example for other county groups to follow.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Thames marker. A photograph has been received from David Blackburn (Derbys.) of a metal boundary marker post beside the river Thames. It is a thin vertical post with an octagonal head. Cast on the head is an elaborate coat of arms around which are the words 'The Conservators of the River Thames'. Are these elegant-looking posts common and what is their purpose?

Waggoners' Warning. Another photograph from David Blackburn, who seems to have a knack for finding unusual signs, is of a metal marker seen beside the A161 at the southern end of Epworth (Lines.). It was put up by the Lindsey division of Lincolnshire and has the name of Charles Scorer, Clerk of the County Council on it. The message is directed at waggoners and reads: 'Waggoners descending this hill must have the locked wheels properly fitted in a shoe or slipper with smooth bottom so as to prevent injury to the road. Offenders will be prosecuted.' David

was amused because the hills in this area are very gentle. Do similar signs exist in other areas?

Five-star Milestone. *Harden's Hotel Guide 2004* only lists two top-grade hotels in London, the highest standards of service now mostly being found further afield. One of these London establishments is The Milestone in Kensington, W8 which is described as 'fabulous in every way'. It should more properly be called The Milepost because it has a cast iron post sitting just behind its front railings. Distances are given to Hounslow 8½ and London 1½.



Stolen heritage. A recent issue of English Heritage's magazine *Heritage Today* notes the theft of a guide post in Devon (see picture left). The granite post, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, was one metre long and weighed 560 lbs (254 kg) so must have needed lifting equipment to shift it. The inscription reads: HATH/ERLY/1704/SM/GL and OKE/AMP/TON/1704. English Heritage members were asked to look out for it in antique shops; information can also be passed to the Milestone Society.

Junior waymarkers. Details of a children's book to look out for in secondhand book shops have been sent by Neville Billington (Worcs.). The title is *Traffic* by Jack Bainbridge (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978. ISBN: 0 631 93930 X). The subjects covered include milestones, tollhouses, turnpikes, early bicycles, canals and horse brasses. It suggests that reader's catalogue the milestones in their district.

Stolen guide post

Signed stones. When emerging from lunch at The Castle Inn, Spofforth (Yorks), the editors spotted a freshly painted milepost. On the side was painted 'BBS '03' and was obviously one renovated by Brian Bradley-Smith (see Newsletter 5, p.16). It seems a good idea to give an indication of who has done the work so that acknowledgement can go where it is due.

Caution cyclists. While searching for milestones near Congleton in Cheshire, John Nicholls (Essex) came across this National Cyclists Union caution sign. He wonders how many of these signs have survived, what date they were erected, and what is the significance of the eight-pointed star with WAY inside it.



National Cyclists Union sign



B4439 milemarker

Second City. The milemarker illustrated (previous page) was found by Michael Knight (Beds.) on the Old Warwick Road (B4439) opposite the church in Rowington village. The cast iron plate is bolted to a wooden shield and protected by a small wall of bricks. Michael comments that, although we see many milemarkers identifying our capital city, we see very few highlighting our second city, Birmingham.

A SCOTTISH SURPRISE

Searching for milestones in Scotland is intriguing. Long barren stretches suddenly give way to rich strings of milestones virtually intact. Remote areas sometimes offer a good return. Islands like Arran, Bute and Mull have long been known to be well-endowed considering the limited degree of motor traffic likely to have troubled planners in the milestone era. The attractive Stirlingshire post types reach into the Trossachs along very small roads where only a hotel or an island seem targets for routes and so become featured in the design.

Returning recently from the far north-west, we had not been too surprised by the relative absence of markers up beyond Ullapool. It is a wilderness landscape where travel must have been difficult and uncomfortable and routes so few that everyone knew distances anyway. Nevertheless we found something indicative of distance information at the junction of the A838 and A836 near the southern end of bleak Loch Shin. To classify these roads as A roads is an administrative euphemism. If they saw five vehicles an hour outside local traffic it would be surprising, except in the peak holiday season when it might rise to ten!

Returning south via Fort William we wanted to try that chunk of land known as Morven, not an island but, bounded by Lochs Linnhe and Sunart and the Sound of Mull, almost one. It is reached by ferry to Corran from the A82, and with its own ferry to Mull from a tiny village port at Lochaline. Its main A861 road leads towards Lochaline and has some rather eroded milestones. We ignored the B 8043 branch round the coast to Corran in favour of the grander classification of the A884, itself a Lochaline-destined branch off the A861 just east of Strontian. It passes a very pretty waterfall near a very tight bend and then, not far beyond that comes a fine, distinctive metal mile marker giving distances to Corran and to Lochaline. It is a small, slim, decoratively-shaped post with two small flat plates just big enough to carry the information. It needs tender loving care! That was a most exciting find but our joy mounted when another one appeared four miles further on and when we found the good majority in place all the way to Lochaline. All needed attention but those nearer Lochaline showed better surviving white paint, perhaps resulting from better protection from wind and weather.

The total distance was cast as 32¹/₂ on the first example but the others gave



Drawing by Terry Keegan

just 32 so in that four miles between first and second sightings half a mile was lost somewhere! The final one, which should have read 31/1, had the '1' of '31' missing and it seems the numbers must have been cast separately and affixed by metal to metal bonding that had in this case given way. We supposed that to be the end of the story but there was a small road continuing round the coast to a dead end hamlet near which was a castle ruin and where a good if distant picture might be taken of Tobermory on Mull, plus more views of the rugged Mull scenery. It was a real surprise at the outset of this tiny road to find another identically-styled marker, giving Corran its full 32 miles with a new destination, BONNAVOULIN, 10¼ miles away. Today's signpost indicates Drimnin. The lady at the ferry terminal café smiled when questioned on this, agreeing that Drimnin was the end of the road but that there was still an old man who called it Bonnavoulin, as per the marker. My very hefty atlas of Scotland, published 1897, shows Drimnin only as Drimnin Cott., plus a Post Office and a large building indeed called Bonnavoulin, which clearly had inspired the original markers. Only two further examples of what was surely a full original run of markers could be found, though observation in winter could reveal more, since here in May vegetation abounds whereas the main Lochaline-Corran series stood on mainly open ground. Of these two one was totally free-standing, in a ditch, all its metal flanges for burying with earth exposed and could easily have been lifted and removed but, of course, I took steps to re-plant it.

Still the day's excitement was not over. Returning to Corran we took that B road round the coast back to the A 861 and we were amazed again to find identical markers, showing the same 32 mile total between the two places. We noted at least a third of them and though the terrain was more rocky and exposed we were hurrying by then to catch a ferry and so others may have remained unseen. We could not have imagined that one road to Lochaline would be so well-endowed let alone two, plus that distinctly minor dead end coastal road. Scotland remains a land of potential discovery for milestone hunters!

Mervyn Benford (Oxon)

GUISBOROUGH AND THE MARKET TOWNS INITIATIVE

I was delighted to receive via Shire Books a letter from Roger Higgins, Senior Planner/Urban Design at Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council reporting the restoration of a series of metal mile markers within the Borough boundaries. The markers were sand blasted, repainted and restored by Cleveland Corrosion Control, with funding from the Market Towns Initiative of the Countryside Agency. Guisborough was chosen to be involved in a pilot project for the initiative which is not aimed at all market towns but only at those still with a significant swathe of rural territory. Bidding is very competitive for the limited resources available and Guisborough is to be congratulated on persuading the Agency that repainting rural milestones was a worthy way of achieving the main goal which is to awaken awareness of the concept of a market town serving rural constituents. The argument was based directly on the impact of the "countdown to Guisborough" the markers represented.

Milestones will be included in a forthcoming local radio feature on general conservation issues, following the BBC's own encouragement of local heritage issues as media features. The Milestone Society has offered to help in such ventures and local branches are encouraged to exploit local media opportunities as much as possible as a way to widen awareness, not least in local authorities and potential funding agencies. The BBC's South Local TV station recently asked viewers to nominate buildings they thought merited conservation and our Dorset Regional Co-ordinator, John Tybjerg, sent in a picture of a milestone which the programme used.

The Guisborough markers are the typical triangular metal type with sloping top which records NRYCC (North Riding of Yorkshire County Council) as the originating authority, with distances to WHITBY and GUISBOROUGH on the left and right faces. Unfortunately, the marker showing five miles to Guisborough, was smashed a few years ago into many pieces in a road accident but the portion of the right hand plate showing Guisborough 5 was rescued and council engineers have managed to create a flat plate from it with a nice pedimented top and have mounted it on Leckwood Beck Bridge, just 30 yards from its original location. It would have been churlish to suggest in the light of such enterprising concern that perhaps some small indication that it was not an original item should have been included! We report this as a splendid example of local authority sensitivity and initiative and congratulate all those concerned, and moves are now afoot to interest the North Yorks Moors National Park in the many other surviving milemarkers of the former North Riding's stock that need similar careful treatment.

The Society is anxious to encourage such work and it was kind of Roger to send his letter to me via Shire Publications saying that my book (*Milestones*, Shire 1999) had inspired his own efforts. When Durham inherited some former NRYCC metal makers following local government boundary change in 1973 the offending initials were either painted out or in some cases simply hacked off, though that may have been vandalism rather than official action. Surely it is preferable that the originating authority should be retained in such cases for indicating a milemarker's heritage rather than the adoptive owner.

Mervyn Benford (Oxon)

THE NORFOLK WI MILESTONE PROJECT

In September 2002 I was contacted by a member of the Norfolk Women's Institute committee who was setting up a new project for the county's branches to work on. Having recently become aware of the milestone in her village, she wondered if this could be the subject of a project. During background research she was given my name and we met and discussed the possibilities. It was thought that asking WI members to fill in the Milestone Society's recording sheet was not practicable, and therefore a simple form was devised which asked for details of location and inscription, together with a photograph or a sketch, and any other information that could be gleaned about the stone. The results were displayed at the Royal Norfolk Show last June, linked to an exhibition on milestones in women's history, and a

small selection has also been seen at other county events. A report has also been sent to a national WI project workshop so that other counties can see what has been done and possibly plan something similar.

Entries were received from over half of the approximately 200 WI branches in Norfolk. A few found no milestones in their area, most returns recorded one or two, some branches ventured much further afield and produced large files of photos, sketches and maps. To date I have seen just over half of the results and it is obvious that the project has been a great success. I am making a catalogue of all the milestones mentioned, and am following up several interesting pieces of information.

Although I thought I had tracked down most of the county's milestones over the past 20 years, I had recently begun to realise that there were quite a few I had missed. As many of my records are over ten years old, I did not know how many of those not seen for some time had survived. The project showed that many stones, thankfully, were still in place, although some had been knocked over. Sadly some are now missing, and probable reasons were given for their disappearance. Happily, though, more stones have come to light to add to the county list; two of them are in private gardens, one being the only known survivor of a series between King's Lynn and Swaffham. Stalham WI reported 'a great digging and cutting session' to reveal their long-hidden milestone.

The prize must surely go to those who spotted the milestone in Tottington. This is one of several villages forcibly cleared during WW2 so that the Ministry of Defence could create a large military training area in Breckland. The inhabitants have never been allowed back. A few times each year guided excursions are allowed into the battle area and ladies from Northwold WI were on one of these and ordered their minibus to stop so that they could nip out and get a photo. Early OS maps show a road running from Watton to Thetford with milestones. It is known that Lord Walsingham had milestones placed along this road at his own expense sometime prior to 1772, and in 1788 a turnpike was proposed, but Lord W objected because it might damage his rabbit warrens. Most of the road is now out of bounds.

Of equal interest were the additional comments and observations on the forms. An elderly resident of one village remembered the milepost being buried during the war, and it is probably still underground; another post has been stolen but WI members think they know its whereabouts. Spixworth WI reported that their former milestone is now probably buried under a cycle track. The parish council are investigating the possibility of having a replacement made, and after an enquiry from the County Buildings Conservation Team, I was able to provide a 20-year-old photograph of the original.

Several WI branches mentioned how much they had enjoyed the project and had become quite addicted to looking for milestones, and had also recorded unusual boundary markers.

It has been invaluable to have recorders looking in their own area who have been able to search more thoroughly and acquire information from local residents. Many WI members are also involved with parish councils, and hopefully they will

spread a greater awareness of the subject. Some members commented that they had contacted their parish council to re-erect a fallen stone, and other milestones have been repainted recently after many years of neglect. The results of the project will eventually be available through the Norfolk coordinator of the Milestone Society and the Norfolk Industrial Archaeology Society (both of whose hats I wear!). There is also the possibility of the Milestone Society applying for a small grant from the Local Heritage Initiative under the NFWI Community Challenge. A possible project might be to produce a leaflet, utilising some of the WI branches' information and photographs, for distribution to Norfolk parish councils to raise awareness of milestones and waymarkers, along with guidance on restoration from the Society's publications.

Carol Haines (Norfolk)

[The website of the National Federation of Womens Institutes is: www.womens-institute.org.uk]

SOME CAERNARFONSHIRE MILESTONES

In a county noted for the production of slate, it is hardly surprising that there is widespread use of this material for milestones. A typical milestone is 32 ins above ground level, 18 ins wide and 2 ins thick, with chamfered corners. Unfortunately slate, being brittle, is prone to damage. The following observations were made on two cycling holidays in 2003.

Approaching from the south, the A5, Telford's masterpiece, is the most well-known road in the area. The milestones have a standard design cast iron plate affixed to the stone. These plates have in this area all been painted black, and where necessary replacements have been made for missing ones, having 2003 cast on the top. Only two Caernarfonshire place names occur: C. CURIG and BANGOR. The A470 also comes from the south entering the county over the Crimea Pass (Bwlch-y-Gorddian), near the summit of which is the first slate: MILES/FESTINIOG 5/DOLWYDDELAN 3/BETTWYSYCOED 9½/LLANWRST 13. A few miles further on the B4406 goes off to Penmachno. Three slate milestones are found, one being MILES/FESTINIOG 12/PENMACHNO 2/BETTWYSYCOED 2½/LLANWRST 6. On the final one in Penmachno village, which is set in a wall, Penmachno is omitted.

The A487 starts from a junction with the A5 south of the Menai Bridge, going to Caernarfon and eventually to Porthmadog. There are two MSs before the town; the first is a plate of slate attached to a wall (Caernarvon 2) and the other is an engraved stone in a wall (Caernarvon 1). Another engraved slate is the only MS south of the town (Caernarvon 11). The A499 diverges from the A487 to go to Pwllheli and Abersoch. On this road two engraved stones, one is without mileages, the other reads: CARNARVON 10/PWLLHELI 10. At the further end are two slates: MILES/PWLLHELI 2/LLANBEDROG 2½/ABERSOCH 5. The other is two miles on towards Abersoch.

The latter two places are on the Lleyn Peninsula without doubt having the greatest number of small places feature on its stones than anywhere else. The now

obscure Porth Dinllaen was once a serious contender as a port for the Irish mailboats. Following the 1776 Turnpike Act for a road from Portmadoc to the peninsula another Act was obtained for a road to Forth Dinllaen, now no longer accessible by a public road. The location of some of the MSs is marked by an arrow painted on the road, sometimes with a number or only a number. Perhaps the local authority is taking an interest.

The B4354 is the direct way to Porth Dinllaen. The MS nearest to the road end is, in common with all others, of slate and reads: MILES/PORTHDINLLEYN 12/NEVIN 1 I/FOUR CROSSES 3/CHWILOG 1/CRICCIETH 3. (Four Crosses is at Rhyd-y-Gwystl.) On the next one Chwilog is omitted and EDERN 10½ appears. The following one is missing. Then Chwilog reappears at the expense of Four Crosses. The next reads: MILES/PORTHDINLLEYN 8/NEVIN 7/FOUR CROSSES 1/CHWILOG 3/CRICCIETH 7½/PORTMADOC 12½/EDERN 7½, thereby showing seven place names. This series continues with 5 from Porthdinlleyn missing with the next at Glanarafon being the last on this road. The road briefly joins the A497 and there is a MS at the junction (Pwllheli 15). The B4412 at Morfa Nevyon has a MS, part of which is buried.

The B4413 goes from Llanbedrog to Aberdaron and the first MS is badly damaged: (Pwllheli 5). The Pwllheli 7, 8 and 15 stones survive, while at Sarn Meyllteyrn the MS reads: P 11 A 5¼. The B4415 links Efailnewydd with Nanhoron and five stones have survived, one being a horizontal slate set in a wall. Three stones have been found along the B4417, and along the A497 four up to Criccieth. North of Criccieth the B4411 joins the A487 and North of Rhoslan is a solitary MS (Criccieth 3).

The Snowdon Road goes south from Caernarfon on the A487 to Penygroes, then along the B4418 through the Nantlle Valley which, once the mining area is left, becomes very picturesque. Of the four MSs shown on the OS map, only one was found (Nantlle Station 3). The station was opened in 1872. Going north on the A4085 two engraved fingerposts stand at the junction with the B4418. From here four MSs survive, each of a different style. On the A4086 four can be found. There is a return to engraved slates on the A498, where four have survived.

A diversion can be taken to see a MS on the A4085 at Perthi. South of Beddgelert around the river bridge at Pont Aberglaslyn are three separate slate finger posts. To end our journey on the A498 there are just two more MSs: MILES/TREMADOC 3/BEDDGELEERT 3½/CAPEL CURIG 15/ CRICCIETH 7½ and another 2 miles from Tremadoc.

Finally two Welsh milestone curiosities: near Machynlleth can be seen white-painted engraved slates bearing the legend: MACH 1 M, MACH 2 M etc. Supersonic milestones? A zero milestone has been spotted at the junction of the A458 and B4395 (Cannoffice 0).

David Lyle (Wilts)

[Fuller details of these milestones can be obtained via the Editors.]

AN OLD HUNDRED MARK STONE

Rooting around on rural verges can turn up objects very much older than milestones. At an old crossroads near Lyonshall in north-west Herefordshire is a large stone that has been there for more than a thousand years. It is to be found at Elsdon which, these days, consists of no more than a large farmhouse and a couple of cottages. But, at the time of the Domesday survey, Elsdon gave its name to a geographically large hundred on the Welsh border - in those troubled times a fluctuating frontier - with most of the hundred, including the present hamlet, situated west of Offa's Dyke.

Meetings of such hundreds were held at regular intervals at a fixed place and usually in the open air, so no doubt the Elsdon stone marked that central point. Today it stands on a T-junction but, until more recent times, this was a crossroads as a lane led on to the village of Almeley. This lost road is still a right of way.

Elsdon hundred took in the town of Kington and what are now some fairly substantial villages but way back much of the area was laid waste, so disturbed was this part of the country.

The Domesday pattern of hundreds in Herefordshire differed greatly from that which survived into the nineteenth century, therefore it is all the more remarkable that Elsdon's stone lies undisturbed.

Tony Boyce (Herefordshire)

TRAVELLER'S TALE

The cost of modern travel is quite high enough, but consider what it was like in the mid-nineteenth century when tollgates were still encountered every few miles. In north Herefordshire one Thomas Beardsley kept a detailed note of expenditure for the years 1851-52. He appears to have been based at Hampton Court, a stately pile near Leominster. He frequently had to fork out 1s (5p) at the 'gate to Lempster' (an unusual spelling, although the town was often referred to on milestones by its phonetic name of Lemster).

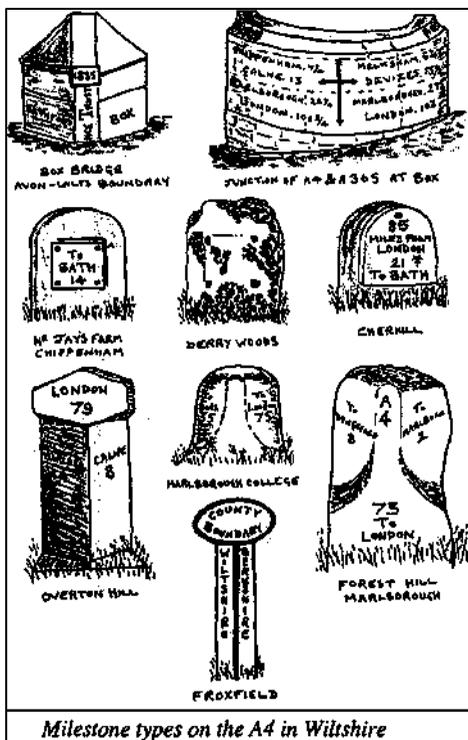
A long journey was begun on 23 October 1851, involving the payment of 1s 6d at the gates to Ledbury and 10½d at those to Gloster (sic). Horses to Reading accounted for £3 6s, and horses on to Dover another £4 0s 6d. That was a huge outlay as, in November, he records the payment of £5 as three months' wages (to whom he does not say). Maybe Mr Beardsley himself was the recipient as he was probably one of the more important servants at Hampton Court. Certainly he had an eye for detail. On 27 October a penny is noted down as spent on 'bread twist'.

On another occasion 1s 6d went on a 'bed and chambermaid' at Gloster. Lucky old Thomas Beardsley.

Tony Boyce (Herefordshire)

MILESTONES ON THE A4

I have recently been photographing milestones along the A4 in Wiltshire. With



good bus services out of Swindon I have been able to cover the whole of the road on foot from Box Bridge in the west to Froxfield in the east. In those 35 miles, assuming there was a stone at each mile, there must originally have been a total of 36 stones. So far 26 have been found plus the curved stone at Box, which seems a bit of an oddity, falling as it does at 26¼ miles from Marlborough and only ¼ mile from the next stone at Box.

There is an unbroken run of 15 stones from the London 82 milestone west of Beckhampton to the London 58 milestone west of Froxfield - sadly the last one at Froxfield is missing but there is a nice cast iron marker on the boundary.

Of the lozenge-shaped type there are 7 stones, 5 of which are buried to half their height - these 5 are situated at Beckhampton, West Kennett, North Farm, Fyfield and Manton. The more crudely made type from Marlborough College onwards

amount to 8 stones with the one at Puthall Farm being completely blank but painted white.

Between Chippenham and Calne the stones are in bad shape. At Pewsham, what may be a milestone lies broken in a ditch where pipe laying work has gone on, while the ones at Derry Woods and Rumsey House are covered in moss and crumbling with no plates attached. The final one at Calne is missing. Although most of the remaining stones are marked on OS maps, they could not be found.

R.G. Smith (Wilts)

REPORTS ON RESTORATION

Malurio cerrig milltir (Damage to milestones) - A cutting from *Llanw Llŷn* (The Tide of Llŷn) has been sent by James Ellis (Anglesey) who has kindly provided a translation. A correspondent draws attention to the state of the local milestones and how the county council's contractors have damaged them during verge mowing. He suggests putting white paint on the highway to indicate their positions, and that local heritage organisations should help to protect them. 'Come on and shout in unison "Enough is Enough" before the season of damage and vandalism lands upon us once

more.'

The *Holyhead & Anglesey Mail* (7.5.03) carried a short report on the replacement of four milestones on the A5. The stones are being made by Aber Stone Company, of Aber Quarry, Moelfre. Telford's original stones had disappeared and Gwynedd Council has contracted to replace them on behalf of the National Assembly.

Cleveland corrosion control - David Whitlock of Cleveland Corrosion Control, Saltburn writes: My company has refurbished a few mileposts in North Yorks. The Council liked the results and funded several more. This generated an acute awareness of mileposts and several Residents Associations then funded further posts. A holiday maker also admired the effects and he liaised with North Yorkshire Highways and they provided the paint and he, (as a volunteer) over several months, has painted quite a few more so that now all the existing posts on the A174 between Loftus and Whitby are now 'as new' and greatly admired.

The various Parish Councils are now campaigning for their signposts to have the same treatment. We discovered that often the cast-iron columns are half buried. We believe that during the war many posts were simply cut off at base level. Re-erection meant burying the beautiful cast-iron columns several feet deep.

Tractor flails are often regarded as responsible for a great deal of damage. My engineering works also repairs flails and I am friends with several 'Hedge cutting Contractors' and they have identified to me four 'lost' mileposts. Our members might profit from befriending these helpful Historians.

Within North Yorkshire there are many important sandstone way-marker posts. Sadly the carved place names are now becoming very weatherworn and difficult to see. I think these carvings should be re-cut for the sake of posterity. It is strange that cast-iron posts must be preserved by painting yet stone ones must be allowed to perish.

A few months ago I assembled thirty milepost photographs and gave a talk to the local W.I. Overnight I became famous - my engagement book is now full for the next six months, each presentation making a small fee for my favourite charity, and also raising local awareness of mileposts.

Finger posts - An article by Richard Simpson in the Motoring section of the *Daily Telegraph* (17.5.03) recounted how two residents of Lanercost (Cumbria) have been restoring the village's old cast iron fingerposts. David Harding and David Gosling were volunteered for the job by their wives who were parish councillors. Each post took about 40 man-hours to restore. Cumbria County Council had wanted them to work on the posts *in situ*, but this proved impossible and they were dismantled to make the task easier. The two men have written up what they have learnt about signpost restoration for anyone contemplating similar projects. They found, for instance, that it was best to apply both coats of black paint before the white, and that an attractive 3D effect can be obtained by painting the raised edge surface of each letter in black. They used Hammerite paint, but found that if the second coat is not applied within three hours of the first, the whole component has

to be left for six weeks to cure. They have also formed a company called Signpost Restoration Ltd, and will undertake full restorations on behalf of parish councils and community groups. A typical cost is £600-£800 per sign.

According to the article, English Heritage is hoping to publish an advisory leaflet about restoring old road signs. It was also recommended that anyone interested in preserving old street furniture should join the Milestone Society.

Cornish boundary marker - Workmen near Lostwithiel recently unearthed a boundary stone that had been buried since 1940 (*This England*, Autumn 2003). L:B (Lostwithiel borough) is inscribed on one side and L:P (Lanlivery parish) on the other. The stone has been cleaned and painted and restored to its correct location. It can now be included in the ceremony of Beating the Bounds, when residents and dignitaries of Lostwithiel walk round the parish boundary and touch each of 18 boundary stones. Anyone who touches a stone is given a penny, those who don't are symbolically beaten.



THE SANDSTONE TRAIL

My husband and I recently walked the 32 mile long Sandstone Trail that follows a ridge of sandstone that rises dramatically from the Cheshire plain as it goes from Frodsham to Whitchurch. Or perhaps I should say that we have followed the 55 km trail as along the route there are nine kilometre stones. Each is of a gravestone shape with the distinctive waymark of the trail (an arrowhead with a footprint below it with S inscribed in it) carved at the top - see picture on left.

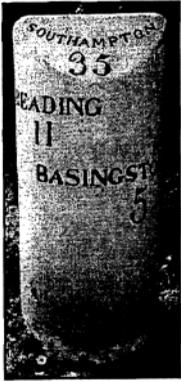
Gillian Oakes (Cheshire)

LUDLOW CROSS III MILES

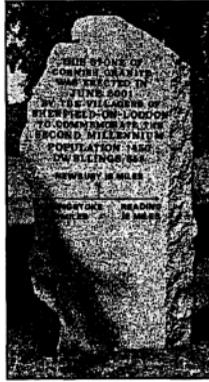
Regarding the illustration of the stone 3 miles to Ludlow Cross illustrated on the cover of Newsletter 5, this was one of a good run of original turnpike stones on the A49 north of Ludlow. It stood in the village of Bromfield. From a similar drawing, but one which showed a timber-framed house in the background, I spent hours searching for this stone. I eventually recognised the house depicted at a point well removed from the present line of the A49. The ninety year old owner of the house - a one-time curator of Ludlow museum - remembered the stone disappearing overnight some thirty years ago. He provided me with a copy of a photograph, taken c.1900, showing the stone standing under a large oak tree on the corner where the road to Leintwardine met the old line of the Ludlow to Shrewsbury main road. Also shown in the picture, standing beside the milestone is a very tall wooden fingerpost, a relic of the coaching days when the coachman had to be able to read the directions from his position on the high driving seat of the coach.

Terry Keegan

MILLENNIUM MILESTONES IN HAMPSHIRE



HA 160
SU 6819 5830



HA 398
SU 6799 5798

Sherfield-on-Loddon is a village bypassed by the current A33, just to the north of Basingstoke. The main street used to be the turnpike road and at either end sit milestones of the 1828 half round type typical of the Reading United Trust (HA 160 - SU 6819 5830 and HA 162 - SU 6798 5729). These milestones give a combined mileage between Basingstoke and Reading of 16 miles.

In celebration of the millennium the villagers have erected a commemorative stone in the centre of the village (HA 398 - SU 6799 5798) on

which the mileage to Reading and Basingstoke are shown - combined mileage 17 miles. John Gary in the 1828 edition of Gary's Roads records a distance of 16 miles between Basingstoke and Reading. Harry Inglis in 'The Contour Road Book of England (SE)' gives a distance from Kings Street, Reading to the Town Hall in Basingstoke of $16\frac{5}{8}$ miles so perhaps both sets of stones are equally correct (or wrong).

The second millennium stone in Hampshire is on the 'Old Portsmouth Road' at Cowplain Village (HA 15.16 - SU 6909 1093) where a stone has been refurbished by the Waterlooville & District Residents Association,



HA 15.16
SU 6909 1093



HA 15
SU 6971 1241

with an inscription replacing a plate. The inscription shows an apparently incorrect mileage to London, it should be 61 if the mileage on the plate of the neighbouring stone is to be believed (HA 15 - SU 6971 1241) and it is missing one of the towns recorded on the plates - Portsmouth.

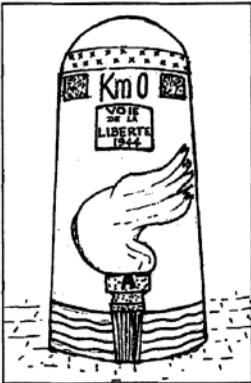
From the Millennium stone the distance from London to Petersfield should be 56 miles and from the plate 52 miles. Cary's Roads records Petersfield as 54 miles from London with Inglis reporting a mileage of $58\frac{1}{8}$ miles, although he did recommend using the Kingston by-pass. The real 65 mile from London stone is

alive and well in Cosham, near Portsmouth (HA 16 - SU 6580 0569). Clearly more work is needed on the mileages on the stones of the Portsmouth Road.

Keith Lawrence (Hampshire)

FOREIGN PARTS

Ere I saw Elba With information about the international spread of milestones becoming reported - USA, Australia, Fiji, Bermuda and India (NL3, p. 15), and France (NL4, p. 19) - Colin Williams (Basingstoke) wonders whether the Society should be thinking of maintaining some central record. To add to those earlier reports, he mentions that on a visit to the island of Elba two stones were glimpsed on the Marciana Marina to Procchio road and one on the Procchio to Marina di Campo road: 'glimpsed' because he was a passenger on a local bus seemingly driven by an ex-Ferrari driver. However, the first two appeared to be of stone with the next town named in black at the top and the distance in large black Roman numerals inset in a panel; the singleton appeared to be concrete with town and, in Arabic numerals, the distance in black paint. Local enquiry suggested that they all predated the 1930s but the first two seemed to be reminiscent of Fascist-period style, and the singleton perhaps of the 1950s. As many of the island's roads have been widened and/or straightened survivors may be few.



La Voie de la Liberté Michael Knight (Beds.) has sent a sketch of one of the 'Dalek-style' kilometre posts on the Voie de la Liberté in northern France. The one drawn is in the sand-dunes of Utah Beach, Normandy, and represents the beginning of the invasion force of American troops moving east towards Germany. There are about 1800 of these kilometre posts stretching east to Bastogne in Belgium. Some of the posts are very well kept. Each one is numbered and Michael wondered about the sequence.

The following is a translation of information on these posts acquired by one of the editors (CH): 'On the initiative of Commandant Guy de la Vasselais, liaison officer with the American army, the Voie de la Liberté was created by a National Committee under the chief patronage of the President of the Republic ... The Voie de la Liberté follows the route of combat from Cotentin to Bastogne in Belgium. It is a permanent homage from the land of France to the land of America that recalls the sacrifice of thousands of young men fighting far from their country for the love of liberty. The course adopted, ignoring - wrongly in our opinion - the landing zones situated to the east of the Vire, is divided into 4 sectors.

Sector 1: from Sainte-Mère Eglise to Cherbourg.

Sector 2: from Sainte-Mère-Eglise to Avranches, via Carentan, Saint-Lô and Villedieu-les-Poèles, with a subsidiary line from Saint-Lô via Coutances and Gavray.

Sector 3: from Avranches to Metz (Moselle), via Pontorson, Dol, Saint-Malo, Rennes, Chateaubriant, Angers, La Flèche, Le Mans, Nogent-le-Rotrou, Chartres, Frontainebleau, Provins, Sézanne, Epernay, Reims and Verdun.

Sector 4: from Metz to Bastogne (Belgium) via Thionville, Luxembourg and Arlon.

All along its length, a distance of 1,145 km, the Voie de la Liberté has kilometre markers of a particular type replacing the ordinary milestones. Kilometre '0', symbolic point of departure of the fight for Liberation, was placed, by the National Committee, in front of the Mairie of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, the town liberated on the night of 5-6 June 1944 five hours before the landing at Utah Beach. Milestone '0' was inaugurated on 16 September 1947. Milestone '00' on 'Utah Beach' at Sainte-Marie-du-Mont, recorded the fact that this beach was considered as the other departure point of the Voie de la Liberté with Sainte-Mère-Eglise. It is found 1,142 km from Bastogne.'

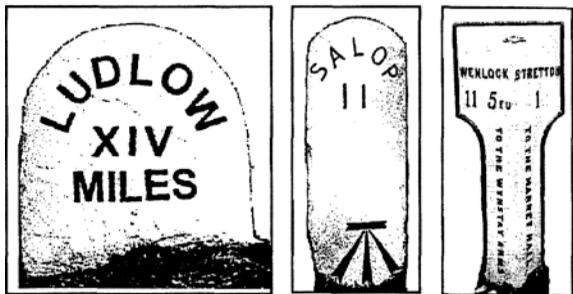
Distance markers in Germany David Blackburn (Derbys.) writes: I recently had a walking holiday based in Remagen, by the River Rhine and upriver from Bonn. I was surprised by the extensive distance marking along the river and wonder if it has the most marker posts of any major route in Europe. Does any reader know the answer?

The river has large marker boards at every kilometre, with the distance shown from the head of navigation. The concrete boards (approx. 5' high by 10' wide) show the kilometres in large black numerals on a white background. Each bank of the river is marked in this way, and there are also smaller showing tenths of a kilometre; for some reason, the half-way markers are a '+' sign - I wonder why. I believe the whole 1000 km of navigable river is so marked.

I also came across an interesting large 'milepost' in the village of Sinzig, just a couple of miles off the river. It shows distances to Colln and Coblenz - unusual spellings and certainly not the normal way of identifying these two cities. Several other destinations are shown on the 12' high stone post, with each distance followed by the letter M. Does this mean that miles were once used in Germany?

SHROPSHIRE RENOVATIONS

A cutting has been received from the new Shropshire coordinator about work done by the Strettons Civic Society to renovate their local milestones. Four eighteenth-century stones on the B4370 have been made more visible and repainted. The early nineteenth-century cast iron post illustrated far right,



examples of 18 Century stones on the B4370 Cast iron post

which stands beside the B4371 one mile east of Church Stretton, shows the distance to the Market Hall (long since demolished) and the Wynstay Arms, Much Wenlock (now the Gaskell Arms).

CANAL MILESTONES

Philip Sumner (Yorks) believes that users of the Inland Waterways have taken more interest in the canalside mileposts over the last 50 years than users of roads have taken in roadside milestones. On a canal they are still very relevant and easily read, and the speed of travel gives time to enjoy and observe them. He has sent several recent articles about milepost restoration which might contain ideas for Milestone Society groups.

From *Waterways*, the National Journal of the Inland Waterways Association (May 2003), comes news of the replacement of many of the mileposts on the Montgomery Canal. Castings similar to the originals have been used, and individuals or groups have been asked to sponsor each post. The posts are quite elaborate and rather similar to some roadside mileposts in Cheshire with a cylindrical post and two 'wings' containing the inscription. There is also a rectangular panel below these reading 'Montgomery Canal'. A plaque is put beside each post giving the name of the sponsor.

The River Weaver Society has been awarded a Local Heritage Initiative grant to research the history of cast iron boundary markers and concrete mileposts along the banks of the Weaver. Volunteers will report on the location and condition of the surviving markers, and it is eventually hoped to reinstate and refurbish the posts.

The magazine of the West Riding Branch of the Inland Waterways Association is called *The Milepost*. In May 2003 they reported that the mileposts on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal on the pound between Bingley and Gargrave were cleaned and painted. This was sponsored by British Waterways who provided the paint and cut back the vegetation. It was found that nearly 25% of the posts were missing and that only one milepost was complete. It is hoped eventually to restore all the posts, if funding can be found.

PUBLICATIONS - BOOK REVIEWS

Charles P Moritz: *Travels in England in 1782*, translated 1795, published by Cassell & Co 1886, republished as an eBook by Gutenberg, March 2003: (transcribed by David Price). <http://ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etex04/teng10h.htm>. 85 A4 pp.

'The English milestones give me much pleasure and they are a great convenience to travellers. They have often seemed to ease me of half the distance of a journey merely by telling me how far I have already gone and by assuring me that I was on the right road. For, besides the distance from London, every milestone informs you that the next place is so many miles, and where there are cross roads there are direction posts, so that it is hardly possible to lose one's self in walking. I must

confess that all this journey has seemed but as it were one continued walk for pleasure.'

The above was in a letter written by the young Charles P Moritz, traveller, theologian, linguist and scholar, to a friend in his native Germany on 25 June 1782 during an overnight stop in Oxford. Moritz was on a journey from London to the Peak District and back in the course of a holiday in this country and the book is a compilation of all the letters he despatched during the months he was here.

Today one might describe the adventure as a back-packing holiday except that Moritz carried no luggage save for writing materials and a change of linen. His mode of travel was partially on foot, partially by post chaise. Moritz's letters home were translated into English in 1795 and today offer a rich source of information, particularly to anyone concerned with eighteenth-century coaching inn history.

Moritz found widespread hostility to anyone arriving at an inn by foot; often he would find the door literally slammed in his face. Clearly, quality people only arrived on horseback or by coach; anyone *walking* was to be regarded as a tramp. Often, exhausted, he would secure begrudging admittance by declaring a willingness to sleep on a bench rather than a bed. Even-then, inn staff would frequently dispense unremitting rudeness and hostility, openly discussing him while he sat at the kitchen table eating his meal - usually bread and butter. '*I wonder where he's come from, I wonder where he's going! Is he French?*'

Moritz admitted the constant problem was keeping oneself looking presentable after days on end tramping the open road - especially after a night spent sleeping rough due to finding no innkeeper prepared to give him shelter. It seems most unlikely he saw a bath tub at any point during the Peak District trip but he did at least have one bath - in the River Thames - early in his journey during a stay in Windsor. Here he found an unusually pleasant innkeeper and after showing Moritz to a room, he directed him to a place on the river bank where he had dug steps for guests to enter the water for bathing. Moritz does not say if he removed his linen but he did at least achieve full immersion.

Moritz was stunned by the beauty of the countryside in the Thames valley, Berkshire and Oxfordshire and his description would prove invaluable to anyone researching the rural aspect of the Home Counties in the eighteenth century. The writing style throughout is impressive and very readable. One feels assuredly this is not the product of enhancement by the unnamed translator but painstaking articulation of the quality and depth of the original German text.

Neville Billington (Worcs.)

Phill Baines & Catherine Dixon: *Signs: Lettering in the Environment* (Laurence King, London; 2003). Paperback; 192pp. ISBN: 1 85669 337 6. Price £25.

Nowadays the lettering on most modern road signs all looks the same. The typeface, called Transport, was designed by Jack Kinneir and Margaret Calvert in 1962 and was recommended by the Anderson Report on road signage as being ideal for modern traffic. The lettering had to be read easily from a distance and at speed, and under different lighting conditions. Background colours were carefully considered.

'American Standard Interstate Blue' was adopted for motorways, primary routes used a green background with white type and yellow road numbers, and other roads had black lettering on a white background. This may seem obvious when pointed out, but road signs are so ubiquitous that we scarcely give them a second thought.

The Transport alphabet and sign colouring have been adopted by many other countries. While this must avoid confusion for international travellers, it does give a feeling that road signs rank alongside the McDonalds and Coca Cola logos in making countries lose their individuality. In contrast, this book also contains pages of photographs of British road signs used between 1933 and 1964 with their capital letters, and blue and white French signs designed by Edouard and André Michelin from the 1930s which immediately evoke national identities. Examples of English milestones, and fingerposts erected from the early 1920s are also given to demonstrate the variety of styles and lettering of the past.

Signs: Lettering in the Environment, produced by lecturers in typography, has been compiled to show the function and execution of letterforms in public places. Until one's attention is drawn to it, it is not appreciated how significant and evocative are the different lettering styles of the signage that we encounter in daily life. The book is divided into two parts: Signing the Way, and Naming Places. The first part also deals with symbolic instruction signs, which mostly comply with the Geneva Protocol of 1949. In many of these a national individuality has emerged. The roadworks sign from Iceland features a recognisable workman with safety helmet, shovelling something from one pile to another. In contrast the sign used in Dubai is of the more iconic 'man having difficulty with umbrella' style. Curiously, the figure on the pedestrian crossing signs in Spain and the Czech Republic wears a hat.

Part 2 describes architectural lettering which conveys an impression related to function and design as a whole. This ranges widely over boundary markers, village signs, fascias, mosaics, gravestones and gratings. Examples of street names cover the modern functional, decorative cast iron, carved stone, and the distinctive signs designed by Chris Tinings in the late 1960s for the City of Westminster.

Although the book is primarily directed at graphic designers, lettering artists and architects, the 700 sumptuous photographs are a treat and the notes on the history of signage are fascinating for anyone who takes more than a passing interest in the lettering that surrounds us.

Carol Haines

Geoffrey Body & Roy Gallop: *The Coaching Era* (Fiducia Press (ISBN 0946217149) and Kingsmead Press (ISBN 1850260192); 2003. Paperback. Price £6.50.

The Coaching Era is a new paperback produced in association with Bath Postal Museum. Although its sub-title is 'stage and mail coach travel in and around Bath, Bristol and Somerset - coachmen and travellers, inns and journeys, highlights and hazards', its chapters are a wealth of detail about the early years of coaching, expansion in the 18th century, and the coaching heyday in what could be the scene

all over England.

These are stories from actual coaching passengers (e.g. Rev. James Woodforde) about their experiences on coach journeys, details of the hardships and discomfort of coach travel, cost of travel, weather on the journey, inns used etc. Much detail is provided on the main coach routes from London to the West Country, not just to Somerset but to Devon, Gloucestershire and Dorset, and routes within these counties. Many actual coaches are named and also many old inns in many West Country towns such as Bruton, Frome, Bridgwater etc. There are chapters on the Royal Mail coaches, coaches and coachbuilders, coach construction, horses, inns and posting houses, costs and charges, the coachmen themselves (some very professional, some having drunkenness as a problem).

There is a map of coach routes from Bath and Bristol to Exeter, Lyme Regis, Poole and Weymouth; a photo of the milestone '6 miles to B'Water' on the Bridgwater Trust's route through Huntspill, the Snowdon Toll House near Chard, photos of inns, and drawings of old coaching scenes. The book ends with a chapter on the coming of the railways which signalled the eventual end of the coaching era - but not for some time as it was to be many years before the railway network penetrated every part of the country. Coach companies adapted by becoming cross-country and feeder operators to and from railway stations and continuing their important but subsidiary role of catering for local movement of people. There is even a mention of the short-lived steam driven coaches.

It is an interesting and informative book and will appeal to anyone interested in the wider aspect of, and background to, toll houses and milestones

Janet Dowding

MILESTONE SOCIETY WEBSITE - The Milestone Society website <http://www.milestone-society.co.uk> contains basic information (objectives, Society officers, application forms for membership and meetings, links to related websites, etc.) and some details of more topical matters (brief synopsis of meetings, photographs of speakers, information and pictures of recently missing milestones, etc.). Importantly, it is intended to be used for 'late breaking news' (for example late changes to a meeting arrangement) which is printed in bold, red type at the head of the web page. By 'clicking' on one of the coloured, underlined pieces of text on the Society's web page (a web-link or e-mail address) then the web page or blank addressed e-mail will open automatically. If anyone feels that other information should be posted on the website, please forward suggestions to the Newsletter Editors.

PUBLICITY - The Society has prepared sets of postcards, notelets and posters for use by members. Supplies will be available at cost from County Coordinators (see this Newsletter, pp. 27-28; those without Coordinators contact the Editors). The postcard design is based on the cover of Mervyn Benford's book *Milestones* (Shire).

YORKSHIRE GROUP NEWS AND AN INVITATION - Following a well-attended and enthusiastic get-together in September, the Yorkshire Group will be

meeting on Sunday 28th March 2004 at Grassington, in the Dales. Speakers will include Brian Ellis. Members from neighbouring counties will be very welcome -or from further afield! Contact Jan for details.

HONORARY AUDITOR REQUIRED - The Society requires the assistance of a volunteer to undertake the auditing of its annual accounts. The job is not onerous but anyone willing to do this will be doing a great service for the Society and in the first instance they should contact the Editors by post (see address in the following section) or by e-mail (see p. 2) or, alternatively, David Viner or Jan Scrine.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEWSLETTER FOR JULY 2004 - Contributions for inclusion in the July 2004 Newsletter should reach the Editors by Monday 21, June 2004 at the following address: A. & C. Haines

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, save in RTF (Rich Text Format), Word 6.0/97, or Wordperfect 5.x for Windows format. We have difficulty with other formats.

<p>MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - Subscriptions for 2004-2005 fall due on 1 June 2004. Details and forms will be sent with the AGM agenda.</p>

<p>MEETING OF THE SOCIETY - SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2003 - This meeting (which is in place of the postponed Autumn 2003 meeting) will be held at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 4LA. This Georgian, working water-powered mill belongs to the National Trust and still spins and weaves cotton to be sold in the shop. Styal (SJ 835 835) is approximately 10 miles due south of Manchester. It is 1½ miles north of Wilmslow off the B5166 and 2½ miles from the M56 (exit 5). Car parking (for which there is a charge) is 200 yards distant and the rail station is ½ mile away. The meeting will start at around 10.30 and finish at 16.00. The cost will be £5 per person. Please complete the booking form enclosed with this Newsletter.</p>
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COUNTY COORDINATORS

The following is the list of County Coordinators to the best current knowledge of the Committee. If there are any mistaken entries, or any omissions, please inform the Coordinator of Coordinators, Mike Buxton (address below), and also the Newsletter Editors. There are a number of Counties without Coordinators; if any member in such a county is willing to help the Society by taking on this role* for their county, the committee would be extremely grateful. In such an instance, please inform Mike Buxton and the Editors.

Anyone wishing to contact their County Coordinator can obtain details from Mike Buxton.

Bedfordshire. Michael Knight
Buckinghamshire. Alan Rosevear
Cardiganshire. Chris Woodard
Derbyshire. John Higgins
Dorset. John Tybjerg
Gloucestershire(E). James Weightman
Hampshire. Keith Lawrence
Hertfordshire. John Donovan
Lancashire. John Priestly
Norfolk. Carol Haines
Northumberland. Ian Davison
Oxfordshire. Derek Turner
Radnorshire. Gwyneth Guy
Somerset. Janet Dowding
Suffolk. Richard Mudhar
Warwickshire. Mike Buxton
Worcestershire. Terry Keegan

Berkshire. Alan Rosevear
Cambridgeshire. Grainne Farrington
Cornwall. Ian Thompson
Devon. Tim Jenkinson
Essex. John Nicholls
Gloucestershire (W). Keith Walker
Herefordshire. Tony Boyce
Huntingdonshire. Michael Knight
Lincolnshire. Biff Vernon
Northamptonshire. Michael Knight
Nottinghamshire. Robert Dodd
Pembrokeshire. Anthony Rhys-Davies
Shropshire. Alan Reade
Staffordshire. John Higgins
Sussex. John Griffin
Wiltshire. Doug Roseaman
Yorkshire. Jan Scrine

* This can involve some or many of the aspects involved in the recording and preservation of milestones but most importantly the coordinator is the local contact for members in a particular county and helps to organise and deal with the various matters that arise (eg recording, restoration, local authority liaison, etc) and also to act as a link between the group of county members and the main Society committee.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - In Newsletter 5 on p. 14, there was a fine line drawing of the Cranleigh obelisk by Lionel Joseph. The Editors apologise for failing to acknowledge the artist in that issue.

