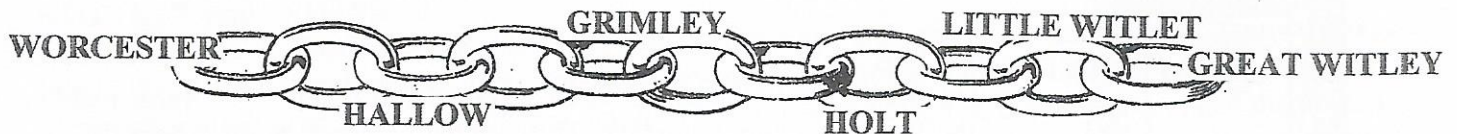


# A COMMUNITY PROJECT

## Re-forging the links in the chain of milestones from Worcester to Great Witley



Worcester City Council and the five Parish Councils of Hallow, Grimley, Holt, Little Witley and Great Witley / Hillhampton joined forces with members of the local community to pay for the restoration and re-plating of the milestones on the old turnpike road from Worcester to Great Witley.

The project was arranged and managed by the Worcestershire group of the Milestone Society (Contact, Terry Keegan on 01299 832358) The Milestone Society is a registered charity, set up in 2001 to record and preserve the nation's milestones for future generations to enjoy. Milestones are an important part of our National Heritage.

### HISTORICAL FACTS

The Henwick Trust milestones were first erected by an Act of Parliament in 1761.

Plates were attached to the stones early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

1932 saw two of the stones replaced by modern concrete Bradley stones.

In 1940, as a wartime measure, all the plates were removed. They were never replaced.

Over the last 50 years road improvements have accounted for the loss of four of the stones.

With the aid of a grant from Worcestershire County Council 'Towards Local Distinctiveness', a pattern for the new plates, based on the design of an old plate, was created and the plates cast at the Blists Hill foundry of The Ironbridge Gorge Museum.

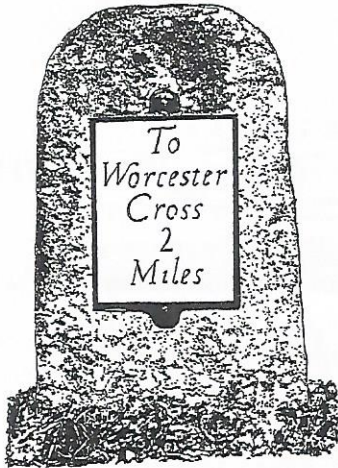
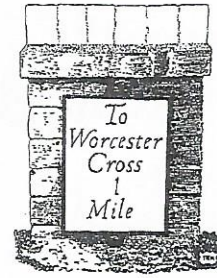
Each Parish paid for their appropriate plate and arranged for them to be attached to the stones.

Where the original stones were missing, either replacement stones were found or other appropriate ways were found to display the mileage plates.

# THE COMPLETE CHAIN OF ELEVEN MILESTONES

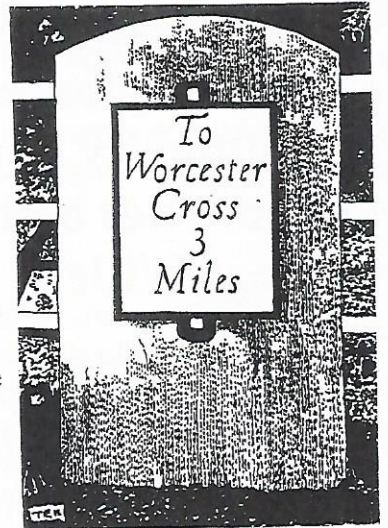
## STONE 1

The original Ordnance Survey map places this stone, one mile from Worcester Cross, on Henwick Road but a later 1904 map locates it a few yards away on Hylton Road. Dr. Knowles, a local historian, agreed to purchase the 1 mile plate and attach it to a brick pillar at the entrance to his driveway opposite the location of the original stone



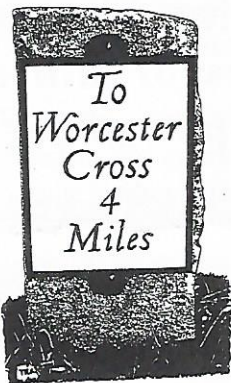
## STONE 2

This fine 2<sup>nd</sup> generation stone has survived and stands a few yards inside the Worcester City boundary. Through their Conservation officer the City Council purchased the 2 mile plate and arranged for it to be painted and attached to the stone.



## STONE 3

The original Hallow stone disappeared when a footpath was created by the side of the main road some forty years ago. It had stood in front of a hedge bordering John Green's farm. The ditch in front of was filled in and a metal fence replaced the hedge. Through the efforts of local villagers and members of the Worcestershire group of the Milestone Society a new stone was purchased from a firm of local stonemasons. The attached 3 mile plate was paid for by Hallow Parish Council.

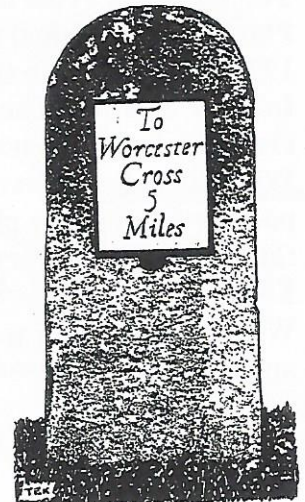


## STONE 4

The original stone was another casualty of post-war road improvements. A determined Grimley Parish Council, not wishing to be left out of the scheme, purchased the 4 mile plate and set about finding a suitable piece of stone to mark the site of the original milestone. A local parishioner came up with a 4ft. stone which the local Highways Partnership Unit erected.

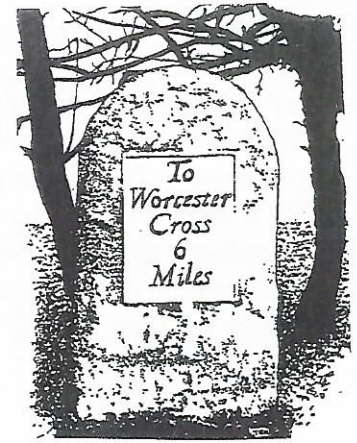
## STONE 5

The original 2<sup>nd</sup> generation stone survived and stands well back from the side of the road as, at that point the bend in the road was eased out. A build up of the road verge left the stone with only 18 inches showing above ground level. David Harper of Top Barn farm agreed to purchase the 5 mile plate and also to have the stone raised to its original height. It is now a prominent feature of the local roadside heritage.



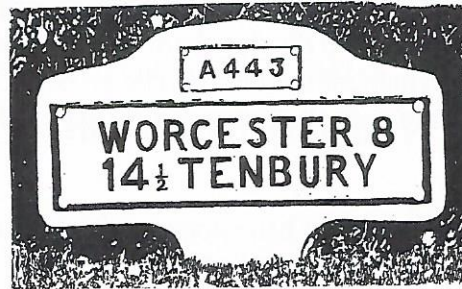
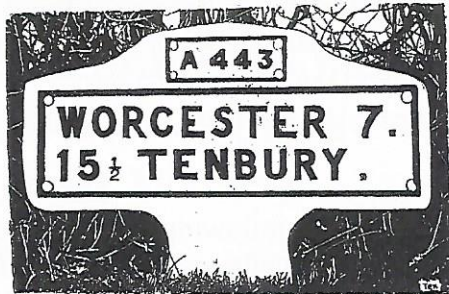
### STONE 6

Another 2<sup>nd</sup> generation stone which has survived. It was well hidden in an overgrown hedge in the parish of Holt. The Parish Council agreed to purchase the 6 mile plate and one of its members painted it and fixed it to the stone. This stone has been given a coat of suitable white paint. Traditionally all milestones were lime washed at regular intervals to make them more visible to the passing traveller.



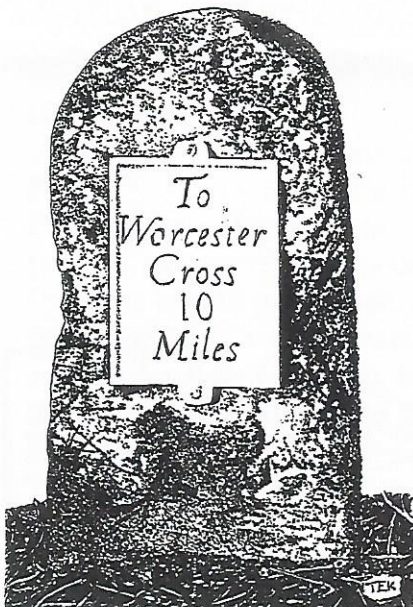
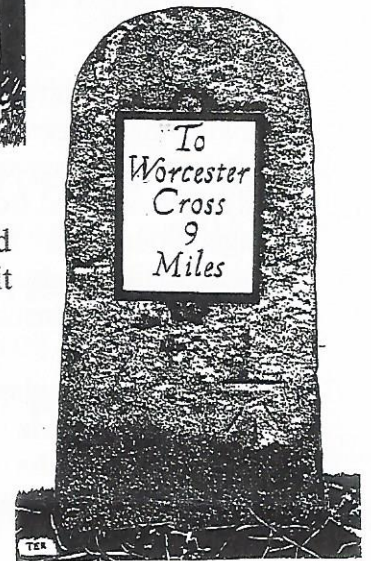
### STONE 7 and STONE 8

In the early 1930's Worcestershire County Council Highways did something that no other Council did so late in the history of milestones. They created a new design of milestone to fill the gaps where old ones were either missing or so badly damaged that they were un-readable. The deputy surveyor of the time, a Mr. Brooke-Bradley is believed to have been responsible for their design. These 'Bradley' stones were produced in concrete with metal plates. Over 100 are known to have been produced and many are still in situ – including the two placed on the A443. The 7 mile stone is in Holt parish but the 8 mile one is in the parish of Little Witley, where Mr. Brooke-Bradley once lived. The original 2<sup>nd</sup> generation stone, which the Bradley stone replaced, can still be seen in a garden nearby.



### STONE 9

This stone, also in the parish of Little Witley, lay buried for many years face down in the roadside ditch. Malvern Hills Highways Partnership Unit arranged for it to be re-erected. The Parish Council purchased the 9 mile plate and had it fixed to the refurbished stone.



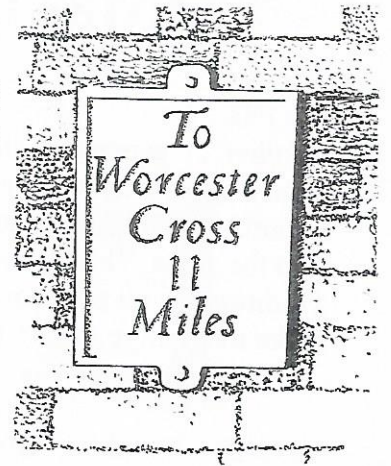
### STONE 10

This interesting stone is in the parish of Great Witley and Hillhampton. It is the only surviving 1<sup>st</sup> generation stone, erected in 1761. It has an inscription carved into the back of the stone which gives the distance to London as 119 miles. The recording of London mileage on early milestones was quite common as these distances were used by the postal authorities when charging for deliveries before the Penny post was introduced.

When, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the stone was plated, it was reversed and the plate fixed to the back face. The new '10 Miles to Worcester Cross' plate was purchased by the Parish.

## STONE 11

The final stone in the chain stood near to the Hundred House Hotel in Great Witley. It disappeared some years ago but a local parishioner clearly recalls the distance to London engraved into the back of the stone. The proprietors of the Hundred House agreed to allow the Parish Council to attach the 11 mile plate to the wall of the building and so complete the chain of 11 mile markers which once existed on the old Henwick division of the Worcester Turnpike to Great Witley.



It has taken two years to complete this community project. The Worcestershire group of the Milestone Society first conceived the idea of re-plating the five surviving original milestones which had had their plates removed in 1940 as a wartime measure aimed at confusing an enemy invader. The cast iron plates were put in the scrap to help with the war effort. For over fifty years the stones remained shorn of their identity and only the older members of the communities had any idea of their past history. To give them back their unique identity would also give them an importance as part of the roadside heritage for each local community.

As the project progressed each parish agreed to purchase the replacement plates for the existing stones. Those parishes which had lost their stones over the years showed an interest in being part of the project and offered to buy plates and to display them either by acquiring replacement stones or by attaching the plates to appropriate permanent structures. The group decided to extend the project to cover the complete chain of eleven milestones which once stood by the old Henwick turnpike which ran from Worcester to Great Witley.

The Worcestershire group of the Milestone Society would like to thank the following for their help in bringing the project to fruition;- Worcester City Council and the Parish Councils of Hallow, Grimley, Holt, Little Witley and Great Witley / Hillhampton. We would like also to acknowledge the financial assistance received from Worcestershire County Council, Dr. Knowles, David Harper, John Green, The Diageo Foundation, David Beacham and Ray Worth. Invaluable assistance was also received from Malvern Hills Highways Partnership Unit and those members of the group who rolled up their sleeves whenever their assistance was required.

The group's next planned project is to re-plate the stones on the old turnpike which ran from Worcester to Bradley Green via Crowle and Himbleton.

For any further information on the group's activities, contact the co-ordinator – Terry Keegan, The Oxleys, Tenbury Rd. Clows Top, Kidderminster, DY14 9HE. (Tel. 01299 832358 )

New members would be most warmly welcomed to the group.

