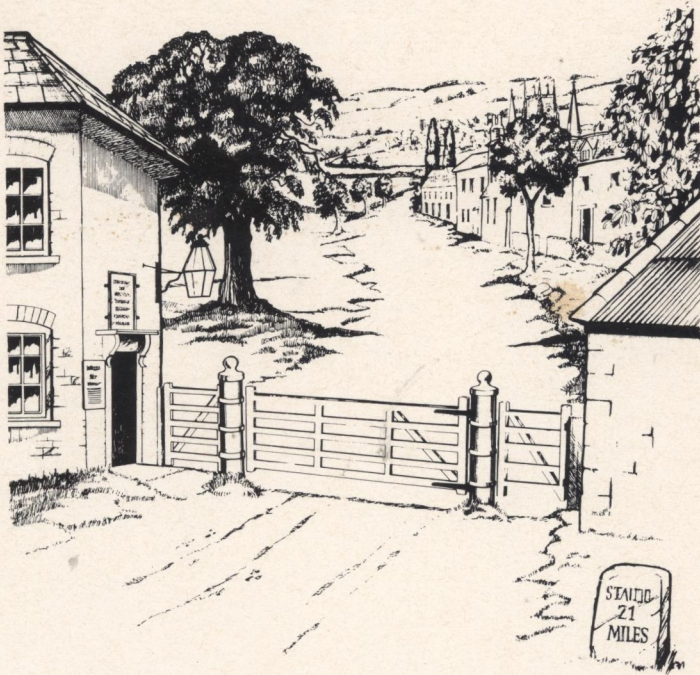


DAMAGED
20p.

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The Vale of Evesham
**TURNPIKES, TOLLGATES
AND MILESTONES**



by
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LIST OF EVESHAM AND DISTRICT TURNPIKE ROADS

NUMBER 1 DISTRICT

Turnpike No.	Modern Road Nos.	Route	Controlling Trustees
1(a)	A.44	Evesham to Earls	Evesham
	B.4536	Croome via Pershore,	
	A.4104	Defford & Baughton	
1(b)	A.435	Evesham to Alcester via Harvington & Dunnington	Evesham
1(c)	A.435	Evesham to Crabbs	Evesham
	A.441	Cross via Dunnington, Weethley Cookhill & Astwood Bank	
1(d)	A.435	Evesham to Hinton	
		Cross	

NUMBER 2 DISTRICT

2(a)	B.4035	Evesham to Chipping	Evesham
	A.46	Campden via Bretforton & Aston Subedge	
2(b)	A.44	Evesham to Stow on	
	A.424	the Wold & Bourton on the Hill via Broadway	
2(c)	B.4035	Evesham to Chipping	Evesham
	& Uncl.	Campden via Badsey, Willersey Hill, & Long Hill	

NUMBER 3 DISTRICT

3(a)	B.4084	Evesham to Stonebow Bridge via Chadbury, Wyre, & Pinvin Cross	Evesham
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3(b)	A.44	Pershore to Worcester via Stoulton	Worcester
3(c)	B.4211 B.4209	Upton on Severn to Malvern Well via Hanley Castle	Upton
3(d)	A.4104	Upton on Severn to Little Malvern via Welland	Upton
NUMBER 4 DISTRICT			
4(a)	B.4510	Evesham to Littleton via Offenham	Evesham
4(b)	A.445	Evesham to	
4(b)	A.445	Winchcombe via Sedgeberrow & Greet	Winchcombe
4(c)	A.435(T)	Evesham to Cheltenham via Sedgeberrow, Beckford, Teddington & Bishops Cleeve	Evesham Tewkesbury & Cheltenham
4(d)	Uncl.	Beckford to Tewkesbury via Overbury, kemerton, & Bredon	Tewkesbury

*An ACT for Repairing and Amend- ANNO
ing several Roads leading to and 1728.
from the Borough of Evesham in
the County of Worcester.*

WHEREAS the several Highways or Preamble.
Roads leading from the Top of *Broad-*
way Hill, in the County of *Worcester*, through
the Borough of *Evesham* in the said County,
to *Stonebow Bridge* in the said County, being
twelve Miles or thereabouts, and from the
said Borough of *Evesham* to the first Chain
upon *Wick Causey*, next the Foot of *Gouldy*
Hill, near the Bridge at *Pershore* in the said
County, being four Miles or thereabouts, and
as much of the Road to *Hinton on the Green* as
lies in the said County, being one Mile or
thereabouts, and to the Gate in *Offenham Lane*
leading to *South Littleton* in the said County,
being two Miles or thereabouts, and to *Nor-*
ton in the said County, being two Miles or
thereabouts, and to *Bretfordton* in the said
County, being two Miles or thereabouts, by
reason of the Soil thereof and the heavy Car-
riages passing through the same, are become
so ruinous and bad, that in the Winter Sea-
sons many Parts thereof are impassable for
Waggons and Carriages, and also for Horses

THE TOLLGATES

The enabling Acts authorized the local trustees to set up and maintain gates along the routes they controlled. At first the gates were watched by an employee from a wooden hut and the gates were often closed during the hours of darkness, but when it became apparent that the turnpikes were here to stay, purpose-built tollhouses were erected in key positions, usually at road junctions and with windows so placed that the tollkeeper could have a view in all directions. The tollhouse became the command post for the particular stretch of road it was concerned with. The job of the tollkeeper was, of course, to keep a constant vigil for travellers and to see that they paid the appropriate rates for passing through the gate. He also had to keep a sharp lookout for persons endeavouring to evade payment. In the early days the wrong type of man was employed in some districts, which was not surprising since the wages being offered were only nine shillings (45p) a week. There were consequently frequent complaints from toll payers of the gates being locked and the tollkeepers either missing, drunk, or asleep and unable to be roused. Mr. Weller in 'The Pickwick papers' makes some reference to them in these words:

They're all on 'em as has met with some disappointment' in life, consequence of vich they retires from the world and shuts themselves up in pikes, partly with a view of being solitary and partly to revenge themselves on mankind by takin' tolls. If they was gen'lm'n you'd call 'em misanthropes, but as it is they only takes to pike keeping.

Eventually the procedure was tightened up considerably, with the local justices inflicting fines on tollkeepers and travellers under the general turnpike Acts, but the ultimate method, whereby the trustees let out the tollgates annually to the highest bidder who would pay the trustees a fixed sum in exchange for the right to collect and retain the tolls, proved the most efficient. This system encouraged a keener type of tollkeeper whose standard of living would depend upon how much he could collect at his gate over and above what he had to pay the trustees. This sometimes led to abuses, as it was not unknown for one man to bid successfully for several tollgates in an area and to employ others to man the gates.

The following are a few of the local tollgates lettings noted as being made by the Evesham trustees:

	1794	1797	1812
Bengeworth gate	£533	£493	£450
Bretforton gate	91	120	172
Broadway gate	205	212	191
Upton Wold (Troopers Lodge)	171	171	142

The figures indicate the volume of traffic at the various gates

Although basically the toll payable depended upon the size of the vehicle or the number of type of animal passing through, the weight of the load was also taken into account when it became apparent that the degree of damage to road surfaces

depended upon the weight of the load, i.e. the vehicle plus what it was carrying, and towns having frequent markets and fairs and producing merchandise were obliged to erect weighing machines, where persons leaving the town with a load would have it weighed and receive a ticket, which they could produce at the various tollgates through which they had to pass. The Evesham weighing machine was outside the town hall, facing Vine Street, and there is a record of one at Upton on Severn in Old Street.

It is pleasing to be able to see so many of the old tollhouses still standing and well cared for but, of course, there are many which have been pulled down or so converted into other uses that they are difficult to identify. Quite a few tollhouses were not purpose-built and were taken into use for toll gathering because of their strategic position on a particular road, and many of these reverted to ordinary domestic use leaving no trace of their use as tollhouses. To trace the sites of the tollhouses it helps to study as many of the maps of the period as possible, as these usually have the initials 'TB' for toll-bar written in. C & J Greenwood's 1822 map of Worcestershire is particularly useful in this respect, indicating the presence of many which have long since been demolished. Others, not on any map, are sometimes found by looking up household directories for such names as Pike Cottage or the Old Toll House. There is, for example, a Pike Cottage at Broadway as one leaves the village in the London direction, another at Campden at the Broad Campden end of Sheep Street, and an Old Toll House at Greet on the Sedgeberrow to Winchcombe turnpike. No doubt others will turn up. The only tollhouse in the area with the toll charges still legible on the building is the one at Oxenton on the Beckford to Bishops Cleeve road. The tollgate at the top of Greenhill, Evesham, which used to be called the Battlewell tollhouse to distinguish it from the Bengeworth and Hampton tollgates in Evesham, is the only known double tollhouse in the district since it provides accommodation for two families and appears always to have done so. One can assume from this, perhaps, that the amount of traffic coming into Evesham from the Alcester and Worcester areas justified the employment of two tollkeepers.

Some of our earliest Ordnance maps show that there were tollhouses at Hampton (near the present Abbey bridge), at Bengeworth (near the present roundabout), at Badsey (near the junction still known as Badsey Pike), at Bretforton (Weston road cross-roads), at Willersey (junction of Collin Lane with Badsey Lane), at Dunnington Cross, at Upton Wold (near Troppers Lodge on the A.44), and at Toddington (at the junction of the B.4078 and A.438 near the factory site).

THE MILESTONES

The turnpike Acts authorized the trustees to erect milestones along the roads under their control. This was something we had not had in England since Roman times and they must have proved of great assistance to travellers. Each turnpike trust had its own style of stone or post and they vary considerably in various parts of the country according to materials available. Sometimes they were of wood, sometimes of iron, but mostly of stone with either a metal plaque inserted showing the distance to the two nearest towns or with the information carved on the stone, as on a tombstone. The Evesham trustees favoured a large stone with a mileage plaque and a great many of these can still be seen on the roads leading out of the town. With one exception they are at present without their mileage plaques. I traced the gentleman who was responsible for them in the 1930s and 1940s and he assures me they were all removed soon after the outbreak of war to comply with defence regulations, as it was felt that like direction signs, they would be of help to the enemy if he invaded. The one remaining intact is outside the central market in Defford road Pershore. Whether it was missed in 1939 or put back after the war is not known, but the remainder of the plaques cannot now be found and it seems to be no-one's responsibility any longer. One wonders, when the oil runs out and we have again to travel by pony and trap or by cycle or shank's pony, whether there will be a demand for new ones to be made. Most of the stones are still standing although in certain cases, with road diversions and re-alignments, they are no longer exactly one mile apart. Some roads which were authorized to be turnpiked show no evidence of any stones having ever been erected. Possibly, being minor roads, they had wooden posts. Many local authorities did replace the plaques upon their milestones and it is pleasing to see all those between Worcester and Pershore on the present A.44 intact, and many on the roads between Upton on Severn and Malvern.

A few metal milestones appear here and there on roads which had been turnpiked, notably those at Sedgeberrow on the B.4078 and at Blockley on the Five Mile Drive between Broadway hill and Troopers Lodge on the A.44. These were erected by the county council on their taking over responsibility for the roads. The most attractive and photogenic are the one erected at Beckford to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, which gives the mileage to about 20 different places, and the one outside Milestone House in North Street Broadway, which was restored after the war and the lettering re-cut. The most useful are those erected by the Upton on Severn trustees, nearly all which stones are still in place, with their mileage plaques intact, and have the added virtue of stating on them the name of the place where they stand.

No.	Location	Present Road No's	Comment
6	COOKHILL — opposite Thornhill.	A.441	Missing April 1980
7	COOKHILL — near 3 Oak Hill Wood	A.441	do.
8	NEW END — near Alcester Alcester Park Farm	A.441	do.
9	ASTWOOD BANK — New End	A.441	In place April 1980 but plaque missing.
10	ASTWOOD BANK — in village	A.441	In place with mileage Plaque intact.

TURNPIKE 1(d) EVESHAM TO HINTON

TURNPIKE 2(a) EVESHAM TO CAMPDEN VIA BRETTFORTON

No milestones recorded or traced on these turnpikes

TURNPIKE 2(b) EVESHAM TO BOURTON ON THE HILL AND STOW ON THE WOLD VIA BROADWAY

1	BENGEWORTH — Benge Hill opposite Hill Crest	A.44	In place but without plaque.
2	WICKHAMFORD — near entrance to Field Farm	A.44	Missing April 1980
3	WICKHAMFORD — near Murcot turn and Whitefurrows.	A.44	County Council Sign (post turnpike era) now in garden of No. 95 Pitchers Hill.
4	CHILDSWICKHAM — near Willersey turn	A.44	Missing April 1980
5	BROADWAY — outside Milestone House in North Street	A.44 A.44	Present and lettering re-cut and restored.
6	BROADWAY — on hill on bend before Farncombe turn	A.44	Present April 1980 but without plaque.
7	CAMPDEN — between turning for Broadway tower and Cross Hands.	A.44	do.
8	BLOCKLEY — between Cross Hands and turning for Stow	A.44	A metal milepost with mileages but not of turnpike era.