

MILESTONES

The Romans brought the mile into Britain a mile being a thousand paces of a Roman soldier on the march. In the old days stones were placed along the verges, especially of roads where stage coaches ran, showing the distances to and from the towns. The oldest had the inscription carved into the stone. Later many had the inscription on an iron plate. Even later iron triangular marks were erected on some verges with the mileage on two sides, as on the road to Corfe. We now have large ugly signs placed high up to enable car drivers to see them in good time.

In 1978 the Parish Magazine editor asked its readers if they could locate any of the mile stones on the Staple Fitzpaine Road - the coach road to Chard. Below are the replies which were received.

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Following last month's findings, Mr Leonard Salter of Stoke St, Mary at once located the first three old milestones on the coach road to Chard. An old workmate had also once told him that the key stone was down a passage way near the old Lipton's shop in Taunton. In actual fact the distances were taken from the old Cross which was opposite Lipton's shop. The shop was demolished when Stukey's Bank enlarged its premises.



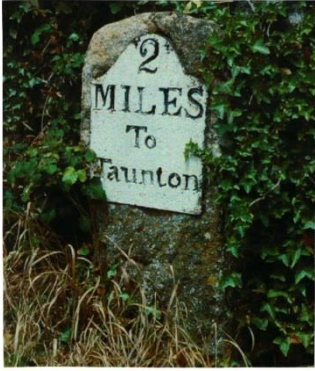
1 Mile Stone



The one mile stone was near the 'bus shelter at Mountfields'... (The editor remarked that the first stone at Mountfields seemed to have been removed).

2 Mile Stone – Taunton Trust stone

Mr Tom Mayberry in 2015 noted that there still remains at least one old milestone, just in Stoke St. Mary parish, with old lettering on it showing that it dates to early Victorian times or perhaps earlier. 2 miles to Taunton



A note in 1978 from Miss Violet Ellery of Orchard Portman, pointed out that the 2 mile stone was at the bottom of Shoreditch Hill, in other words outside Shoreditch Farm.

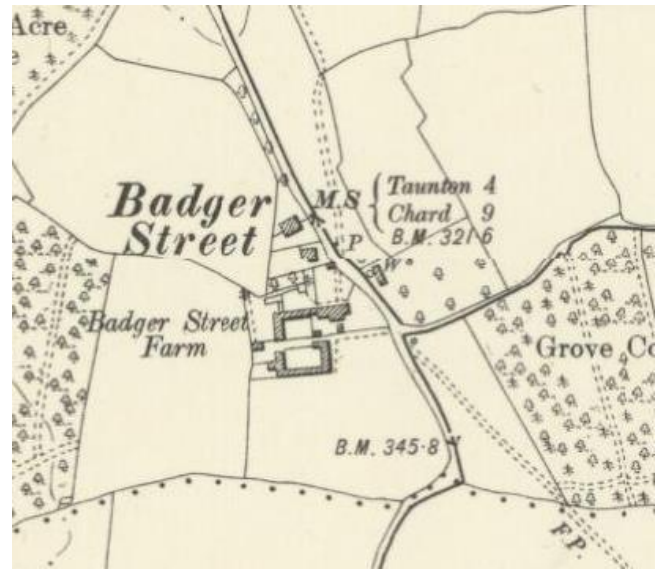
3 Mile Stone – Taunton Trust stone



Miss Ellery also stated that the three mile stone is on the Thurlbear road not far from her house. The three mile stone is by a field gate half buried, covered in mud, and chipped by passing tractors.

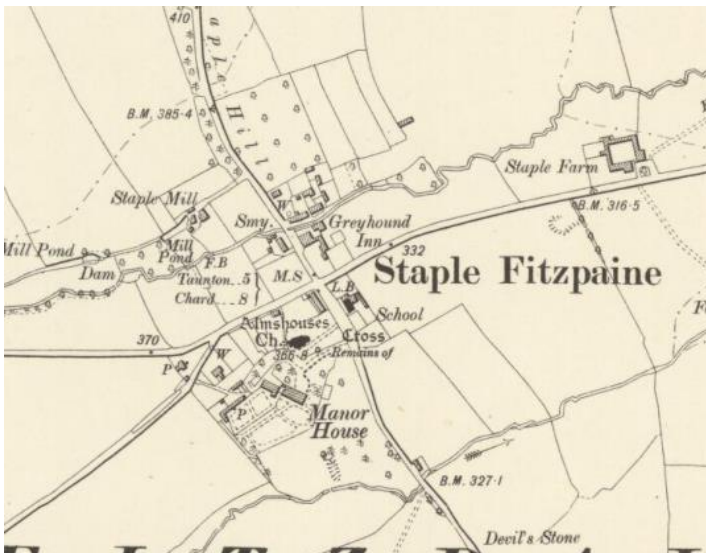


4 Mile Stone – Taunton Trust stone



Mr Foster, now living at Stoke St. Mary, claimed to have found the 4 mile stone as it was nearly opposite his old home at Badger Street. Almost as good as new after well over a hundred years. The four mile stone used to be on the left near the cottage of the late Mrs Bessie Sparks.

5 Mile Stone – Taunton Trust stone



On leaving Staple Fitzpaine Church I saw the five mile stone facing the road to the church near the Greyhound Inn



6 Mile Stone – Chard Trust stone



January 2015

Sadly the 1, 3, 4 and 6 mile stones do not appear to be there any more.

However, Mr Brian Murless, Archivist, Somerset Ind. Arch. Society has very kindly sent in pictures of milestones, 3,4 and 6 which were taken when Mr Murless and the late John Bentley researched the Turnpike Trusts of Somerset in the 1980s.

It will be noted that there is a difference between the Taunton and Chard Trust milestones.