

SURVEY

Some Milestones in Tipperary North Riding

Four very interesting and varied milestones, in the area of Tipperary, North Riding, were brought to my attention by a member of this Society.¹ There is no doubting the county location of the stone in the parish of Kilcomenty, townland of Birdhill, on the N7 Limerick to Dublin road as it is painted in bright blue and gold (Fig. 1). The stone, of limestone, is 34 inches (86.7 mm) in height. It is very weathered and has a large crack which, if it gets worse, could split the stone in two. The front angle is in poor condition also; it appears to have been hacked by cartwheels over many years. The top is very uneven and displays the distance to Dublin as 105 miles while Nenagh is 11 miles and Limerick 8 miles. These distances are English miles, which became the standard measurement in Ireland when the country was fully mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the 1840s and 1850s.² It is possible that the stone originally was local in its use and only gave the distance between Nenagh and Limerick. It may have been later in the nineteenth century, when the road to Dublin was changed to the present location through Birdhill, that the stone was altered on the top, to include the distance to Dublin.

There is a very unusual milestone in the parish of Castletownarra, townland of Lansdowne, two kilometres from Portroe on the Ballina, Nenagh road (L152). A slab, set into a stone wall (Fig. 2), contains the following information:

Seven miles one Quarter &
Twenty nine perch to Ne
nagh Four miles one Quarter &
Eleven perch to Killaloe
1801

The wall into which the slab is now set seems to be of relatively modern construction and the slab has indentations on each of its sides. It is probable that it was slotted into some form of receptacle that held it in place; it was not constructed to rest upon the ground, as it does at present. It is 51 inches in length (128 mm), 12 inches in height (30mm) and is made from limestone. Because of its unusual form and detailed measurements it may have been erected by the Parker family who lived at nearby Castletown House³ though there is no actual evidence for this.

In the appropriately named hamlet of Milestone in the parish of Upperchurch and townland of Graniera (T19) there is a stone with a very distinct triangular head displaying the information that it is 16 mile[s] to Newport; the word 'miles' is very worn (Fig. 3). The triangle on the stone indicates that it was erected or altered at a date during the nineteenth century.⁴ No road existed in 1778 running from Thurles, through the

¹ Mr. P.J. Ryan, Newport.

² The road to Dublin from Limerick, went through Newport or O'Brien's Bridge and Castleconnell in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, *Maps of the Roads of Ireland Surveyed 1777* (London and Dublin, 1778) pp 98-9.

³ Ibid.,

⁴ See Charlotte Murphy, 'Milestones in County Limerick', *NMAJ*, vol. 49 (2009) pp 125-9.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Slievefelim mountains to Newport.⁵ A bridge on the present road to Newport is known as Anglesey Bridge. Lord Anglesey was lord lieutenant of Ireland on two occasions; 1828-9 and 1830-33. It is probable, therefore, that this road was constructed during the viceroyalty of Anglesey, most likely in the 1830s. On the right-hand side of the stone, as one faces it, it shows that Tipper[ary] is 16 [miles] and on the left-hand side it shows that Thurles is 13 [miles]. The 'ary' is missing from Tipperary and there is no use of the word 'miles'. The stone appears to have been cut away at the 'Tipperary' side, hence the loss of the last three letters. It has also been given a protective ledge but it is unlikely to have been moved any distance from its original site. It is approximately 39 inches in height, at its highest point (99 mm) and is of limestone.

A most interesting milestone is to be found in the main street of Borrisoleigh, parish of Glenkeen, townland of Borrisland, South. (T21). It appears to be a jostle stone (Fig. 4). These were used at corners of buildings to protect them from the wheels of carts and coaches. This stone stands at the corner of Ryans on the way to a car park. According to local tradition, this building was a hotel and stage for Bianconi cars in the nineteenth century. Therefore, the usefulness of the milestone/jostle stone is very obvious. It refers only to Templemore which it states is five miles and three furlongs distant. It is of limestone and is 24 inches (60mm) in height.

Charlotte Murphy



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

⁵ Taylor and Skinner, *Maps of the Roads of Ireland*.