

Historic Victorian Milepost in Cricklewood Restored

A Heartening Victory for Local Residents

12 February 2018

For years, sharp-eyed travellers on the A5 Cricklewood Broadway road might have noticed, as they come over the rise by Beacon Bingo and the Travelodge, a humble monument set back on the grass verge of the highway. You'd have had to look closely though – in its deteriorated state, rusting and overhung by a line of London plane trees, this Grade II listed structure didn't exactly stand out.

It's a roadside milepost – a surviving relic from the time of horse-drawn carriages. The A5 here is ancient, once part of a Roman road previously known as Watling Street. Approaching from the south, the milepost reads "Watford 10". From the north, it reads "London 4", indicating the distance in miles from the Victorian-era edge of London at Tyburn (modern day Marble Arch).

According to Mike Horne, who runs the historical research site Metadyne and on it keeps an inventory of London mile markers, this cast iron milepost is one of only two between London and Watford that exist in their original positions.

A few local residents from the Cricklewood Railway Terraces, a set of old workers' cottages which occupy the land behind the milepost, approached Barnet council in June 2017 in an effort to have the monument restored.

For a time, it seemed a bit of a lost cause. Jurisdiction was debated as to who at Barnet council was ultimately responsible for the milepost's upkeep.

Cartographer and local researcher David Wenk was brought in to help draft a letter to Barnet council, which aimed to clearly set out the council's responsibility for the milepost's maintenance. This letter was cosigned by Marlene Wardle, chair of the Cricklewood Railway Terraces Residents' Community Association, and Railway Terraces resident Ramsay Wood.

In the end, Brian Francis, an engineer at Barnet council, agreed to take on the project. A team from the Highways department set out in January of this year to restore the milepost. Adhering to guidance published by The Milestone Society (an organisation dedicated to the preservation and cataloguing of historic mile markers throughout England) Francis's team undertook a sensitive renovation. They cleared vegetation away, repaired the rusting portions of the milepost, and gave it a handsome new coat of paint.

The results speak for themselves. The milepost, now beautifully restored to its original, sharp black and white colour scheme, has regained its rightful prominence as an important historic marker on the A5 Cricklewood Broadway.

See attached images showing the milepost before and after renovation.

Cricklewood Railway Terraces

Residents' Community Association

Chair: Marlene Wardle
Secretary: Jessica Howey
Treasurer: Sonia Bryant

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Images



Figure 1. Showing condition of the milepost in October 2017, before maintenance.

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Figure 2. Showing condition of the milepost in late January 2018, after maintenance.



Figure 3. The milepost as seen from the footpath alongside the A5, January 2018.



Figure 4. The milepost as seen by traffic approaching from the north, January 2018.



Figure 5. The restored milepost flanked by local residents.
L to R: Mike Leydon, Marlene Wardle, Ramsay Wood.
Ramsay is pictured holding the original letter to Barnet council.

ALL IMAGES AVAILABLE AT HIGH RESOLUTION.
CONTACT DAVID WENK (WENK@BTINTERNET.COM) FOR DETAILS.