

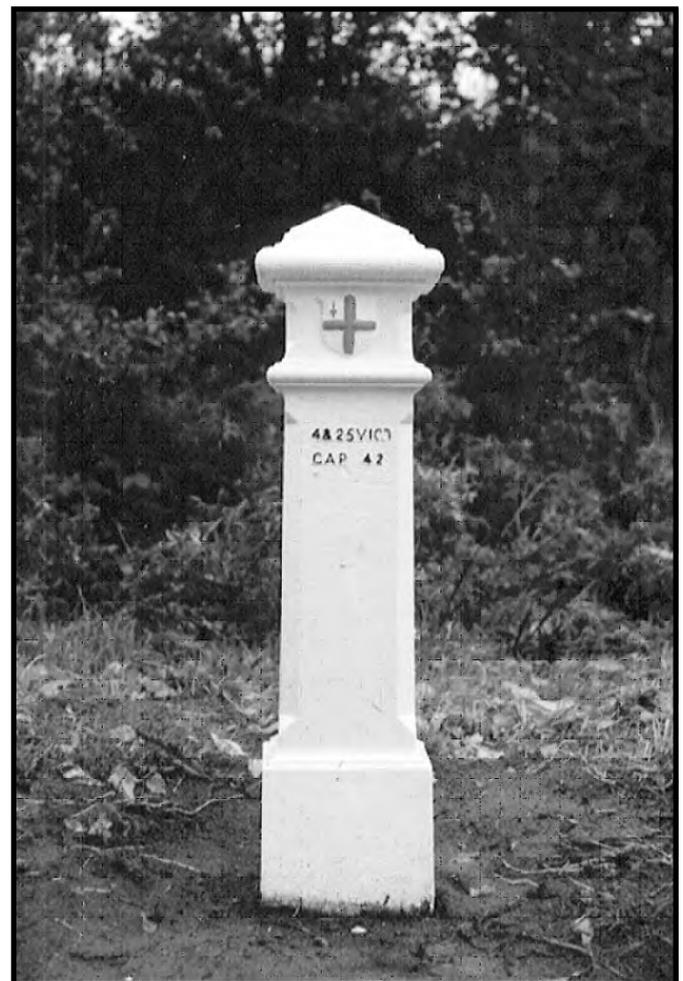
Further Information

If you have any queries concerning the information given in this leaflet, please do not hesitate to contact the Landscape and Heritage Section of the Town Planning Division. You may call in, preferably by appointment, or telephone the Town Planning Division (01372 474824 or 474828) during normal office hours.

Other guidelines and advice leaflets are also available covering such subjects as Conservation Areas, Preservation of Trees, Home Extensions and the Enforcement of Planning Control.



Coal and Wine Tax Posts



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This leaflet explains the historical origins, describes the different types and provides a guide to the location of the Coal and Wine Tax Posts in the Borough of Elmbridge. The majority of the posts were restored in September 1997 by the Council's Town Planning Division.

What is a Coal and Wine Tax Post?

It is a means of marking the point at which duty became payable on coal and wine being transported into the City of London. There are over 200 located around London, 23 of which are known to have survived within Elmbridge Borough. These are to be found in various locations in Walton-on-Thames, Molesey, Esher, Claygate and Oxshott (see map). They were set up under the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act 1861 at points where any canal, inland navigation, railway or public road first entered the Metropolitan Police District.

History

Although the Coal and Wine Tax Posts have been in existence for over 130 years, the history associated with them goes back centuries earlier. Since mediaeval times, the Corporation of the City of London exercised the right of "metage" - the collection of dues - on coal or other goods entering London. The majority of coal was brought by sea from Newcastle, and the collection of the fees was relatively uncomplicated. As the coal was unloaded and weighed, the appropriate fee was paid to a Corporation official known as "The Measurer of Coals".

A further important aspect in the history of the Coal and Wine Tax Posts is the link between these and the existence in the 14th Century of the "Orphans Fund", which was administered by the Court of Record, acting on behalf of the Mayor and Corporation of the City. All citizens were obliged, as a condition of accepting the Freedom of the City, to execute a will nominating the Corporation as administrators of their estate. In the event of their death, any of their under-age children would come under the custody of the Court. The proceeds of the sale of property were invested by the Court, and returned to the children either on their marriage or coming of age.

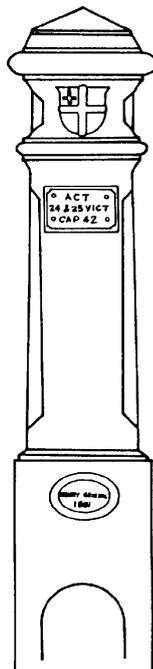
In the 17th Century, the City suffered two major disasters, the Plague in 1665, and the Great Fire of London in 1666. Funds were needed to enable rebuilding and renovation works to be carried out and in 1667 the First Rebuilding Act was passed, authorising an increase in the duty payable on coal entering the Port of London. The funds collected from these taxes, together with the "Orphans Fund", were used for the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral and numerous other City churches, the Guildhall, the City's markets and Newgate Prison.

But the City remained in considerable debt and an Act of 1694 "for the Relief of the Orphans and Other Creditors of the City of London" was passed. This act bestowed upon the City, amongst other things, the power to impose a duty on each tun (a large cask) of wine entering the Port of London and increase the duty payable on coal. It is acknowledged as the ancestor of the Act of 1861 that set up the Coal and Wine Tax Posts which are still in existence today. Once all debts had been repaid, surplus funds were used to finance public works including the building of bridges over the River Thames, street paving and new access roads into London. Several further Acts passed during the 17th and 18th Centuries continued the provision of funds to be used for public works.

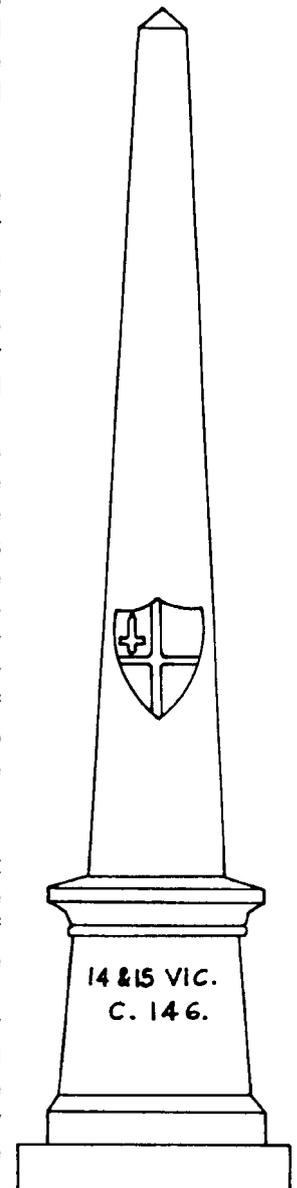
Until the 19th Century, the transport of coal and other goods into London had been by sea. But the growth of the canal and railway systems meant that collecting points for taxes had to be set up beyond the boundary of the City. Originally an official was stationed on the bank of the canal to record the tonnage and collect the duty; but as canal trade dwindled with the advent of the railways, it became uneconomic to employ collectors, and it eventually became the responsibility of the operating company to collect and pay the taxes to the Clerk of the Coal Market. The Coal Duties (London, Westminster and adjacent counties) Act 1851 set the boundaries for collection of duties at 20 miles from the General Post Office in the City. The area was subsequently reduced by the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act of 1861 to include only those places lying within the Metropolitan Police District.

As a result of the liberal interpretation of this Act, many posts were erected at places that were little more than streams, cart tracks and footpaths - very little trade could have passed by these! The revenue raised was used for metropolitan improvement schemes including the building of the Thames Embankment, the erection of the Holborn Viaduct and the purchase of the River Thames bridges, including Kingston-upon-Thames, Hampton Court and Walton-on-Thames, to free them from tolls.

TYPE 1



TYPE 2



Although the tax was finally extinguished by an Act of Parliament passed in July 1889, many Posts remain as fine examples of industrial archaeology in Elmbridge, the majority of which are Grade II structures listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Types of Coal and Wine Tax Post

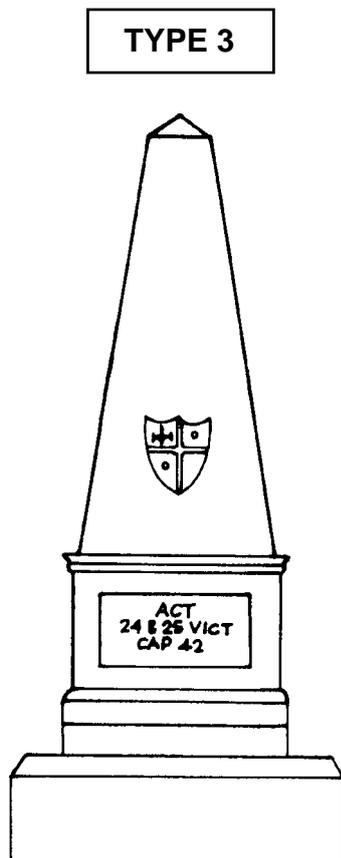
There are examples of four different types of Coal and Wine Tax Post within the Borough. The variations in style reflect both their age and location, i.e. roadside (type 1), railway embankment (types 2 and 3) and river towpath (type 4).

Type 1: these are the most commonly seen Coal and Wine Tax Posts and form the great majority of the surviving boundary marks in Elmbridge. They are found beside roadways, bridleways and footpaths. They are made of cast iron, and were cast by Henry Grissell at the Regents Canal Ironworks, London. A maker's plate is often still to be found either on the front or the rear of the plinth, indicating the year in which the post was cast.

The posts are 1.8 metres (6 ft.) high in total, of which approximately 1 metre (3 ft.) is usually above ground, although some are now buried much more deeply. A fine example of an entire post can be viewed from the Hurst Road entrance of the Walton Advanced Water Treatment Works, West Molesey (number 25 on the map). The body of the post, including the cap, is white. The coat of arms depicted is that of the City of London, with the shield bearing the Cross of St. George and the Sword of St. Paul, painted red on a white background. Beneath the coat of arms is to be found the letters

**"24 & 25 VICT.
CAP 42"**

This is the reference to the Act of Parliament under which statute they were erected - in this instance the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act 1861. On many of the posts this lettering is somewhat illegible, and in almost all cases the "2" of "24" and the "T" of "VICT" is missing. This is attributed to the fact that the production of some posts was put in hand prior to the Act being passed by Parliament. These posts did not carry a full inscription and so it was necessary to fix a correction plate bearing the words



"ACT 24 & 25 VICT. CAP 42"

over the original inscription. To ensure uniformity, these correction plates were fitted on all posts cast, and to enable a good fit, it was necessary to grind away the "2" and "T". There are only four posts in the Borough where these correction plates remain intact. These are numbered **2, 9, 14** and **16** on the map.

Type 2: These are tall obelisks, approximately 4.2 metres (14 ft.) high, and made of stone or cast-iron, which were erected along railway lines before 1861. There is one example of this style of post in Elmbridge, on the railway embankment at Douglas Road, Esher (numbered **6** on the map). This granite obelisk was originally erected on the main railway line at Weybridge under the powers of the Coal Duties (London & Westminster and adjacent counties) Act 1851. It was moved to Douglas Road, Esher following the passing of the 1861 Act, which revised the boundary of the area within which duties became payable.

Type 3: These are cast-iron obelisks approximately 1.5 metres (5 ft.) high with metal shields depicting the coat of arms of the City of London attached to each of the four faces of the obelisk, and with a plate bearing the inscription

**"ACT
24 & 25 VICT
CAP 42"**

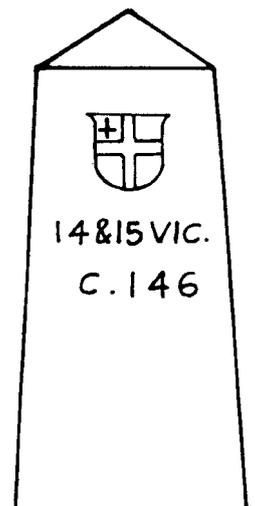
fixed to each face of the plinth. They were erected along railways after 1861. The sole example of this style in the Borough is on the railway embankment at Stokesheath Road, Oxshott (numbered **15** on the map).

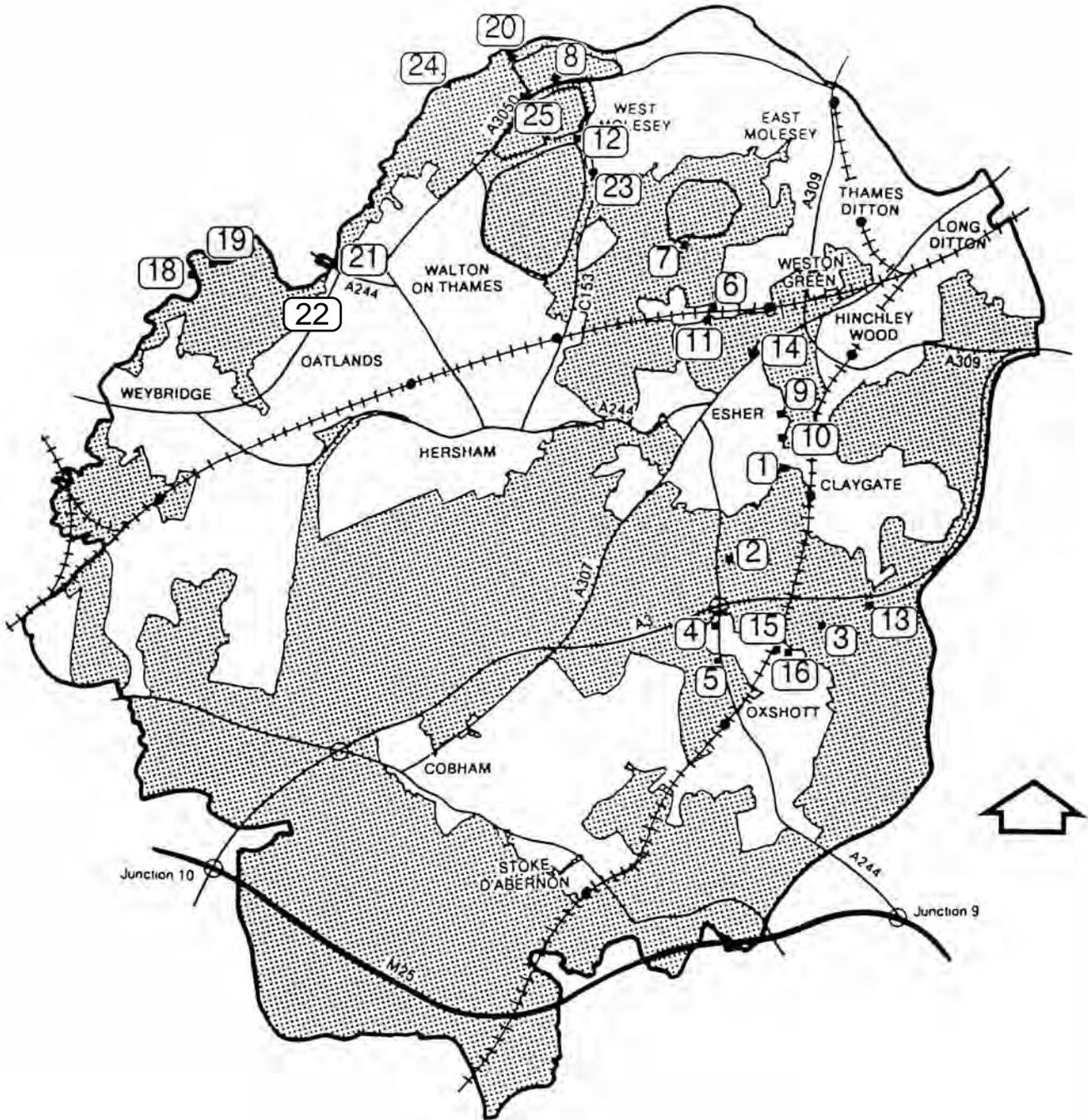
Type 4: These are granite obelisks approximately 1.2 metres (4 ft.) high, without a plinth, and with the shield depicting the coat of arms of the City of London embossed on one face and beneath it the inscription

**"14 & 15 VIC.
C.146"**

is engraved. Again there is only a single example of this type of post in the Borough, located on the towpath of the River Thames, Walton-on-Thames (numbered **20** on the map). It is believed that this granite obelisk was originally erected at New Haw Lock under the powers of the 1851 Act and relocated at Walton-on-Thames with the passing of the 1861 Act.

TYPE 4





Location of Coal and Wine Tax Posts within the borough

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arbrook Lane, junction with Milbourne Lane, Claygate. 2. Arbrook Farm Lane, off Copsem Lane, Esher. 3. Birchwood Lane, along public bridleway to Arbrook Common Esher. 4. Copsem Lane, south of Esher Common Roundabout, Oxshott. 5. Copsem Lane, junction with Sandy Lane, Oxshott. 6. Douglas Road, on railway embankment, opposite junction with Blair Avenue, Esher. 7. River Ember, north bank. No public access. 8. Hurst Road, north side below Molesey (Lambeth) Reservoir, West Molesey. 9. Littleworth Lane, north of junction with Littleworth Road, Esher 10. Littleworth Road, junction with New Road, Esher. 11. Lower Green Road, opposite Lower Green Open Space, Esher. 12. Molesey Road, junction with Walton Road, West Molesey. 13. New Road, east side of footpath adjacent to Holroyds Plantation, Claygate. 14. Portsmouth Road, north side by "The Toll House", Esher. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Stokesheath Road, on railway embankment, view from Stokesheath Road Bridge, Oxshott. 16. Stokesheath Road, in private garden near Stokesheath Road Bridge, Oxshott. No public access. View from roadside. 17. Stokesheath Road, Oxshott - post buried in grounds of Stokesheath Farm at present. 18. River Thames towpath (east bank). Post north of Desborough Channel. 19. River Thames towpath (south bank). Post north of Desborough Channel. 20. Towpath along River Thames (south bank), - access from Waterside Drive, Walton-on-Thames. 21. Bridge Street approach to Walton Bridge, Walton-on-Thames. 22. Walton Lane (south side) - No public access. View from Walton Lane. 23. Molesey Road, north of junction with Pool Road, West Molesey. 24. Sunbury Lock Ait in grounds of Yachting Club. No public access. View from Sunbury riverbank 25. Hurst Road in grounds of Walton Advanced Water Treatment Works, West Molesey. No public access. View from roadside. |
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