

## The Butter Stone between Ravensworth and Richmond used to safely trade goods during Black Death

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by Chris Lloyd, Chief Features Writer



Somewhere where the Ravensworth road crosses the Jagger Track is the remains of the Plague Stone.  
Picture: Google

LAST week, we told of the Butter Stone – a plague stone on the moor between Cotherstone and Bowes where, in times of past pestilences, people placed their produce for sale. A natural divot in the stone held a vinegar solution where purchasers would place their money to disinfect it.

“Did you know there is another Butter Stone on the left hand side of the road between Richmond and Ravensworth?” asks Robert Robb. “It is where the footpath from Gilling Wood crosses the road towards Jockey Cap, just to the left of the gate before you go on to the moor. It’s quite hard to see in the rough grass on the verge.”

So hard to see that it seems to have eluded the all-seeing eye of Google StreetView, and in these days of isolation, we haven't been brave enough to check it out for ourselves.

However, it must be there as it is a scheduled ancient monument. "Medieval cross base known as the Plague Stone," says its listing.

In Medieval times, the country was littered with standing stone crosses. There were at least 12,000 erected at spots considered important for religious or historical reasons, or to mark boundaries or as landmarks.

Most of them featured a carved upright which was placed in a stone socket on the ground.

Our Plague Stone is on a parish boundary and at a crossroads, because the footpath that goes across the Ravensworth Lane is called the "Jagger Track".

Jaggers were the sturdy packhorses that traipsed the countryside in trains, led by a man called a jagger, carrying goods for sale in their panniers.

When the plague struck Richmond, the upright of the old cross had disappeared, but that left the stone socket available to be used as a receptacle for the vinegar solution. With people isolating to avoid the plague, goods for sale were left around the stone at the crossroads.