

Old Stone Stiles

Two sets of stones have been found on our walks with the Meadowhead Military local history group. They both consist of two vertical stones, each with a groove carved into its inner face, giving provision for a vertically orientated flat stone to be placed in the grooves.

Searching on the internet, a very similar stone stile was found:-

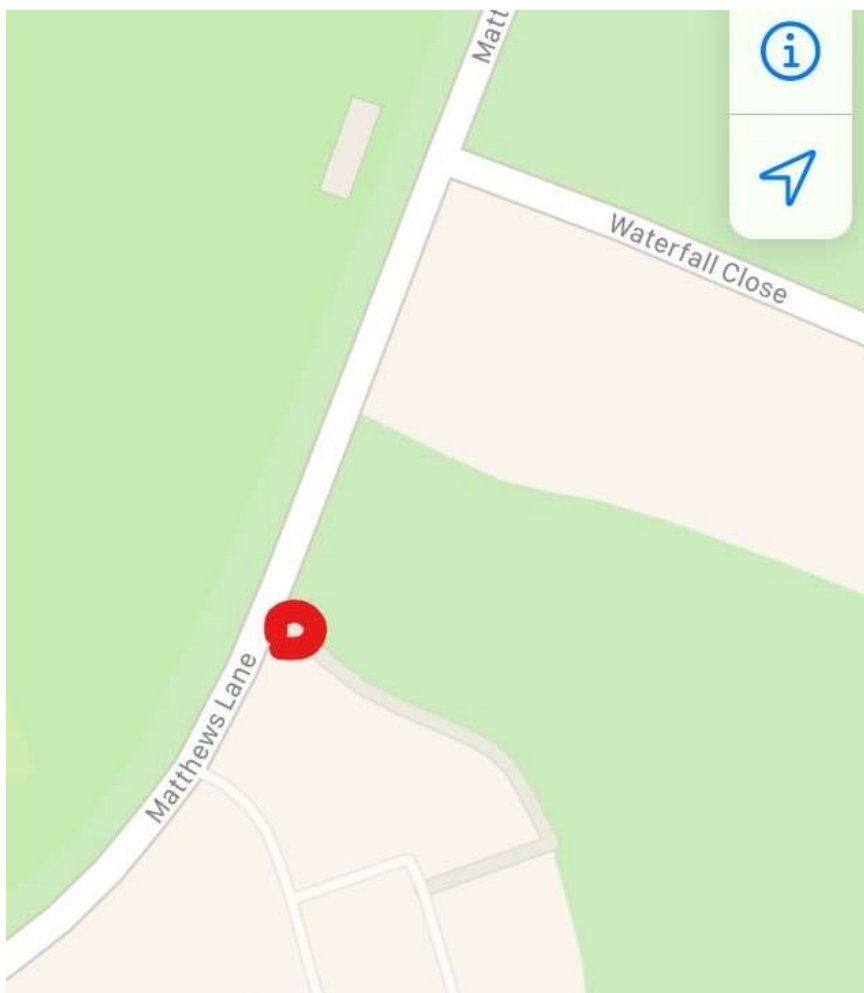
[File:Stone stile at Oldfield Farm.jpg - Wikimedia Commons](#)

This one had the grooves extending to the top of the vertical posts, so that the vertical flat stone could be added or removed at any time.

The stones around Meadowhead are slightly different, in that the grooves do not go up to the top. This means that the vertical flat stone would have had to be fitted whilst the vertical stones were being erected. Once erected, the vertical flat stone is effectively 'trapped' (obviously less trusting in the Meadowhead area!).

1) Matthews Lane / footpath

This footpath runs down the side of Norton Free School / Chantreycentre, towards School Lane.





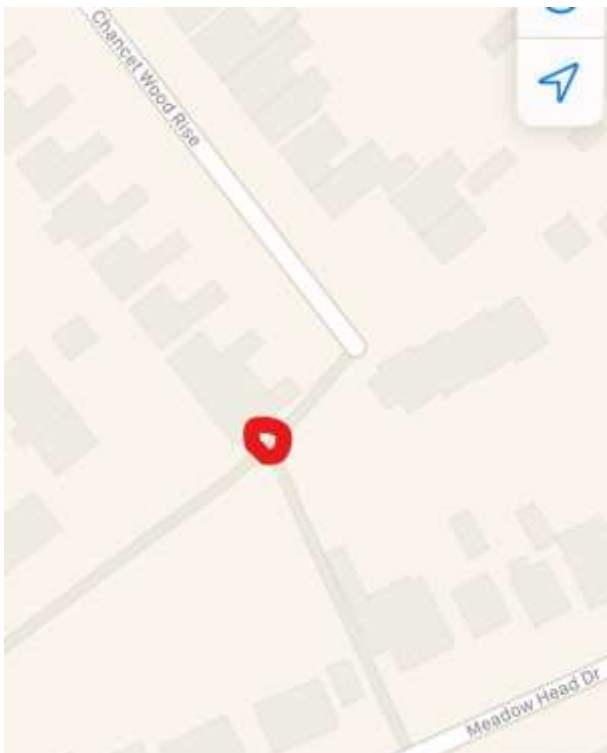
The two vertical posts facing each other have both got a groove chiselled into their inner surfaces, but the grooves do not go to the top. Originally, there would have been a flat stone fitted into the two grooves, over which people would have had to step. There may have been stepping stones either side, to assist getting across the stile.

There is a third vertical stone, to make getting across the stile more awkward (perhaps to deter animals from trying to jump over?). On the top of this vertical stone, there are some markings:-



2) Footpath junction by Chancet Wood Rise / Meadow Head Drive

At this location, three footpaths meet at a common point.



On the entrance to one of the footpaths there is a stone stile, of the same construction as the previous one in Matthews Lane. However, the vertical stone posts do seem to be taller here.



The round concrete post is obviously a much more recent addition, so it can be ignored. The remains of the missing vertical stone post can be seen in the ground as a stump. It would have provided the opposite groove for the vertical flat stone.



The vertical flat stone can be seen lying down nearby. It two opposite edges that have been stepped down, to fit into the grooved channels in the vertical posts. An initial measurement confirmed that the width of the flat stone corresponds to the gap between the two vertical posts.

It is possible that one of the vertical posts was crudely broken and knocked down to release the vertical flat stone, when the stile was no longer needed.

As at Matthews Lane, the third vertical post also has markings on its top surface:-



For comparison, this is the Merseyside stone style, with its 'slot-in' vertical flat stone:-



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