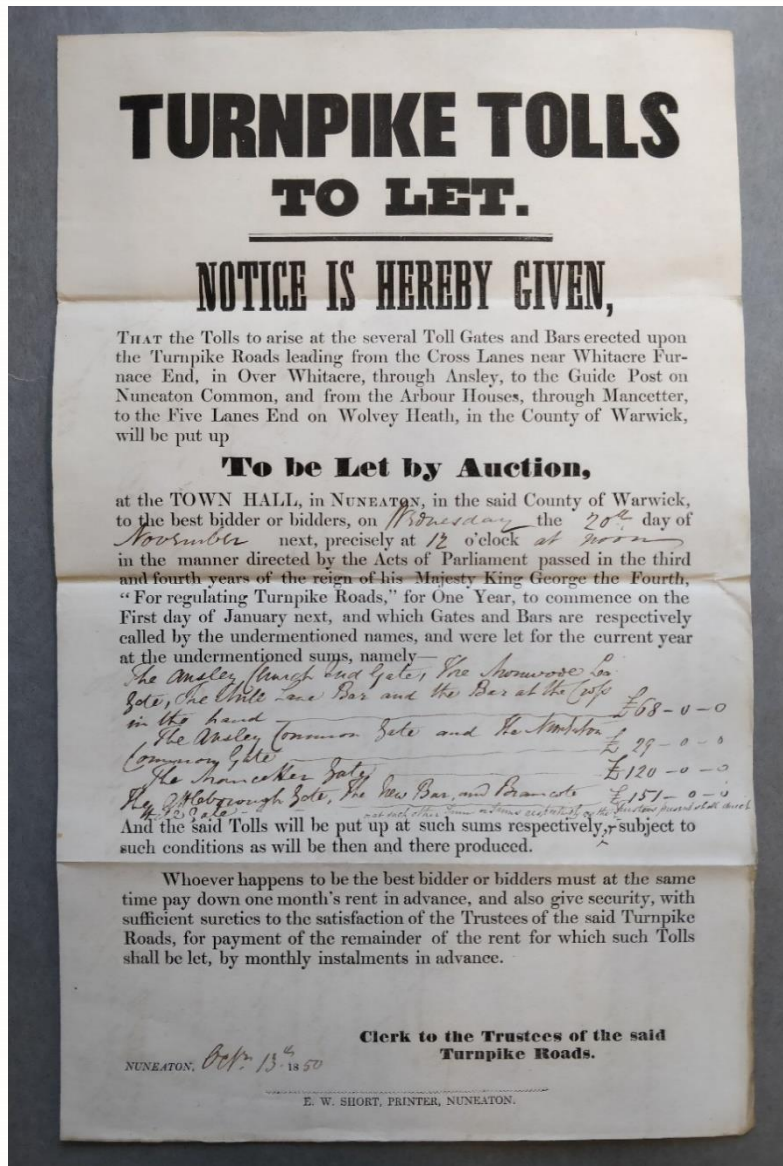


Notice of turnpike tolls to let

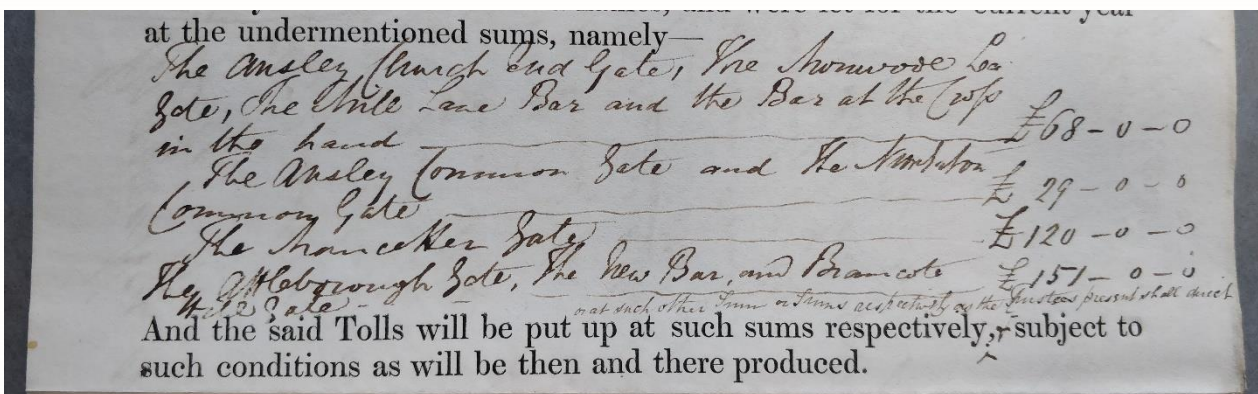
CR0202/10/3

The Document of the Month for July is a notice given regarding turnpike tolls to let, naming roads covered by the Ansley and Whitacre Turnpike Trust and the Mancetter to Wolvey Heath Turnpike Trust. Turnpike trusts were organisations set up to maintain the condition and manage the use of roads. At the height of the turnpike system, approximately 1,000 trusts are said to have been in operation.¹



Warwickshire County Record Office, CR202/10/3

In promoting an auction for vacant toll gates, this notice follows common procedure for the leasing of turnpikes, which trusts were obliged to put up for bidding by potential lessees. The lease agreement usually involved a simple exchange between the trust and the lessee: the lessee would pay a fixed sum to the trust, and in return would be entitled to the proceeds collected from travellers.ⁱⁱ In this document, the toll gates up for auction are handwritten onto the printed notice- this section is transcribed below.



Warwickshire County Record Office, CR202/10/3

The growth and decline of turnpike trusts

Prior to the development of turnpike trusts, parishes had long been responsible for the upkeep of local roads, but low funds adversely affected their maintenance. Turnpike trusts emerged as an alternative system with significantly higher expenditure, injecting money into local routes to support more efficient road transport. In fact, a 60% reduction in passenger travel times has been attributed to the development of turnpike trusts.ⁱⁱⁱ

The first turnpike trust was established in the seventeenth century, but the approach spread more widely in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All trusts were established by individual acts of Parliament which imposed responsibilities on trustees.^{iv}

Trusts typically covered only short stretches of local roads, and the trustees by whom they were managed were often men with public roles in the local community, such as landowners and those in legal and political professions.^v Tolls, which funded the management of turnpike roads, were collected at gates called turnpikes- a name taken from the military obstacles historically used to defend against cavalry attacks.

The last act was passed in 1836, by which point turnpike trusts accounted for around 20% of the entire road network.^{vi} Despite the wide reach of the system, it is said that some trusts suffered from financial mismanagement and debt. Tolls were also met with hostility in some cases, most notably in Wales during the Rebecca Riots, which saw toll gates torn down by local farmers.^{vii} Upon the advent of the Local Government Act of 1888, the responsibility for

road maintenance fell to the newly established county councils, putting an end to turnpike trusts.

The legacy of turnpikes

Despite their dissolution, the legacy of turnpike trusts can still be found today. Tollhouses were sold on following the closure of turnpikes, and though some were demolished, others have survived, sometimes inhabited as private residences. Their location can be traced on some historic maps, or they can be found as listed buildings. For example, Tollgate Cottage on Nuneaton Road, near Ansley Common, is a Grade II listed building, marked as having been built in 1769 as a toll gate following the turnpiking of the road in 1762.^{viii} Based upon its location, the cottage could be linked to the Monwode Lea Gate or the Ansley Common Gate which are auctioned in this document.

Transcription

The Ansley Church End Gate, The Monwode Lea Gate, The Mile Lane Bar and the Bar at the [Cross]
in the hand _____ £68 – 0 – 0
The Ansley Common Gate and The Nuneaton Common Gate _____ £29 – 0 – 0
The Mancetter Gate _____ £120 – 0 – 0
The Attleborough Gate, The New Bar, and Bramcote Hill Gate _____ £151 – 0 – 0
Or at such other sum or sums respectively as the Trustees present shall [decide]

ⁱ 'Turnpikes', *Great North Road*. Available at: <https://greatnorthroad.co.uk/turnpikes> [accessed 09/06/2023]

ⁱⁱ William Albert (1972), *The Turnpike Road System in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 85. Available at Warwickshire County Record Office, reference D.625.ALB.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dan Bogart (2005), 'Turnpike trusts and the transportation revolution in 18th century England', *Explorations in Economic History*, 42(4). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eeh.2005.02.001> [accessed 09/06/2023].

^{iv} UK Parliament, *Turnpikes and tolls*. Available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/transportcomms/roadsrail/overview/turnpikestolls/> [accessed 09/06/2023].

^v Albert (1972), *The Turnpike Road System in England*, p. 57.

^{vi} UK Parliament, *Turnpikes and tolls*.

^{vii} 'Turnpikes', *Great North Road*. 'Turnpike Trusts', *Hungerford Virtual Museum*, available at: <https://hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk/archives?view=article&id=823:turnpike-trusts&catid=36:transport> [accessed 09/06/2023].

^{viii} 'Tollgate Cottage, Nuneaton Road', *Historic England*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1365155?section=official-list-entry> [accessed 09/06/2023].