

Ralph Restorations: - <http://www.ralphrestorations.co.uk/>

Although overall the fingerposts don't look really bad, I find it difficult to quote for just partial repaints or 'sand all over and /repaint' rather than full 'strip right back' restorations as there are problems with not doing the full restoration which is the best option and would look good for many years but would not be cheap.

'FINGERS' (arms)

With the exception of the GUILDFORD finger on the Shillinglee Road post, all the wooden boards are basically sound although 2 have been damaged where they have been hit. All the lettering appears to be of cast aluminium and are starting to suffer from aluminium corrosion (white 'furring') so that they show up very pale rather than black. Unless all the corrosion is removed it tends to reappear fairly quickly. If one just sands the face of the letters and repaints them then within a year or so they can look bad again. They really need removing and sandblasting to remove all the corrosion. However, the letters have been fixed using steel screws instead of brass ones as I always use. The steel screws have rusted which makes it very difficult to remove the letters. Many of the screws are likely to snap and others will simply round off the heads. To remove the letters without breaking them usually means having to destroy some of the wood to get the screws out. The steel screws have also caused rust stains on the white paint on the face of the fingers, as has the steel coach bolts which secure them to the brackets. Removing and refurbishing the letters is time-consuming and the exceptional number of them on your fingerposts adds considerably to the cost.

APPRAISAL OF INDIVIDUAL FINGERPOSTS

Post 1 Dunsfold/Shillinglee Roads

Leaning badly

Some rust on finial

Black paint flaking on parts of column

GUILDFORD finger rotting along top edge and large area of bare wood – needs replacing

SUGGESTED WORK

As the post needs standing upright and one finger requires replacement I definitely recommend a full restoration. The one new finger would really show up the others unless they are done.

COSTS

Straighten leaning post and stabilise within ground.

Strip all metalwork to bare metal and repaint using high quality industrial primer and enamels
Supply 3 new hardwood fingers fully painted with the 89 letters refurbished and affixed by traditional slotted brass screws

Fingers to be attached to brackets with stainless steel fixings

£1400

Post 2 The Street/Common House Lane

Overall appearance seems reasonable but requires thorough clean

Some paint missing from lower white band

End of PETWORTH/KIRDFORD finger damaged

Whole top of sign rotates (and could be lifted out) as thread for grub screw has sheared (probably when PETWORTH finger was hit)

Slight backwards lean

SUGGESTED WORK

This fingerpost could either be fully restored or just have the following work carried out: -

Thoroughly wash fingerpost

Touch up lower white band

Paint damaged part of PETWORTH finger

Secure top of sign by re-drilling and threading for larger diameter grub screw

Other minor touching-up of paint

To cut a new thread for the larger grub screw will require removing the whole top of the sign to get the tube (on which the grub screw locates) out of the way so that the tapping tool can be used. Due to the weight this will necessitate removing the 3 fingers to make it safe to handle. Unfortunately, steel coach bolts/nuts have been used which are likely to be rusted and will simply rotate within the wood when attempting to undo them. I would therefore probably have to cut them off and replace with stainless steel fixings.

I do not consider the backwards lean of the post to be sufficiently bad to warrant trying to correct the lean.

COSTS

FULL RESTORATION **£1410**

WORK AS SHOWN ABOVE **£340**

Post 3 Loxwood Road/Common House Lane

Finial discoloured and rusty

BILLINGSHURST finger damaged at end

Damage to paintwork on lower white band

Limited corrosion to aluminium letters

Bottom finger bracket has been welded to top of column at some point and the weld has broken – rust forming

SUGGESTED WORK

Wash fingerpost

Strip finial back to bare metal and repaint using high quality rust-resisting primer and industrial enamels
Touch up damaged paintwork on white band
Paint damaged part of BILLINGSHURST finger
Smooth jagged part of broken weld. Touch up paint and seal.

At this stage it may be considered worthwhile just to carry out the above work. However, the freshly repainted finial will tend to show up the condition of the rest of the fingerpost. Unfortunately painting the finial does involve a number of trips over to apply all the necessary coats of enamel paint.

I have only quoted to paint (not fill first) the damaged part of the BILLINGSHURST finger as normal filler may well become dislodged over time. I would only use an epoxy-resin paste to fill it and the finger would need to be removed and laid flat to apply that. That would necessitate cutting off the securing coach bolts and replacing with stainless steel bolts. This work would add **£55** to the overall cost and why I have not suggested doing it.

COSTS

FULL RESTORATION **£1610**

WORK AS SHOWN ABOVE **£450**

Timescales: -

If the Parish Council wants the work on the post at the Shillinglee junction done over the winter I could certainly fit it in before the end of March, possibly much sooner.