

# North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society



**NEDIAS Newsletter No. 47 – August 2012**

**Price: £1.00 (Free to Members)**



## **Samuel Lees Ironworks at Park Bridge**

***Cliff Lea***

Last month we went to see the site of Samuel Lees ironworks, just north of Ashton-under-Lyne at Park Bridge, a site that was started by Samuel Lees in the 1780s, and which was developed over many generations of the same family. The ironworks is probably Lancashire's longest surviving example of an industrial community based on engineering. From the 17th century the Medlock valley had been extensively mined for coal, and this was where Lees built his first water powered mill in 1789.

The site is now a country park, with remains of the forges, gas works, pumping house, bar rolling mill as well as the Lees family houses and cotton mill. The family built the Park bridge village for their workers, including shops, terraces, institute, school and church.

The Park Bridge works were developed from an earlier water corn mill, but the availability of coal nearby and the demand for textile machinery in the surrounding towns made Park Bridge well situated. In addition to the original forges, new "bright shops," where steel was polished, and rolling mills were built in Rocher Vale to the east and a later building below the viaduct became a cotton spinning mill. A 1780s Newcomen steam engine which had been installed to pump water from 200 foot pit, at an area now called Fairbottom Bobs is no longer there; apparently it was dismantled in 1929 and sold to Henry Ford, being shipped off lock, stock and barrel to his museum in



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Detroit! The area by the way was later called Fairbottom Bobs after the bobbing action of the beam engine

The iron works and railway both closed in the 1960s. The railway viaduct was demolished, as was most of the iron works. The remains have been landscaped and a heritage centre has been established in the stables buildings. Millennium funding enabled an improvement of the area, including making more of the industrial remains accessible to visitors.

## WHAT'S ON?

### NEDIAS Lecture Programme

### NOTE NEW VENUE

Meetings now held at: St Thomas' Centre, Chatsworth Road, Brampton (opposite Vauxhall/Bristol St Motors) S40 3AW. There's plenty of parking in their own car park, including disabled spaces, as well as on-road parking in front of the Church. All meetings commence at 7:30pm.

Monday, 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2012	Patsie Jarman: "The 'Wonderful' Age of Steam"
Monday, 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2012	Derek Bayliss: "Wortley Top Forge and early ironmaking"
Monday, 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	Derek Grindell: "Power to the Peak"
Monday, 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2012	Christmas Meeting – Members only

### Other Diary Dates

On until 1st September 2012	Chesterfield Museum: George Stephenson Exhibition
8th September – 15th December	Chesterfield Museum: "A Touch of Glass" – Exhibition of glassmaking in Chesterfield
6th – 9th September 2012	Heritage Open Days – Various Sites See <a href="http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/">http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/</a>
Thursday, 20th September 2012	Talk and DVD – "Steaming through Britain" - Barrow Hill Roundhouse 7:00pm

<b>Saturday, 13th October 2012</b>	<b>EMIAC 84 - "Transport &amp; Trade in the Trent Valley".</b> St Joseph's Church Hall, Retford, Notts. Booking form at <a href="http://www.derbyshireas.org.uk/daslect.html">http://www.derbyshireas.org.uk/daslect.html</a>
<b>Saturday, 24th November 2012</b>	South Yorkshire Archaeology Day – advance notice

## **NEDIAS VISITS**

***Co-ordinator: Brian Dick, 01246 205720***

→ **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September at 10:00am. Visit to the Farriery and Forge Museum, Thanet Street, Clay Cross.**

We have organised a visit to view the Museum opened and curated by ex-miner, farrier, blacksmith and liveryman Doug Bradbury.

Farriery and Forge Museum, Thanet Street, Clay Cross. Meet on-site at 10:00am Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September, for a visit expected to finish by about mid-day. Donations in lieu of entrance charge to Doug Bradbury's local hospital charity.

## **Chairman's Chat**

Our winter and spring talks programme finished with a bang! One of our most well-attended meetings yet heard Andy Pollock talk on the Cromford & High Peak Railway – just as well we were at our new meetings venue, St Thomas Church Centre on the Chatsworth Road. There were just one or two minor teething problems at the new venue, which we'll iron out for our September meeting. The large turn out for the last two meetings, and the well supported mid-summer event Cromford Wharf however contrasted strongly with very small numbers travelling to Ticknall, following up Sue and Janet's invitation to see their recent dig. Do please let me know of any visits you'd like NEDIAS to make, or interesting speakers for future meetings.

Since our last meeting, it's been announced that the great, and historically important, William Armstrong's factory at Elswick, now within the BAE Systems Group, on the banks of the Tyne is to close. Whilst this is not of course in our area, it's truly the end of an era. Armstrong started this site over 150 years ago; he was a great entrepreneur, educated in Law, but rapidly turned to engineering innovation. In the early days he had experimented with hydraulics, and had applied this to development of cranes on the Tyne. But it was on hearing of our lack-lustre fire-power in the Crimea that he turned his attention to artillery. He was appalled that although rifles had evolved from earlier musket technology, our artillery was still in the dark ages, still with mediaeval muzzle-loaded cast cannon technology. He developed breach-loaded cannon with rifled bore, massively increasing fire-power, initially for light artillery weapons, soon extending weight and range for weapons on land and sea – and then moving into shipbuilding for the world's navies, taking over Whitworth en-route, the company merging in the 1920s with Vickers. Visitors to Armstrong's house, Craggside, will have seen quite a number of the innovations of this man who never stopped enquiring and researching, not least his innovation in use of water power for generation of electricity.

It seems the historical Elswick site is to close with little more than a whisper - but then we know all about that here! The Scarsdale area has had more than its share of industrial entrepreneurs; so perhaps this is the time for us all to put your own recommendations for next Plaques to be erected by the County Council – have you filled in a form for the DCC to make your own recommendation yet?

## **TRACK LIFTING MARKS THE END OF AN ERA AT CLOWNE**

***Phillip Cousins***

Track lifting on the former Midland Railway's Clowne Branch was carried out in earnest during March. Earlier, work had involved removal of the remaining track from Markham Vale to Bolsover and the Oxcroft Branch (where it had not been stolen).

A variety of plant was in use including rail mounted vehicles. A letter had been circulated in the area by

Network Rail advising that work would start on 25 January 2012, for three weeks. The work was undertaken by Tees Rail Ltd. Speaking to a site representative I understand that they had some 5 miles and 2 chains of track to lift from Seymour junction towards Creswell; the line to Oxcroft, which diverged at the former Oxcroft Junction; and to Bolsover. For the record engineer's line references were BAC for the line from Seymour to Elmton and Creswell Junction, OXO for the Oxcroft Branch and BOC and BCE for the line to Bolsover.<sup>1</sup>

The work took longer than envisaged, with some time spent clearing the track and cutting rails into sections, before lifting commenced. This was particularly difficult on the Clowne branch, which had not seen traffic for a number of years and was very overgrown. Lifting was started at the Seymour junction end, but much rail in the vicinity had already been stolen. This had included track at the now demolished Oxcroft disposal point and towards Bolsover.<sup>2</sup>

When visited at the end of the first full week in March, concrete sleepers were being stacked at an access via the Bolsover Road overbridge, with all track in the vicinity (excepting a very small panel) lifted. This access had been used to remove scrap rail and sleepers by lorry.

At Creswell a side road off Linden Road was being used for loading track and sleepers onto lorries. Sections of track were lifted and relayed to this site by rail mounted trolleys, propelled by rail mounted excavators.

It is likely that track was lifted through Clowne Station on 14 March 2012. The picture showing track recovery in progress at the cutting near Neale Street, Clowne, was taken the day after. The next day track was being lifted beyond Hollin Hill Road, towards Creswell. The Tees Rail site representative thought that work would be completed by the end of the following week.

### Brief History – Clowne Branch

A brief history is in order. Those who require more details are especially referred to Glynn Waite's *Passenger services between Mansfield and Chesterfield*,<sup>3</sup> Anderson and Cupit's *An illustrated history of Mansfield's railways*,<sup>4</sup> along with J. Gough's *The Midland Railway: a chronology*.<sup>5</sup> The history of the various branches in the area bounded by Staveley/Creswell/Sutton-in-Ashfield and Alfreton is complicated. What follows is a summary.



The Midland's Clown station was a simple affair, as shown in this Edwardian postcard. The nearest bridge carries Station Road over the line, followed by the second bridge, carrying North Road. Something of the nature of the line through Clowne can be judged by the limestone cutting beyond, heading out towards Boughton Lane. (Collection Glynn Waite)

The single track Clown Branch (without the 'e') was fully opened by the Midland Railway, for goods, in 1875, apparently having been completed in 1872, but largely dormant except for mineral traffic from Barlborough Colliery since 1873.<sup>6</sup> Opening to passengers from 1888 – this date was the start of direct passenger services from Chesterfield to Mansfield. The intermediate passenger stations for this service, were Whittington, Staveley (later Barrow Hill), Netherthorpe (later Staveley Town), Clown, Elmton & Creswell, Langwith, Shirebrook and Mansfield Woodhouse, with the journey

usually taking a little over 50 minutes. Clown was the only station actually on the branch, which was of some 5¾ miles long, diverging at Seymour Junction and joining the Worksop to Mansfield line at Creswell.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Quail Map Company, (1988), *British Rail track diagrams – 2: Eastern and Anglia Regions*, diagram 12A.

<sup>2</sup>For a summary of the status of the lines immediately before lifting see C. Booth, 'Waste trains to Markham Vale', *Rail Express*, March 2012, pp. 24 to 27.

<sup>3</sup>G. Waite, *Passenger services between Mansfield and Chesterfield*, *Midland Railway Society Journal*, Number 37, summer 2008, pp. 1 – 8.

<sup>4</sup>P. Anderson and J. Cupit, (2000), *An illustrated history of Mansfield's railways*.

<sup>5</sup>J. Gough, (1989), *The Midland Railway: a chronology*.

<sup>6</sup>Anderson and Cupit, (2000), p. 40.

<sup>7</sup>*ibid*.



The passenger service over the Clowne Branch was never very great. As Glynn Waite<sup>8</sup> records the standard service for many years, probably right from opening, was three Monday to Friday trains with additional trains on Saturdays. The onset of the Second World War saw services severely curtailed to one train weekdays only, at times to suit schools. The service eventually ceased in 1954, except for a summer Saturday's Radford – Blackpool service, which ceased in 1962.<sup>9</sup>

[For JULY, AUGUST, and SEPTEMBER, 1889.]

**TABLE 62.] CLOWNE BRANCH. (Weekdays only.)**

STATIONS.	1w	2w	3w	4w	5w	6w	STATIONS.	1w	2w	3w	4w	5w	6w	7w
<b>LONDON</b> (St. Pancras) ...dep.	12  0	...	...	...	10  40	3  0	<b>LONDON</b> (St. Pan.) dep.	5  15	...	10  40	10  40	12  20	3  0	4  0
Nottingham... ..	5  50	...	10  30	12  40	1  15	6  0	Derby... ..	8  0	...	12  30	12  30	2  55	2  55	7  5
<b>MANSFIELD</b> ...dep.	6  55	...	...	...	...	...	<b>CHESTERFIELD</b> ...dep.	8  40	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mansfield Woodhouse ..	7  59	8  50	11  10	1  15	3  48	7  11	Whittington ..	8  49	11  26	2  51	2  51	5  10	6  20	8  20
Shirebrook .. ..	7  10	9  20	11  21	1  21	3  59	7  23	Staveley .. ..	8  59	11  34	2  59	2  59	5  17	6  27	8  26
Langwith .. ..	7  16	9  26	11  26	1  26	3  55	7  29	Netherthorpe ..	9  09	11  39	2  55	2  55	5  23	6  33	8  30
Elmton and Creswell ..	7  23	9  33	11  33	1  33	4  02	7  36	Clowne .. ..	9  16	11  46	2  55	2  55	5  30	6  40	8  36
Clowne .. ..	7  23	9  33	11  33	1  33	4  02	7  36	Elmton and Creswell..	9  23	11  53	2  55	2  55	5  37	6  47	8  43
Netherthorpe .. ..	7  34	9  44	11  44	1  44	4  10	7  47	Langwith .. ..	9  30	12  00	3  00	3  00	5  44	6  54	8  50
Staveley .. ..	7  40	9  50	11  50	1  50	4  18	7  53	Shirebrook .. ..	9  37	12  07	3  00	3  00	5  51	7  01	8  57
Whittington .. ..	7  44	9  54	11  54	1  54	4  25	7  57	Mansfield Woodhouse....	9  44	12  14	3  00	3  00	5  58	7  08	9  04
<b>CHESTERFIELD</b> ...arr.	7  52	10  02	12  02	2  02	4  35	8  05	<b>MANSFIELD</b> .. ..arr.	9  53	12  23	3  00	3  00	6  05	7  15	9  11
Derby .. ..	9  55	11  05	12  05	2  05	4  35	8  05	Nottingham .. ..arr.	10  3	12  33	3  00	3  00	6  12	7  22	9  18
<b>LONDON</b> (St. Pancras)..	12  50	2  00	3  00	4  00	5  30	9  20	<b>LONDON</b> (St. Pan.) ..	12  50	2  00	3  00	4  00	5  30	6  40	8  15

**A**—Stops when required to take up Passengers for Netherthorpe and beyond. **B**—Goes forward from Elmton and Creswell at 7.27 p.m. **\*** Stops when required to take up or set down Passengers.

The Clowne branch never had a very great passenger service, as this extract from the Midland Railway's timetable for July, August and September 1889 shows. (Collection Glynn Waite)

There was a connection with the Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway (LDEC) at Clowne, which opened in 1896, but closed in 1937.<sup>10</sup> The two stations (LDEC and MR) stood next to each other, off Station Road. The LDEC closed to regular passengers in 1939, but with seaside specials until 1964.<sup>11</sup> The LDEC station had opened to passengers in 1897.<sup>12</sup> Its buildings still survive at street level. This route's final demise came in 1967, with the opening of a connection at Langwith Colliery junction between the former Great Northern Railway and Midland lines, enabling coal trains to be diverted away, via the Midland line, to Worksop.<sup>13</sup>

There is some history to the various spellings of Clowne with renames for the MR and LDEC stations; effectively chronicled by others. Suffice to say the final version of the MR's station became 'Clowne and Barlborough' in 1951, with the former LDEC station 'Clowne South' at its final abandonment in British Railways' days.<sup>14</sup>

### Brief History – The Doe Lea Branch

The MR's former line through Bolsover was usually termed the Doe Lea Branch. Opening in 1866 for goods, but only for something over a mile from Seymour Junction. It was extended twice – in 1884 to Glapwell and again later to connect with a line from Tibshelf junction to Pleasley Junction. In 1890 the Midland started an additional passenger service via this line. There were new stations at Bolsover, Palterton & Sutton, Glapwell (opened 1892) and Rowthorn & Hardwick on this line.<sup>15</sup> The line was closed to passenger traffic in 1930 with the section after Glapwell Colliery being abandoned.<sup>16</sup> Bolsover Station was used for excursions into the early 1980s, the building surviving until late in that decade.<sup>17</sup>

Finally there was the MR's branch to, originally, Oxcroft Colliery Number One pit, which left the Clowne Branch near Woodthorpe, at Oxcroft Junction; opening in September 1902.<sup>18</sup> The colliery closed in 1974,<sup>19</sup> with the line closing in February 1976, but it reopened to serve the Oxcroft Opencast Disposal Point in 1980,<sup>20</sup> built near the site of the former colliery exchange sidings.<sup>21</sup> The opencast disposal point later acted as a blending facility for receipt and dispatch of coal, some by road and some by rail.

<sup>8</sup>Unless separately referenced the majority of this paragraph is sourced from Waite (2008), p. 3 and p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Anderson and Cupit, (2000), p. 43.

<sup>10</sup>Gough, (1989), p. 118.

<sup>11</sup>Anderson and Cupit, (2000), pp. 52-3. R.V.J. Butt, (1995), *Directory of railway stations*, p. 64.

<sup>12</sup>ibid. For a history of this line see J. Cupit and W. Taylor, (1984), *The Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Railway*.

<sup>13</sup>*Railway World*, March 1967, p. 90. L. Little, (1995), *Langwith Junction, the life and times of a railway village*, p. 67-68.

<sup>14</sup>Butt, (1995), p. 64.

<sup>15</sup>The majority of this paragraph sourced from Waite (2008) to which readers are referred for further details.

<sup>16</sup>*Railway Magazine*, May 1941, p. 227 and Waite (2008), p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>Waite (2008), p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Gough, (1989), p. 118.

<sup>19</sup>National Coal Board, North Derbyshire Area, (1974), *Oxcroft Colliery 1873 – 1974*, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup>Gough, (1989), p. 118.

<sup>21</sup>P. Riden, (2011), *VCH Derbyshire: Texts in Progress: Bolsover – published 20 Aug 2011*, p.7. [On-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: [http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/sites/default/files/work-in-progress/bolsover\\_intro\\_20-8-2011.pdf](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/sites/default/files/work-in-progress/bolsover_intro_20-8-2011.pdf)

For a more recent history of the area readers are recommended to consult Chris Booth's 'Waste Trains to Markham Vale' article in the March 2012 edition of *Rail Express*.<sup>22</sup>

## Last Rites

The reason for both the Doe Lea and Clowne branches was primarily mineral (mostly coal) traffic. The passenger service was secondary. As the coal industry and by-products declined so did the reason for the lines' existence.

In 1993 it was reported that the fall in coal traffic and the move to road had reduced Oxcroft Disposal Point workings from about 40 trains each week to less than 15.<sup>23</sup> The disposal point was mothballed, with the rest of the line from Foxlow Junction to Seymour Junction and Oxcroft, following the last train on 25 January 2006.<sup>24</sup> A short attempt was made to extract stocked coal from the site by rail in November 2007<sup>25</sup> along with a short lived onsite coal open-casting operation.<sup>26</sup> Coal stocking at the disposal point was only authorised for operation until 2009. An unsuccessful planning application in 2010 to extend coal stocking at the site, and thereby the disposal point's life until the end of May 2014, was refused.<sup>27</sup> At the time a council officer's report stated that the disposal point was mothballed. The blending plant operation had involved coal imported by road, before this was blended. Coal for power generation went out by rail. The remainder (for industrial use) went by road. The disposal point actually had a locomotive named at it – 58 044 'Oxcroft Opencast' on 9 May 1992.<sup>29</sup> Coalite, at the Bolsover end, had stopped receiving traffic on its closure in 2004.<sup>30</sup>

Of the Clowne branch, the decline of coal sealed its fate. As an example Bevercotes Colliery, was closed in 1993 and at that time was reported as consigning large quantities of its output to Coalite.<sup>31</sup> Other collieries in the area also quickly succumbed.

Thanks to information from a former railway employee<sup>32</sup> I am able to give some details on probable last workings, following closure to passengers. The final train along the branch appears to have been a weed-killer train in April 1994. A fortnight previously, an inspection saloon special had visited. Though another account has traffic ceasing in 1995.<sup>33</sup>

A number of rail-tours visited the branch prior to closure. Perhaps most famously was the 'Virgin and Clown' in April 1987.<sup>34</sup> Another rail tour was booked to run over the branch, in September 1991 ('The Bolsover Ballandeer').<sup>35</sup> The same day passenger trains traversed the branch from Chesterfield to the Worksop Freight Depot open day.<sup>36</sup> This is probably the last time that a publicly advertised passenger service used the branch. The station building at platform level appears to have been demolished as late as 2000,<sup>37</sup> having survived until this date in use as a local base for permanent way staff.<sup>38</sup>

It is thought that the Clowne Branch connection at Oxcroft Junction was removed in 2004, when the line to the disposal point was possibly renewed. The connection at Creswell Junction may have been removed earlier, around 1996.<sup>39</sup> Further information on isolation of the Clowne Branch would be welcomed.

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<sup>22</sup>Booth, (2012), pp. 24 to 27.

<sup>23</sup>F. Fifer, 'Coal – catch it while you can', *Rail*, 9-22 June 1993, p.29.

<sup>24</sup>*Railways Illustrated*, April 2006, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>Booth, (2012), p. 24. The first train worked 20 November 2007, ceasing around three weeks later.

<sup>26</sup>Derbyshire County Council, Regulatory – Planning and Control Committee, 12 February 2007. Report of the Strategic Director – Environmental Services: Proposed Surface Mining of Coal at Oxcroft Disposal Point, Mill Lane, Stanfree, Applicant: UK Coal Mining Limited. Code No: CM5/0106/161. [On-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: [http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2007.02.12%20Stanfree\\_tcm44-11176.pdf](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2007.02.12%20Stanfree_tcm44-11176.pdf). Page 10 of the report states that coal export would be solely by rail.

<sup>27</sup>Derbyshire County Council, Minutes of a meeting of the Regulatory – Planning Committee held at County Hall, Matlock on 12 July 2010. Minute 78/10. [On-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: [http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2010.08.02%20Mins%20of%2012%20Jul%2010\\_tcm44-144220.pdf](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2010.08.02%20Mins%20of%2012%20Jul%2010_tcm44-144220.pdf)

<sup>28</sup>Derbyshire county Council, Regulatory – Planning Committee, 12 July 2010. Report of the Strategic Director – Environmental Services: Planning application to develop Oxcroft Coal Stocking Grounds...so as to allow the continuation of the stocking of coal until 31 May 2014, Oxcroft Disposal Point, for UK Coal Mining Limited. Code CM5/0509/53. [On-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: [http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2010.07.12%20Stanfree\\_tcm44-140330.pdf](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2010.07.12%20Stanfree_tcm44-140330.pdf).

<sup>29</sup>C.J. Marsden and D. Ford, (1998), *Encyclopaedia of Modern Traction Names*, p. 182.

<sup>30</sup>P. Riden and D. Fowkes, (2008), *Bolsover: castle, town and colliery*, p. 159.

<sup>31</sup>F. Fifer, 'Coal – catch it while you can', *Rail*, 9-22 June 1993, p.29.

<sup>32</sup>Mr Simon Culberhouse of Clowne. He worked the Inspection special.

<sup>33</sup>Booth (2012), p. 24.

<sup>34</sup>[On-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.sixbellsjunction.co.uk/80s/ht1987.htm>.

<sup>35</sup>Pathfinder Tours, (1991), *The Bolsover Balladeer, Sunday 1 September 1991: route itinerary*.

<sup>36</sup>Trainload Coal, (1991), *Worksop Freight Depot open day 1991: programme*.

<sup>37</sup>[On-line] last visited on 17 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.clownevillage.co.uk/the-station/the-station.htm>.

<sup>38</sup>Information from Mr S. Culberhouse, Clowne, 16 March 2012.

<sup>39</sup>Information in this paragraph from Mr S. Culberhouse, Clowne, 16 March 2012.

I am told that the line was fairly busy in the 1980s with empty ‘Merry-go-Round’ and other coal trains.<sup>40</sup> A good selection of photographs showing freight activity can be found, at the time of writing, on a ‘Flicker’ website.<sup>41</sup>

The Clowne branch was not a particularly fast line. In 1960 there was a 15 mph restriction,<sup>42</sup> unchanged twelve years later.<sup>43</sup> The branch was heavily graded. In steam days bankers were regularly required. From the Creswell end steam engines, in poor condition or where track conditions were poor, would invariably stall near the Hollin Hill Road overbridge.<sup>44</sup> Unfitted freights, running in the Seymour Junction direction, would be required to stop and pin down brakes (which usually occurred near the Boughton Lane overbridge – rather too handy for children from the local school, I am told).<sup>45</sup> Anderson and Cupitt<sup>46</sup> tell us that from about 200 ft at Seymour Junction the single track climbed to 450 ft at Clowne – over 2½ miles of the ascent were at 1 in 66. The descent to 270 ft at Creswell included two miles at 1 in 72. Much of the approach to Clowne is in cuttings.

Chris Hollis,<sup>47</sup> who started working for British Railways in September 1952 from Hasland Shed, can remember a working from that depot commencing as an early morning passenger train turn. This started as an all stations Chesterfield to Sheffield via Dronfield. At Sheffield the turn then went to Holme’s Junction and thence back to Chesterfield via the ‘Old Road’ – all stations via Barrow Hill. On arrival at Chesterfield the stock (usually three coaches) was deposited in the north facing bay platform. The engine would then pick up a parcels van, setting off again via Barrow Hill, where it stopped to load. Then it was up to Creswell, stopping at Staveley Town, travelling along the Clowne branch via Seymour Junction. A stop was made at the then Clowne and Barlborough station, before unloading at Creswell. A pick-up at Creswell followed, with a reversal to Chesterfield by the same route, picking up where required. This was usually a tender first job from Chesterfield to Creswell, with an ex Midland 4-4-0 steam locomotive the staple motive power. Goods traffic consigned by this manner was usually sparse and the turn on the Clowne Branch was taken off soon into Chris’s time, probably around 1954. Barrow Hill men had passenger turns over the branch – two return workings – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This was apparently nicknamed the ‘punkey’. Recollections on this are welcomed.

Table 243 MANSFIELD, STAVELEY TOWN, and CHESTERFIELD—Week Days only									
Miles		p.m.				Miles		a.m.	
	<b>Mansfield</b> ..... dep	<b>E</b>					<b>Chesterfield</b> ..... dep	<b>E</b>	
1½	Mansfield Woodhouse...	..	..	..	..	2½	Whittington.....	8 14	..
4½	Shirebrook.....	..	..	..	..	3½	Barrow Hill & Staveley	8 20	..
6	Langwith.....	..	..	..	..	5½	Staveley Town... [Works	8 26	..
8½	Elmton and Creswell....	4 37	..	..	..	9½	Clown and Barlborough	8 32	..
11½	Clown and Barlborough...	4 45	..	..	..	12½	Elmton and Creswell....	8 44	..
15½	Staveley Town.....	4 58	..	..	..	15	Langwith.....	8 50	..
17½	Barrow Hill & Staveley	5 A 9	..	..	..	16½	Shirebrook.....	..	..
18½	Whittington.... [Works	5 12	..	..	..	19½	Mansfield Woodhouse...	..	..
21	Chesterfield..... arr	5 17	..	..	..	21	Mansfield..... arr	..	..

By the 26 September 1949 timetable, the branch had a weekday only service of one train each way. For the Chesterfield departure, it would have been possible to connect into a train at Elmton and Creswell, departing at 9.12 am, arriving at Mansfield at 9.34 am, though the timings actually seem to suit school traffic. (Author’s collection)

Elmton and Creswell Junction signal box remains. Opened in 1946,<sup>48</sup> one of its purposes – that as a junction ‘box for the Clowne branch – having disappeared when the connection was removed. Its 1938 vintage, 48 lever frame, was not used until the London Midland and Scottish Railway type 11c box was opened.<sup>49</sup> Today it sees little use and is normally switched out. The ‘box’s official closure is apparently listed as late as 2027, in connection with Network Rail’s various resignalling schemes.<sup>50</sup> The ‘box latterly housed the Tyer’s tablet exchange device, which allowed access to the Clowne Branch.<sup>51</sup> The other unit was housed in a wooden hut

<sup>40</sup>Information from Mr S. Culberhouse, Clowne, 16 March 2012.

<sup>41</sup>[On-line] last visited on 17 March 2012 at URL: at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/onemananhisdog/sets/72157609737099956/with/3069934763/>.

<sup>42</sup>British Railways, Eastern Region (1960), *Sectional appendix to the working timetables and books of rules and regulations: Great Northern Line*, 1 October 1960, pp. 157 – 158.

<sup>43</sup>British Railways, Eastern Region (1972), *Sectional appendix to the working timetables and books of rules and regulations: southern area*, 1 October 1972, p. 196.

<sup>44</sup>Information from Mr S. Culberhouse, Clowne, 16 March 2012.

<sup>45</sup>Information from Mr S. Culberhouse, Clowne, 16 March 2012.

<sup>46</sup>Anderson and Cupitt, (2000), p. 40.

<sup>47</sup>Information in this paragraph from Mr C. Hollis, Chesterfield, May 2012.

<sup>48</sup>P. Kay, (2010), *Signalling atlas and signal box directory*, p. 19 and [On-line] last visited 18 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.signalbox.org/gallery/lm/elmtonandcreswelljcn.php>.

<sup>49</sup>P. Kay, (2010), *ibid.* and p. 31.

<sup>50</sup>[On-line] last visited 18 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.signalboxes.com/signalbox-closure-dates.php>.

<sup>51</sup>[On-line] last visited 18 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.signalbox.org/gallery/lm/elmtonandcreswelljcn.php>.

at Oxcroft Junction, where operation would release a ground frame.

The gradient profile on this line and traffic requirements led to trains latterly mostly running from the Creswell direction.<sup>52</sup> In the 1980s such was the one-way traffic (from the Creswell end) that a regular Sunday job for signal and telegraph staff would be to travel to Oxcroft Junction to collect tablets released by Elmtun and Creswell Junction, returning them to that 'box'.<sup>53</sup>

## The Reopening Question

Recent years have seen some interest in potentially reopening the Clowne Branch. The successful opening of the Robin Hood Line, in particular work for Stage III in the late 1990s, probably acted as a springboard for this. In 1997, for example, Derbyshire County Council was reported as examining extension of the line 'from Creswell to Sheffield via Clowne and Staveley...', though this was described as tentative 'because of the funding issue'.<sup>54</sup>

Bolsover District Council's 2000 Local Plan had stated; 'There is the possibility of re-opening the line through Clowne which would link the Robin Hood Line with Sheffield via Staveley, Beighton and Woodhouse. It has already been agreed that a feasibility study of this route should be carried out, using funds from the Single Regeneration Budget'.<sup>55</sup>

In 2002 a multi-modal study carried out by WS Atkins Ltd, for the government,<sup>56</sup> suggested that Clowne and Staveley stations could be reopened on a new 'Creswell to Staveley/Chesterfield line'.<sup>57</sup> The scheme would see a parkway station built to serve the M1 motorway at the Markham Employment Growth Zone (now the Markham Vale site) via a new Birmingham-Castle Donington-Nottingham-Mansfield-Chesterfield service.<sup>58</sup> Reopening of the Clowne branch and presumably the other works was then costed at £29m, for implementation in 2011.<sup>59</sup>

The 2006 replacement Chesterfield *Local Plan* also saw the line's reopening with a new interchange station at Markham Vale, though it was acknowledged that further feasibility studies and funding were needed.<sup>60</sup>

None of these plans have reached fruition. On lifting it was evident that the Clowne Branch had ballast in poor condition – mainly ash based, with worn track and rotten sleepers. It is evident that any reopening of the branch would have required extensive reballasting and track renewal. Bolsover District Council still has aspirations for the branch. The council's *Local Development Framework* mentions the possibility of reopening and the need to protect the route; though admits that there is no funding for reinstatement.<sup>61</sup>

On the line from Seymour Junction to Bolsover and Oxcroft Junction track conditions were better with deep ballasting and mostly modern track. But much of it had been stolen.<sup>62</sup> The Markham Vale development contains space for a dedicated rail head, with '20m deep loading yard designed for a reach stacker operation', able to accommodate '750m trains with 375m long siding with availability to split trains'.<sup>63</sup> The March 2012 edition of *Rail Express* carried news of a possible scheme to use a former opencast site for land-fill, involving trains to Markham Vale at the rail head site.<sup>64</sup> Presumably there will be much work with planning consents, along with track and signalling work, to bring this to fruition.

The remaining in situ track is classed as 'out of use (temporary)'.<sup>65</sup> The line to Seymour Junction from Hall Lane Junction (Staveley), has been under engineers' possession since March 2008.<sup>66</sup>

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52A.R. Kaye, (1984), *British Rail in the North Midlands and Peak District: a pictorial album*, p. 28.

53Information from Mr S. Culberhouse, Clowne, 16 March 2012.

54*Modern Railways*, October 1997, p. 617.

55Bolsover District Council, (2000), *Local Plan*, [on-line] last visited 16 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.bolsover.gov.uk/LocalPlan/chapter07.htm>

56'East Midlands expansion planned', *Modern Railways*, October 2002, p. 70.

57WS Atkins Consultants Limited, (2002), *Multi-modal study north/south movements on the M1 corridor in the East Midlands option identification report (draft)*, p. 54. [On-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: [www.go-em.gov.uk/transport/mmr-studies/m1-eastmids/reports/option\\_identification/...](http://www.go-em.gov.uk/transport/mmr-studies/m1-eastmids/reports/option_identification/...)

58ibid.

59ibid. p. 67. Though page 72 has the year of opening as 2006.

60Chesterfield Borough Council, (2006), *Replacement local plan*, [on-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: [http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/chesterfield/text/06\\_trs\\_transport.htm](http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/chesterfield/text/06_trs_transport.htm)

61Bolsover District Council, (2010), *Core strategy: revised preferred options, April 2010*, p. 54. [On-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: [http://www.bolsover.gov.uk/images/pdfs/Planning\\_Policy/LDF/corestrategy\\_revised\\_preferred\\_options.pdf](http://www.bolsover.gov.uk/images/pdfs/Planning_Policy/LDF/corestrategy_revised_preferred_options.pdf)

62For a plan showing lines stolen see Booth (2012), p. 24.

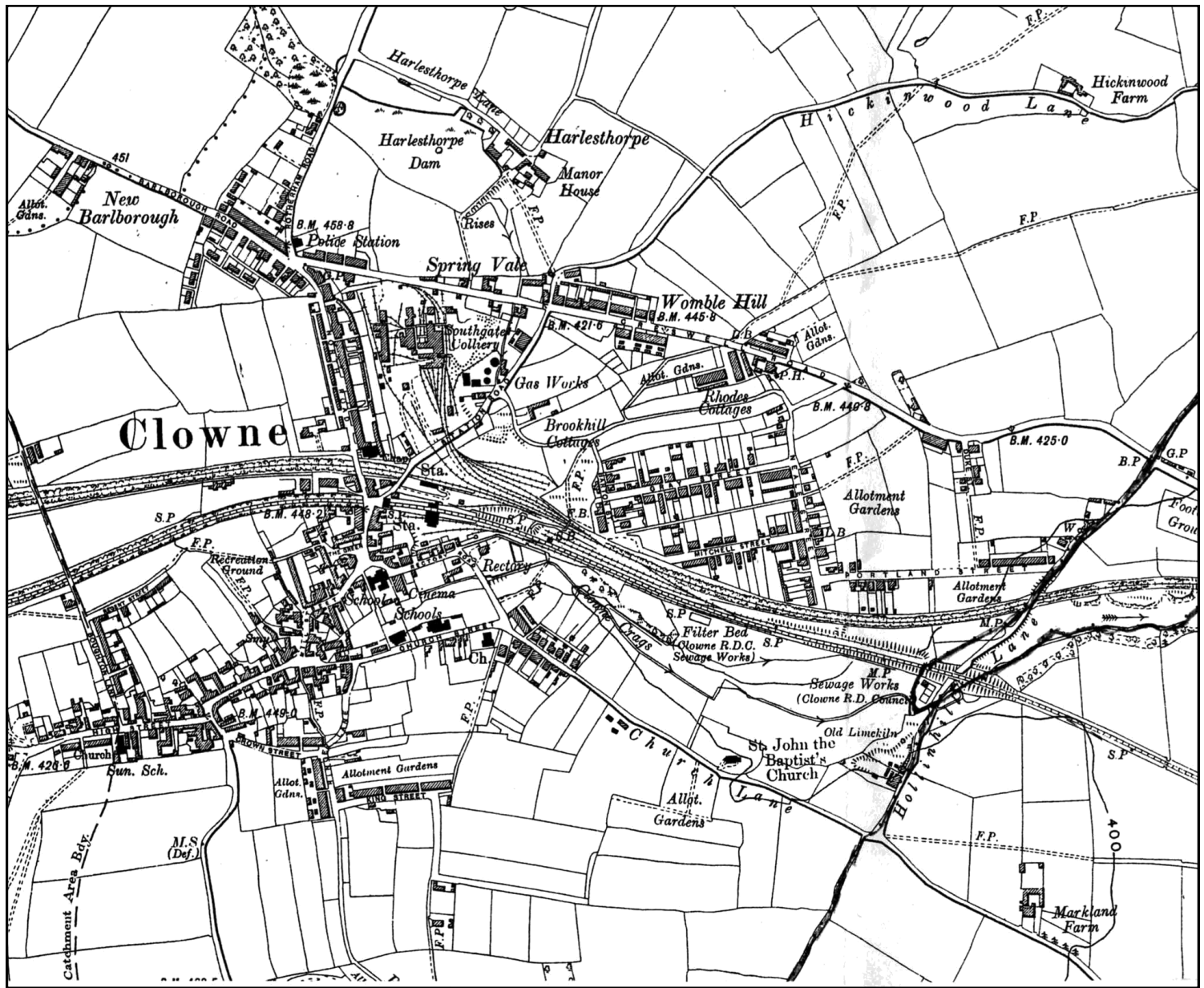
63[on-line] last visited 17 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.markhamvale.co.uk/railhead.asp>

64Booth, (2012), pp. 24 – 27.

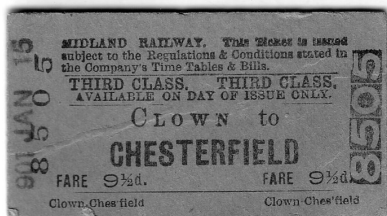
65Booth, (2012), p. 26 and [on-line] last visited 18 March 2012 at URL: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/network%20code/network%20change/completed%20proposals/london%20north%20eastern/ngc12011ncstnc004%20seymour%20junction%20to%20markham%20colliery/a%20ncg12011nc004%20notification.pdf>

66Booth, (2012), p. 26.

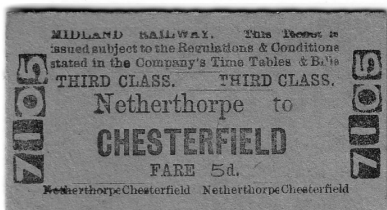




An enlargement of the 1923 Ordnance Survey 6-inch map gives some impression of the railways in Clowne. The bottom line is that of the Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway (LDEC) branch from Langwith Junction to Beighton. The station buildings to this line still survive at street level. The Clowne Linear Park follows part of the track-bed eastwards, with the tunnel, which took the LDEC under the town, still viewable from the park. The Midland Railway's station is marked just under the 'Sta' notation. Both lines through Clowne involved fairly extensive cuttings and gradients. The future of the MR track-bed is unclear, though it does appear that current planning policies, described in the text, protect the line from development. Westwards from Station Road the former LDEC route has been filled in. (Derbyshire sheet XIX. S.E., edition of 1923)



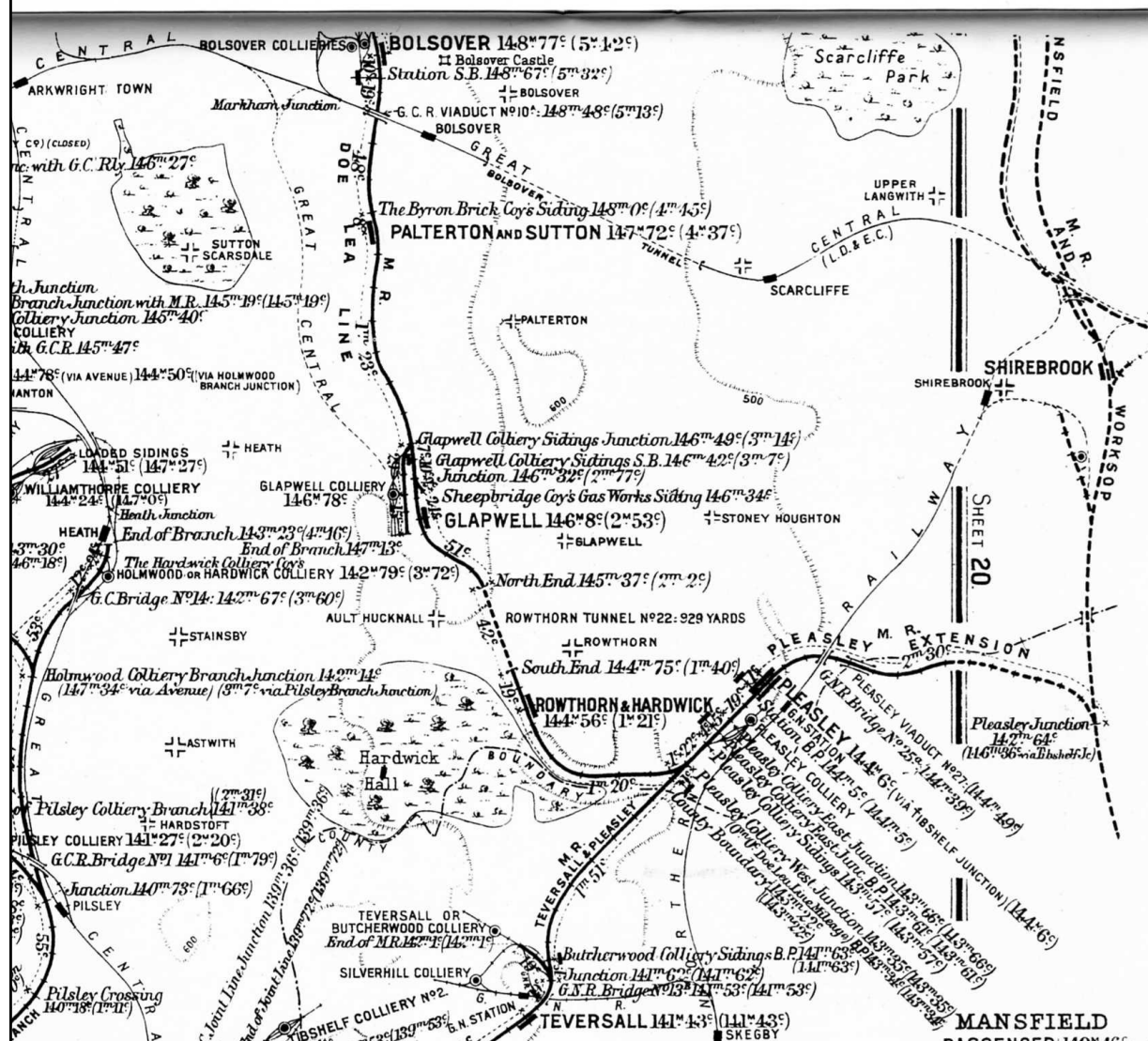
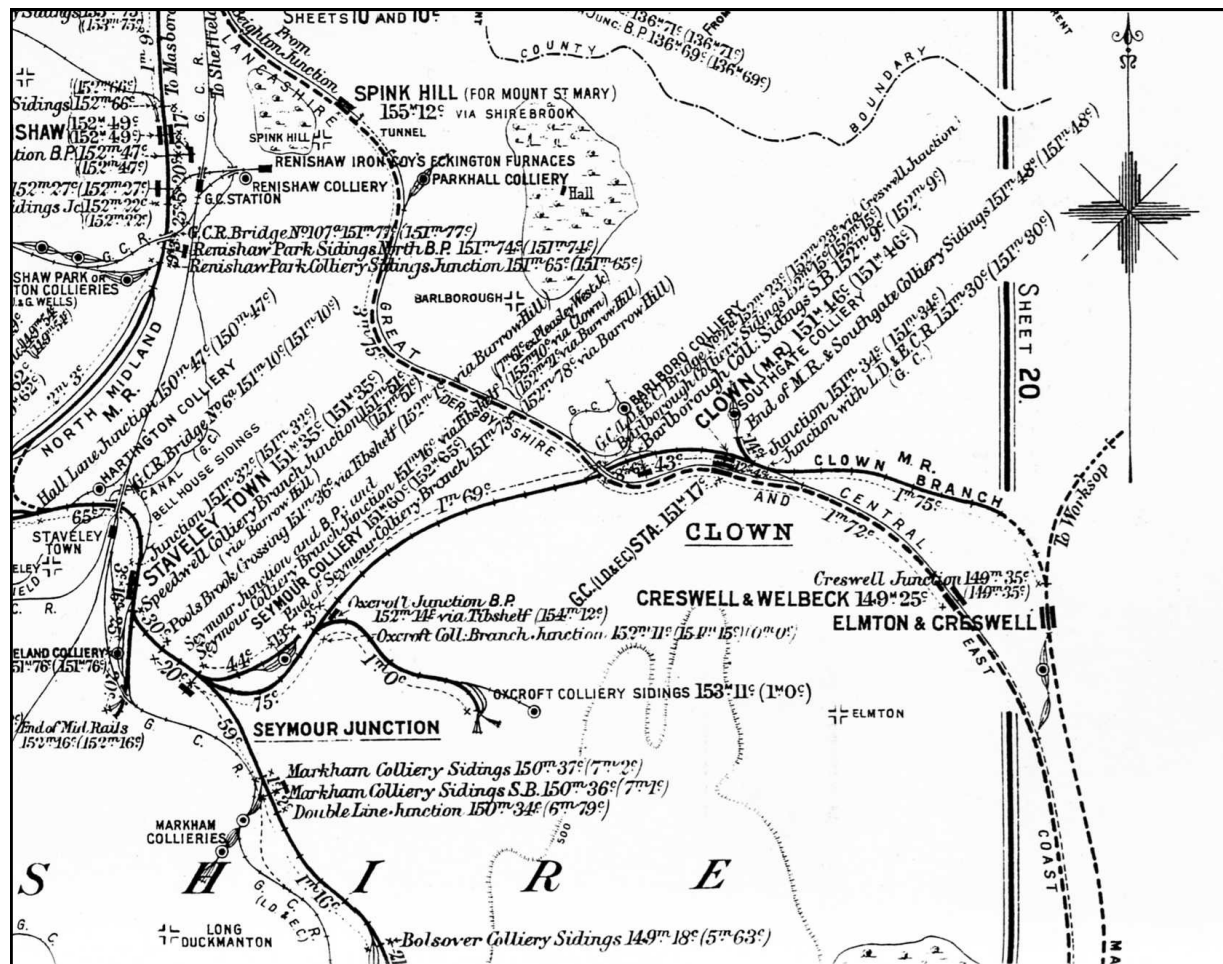
Issued in January 1901 from the then Clown station to Chesterfield, the third class single fare was 9½ d. (Collection Glynn Waite)



Though issued on 7 March 1890, this ticket would have been printed for the opening of Netherthorpe Station on 1 November 1888. The station was later renamed Staveley Town. (Collection Glynn Waite)



A 1906 issue from Staveley Town (the former Netherthorpe) to Palterton and Sutton. At a cost of 4d one wonders who made this journey over 100 years ago and for what purpose? (Collection Glynn Waite)



Evidence of the complexity of lines in the area can be gained from part of the 1909 Midland Railway Distance Diagram. Today's Robin Hood Line (from Mansfield to Worksop) actually follows the tracks of a number of former railway companies, including a section of completely new route. Note the spelling of 'Clown'. Originally a Celtic name after the river which rises nearby. The 'e' was present in the community's name from previous to the Domesday book ('Clune'), though disappears only to be re-instated, presumably in Victorian times, though the railways appear to have ignored this until relatively recently.



**Above, left:** Track removal just east of the cutting at Neale Street, Clowne, on March 15, 2012. Behind the operative are abutments to a long demolished over-bridge. The vehicle is not rail mounted in this instance. **Right:** A day later track lifting had rapidly exited Clowne. Taken from the Hollin Hill Road over-bridge, actually on the parish boundary, this view is looking east towards Creswell. The plant, on this occasion, is rail mounted. The railway's final retreat from Clowne?



**Above:** Elton and Creswell Junction signal box on 8 March 2012, with a Robin Hood Line departure heading for Worksop. Between this East Midlands Trains' class 156 multiple unit and the 'box can be seen the disconnected Clowne Branch track-work.



## And Finally .... *The Trebor Story*

Last year I had an enquiry from Matthew Crampton who was researching the history of Trebor to fill a much needed gap in the recorded history of the company; his new book, "*The Trebor Story*" has just been published and is already stocked at Spire Books, 9 Soresby St. The author is great grandson of one of the four founders of the company and has interesting early information.

The 145 page publication contains much historical detail on a company which had been incorporated in 1906, and which built its Chesterfield factory in 1940. The Chesterfield site was a solution to the great problem faced by this London company which was desperate to find a safer factory location during wartime. The book contains many photographs, and records of the brand names and marketing images. Many of the records, photographs of staff and processes in the Chesterfield works will be of great interest to local families.



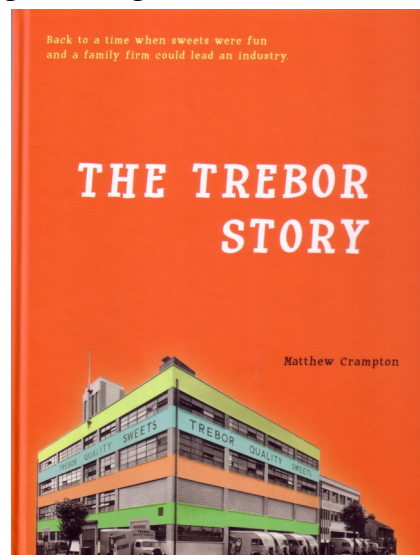
The 'Coolmints' team in Chesterfield

The book is light on the manufacturing processes involved, and about the press technology used for making their great brands such as Refreshers at the Chesterfield site. What it lacks in engineering detail however, it makes up for by the mass of social data about staff, working conditions and about the founders' family involvement. It records the many brand names and market images – just before the Chesterfield site had been established Trebor already produced 452 products. It brings us right through to the reasons for

the buy-out by Cadbury, and pointing out that it was within only 14 years after Trebor had been bought that all of the original Trebor factories, including Chesterfield, had been closed by the new conglomerate. It is perhaps sad to see that after Cadbury has been bought themselves by Kraft, the name "Trebor" was reduced to little more than brand name status – the original 452 Trebor products have dwindled now to only seven

*And Finally ....* The book clears up the speculation about the name "Trebor", but I leave you to read the new book to learn the real reason and the real Robert!

("The Trebor Story" by Matthew Crampton, ISBN 978-0-9561361-1-4, Muddler Books, 2012. Available from Spire Books, 9 Soresby St., Chesterfield )



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