

Kempshott's own Railway Children

Marion Wolstencroft

July 2023

1. Introduction

The railway came past Kempshott on its way between Southampton and London in 1839. I cannot emphasize enough how much the railway changed life for everyone in the 50 years after that date – economically, socially, technologically. It created a revolution in transporting people and goods which had huge consequences in the second half of the 19th century, it created an entire segment of economic life which had not existed before.

There were aspects of society which were adversely affected, of course. The stage coach system which at its height saw 37 coaches per day pass through Basingstoke, bringing economic activity to the inns, servicing of the horses etc. came to a swift juddering halt. The focus of activity in Basingstoke changed from being concentrated round the old Market Place and the routes leading east and west from it, to the new railway station on the northern extremity of the town, which fortunately provided plenty of space for goods yards, warehousing, cattle handling etc.

Of itself the railway generated a major growth in economic activity, and thus wealth, wherever it went but it was a highly capital intensive investment, on a scale never seen before and, when built, required a substantial on-going expenditure on maintenance and operating the services it provided. Not least of these services were the track maintenance and network operating requirements – signalling and road/rail junction management – in addition to station staffing and goods handling.

Before 1839, the area to the west of Basingstoke town, some 5 square miles of downland and chalk streams, was a deeply rural countryside of farms and country estates which sustained the rural population in agriculture and its associated crafts. In 1839 the London to Southampton railway line cut straight across this, NE to SW, and relatively soon afterwards in 1854 a branch line marched westwards towards Salisbury and the south west of England from a junction at Battledown. Apart from the teams who maintained the trackway, a junction required signals to be manned, and points to be moved. As it happened this junction was within a few yards of the railway track passing across a local lane, Pack Lane. So, by 1854 there is a requirement for railway 'servants' to be housed nearby to work the junction. The Railway Cottages at Battle Down Junction were built and lived in by railway families for the next 100 years.

2. Context

It is all too easy while researching what looks like a simple and limited subject, to be dragged down a huge number of rat holes - leading left and right - so I have had to draw some lines across interesting paths and leave further exploration to others. This paper therefore confines itself to a few local families who were connected with the London and South West Railway network in the period 1840 - 1901. This paper records a little bit of local social history but it is useful to understand the wider context in the 19th century to appreciate the speed of change and the profound consequences - unequalled in the 20th and 21st century, I believe.

While track-ways for moving heavy loads of material relatively short distances - to a river or a harbour - had existed for hundreds of years, the metal railway track with propulsion provided by moving engines which could thus transport anything -raw materials, people, animals, goods etc really dates from 1825 - when the Stockton & Darlington Railway demonstrated the huge potential of the railway system.

From that zero point, in only 40 years, an entire network of tracks would be created covering the whole of the UK and connecting all significant centres of population. How was such spectacular change possible?

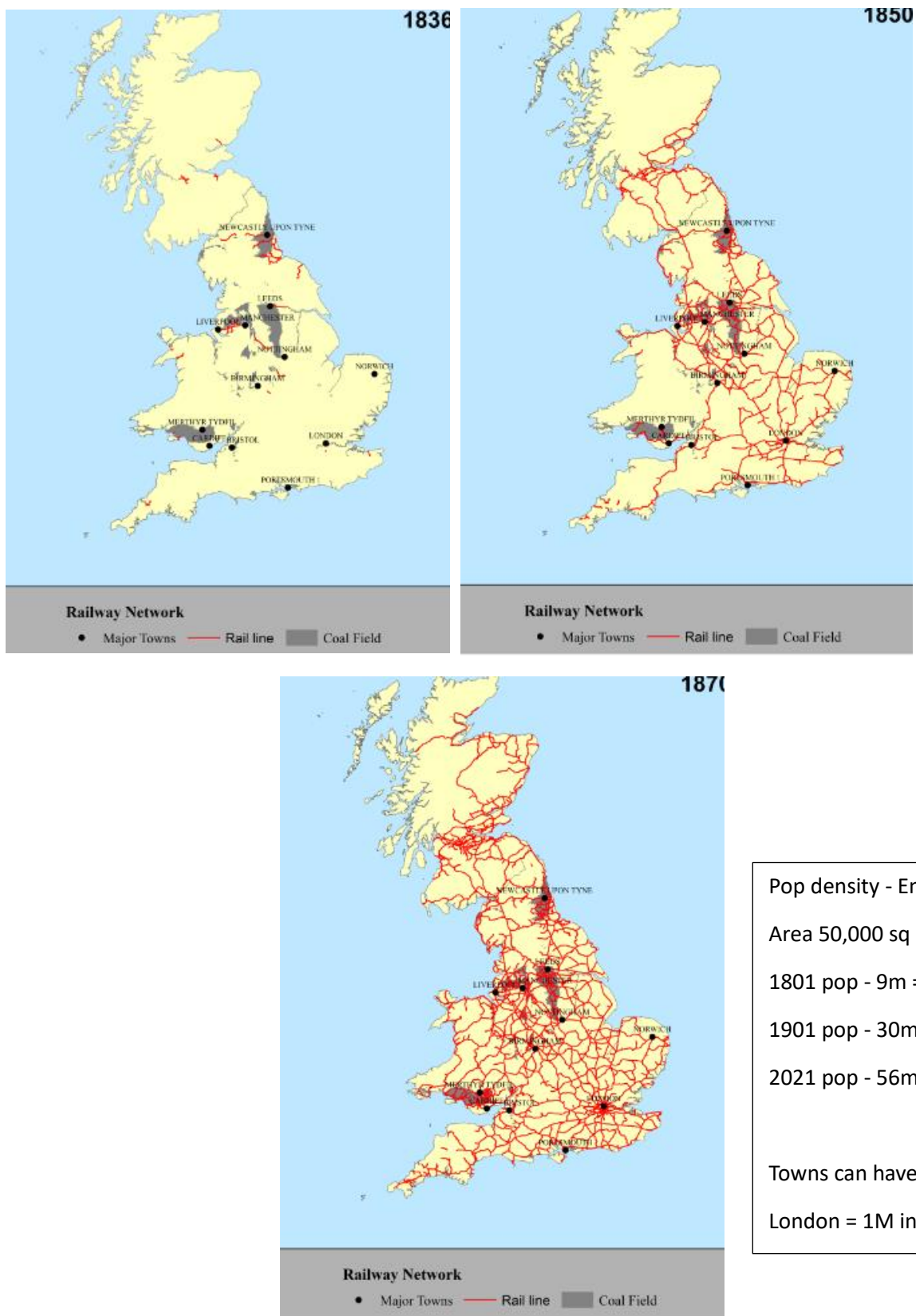
Moving heavy goods had been a problem for a long time - the first solution in the 17th - 18th centuries was to reduce the friction problem - float a heavy load on water and the energy required to move it from A to B is drastically reduced - your only flexible power source on land - a horse - can move a boat many times its own weight at a steady pace. There are limitations of course - the water surface has to be flat and when you need to go up and down because the terrain has a hill in the way you can't avoid, you need to have a system of steps or locks. Still by the early 1800s there were 4000 miles of canals and navigable rivers in the UK. The 'Golden age' of the canals and the height of their activity was 1790 - 1820 - immediately before the next technological breakthrough - the railway age. This is significant because the creation of canals had required vast amounts of manpower to dig the canals largely with picks and shovels - and great civil engineering feats of bridging, banking, ditching and tunnelling - employing a quarter of a million men - the navvies - at a time when total male working population was only about 3 million and over one million of them were working in agriculture.

The railway age - 1825 onwards - simply switched that ready workforce of navvies and the engineering knowhow from canal building to railway track building (without the constant challenge of needing a steady water supply).

The technological breakthrough was the creation of a moveable engine which could generate more energy - through steam pressure etc. - propelling the engine forward while consumed less raw material in the process (coal and water) than it could haul behind it, and with a low level of friction because the engine was running with iron wheels on iron rails.

Static steam engines had been invented at the beginning of the 18th century and had improved steadily in their efficiency, but it was the combination of pressure cylinder, condenser and vacuum valves which made the relatively smaller and more efficient moveable steam engine possible.

Fig 1 - the growth of the railway network 1830 - 1870



Pop density - England
 Area 50,000 sq miles
 1801 pop - 9m = 180/sq m
 1901 pop - 30m = 600/sq m
 2021 pop - 56m = 1,120/sq m

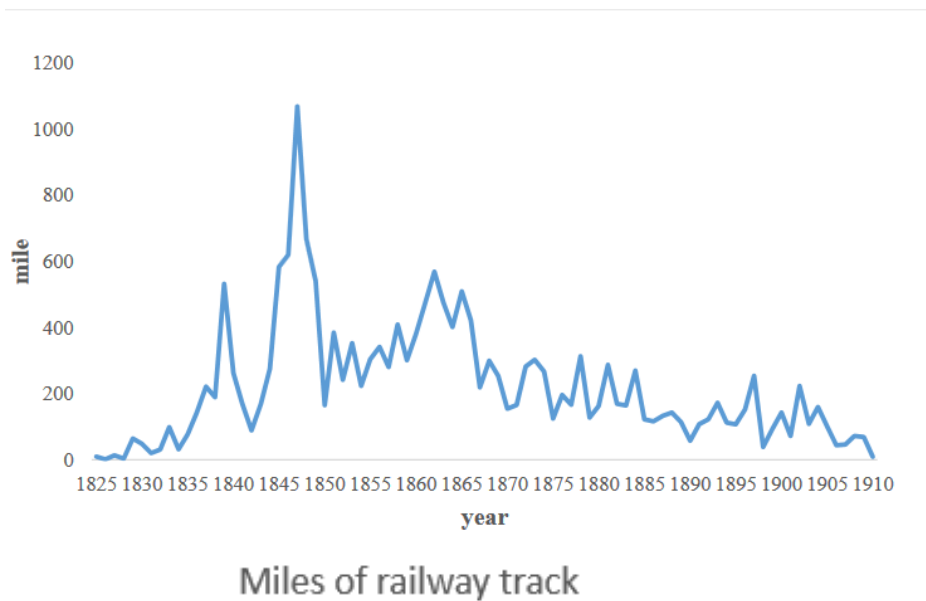
Towns can have 15,000/sq m
 London = 1M in 1801

That is an astonishing rate of expansion of the network. But it was not a steady expansion - there were 3 notorious booms or railway building manias: the initial development 1839, an even bigger boom in 1848-50 when all the advantages of the railway system were clear - the cost of travel halved, the cost of freight halved, the journey timed halved or better and then a solid expansion of the network to all major population centres 1860-65 - that is just 30 odd years.

What other technological advance has gone from almost nothing to virtually universal availability in 30 years? I can only think of the mobile phone network.

The scale of the change is staggering.

Figure 10: The annual growth of railway mileage in Britain, 1825-1911.



Cumulative miles of track:
1836 - 378
1844 - 2,210
1870 - 16,000
1914 - 18,000
2020 - 14,500

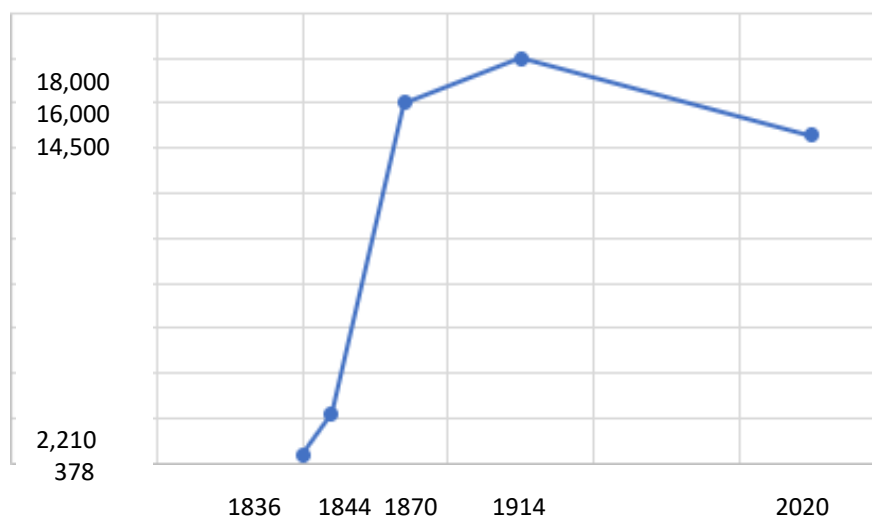


Fig 2 The growth of the railway network in numbers

By the beginning of the First World War there were 18,000 miles of rail track in England. By then the navvies had moved on to other things, but the railway companies - all 120 of them - employed over 620,000 people while the population of England had increased from 13 million in 1830 to 35 million in 1911.

Which brings us to the huge changes to society in considerably less than a century. Below the headline number it becomes considerably more difficult to compile reliable numerical data.

3. Census Data as a series of snapshots of change in UK

We all rely on the Census database - 1851 - 1939 - as a starting point - where would we be without it? But it started as a very different beastie - and has grown and developed as people's understanding of the power of data has grown .

The first 3 censuses 1801 - 1831 were originally created to answer one simple question - how many mouths are there to feed and are we going to run out of bread and see mass starvation?

Does anyone remember being taught about Dr Malthus Theory in school - that population will grow to the point where it cannot be fed and starvation ensues? His paper was published in 1798. There had been several very bad harvests at the end of the 1790s, possibly exacerbated by volcanic activity in Iceland. In addition, the disruption of trade due to the Napoleonic Wars and the government's increases in taxation (need to pay for the war -with the only taxation mechanisms they had (largely customs and excise charges) which hit the poor as well as the rich and included levies on essentials such as salt and candles. So for a combination of several factors the poor were hit hard. The misery continued into the 1810s and after 1815 with disbanding of troops after the end of the Napoleonic wars. The steady mechanisation of agriculture (especially the threshing of grain which reduced the demand for labour over the winter months) prompted rural social unrest culminating in 1830 in the Swing Riots.

The early censuses confirmed that the population was growing: from 9 M in England in 1801 it had grown to 12.8 M by 1831 - a 44% increase in just 30 years. The usefulness of censuses had been proved and they were to continue for the next 200 years.

As part of the background statistics for this study I wanted to know what the population growth of England was in the 19th century and what the proportion of the working population was who were engaged in agriculture while employment in the rail transport industry grew from nothing.

Finding this data on a consistent basis - England only, not UK, and avoiding double counting and under estimating as much as possible, proved more difficult than I first thought.

The census has always been a headcount - with or without additional data per entry. The exercise was carried out every 10 years - so if the instructions for completing the form were not explicit and clear you would have to wait 10 years before you could correct it on the next gathering of data. It is at this point that the reality of rural society, and remember much of society was still rural communities in 1830, does not fit well with the assumptions of census takers. Children under ten were workers as soon as they could do so - school was an incidental. Old people kept working, to the extent they could, as there were no pensions, and wives of agricultural workers pitch in on farm work in peak seasons.- the whole family worked when needed - so what should be recorded on a census form in addition to the number of souls in the family?

Another problem area was classifying employment. 'What is your job?' sounds simple enough but if you do not know which industry that employment is in, the correct aggregation becomes very difficult - lots of men called themselves 'carters' - they operated a horse(s) and cart - but was that in a farm context or a brewery context or some other? Hence the Enumerator recoding so commonly seen reducing a range of job descriptions to 'Ag Lab'.

The complexity of data collection and meaningful aggregation on employment - job description/industry/apprentice-full time-retired etc. - means that it is extraordinarily difficult to get reliable employment data out of the census without reworking the entire database (which has been done in some cases but is full of data coder's assumptions so is a bit of a mine field).

The summary data I have used is detailed in Appendix 1 - census population totals for England by sex and age; industry employment estimates from other government departments and academically reworked census data giving estimates of economically active people, etc.

In 1801 England could be considered empty by modern standard - just 9 million souls in 50,000 square miles - less than 200 people per square mile, statistically. By 1831 that had increased to 256 but that is not an order of magnitude greater. The next 70 years saw huge growth - to 600 per square mile, but to put that in context a city centre like London could have as many as 14,000 per square mile. The rapid growth in the population 1830 - 1890 means that one has to be careful how data is presented. Take the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture - in 1801 it is estimated that 31% of the working population was engaged in agriculture - a count of males over 12 years of age. In 1801 that is just 1.5 million people. The proportion of the population in agriculture fell each decade until in 1871 it was estimated as 25% and by 1901 as 17%. That gives a work force of 2million in 1871 and 2.3 million by 1901. So the real picture is of a soaring population fed by only a slightly increasing number of people in agriculture, aided by great increases in mechanisation and the import of key staples from 1870 onwards. The dramatic change in this picture was to happen in the 20th century as England's population continued to soar to 56 million, the proportion engaged in agriculture dropped to 2% - 300,000 people, operating a massive capital investment in automation while 50% of our food consumed is imported from outside the UK - but that is another story.

Meanwhile, the rail transport industry had grown from almost nothing to employing over 100,000 men by 1871 and over 353,000 by 1901. There is an unresolved question of definitions here - the railway companies employed over 300,000 at the turn of the century -but by this time they are engaged in a significant amount of related and ancillary activities - manufacturing trains and carriages, operating hotels, ports and ferries etc. it is estimated that on a broad definition there could be 650,000 men and women engaged in the railway industry by 1901.

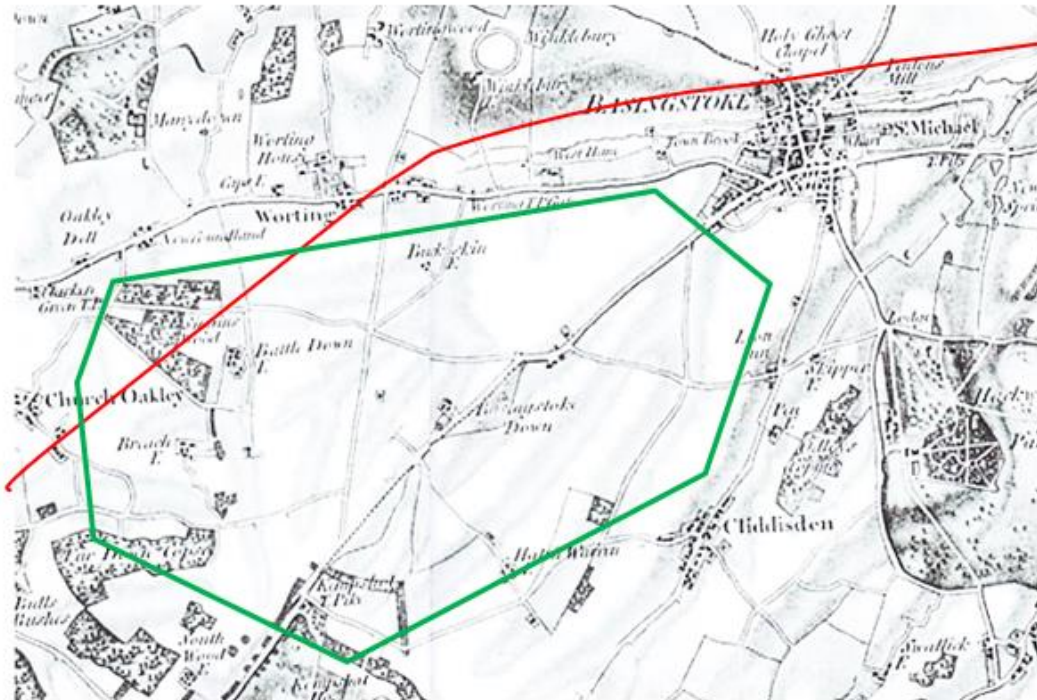
4. The coming of the railway to Hampshire - Gateway to the South West.



Fig 3 A schematic of the London & South West Railway network

The London and South West Railway Company (originally called the London and Southampton Railway Company and incorporated in 1834, but quickly changing its name as its ambitions grew) aimed to connect London with Southampton and Portsmouth. The easiest route was via Basingstoke rather than via Guildford - and that route also opened the possibilities of connections further westwards - to Salisbury etc. It reached its ultimate goal - Exeter in 1860. So, they started construction of the London to Southampton route from both ends - London to Winchfield and Southampton to Winchester. Those sections were completed by June 1838 and the final connection Winchester to Winchfield with a station and sidings at Basingstoke was made in June 1839 to general celebrations - just 9 years after the original Stockton to Darlington Railway was opened.

Fig 4. The route of the L&SW railway superimposed on the 1816 map of west Basingstoke area



The London to Southampton line (in red) superimposed on the First Series Ordnance Survey map and the 'empty quarter' of Kempshott outlined in green - about 5 square miles or 3,000 acres of farmland and tree belt.

So, there is no reason why the railway should concern itself with this empty area of rolling downland cereal fields and grazing sheep - except that at Worting the track had to cross the Basingstoke to Newbury road on a bridge and embankment and on Battle Down there was an old pack horse route and drove route into Basingstoke from the west . Having bridged the Newbury road the track was on an embankment so it was no great problem to bridge over Pack lane.

The line to Southampton was finished in June 1840 with two tracks - an up and a down track. The extension of the network to Salisbury via Andover followed not long after in - 1854. That was initially a single track which connected with either the up line or the down line with manually moved points. The maintenance of the trackway, once the construction team had moved on, involved several new ongoing jobs - maintenance of banks ditches and bridges and maintenance of the tracks themselves. Old photographs show not a tree or bush growing within 10 yards of the track - why? The risk of lineside fire. To maintain this cropped landscape lengthsman were employed - a practice carried over from the canal system. A wholly new job, however, was the platelayer - the name they had in the old days when wooden 'plates' were used to hold wooden rails for short distances of rail track. The name stuck for much of the 19th century, but eventually they would be called 'sleepers' and the job would be described as 'track maintenance'. Neither of these jobs were skilled and were usually drawn from the local workforce. Early censuses record several men living at Newfound on the Overton road just west of Worting called platelayers.

A more skilled role, created by the modern metal rail network, was pointsman or signaller, who controlled the track points and signals giving trains permission to use a section of track -

and controlling the junctions where two or more tracks connected. The slang name for signalmen was no accident - they were called 'bobbies' - the traffic police of the railways.

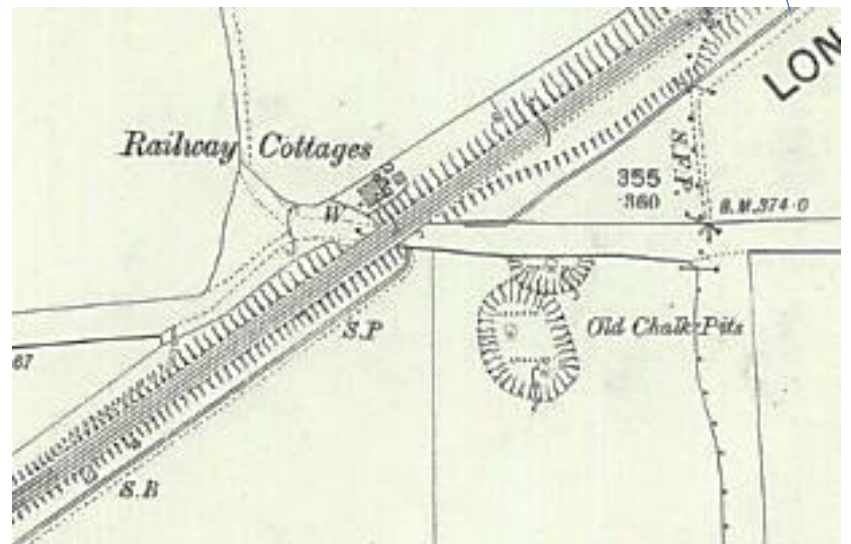
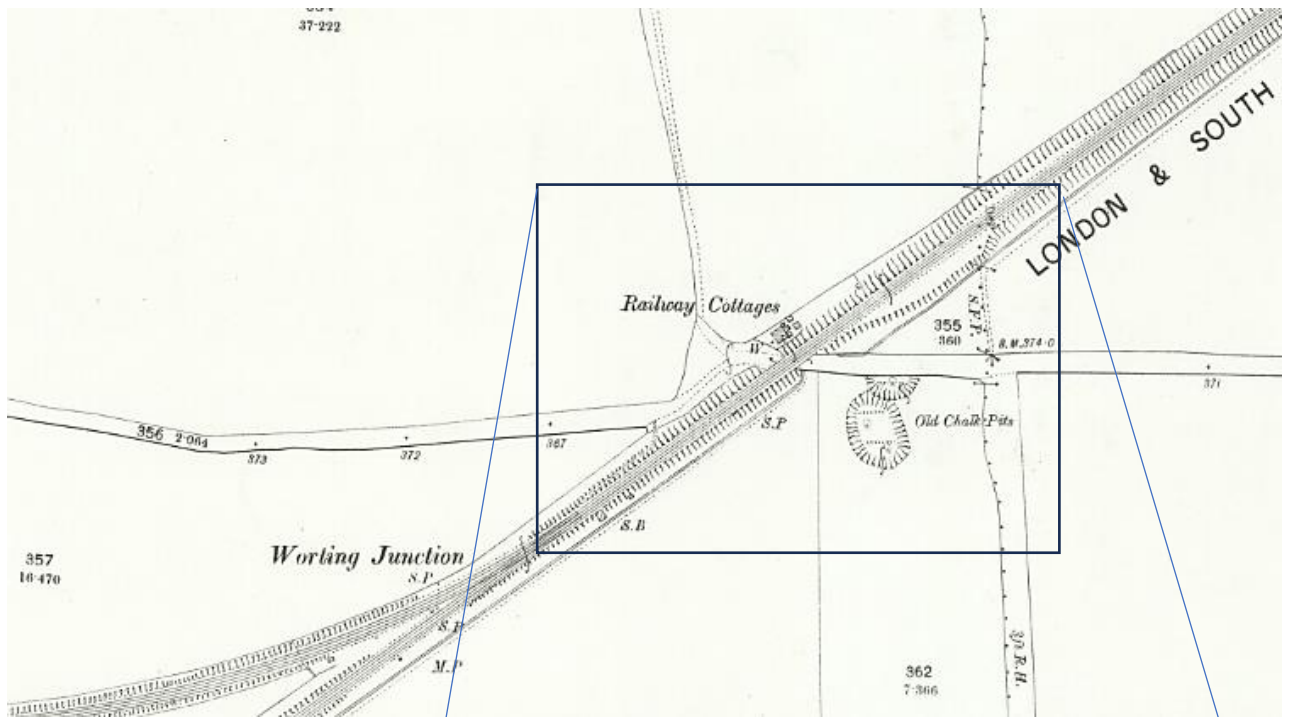
In the early years the terms pointsman and signalman seem to have been used to mean the same thing. Why the variation in terminology is not clear- from record to record and district to district. In our case they were called pointsmen until 1871 census and after that signalmen.

A signalman was a highly skilled and reliable member of the railway staff In the early days when signalling was in its infancy. Points were moved manually and at night signalling was by lamp. When the Salisbury line was introduced, branching off from the Southampton line at 'Worting Junction' a small signal box was built on the south side of the track just before the new track turned west. This needed to be manned permanently - so the two Pack Lane railway cottages were built.

In 1870 the Salisbury track , which had been a single track since 1854 , was doubled to an up line and a down line . We have no large scale map showing the tracks from 1870 to 1894 -the area was considered unimportant and did not merit map maker attention. But the arrangement was simple enough - the lines to and from Andover connected to the tracks to and from Basingstoke - each track requiring a movement of the points determining the track connection.

How small and miserable they were - no land to speak of, side-on to the railway embankment, only an external well for water and two small earth closets(?) behind the cottages. As you can see on the section of map below this was referred to as Worting Junction - although it is about 1 mile from the bridge over the Overton road at the village of Worting.

Fig 5. 1894 map of Worting junction just prior to its rebuilding in 1897 with the Battledown Flyover and the doubling of tracks.



5. Maturing of the railway network at the end of the 19th century

With the volume of traffic increasing relentlessly, both goods and passengers, in the 50 years since the first line was built, much had changed in railway operations - especially in signalling on main lines such as that to Southampton, justifying a major reconfiguring of the Woking Junction - the creation of Battledown Flyover Bridge - the highest point on the line from Waterloo and with 5 lines at the junction merging down to 4 lines as it approaches the Newbury Road bridge.

To accommodate this expansion of the tracks banking was added to the north side of the existing tracks, so gone are the old railway cottages - replaced by 2 new and somewhat larger

cottages on the south side of Pack Lane - although just as cramped against the embankment and still with a well for water beside the road. So what happened to the families living here while the entire trackway was reconfigured?

By the turn of the century the signaling system had developed substantially - and junctions such as Worting were operated by linked hydraulic relays, no longer requiring the physical presence of signalmen. So these cottages were just some of the accommodation stock provided by the railway company for its staff - from the Railway Terrace, Oakley, Railway Cottages Battledown, Railway Cottages, Worting to Victoria Terrace in Worting Town End.

Finally, in 1909 the network from London to Basingstoke was expanded to 4 tracks - 2 up and 2 down - the network was effectively complete.

Fig 6 1909 map of Worting Junction showing Battledown Flyover bridge for the Southampton up line.

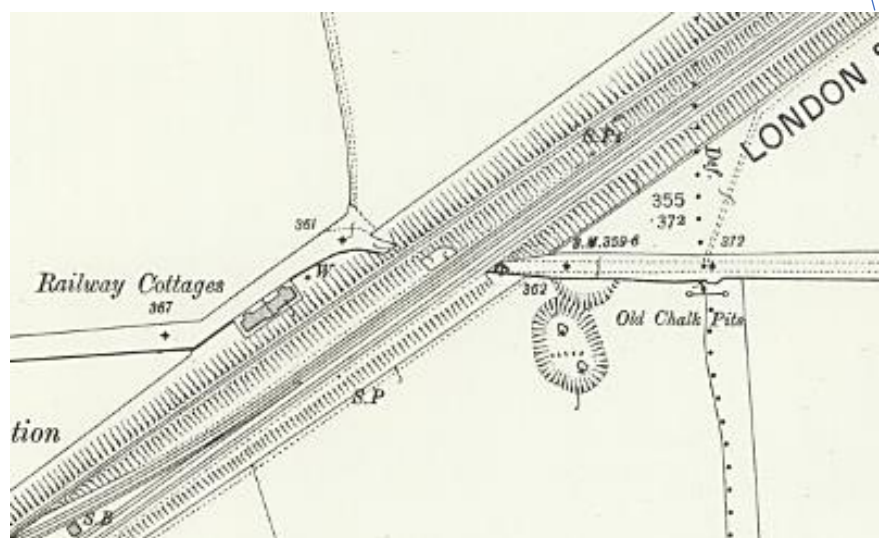
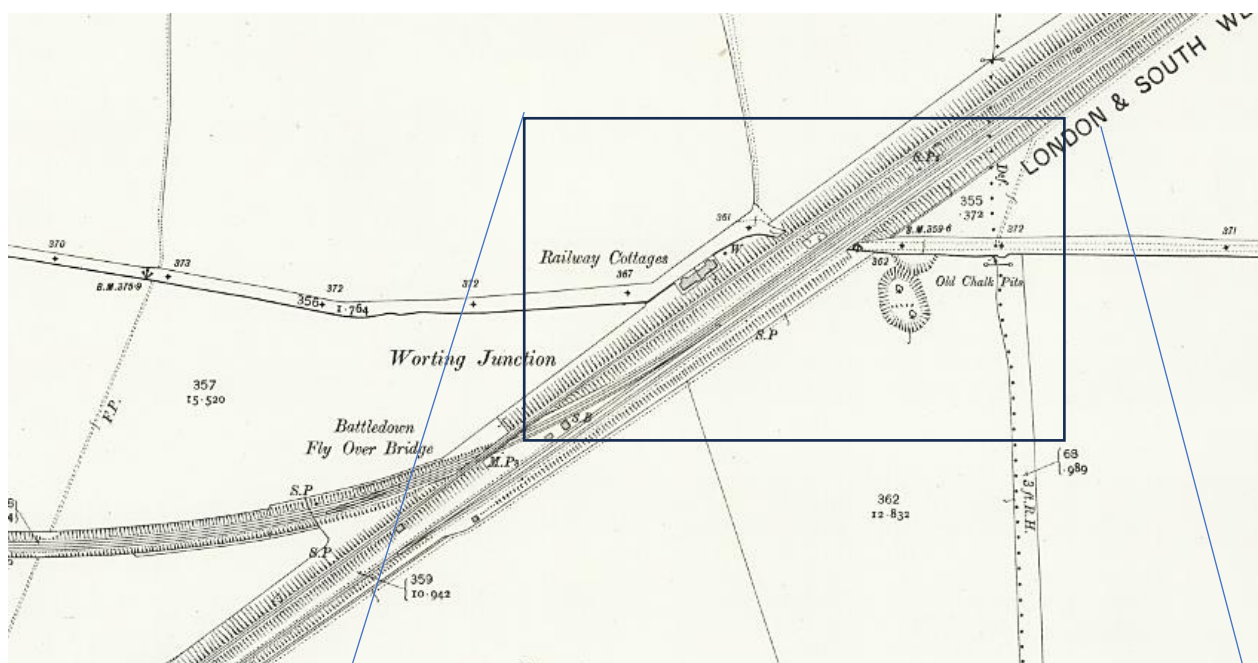


Fig 7 Railway Cottags, PackLane at Worting Junction



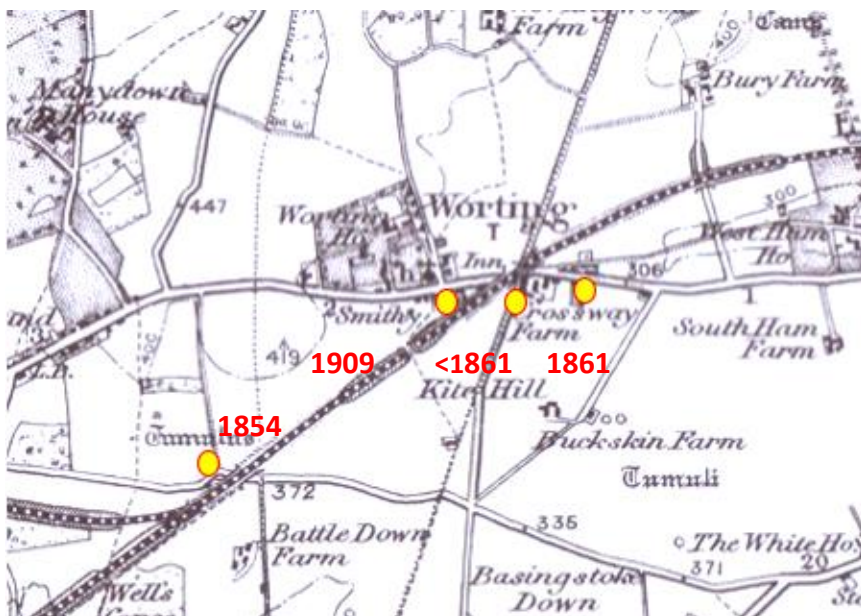
These were not the only railway built and owned houses, of course.

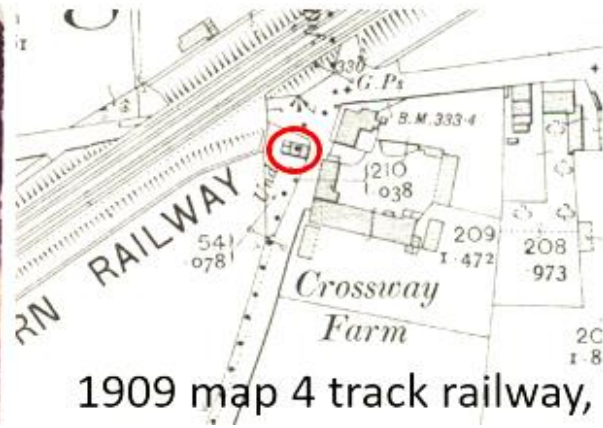
6. Railway accommodation in Worting

By the second half of the 19th century railway workers represented a huge dedicated population in England. In our little part of Hampshire along there were many families engaged in the railway industry. All had to be housed anew and railway cottages, railway terraces, even railway towns sprang up.

The railway companies providing accommodation for their workers inevitably created and reinforced a close and enduring relationship between companies and their employees. By the end of the century the loyalty to company and rivalry between company employees was legendary. The railway industry, I believe, was the first to offer the possibility of geographical mobility while retaining security of employment and accommodation.

Fig 8. Track & signalling workers cottages in Worting.





The original bridge railway cottage at Worthing was built prior to 1861 and at the time of that census accommodated the family of David Wells, listed as a railway labourer aged 45 & his wife Mary. Both were locally born in 1816. The cottage was demolished in the 1950s.

The only photograph we have is from a wedding party in 1943, with the cottage in the background.

The 4 railway cottages built in 1909 close to Worthing school are still there. This still from an old 1960s film shows them in their original steam age brick - they are now mostly painted white - but just as close to the main line tracks!



Fig 9a Cottages west of Worthing Bridge

Finally, Victoria Terrace, Worthing - Town End, a terraced of railway company houses, still extant. In 1861 they accommodated mainly track maintenance employees and their families, but the notable thing is that over the 50 years from 1861 to 1911 they house a tight knit community of railway worker families - who move around the area's railway housing, including living at the Oakley railway cottages.



Fig 9b Originally 8 2up-2down semi-detached railway cottages at Worthing -Town End there remain 6 cottages - much extended and now double fronted.

Census records show the growing community of lengthsman and track maintenance employees being drawn from the local community and remaining very localised, but signalmen most certainly did move around the network their company operated.

So, who were the first signalmen and where did they come from?

Worting Junction is a very modest construction compared with junctions nearer London or at major goods depots, but the census records do show a sequence of employees occupying the railway cottages . Being a snapshot at 10 year intervals we may be unaware of some signalmen and their families moving into and subsequently out of these cottages between censuses - but the censuses are invaluable in recording the progress of specific families round the country by the locations at which their children were born, which allows one to back track following each thread

Take our first Signalmen Thomas Brown as a prime example:

Fig 10. 1861 Census for Wootton St Lawrence, Lower Wootton before Battledown Farm and Breach Farm p 34-3.

No. of Schedule	Road, Street, &c., and No. or Name of House	HOUSES		Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf, and-Deaf
		In-land	Water (18-19)							
162	Battledown	1		Thomas Brown	Head	Married	43	Rail Pointsman	Hannington	
				Hannah Brown	Wife	Married	36		Church Oakley	
				Ernest Brown	Son	Single	7	Labourer	Guilford	
				Mary Ann Brown	Daughter	Single	4		Guilford	
				Robert Brown	Son	Single	4		Wootton	
163	Battledown	1		Joseph Smallbone	Head	Married	47	Rail Porter	Berkhamstead	
				Hannah Smallbone	Wife	Married	27		Wootton	
				Henry Smallbone	Son	Single	4		Berkhamstead	
				Mary Smallbone	Daughter	Single	4		Wootton	

Thomas is called a Rail Pointsman here at 'Battledown' in 1 of 2 dwellings listed before Battledown Farm and Breach Farm residents - the other being occupied by a rail porter Joseph Smallbone of Sherbourne St John and his family.

Thomas is a local man - born in Hannington and married to Hannah from Church Oakley. The children - Lloyd and Mary Ann are listed as born in Guilford while the younger children are born here in the parish of Wootton.

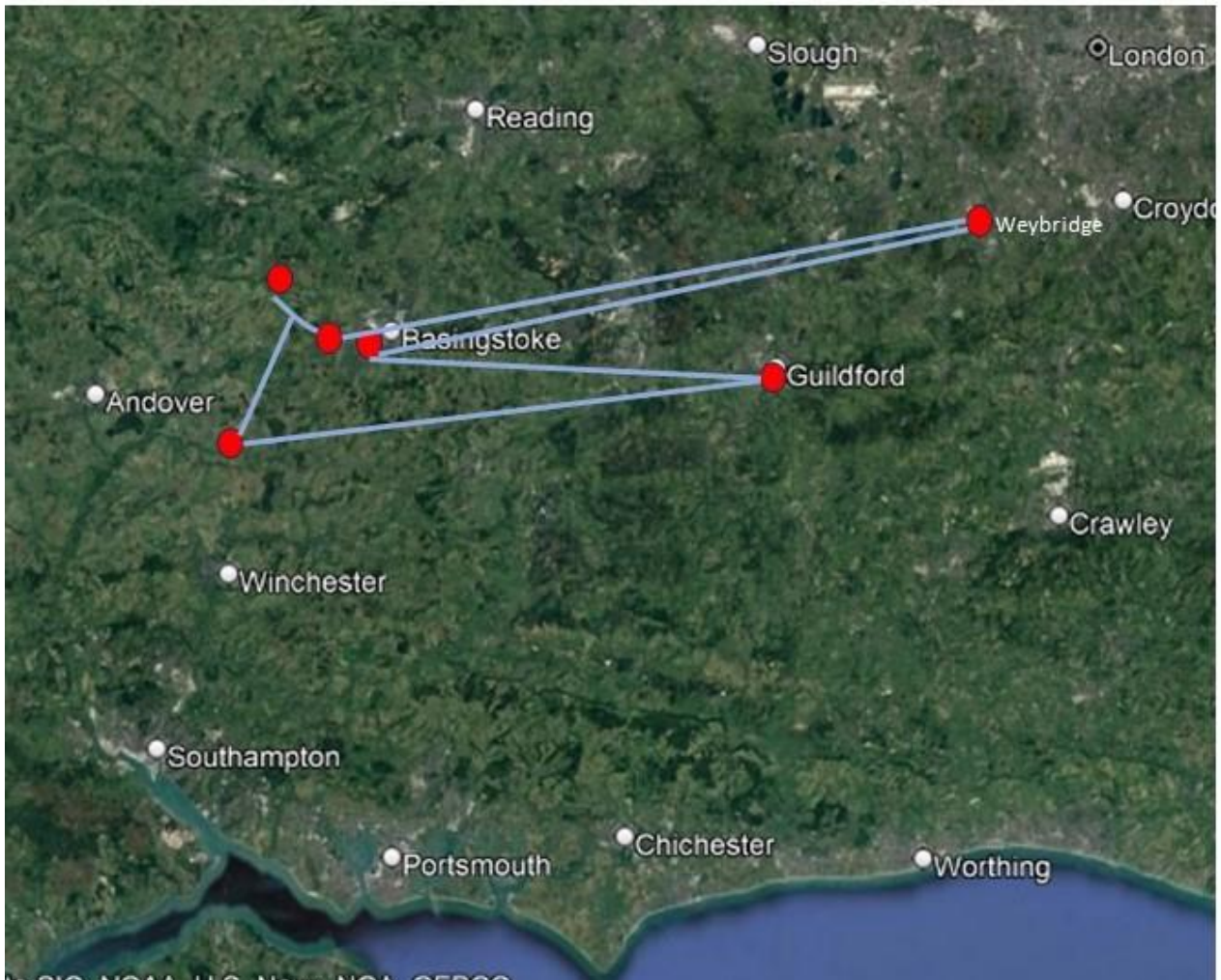
That allows you to back track from earliest entries in the 1841 census which confirms Thomas was the son of local Ag Lab stock born in 1817 in Hannington, and to find the family in the parish of St Nicholas in 1851 in Guilford.

From this information we know Thomas was the Pointsman here at Worting Junction at least from 1855 to 1870

7. Thomas Brown, Signalman

To cut a long story short, we can trace the Brown family from 1841 to 1915 living at Micheldever, Guilford, Wootton, Weybridge and finally, in retirement, aged 65 in a cottage next to the gamekeeper at Battledown Farm.

Fig 11 - The travels of the Brown Family 1841- 1901



For the son of an Ag Lab born in the first quarter of the 19th century that is a lot of moving around in 40 years - but it is all based on the railway company's activities - until they retire to the area of their family roots - Church Oakley with which they never lost contact.

Hannah his wife , outlived him dying at the age of 90 in 1915 in Wimbledon living with her son Wyndham and his family. Hannah gave birth to 9 children in 20 years of which 6 lived to adulthood.

Railway housing was not lavish or commodious - basically 2 up and 2 down terraced houses. So how did 6 or 8 children fit in -they simply did not. As they grew older and the babies kept coming, children were sent to live with grandparents and uncles and aunts. The 1861 census tells us that child 1 and 2 (Albert and Margaret) went to live with their maternal grandparents in Church Oakley while Margaret was living with her maternal great aunt in Wootton.

One small cultural point is highlighted by Thomas's life with the railway company - the names of his children. Since time immemorial children had been named after their grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts - William ,Thomas, Julia, Margaret. So where did the names of the 3rd

and 6th surviving sons come from - Lloyd and Wyndham - is this the influence of a more mobile life and the mixed community of the railway company?

The details of the Browne family are summarised in Appendix 2.1, showing the peregrinations of the family, thanks to the railway network and some details of Thomas's children although we did not attempt to track down the details of all 9 children.

8. The residents of Battledown Railway Cottages

The early role of Pointsman /Signalman physically operating track points and signals in situ did not last more than 20 years - very quickly signalling became much more sophisticated - frequently after some particularly gruesome accident had indicated that things needed improving if the traffic demand was to be managed safely.

So from 1880 onwards railway accommodation tended to be used for all or any employee, and later railway widows or pensioners - not only for signalmen and their families.

The roll call of signalmen etc. living at Worting Junction runs as follows, but with some gaps where the stream of census data lets us down.

Fig 12 Residents of the two railway cottages at Battledown and their occupations as constructed from census data

Period	Railway Cot 1	Occupation	Railway Cot 2	Occupation
1855 -1862	Thomas Brown	Pointsman	Joseph Smallbone	Railway Porter
1862 - 1870	?		?	
1870 - 1873	George Pullinger	Pointsman	Thomas Kingsley	Pointsman
1873- 1875	?		?	
1875 - 1896	William Wright	Signalman	Mary Nation - widow	launderess
1891 - 1901			Vacant	
<i>1897 - 1898 cottages demolished and replaced with adjacent cottages</i>				
1900 - 1905			Fredrick Davis	Signalman
1905 - 1911	?		?	
1911 - <1921	George Burgess	Signalman	Walter King	Signalman
1929- 1940s	Frederick Randall	Signalman		
1939	William Owen	Track Foreman	Reginald Hudson	Railway Porter

9. William Wright, Signalman

It is worth looking at the biography of one other signalman - William Wright - to illustrate the transition in the 19th century from pre-railway England to an era we would recognise today. William and his wife were born in the second quarter of the 19th century- so they were children of the railway age.

William was born in Up Nately near Odiham and his wife was born in Bookham, Surrey 33 miles away. They were both of Ag Lab stock with the usual hoard of siblings. William was farmed out (literally) to live with a retired farmer and his housekeeper in Up Nately as a servant at the age of 11. This may be why he was almost illiterate and had to make his mark on the marriage register when he married Hannah Davis in 1860, who could sign her name.

How they met and why they are both in London in 1860 is not known, but they married in St Anne's, Battersea and lived for a time in Twickenham where Hannah gave birth to 2 daughters

in short quick succession. The record of William is quite sketchy and he is referred to in the marriage register as Labourer, but at some point he started work with the L&SW Railway Company because in 1866 the family moves to Exeter in Devon - the other end of the line.

Clearly this was a good move, although William is only classed as a Porter in 1871 which tells us very little. The children continue to arrive....Hannah gave birth to 7 in total.... But after nearly 10 years in Exeter the family move to Worting Junction where William is the Signaller. Clearly he has risen somewhat in the railway hierarchy.

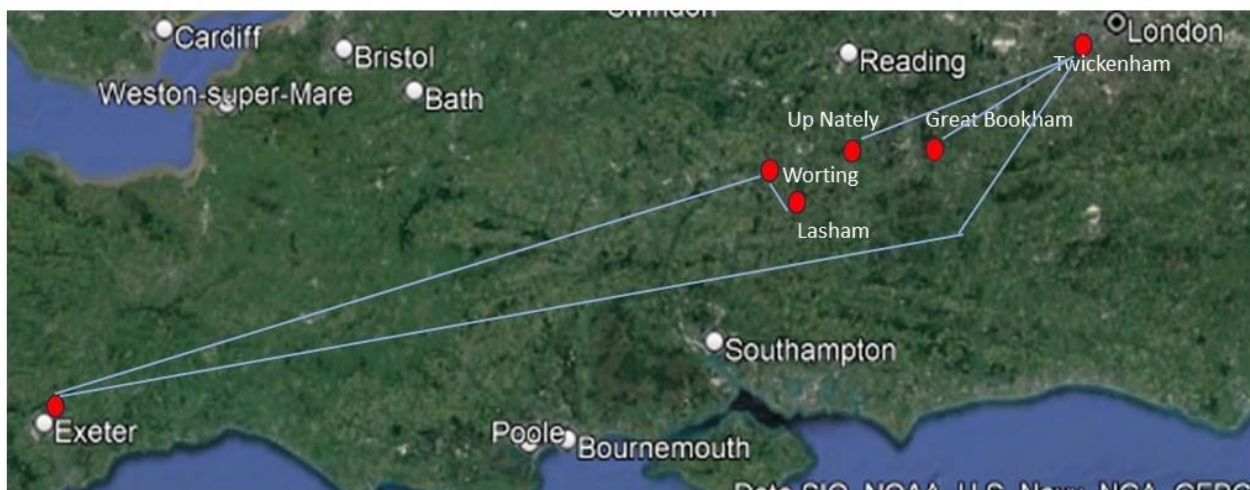


Fig 13. The travels of the Wright family 1860 -1911

William Wright was the signaller from 1875 to 1901. All that time the family is listed as living in a railway cottage at Battledown, but we do not know what happened when they knocked down the old cottages in 1897 and built the new cottages just a few yards away - there must have been a short interval when they family was housed somewhere else. The children grew up, some joined the railway company themselves - starting as 'porter' - effectively the entry grade from which you made your way as ambition and talent allowed.

Hannah, his wife, died in 1901 and William is a widower in one Battledown cottage at the time of the census - but that is not quite the end of the story. In July 1905 at the age of 66 William marries a widow - Eliza Morgan who's own husband had died in 1901. Eliza was the sub-post mistress at Lasham and there they lived for a number of years. They are listed at the sub-post office in Lasham in the 1911 census - William Wright, Railway Pensioner and Wife and lived on happily, one hopes, in pensioned retirement.

10. Notes on English elementary education

My final comment on railways, railway families and the transformation of society in the 19th century is on the education system.

The English education system does not cover itself with glory in the 19th century. While the right to universal primary education for both girls and boys had been established in Scotland in the 1660s - children were required to be in school in England only after 1870 - and in the employment statistics extracted from census returns the inclusion in the employed statistics of children over 10 years of age and retirees up to the 1870s complicates the picture.

The English way of doing things is to move gradually from an unsatisfactory situation by stages to the application of an across the board principle, often with the ghost of older structures still evident for decades if not centuries.

The Government had been involved in promoting primary education since 1833. A large number of parish schools created by the churches, both established and nonconformist and by endowments, had been set up by mid 19th century. But this provision through the existing mechanisms was by no means universal - by 1860 it was reported that in addition to 1 million children in voluntary schools, and 1.3 million children in state aided schools, a further 2 million had no access to schooling whatsoever. The universal access to schooling required the creation of local school boards to plug the gap, and over time all schools became part of the national education system, while remnants of the old endowed system still survive in private schools to this day.

As we heard in the presentation on Worting school by Kathy Frewin, quite recently, Worting school was originally set up by the vicar of Worting, Rev Lovelace Bigg-Wither some time prior to 1851 as a National School and located in purpose built premises from 1855 onwards. This was the nearest and most convenient school to reach from Pack Lane - 1.3 km (0.8 miles) - but we do not know if the children attended this school or not.

The primary school in Oakley was further away - 2.7km (1.7 miles). It can trace its foundation to a school endowed by local landowners in 1667 but was still a very modest rural primary school.

The Battledown railway cottages were located in the parish of Wootton St Lawrence - a long, narrow parish stretching from the railway tracks north to the Newbury road. It is not clear whether there was a primary school in Wootton village prior to 1900, I think not. The old school building by the church is an early 20th century building and no longer a school. It would have been 2.6km (1.6 miles) away.

I originally assumed that the railway children would go to school in Worting - the nearest point - but the family connections of the Browns to Church Oakley, where some of the Brown children lived with grandparents, lead me to think they would possibly have gone to school there. In any event it would seem that primary education did not significantly affect the lives and careers of many of our children - either the Browns or the Wright. A parental connection to the railway would seem to be much more significant with several of the boys listed in their early teens as Railway Porters - what would nowadays be called an 'entry grade' job description from which one could advance as talent, ambition and luck allowed.

In the process of compiling this brief history of the impact of the railway on the immediate area of Kempshott and Worting in the 19th century much background and associated data has been collected. This is filed in the working papers for this project. Anyone who is interested in further exploring this or related themes is welcome to contact the group to gain access to the material.

Marion Wolstencroft

15 July 2023

Appendix 1 Periodic Summary Population data from Censuses and other government statistics 1801 -2021

1801 statistics			1831 statistics			1851 statistics		
	%			%	Millions		%	Millions
Total Pop England		8.9	Total Pop England		12.8	Total Pop England		17.0
			<i>(incr last 10 yrs)</i>	14%		<i>(incr last 10 yrs)</i>	13%	
under 10&>60 M		0.5	under 10 & > 60 M	9%	1.2	under 10 & > 60 M	11%	1.9
all females	51%	4.6	all females	51%	6.5	all females	51%	8.7
potential working pop	0.427	3.8	potential working pop	40%	5.1	potential working pop M*	38%	6.4
						*female element of working population significantly under estimated		
Working population by industry								
in Agriculture	38%	1.5	in Agriculture	36%	1.8	in Agriculture	33%	2.1
almost entirely male			(females only added 100,000 up to 1871 thereafter negligible)					
Railway Operations- with tatic engines or horse power <10,000?								

1871 statistics			1901 statistics			2021 statistics		
retired>60	8%	1.68	retired -M	11%	3.2	over 65	21%	11.87
under 10	16%	3.40	under 10	16%	4.7	under 16	18%	10.18
potential working pop	76%	15.92	potential working pop	84%	22.1	potential working pop	61%	34.48
non-working -F	71%	5.76	non-working -F	68%	8.8	less FT Students 16+	-3.3%	-1.90
working pop -F	29%	2.35	working pop -F	31%	3.9	plus over 65 working	2.8%	1.60
working pop M	100%	7.80	working pop M	84%	9.5			
Estimated tot working pop		10.16	Estimated tot working pop		13.4	working pop - M&F 16-65	63%	35.61
of which -Agriculture	25%	2.0	of which Agriculture	17%	2.3	of which Agriculture	2%	330,000
Railway operations		>110,000	Railway operations		>352,000	Railway operations		240,000

Appendix 2: Genealogical data of families of Thomas Brown and William Wright

1. Thomas Brown

Thomas was born in Hannington in 1817 to a family of Agricultural workers. The 1841 census shows him as single and living with the rest of the family (a brother and sister) with his father and mother Thomas and Louisa Brown aged 45 and head of the family Grandfather John Brown aged 75 (born 1766?)

Thomas marries Hannah Goodall of Church Oakley in and they are next found in

Thomas Brown & Family - the first Signaller at Worting Junction

The junction at Battledown was created in 1854 with a single track leading westwards to Salisbury from the London - Southampton lines which had opened in 1840. The first traceable signaller controlling this junction was Thomas Brown living at Worting Junction with his family from at least 1855 until some date prior to 1870.

Here is the story of Thomas and his family.

Born in 1817 in Hannington ,Hampshire Thomas can be found in the 1841 census as a young man of 20 living with his family in Hannington:

1841 Hannington Hants census

Head of family Grandfather John Brown aged 75 (born 1766?)

Father Thomas and Mother Louisa Brown aged 45(born 1796?)

Thomas Brown (born 1818-19?) and other siblings - David- same age (twin?) and Hannah aged 9

All are listed as Ag Labs.

1847 Thomas is now married to Hannah Goodall of Church Oakley, Hants (born 1826), Hannah is the daughter of William and Charlotte Goodall (1791) and Thomas is a Porter at Andover Station - his job is described as station clerk, gardener and agent.

1848 Their first child Albert George (born Q1 1848 in Micheldever - 10 miles from Andover) and Margaret Jemima aged 1 (Oct 1849)

1851 Guilford, Surrey census, St Nicholas Parish Thomas is employed as a Railway Porter

They have 2 children with them :Albert listed as aged 11 (born 1840) but this is an error as he was only born in 1848 so is no more than 3 years old at this census.

Margaret Jemima born 1849 and baptised in St Nicholas, Guildford.

1861 Wootton St Lawrence, Hants census

Thomas (43) and Hannah(35) are living at Worting Junction cottages and he is a Rail Pointsman Son Albert now thirteen years old and living with his aunt and uncle , William Wells and his wife Charlotte (nee Goodall) who is the sister of his grandad on his mother's side , so actually his great aunt, living in Wootton St Lawrence, East Oakley.

Daughter Margaret Jemima is staying with her maternal grandparents William and Charlotte Goodall at time of census, living in Church Oakley. She is buried on 23rd May 1863 aged 13.

They have 6 more children living with them – Lloyd aged 9 (1852), Mary Anne aged 7 both born Guildford and Henriett aged 6 with Julia (4), Thomas William (2) and Frederick (6 months) all born Wootton - so family in Wootton from at least early 1855.

1871 Weybridge census

Thomas (55)and Hannah living in Weybridge, Thomas is listed as Delivery Agent and

Lloyd (aged 19),living at home is listed as Delivery Agent son.

Mary Ann is not listed, nor is Henriett, but Julia is now 14, Thomas is 12, but no Frederick is listed .

Newly listed are William Wyndham aged 9 (May 1862) and Herbert Alfred aged 5 born 1868.

So in 20 years they had 9 children of which 6 survived to adulthood.

1881 Wootton St Lawrence

Thomas Brown (63) and Wife Hannah (54) living at one of two Battle Down Farm cottages aged 65 and listed as Ag Lab - so clearly retired from the railway job.

Only one child still at home - Walter aged 12 still at school, plus an adopted daughter aged 5 Elizabeth Fanny from Middlesex.

1890 Thomas' death registered Q1 1890 in Church Oakley

Son : Albert George

Born 1848 - died 1907, Portsmouth aged 59 years?

Thomas Brown's first child Albert George born 1848 is baptised in Oakley, while with his parents in 1851 in Guilford, he is not living with his parents in 1861 when they are in Weybridge, but back in Wootton St Lawrence with relatives.

1871 Albert is now working as a Railway Station Waiter he is now 23 years old and is boarding with a family who has taken in two men, the other man is a school teacher. The address is Church St, Wimborne Dorset.

1881 Albert has married Fanny Thomas in 1874 at Wimborne, Dorset. They are found in the census at Rowlands Castle Station, Idsworth, , working as a Railway Station Agent and giving his place of birth as Micheldever in all the census reports. His two boys Albert J, born in 1877 and Arthur W B 1881.

1891 Still at Rowlands Castle as railway agent.

1901 Moved to Hammersmith now working as a clerk both of his boy's elsewhere just Albert 53 years and his wife Fanny 50 yrs.

1907 Albert died in Portsmouth

1911 His widow Fanny (60 yrs) is living with her son Arthur who is now 30yrs old, single and working as a railway clerk, they live at 10, Alexandra Rd, Basingstoke.

Son: Lloyd Brown

Born 30th June 1852 Guildford/ died Oct 2nd 1940 aged 88 years

1861 Living with parent's age 9 yrs. at Wootton St Lawrence

1871 Aged 19 yrs. living with parents at Weybridge, Delivery Agent's son

1877 Married Mary Forder at Marylebone, London 3/11/1877, both of full age, Lloyd was a carpenter and gives his father Thomas as (Official on the railway) Mary's father Francis as a game keeper.

1881 Living in Richmond Surrey, working as a carpenter and joiner , two daughters Julia 2 years old and Rose one year , she has been born in Worting and baptised by Rev Reginald Bigg Wither.



1891 Lloyd has moved to Basingstoke Winchester Street, and living at the Tunn Inn, stated he is the Innkeeper.

1901 living at The Rising Sun inn, Chapple Hill (neighbour John Arlott at Cemetery Lodge) with wife Mary and Daughter Julia. Working as joiner and Inn Keeper.

1911 Moved to Alexandra Cottage, Darlington Road, Basingstoke married but no one else on the form.

1921 Living with Mary his wife both aged 69 years, he works for J. May & co Ltd The Brewery

1939 Lloyd now a widower, living with Rose his daughter also a widow, taking in two lodgers and now at 19 Richmond Road, Basingstoke

1940 Lloyd's death recorded on Oct 2nd 1940, while still at same address leaves to his daughters Rose Cox Fonder and Julia wife of William Hudson £ 236-9s-6d.

2. William Wright

Henry William Wright was born in Up Natley, Odiham Hants in 1839 of Ag Lab parents, John and Martha Right, the 3rd son of 4 children at that date. While Hannah Davis his wife, 1 year younger, was born in Bookham Surrey - about 33 miles away. To William and Mary Ann Davis an Ag Lab family on Lower Common Farm Great Bookham.

1851 William is living with farmer and housekeeper (both in sixties, names not distinguishable) in Up Natley as 11 year old servant.

Hannah is the youngest of 6 children at this point.

August 1860 they marry in St Mary, Battersea. Henry William listed as Labourer, both fathers listed as labourers. While Hannah Davies can sign her name, Henry William has to make his mark.

1861 they were living in Twickenham, London where they had 2 daughters Ann Martha and Elizabeth Jane in 1861 & 63, but Ann was sickly and listed as disabled (although I cannot decipher the disability), so they moved to Exeter in Devon before 1866 where sons William and Robert are born,

1871 William is working as porter in Exeter Devon. He moved to Devon 1866 - 1876, with the two daughters born Twickenham 1861 & 63 (but 1 disabled) William, Rosina and Robert all born Exeter.

They have 3 more children 2 sons and another daughter - 7 children in total all surviving to adulthood.

By 1881 census the older boys were teenagers and are listed as Porters - following in fathers footsteps. They have 4 sons - William aged 15 listed as Railway porter born Exeter, Devon, Robert, aged 14 also railway porter also born Exeter, Frederick aged 12 still at school also born

Exeter, John aged 4 born locally – so William Wright moved to Worting Junction shortly before 1876 where fourth son John was born.

1891 Mr Wright is still signalman here with his wife and widowed daughter Martha who was born in Twickenham and disabled.

1901 William Wright, still working as signalman, is still living in cottage 1 Battledown railway cottage - now a widower of 60 (Hanna died in 1901 at age of 61) - Only one household is listed - the other cottage is possibly unoccupied.

July 1904 married Henry (65) ' retired railway servant' married again , a widow just a little younger than himself (60) who was the sub-postmistress at Lasham. Her husband Edwin Vickers had also died in 1901.

1911 Henry aged 72 and his second wife Eliza Morgan aged 67 are living in Lasham. They both live until 1920s at least - date of deaths not confirmed.

I have found a couple of the boys in later life - married but listed as unskilled workers.

1881 census

Page 14											
The unmentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the											
Civil Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town or Village or Hamlet of	Urban Sanitary District of	Rural Sanitary District of	Electoral Parish or District of				
North St. Lawrence					Basingstoke	Basingstoke					
No. of School.	ROAD, STREET, Ave. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES (No. of Houses (A), or being (B))	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	II (1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Imbecile or Idiot (4) Lunatic		
62	Battledown Junction	1	William Wright	Head	Mar	48	Railway Signalman	Hants - Aldham			
			Hannah do	wife	Mar	40		Surrey - Bookham			
			William do	son	Mar	15	Railway porter	Barn - Exeter			
			Robert do	son	Mar	14	do do	do do			
			Frederick do	son	Mar	12	Scholar	do do			
			John do	son	Mar	11		Hants - Basingstoke			
63	do	1	Mary Nation	Head	Mar	64	Laundress	do Basingstoke			
			Joseph do	son	Mar	10	General Labourer	do North			
64	Battledown Farm	1	Thomas Brown	Head	Mar	40	Ag lab	do Hamstead			