

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

OCTOBER 1928—OCTOBER 1930

WITH
Communications
MADE TO THE SOCIETY

VOLUME XXXI

Edited by E. A. B. BARNARD, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.



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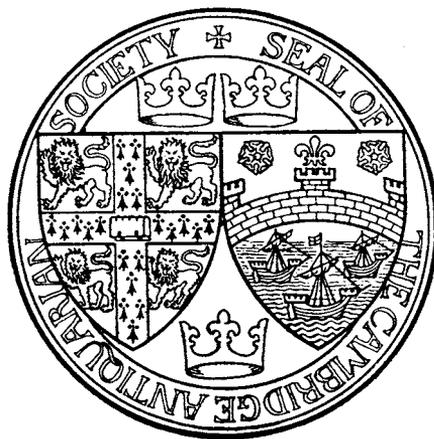
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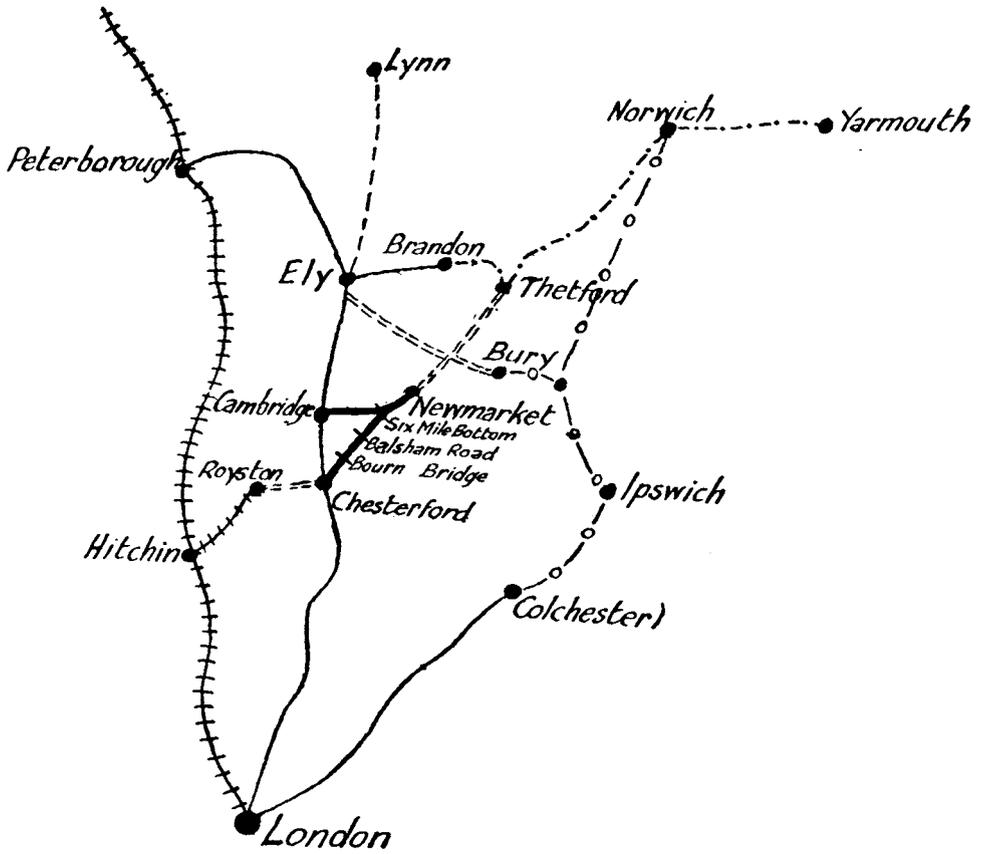
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PLATE I



- Newmarket Rly* **—————**
- ditto Proposed* **=====**
- Eastern Counties Rly* **—————**
- Norfolk Rly* **-----**
- Eastern Union Rly* **-o-o-**
- East Anglian Rly* **-----**
- Great Northern Rly* **+++++**

Sketch Plan of Newmarket Railway and its connections.

A DERELICT RAILWAY: BEING THE HISTORY OF THE NEWMARKET AND CHESTERFORD RAILWAY.

By KENNETH BROWN.

(Read 14 November, 1927.)

The history of the Newmarket and Chesterford Railway might be regarded by some as too recent a matter to come within the scope of antiquarian interest, but after all antiquity is a question of relativeness and, since steam railways are only just a little over 100 years old, a railway whose history dates back over 80 years can perhaps be admitted as an antiquity, and if so admitted gives the County of Cambridge a unique antiquarian relic in the 11½ miles of derelict railway, originally opened and planned as an important through main line.

The abandoned portion of the railway lies between Great Chesterford on the London and North Eastern main line to Cambridge and a point near Six Mile Bottom Station on the existing Cambridge–Newmarket line, and the embankments, cuttings and other works are clearly visible from the London and Newmarket road to which it runs parallel.

According to the original plan this section formed part of the main line running from a point half a mile north of Chesterford Station (as it was then called) on the Eastern Counties Railway, which had been opened to Cambridge on 3 July, 1845, to Newmarket, whilst the existing line from Six Mile Bottom to Cambridge was merely to be a branch. An illustration in *The Illustrated London News* of 2 August, 1845, shows that Great Chesterford Station is little altered to-day from the original Chesterford Station of which an enthusiastic contemporary guide writer said that “the style is Elizabethan having ornamental chimnies with flat overhanging heads¹.”

The first station on the Newmarket line was that of Bourn Bridge, situate immediately opposite the present Pampisford Station on the site now covered by the Railway Inn. Before

¹ *A Guide to the Eastern Counties (Cambridge Line) and Norfolk Railway*, 2nd Edition, 1847.

reaching this point there are very clearly marked indications of the line, including a section of deep cutting and half a mile of high embankment thickly timbered which forms a striking feature of the landscape.

A little north of Bourn Bridge Station the railway crosses Pampisford Road and the level crossing keeper's house is still standing and inhabited (Pl. II A). Similar houses built by the railway are to be found where the line crossed the Roman Road and again at Balsham Road Station, which was the other station on the deserted portion of the line (Pl. II B).

The line crossed the River Granta at Bourn Bridge (Pl. III A) and on each side are to be seen the remains of the brick footings to support a bridge which must have had a span of some 65 feet.

A little farther north the line was crossed by the Abington road and the bridge carrying that road over the railway is still in existence and is in a complete state of preservation (Pl. III B). Other over-bridges are still extant, one carrying a farm road to Fulbourn Valley Farm a little north of the level crossing at the Roman road and one on the Wilbraham road near the junction with the existing Cambridge-Newmarket branch (Pl. IV). In a cutting north of the Roman road there are still marks showing where the sleepers were laid, and after emerging from this cutting north of the Roman road the line was carried on an embankment and subsequently in a cutting until it reached the junction with the existing railway, one mile west of Six Mile Bottom Station. From this point, the line is, of course, that of the existing route to Newmarket.

The prospectus of the "Newmarket and Chesterford Railway with a branch to Cambridge" appeared in *Herapath's Journal* on 4 and 11 October, 1845.

The Engineers-in-Chief of the line were given as Mr Robert Stephenson and Mr John Braithwaite. The promoters no doubt regarded themselves as lucky in obtaining Mr Robert Stephenson's assistance, as it is recorded by Smiles that

When the speculation of 1844 set in Robert Stephenson's services were, of course, greatly in request. Thus in one session we find him engaged as engineer for not fewer than thirty-three new schemes. Projectors thought

(A)



Level-crossing keeper's house at Pampisford Road.

(B)



Balsham Road Station.

(A)

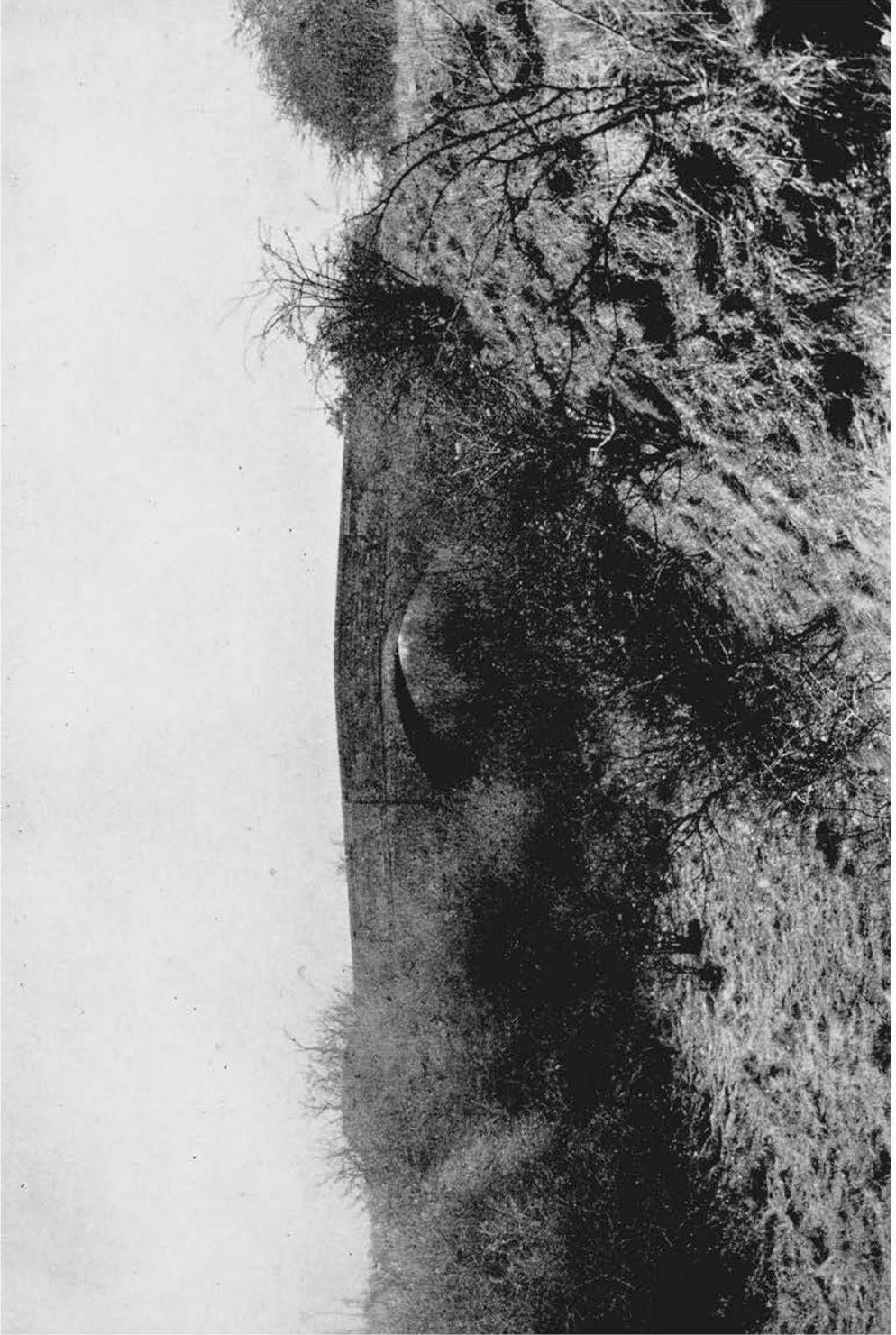


Site of bridge over River Granta at Bourn Bridge.

(B)



Abington Road Bridge.



Wilbraham Road Bridge.

themselves fortunate, who could secure his name, and he had only to propose his terms to obtain them. The work which he performed at this period of his life was indeed enormous, and his income was large beyond any previous instance of engineering gain.

Mr Braithwaite had been until May 1843 Engineer-in-Chief to the Eastern Counties Railway. Although his name appears thus on the prospectus in the preliminary stages of the Company's formation, it seems that the actual construction of the Newmarket and Chesterford line was under the direction of Mr Robert Stephenson alone.

By 31 October, 1845, the project had received the support of the social and political influence of the ducal house of Rutland, who included in their territorial possessions the Cheveley Park Estate near Newmarket, by the addition to the Committee of Management, as its Chairman, of young Lord George Manners (then only 25 years of age), some time M.P. for Cambridgeshire and son of the fifth Duke of Rutland.

The Stockton and Darlington Railway was made to convey Durham coal to Tees-side, the Liverpool and Manchester to carry American cotton to Manchester, but no such sordid motives inspired the Newmarket and Chesterford Railway. Mr Shelley, the representative of the Jockey Club, under the genial influence of the luncheon so necessary to the cutting of the first sod, waxed lyrical as a Shelley should and said:

The Jockey Club felt that a railway to Newmarket would not only be a great convenience to parties anxious to participate in the truly British sport of racing but would enable Members of Parliament to superintend a race and run back to London in time for the same night's debate.

Inspired by such ideals, favoured by the local landowners, and under the august patronage of the Jockey Club the Company's Bill was unopposed and had a fair passage through the treacherous straits of Parliament and received the Royal assent on 16 July, 1846, after the Company had only incurred the moderate sum of less than £2000 as preliminary expenses prior to its incorporation by its Act.

The authorised share capital was £350,000 in 14,000 shares of £25 each, with borrowing powers of £116,666. 13s. 4d.

The Company's Act of Incorporation (9 and 10 Vict. c. 172) "for making a Railway from Chesterford to Newmarket with a branch to Cambridge" contained some unusual clauses, such as those giving officers of the University of Cambridge the right to have access to the stations to search for any member of the University, and forbidding the Company to carry any member of the University under the rank of M.A., Bachelor of Civil Law or Medicine whom the proper University authorities might prohibit, and a further provision compelling the Company to employ special constables who were subject to the University authorities to superintend, manage and control the workmen engaged in works within three miles of the town of Cambridge.

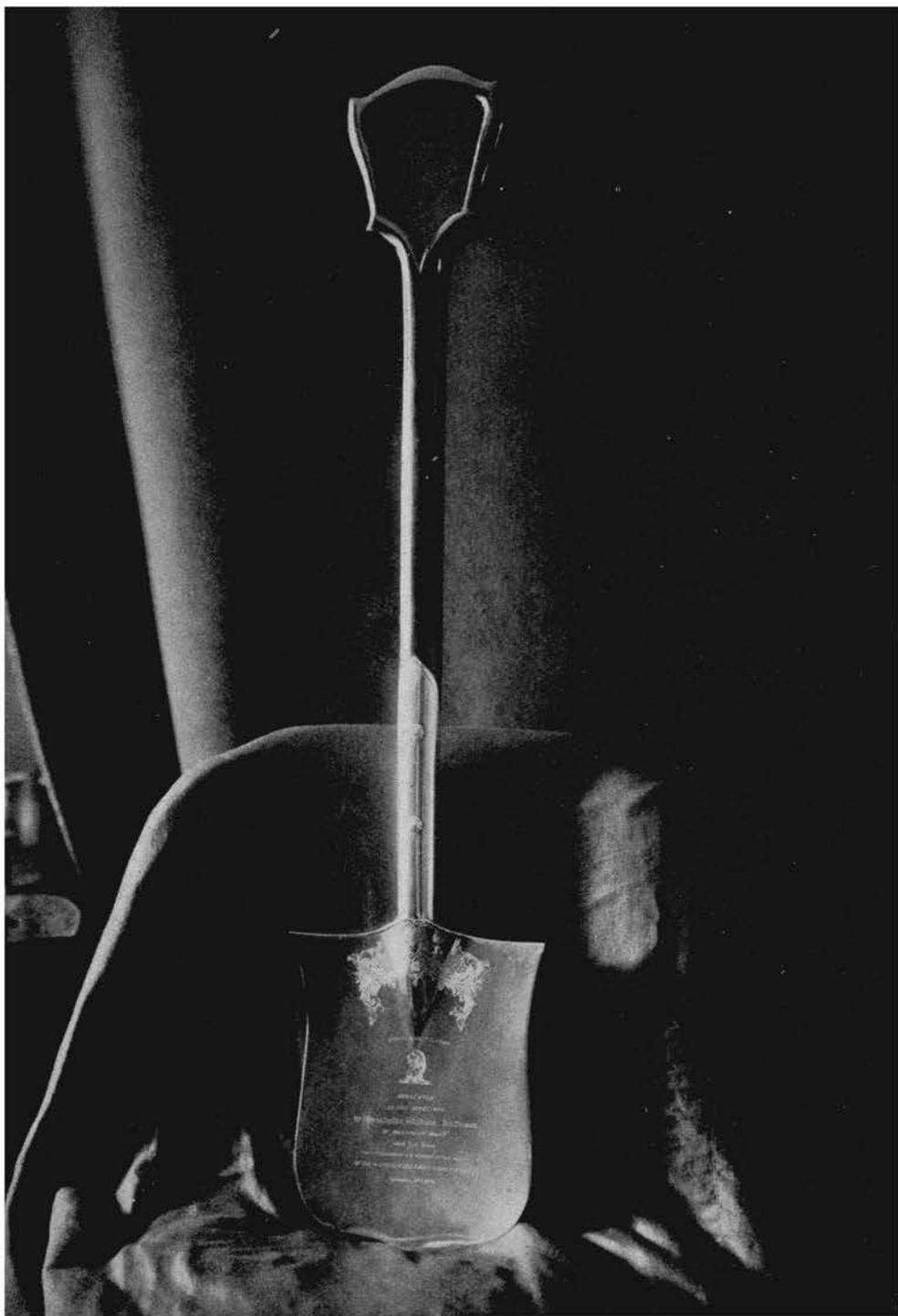
It was also made unlawful for the Company to take up or set down passengers at the Cambridge Railway Station (Pl. VI) or within three miles thereof between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Sundays, under pain of a penalty of £5 per person payable to Addenbrooke's Hospital or other charity nominated under the Seal of the University.

After the Act had been obtained no time was lost in getting on with the work of construction, which was entrusted to Mr Jackson, a well-known contractor.

On 30 September, 1846, the ceremony of "turning the first sod" took place "in the parish of Dullingham upon the property of the heir of the late General Jeaffreson the eldest son of W. Pigott Esqre." The heir in question, Master Jeaffreson, to whom the duty of turning the first sod was entrusted, was only ten years of age.

"About eleven o'clock," it is recorded by the *Cambridge Chronicle*, "the Directors and a large party of ladies and gentlemen left Dullingham Hall in procession, preceded by a band of music from Newmarket, a collection of handsome silk banners, and a body of 'Navvies'" who, it is gratifying to learn, were "apparently well-conducted men" and "presented quite a respectable appearance in their clean white smock frocks." Master Jeaffreson "divested himself of his coat and stood spade in hand ready for his task," and, having been suitably addressed by Lord George Manners, the Chairman of the Company, "gave a few hearty digs into the earth and having partially filled his

PLATE V



Silver spade with which first sod was cut, Sept. 1846.

barrow wheeled it along and tilted its contents amidst the cheers of the spectators."

It is interesting to know that there is a living link with this ceremony of over eighty years ago in the person of Master Jeaffreson's widow, Mrs Robinson of Dullingham. Master Jeaffreson having taken that name under the will of his grandfather, General Jeaffreson, subsequently assumed the name of Robinson under the will of Mr W. H. Robinson of Densham. The ceremonial spade and barrow presented to young Master Jeaffreson by the Directors are still in the possession of Mrs Robinson at Dullingham House, the mansion where the customary luncheon was held after the turning of the first sod, and it is due to her courtesy that the writer was able to have them photographed. The silver spade (Pl. V) bears the inscription :

Omnia vincit Labor

(Crest)

PRESENTED

BY THE DIRECTORS

TO

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM JEAFFRESON

of Dullingham House

aged Ten Years

Upon the occasion of his commencing the works

On the Newmarket and Chesterford Railway

September 30th 1846

The ornamental barrow bears no inscription, but has carved upon it the same crest as is engraved on the spade.

The Railway, which by this time had been re-christened by its Act of 1847 the Newmarket Railway, was opened to goods traffic on 3 January, 1848, and on 4 April, 1848, to full traffic. From the Bradshaw of May, 1848, in which the railway makes its début, it appears that there was a service of four passenger trains each way on weekdays and two on Sundays. There were four intermediate stations, two, as has already been mentioned, Bourn Bridge and Balsham Road, on the portion of the line now derelict, and Six Mile Bottom (originally called Westley) and Dullingham on the portion still in operation.

It has been frequently, but incorrectly, stated that the Newmarket Railway did not have its own engines and rolling stock, but depended on the Eastern Counties Railway in this respect. In the report in 1855 of the Committee of Investigation into the affairs of the Eastern Counties Railway, an exact inventory is given of all the engines and other rolling stock of the Newmarket Railway which the Eastern Counties Railway purchased from it in 1850. This rolling stock consisted of 6 engines and tenders, 18 carriage trucks, 26 first-class carriages, 25 second-class carriages, 30 third-class carriages, 7 luggage vans and 22 horse boxes. All six engines were of the same type and were built by Messrs Gilkes, Wilson & Co. of Middlesbrough, and were named after famous race-horses, namely "Beeswing," "Queen of Trumps," "Van Tromp," "Flying Dutchman," "Eleanor" and "Alice Hawthorn." After being taken over by the Eastern Counties Railway, they were for some time used on coal trains between Peterborough and Stratford, and it was not until April 1870 that the last of these engines was broken up¹.

In June 1847 the Railway obtained Acts to extend their line of railway from Newmarket to Bury St Edmunds, with a branch to Ely, and also to make a line from Newmarket to Thetford (10 & 11 Vict. c. 12 and c. 20). None of these works was in fact carried out except the line to Bury, which was subsequently incorporated as a separate undertaking and eventually taken over by the Eastern Counties Railway. The Thetford extension, if constructed, would have provided a through route from London, *via* Newmarket, to Norwich $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles shorter than the existing route *via* Ely, giving the Newmarket Railway a connection with the Norfolk Railway which ran from Brandon to Norwich and Yarmouth.

The Newmarket Company then became a pawn in a complicated game played between the more powerful Eastern Counties and Norfolk Railways. Thus at a meeting on 14 August, 1846, the Chairman of the Newmarket Railway reported that negotiations had been pending with the Norfolk Railway

¹ *v. Locomotive Magazine*, 15 August, 1904, p. 138, where a drawing and full dimensions of the engines are also given.

for leasing the present line with the proposed extension to Thetford at 6 per cent. on the whole outlay and half the profits, and that upon a meeting to settle the contract negotiations were broken off, it then being announced for the first time by the Norfolk Railway that they had no power to enter into any agreement without the sanction of the Eastern Counties Railway. Then on 11 November, 1846, a special meeting of the shareholders of the Newmarket Railway was called to sanction an agreement with the Eastern Counties Railway for the lease to the latter Company of the Newmarket Railway from date of completion of the main line and Cambridge branch at a net rent of 5 per cent. on the Newmarket Company's capital with a further dividend in certain events. When, however, the meeting was held the Chairman had to announce that just before the meeting the Directors had received an intimation from the Eastern Counties Railway that the report as to the effect of the agreement issued by the Newmarket Railway was not in accordance with the spirit of the agreement. As the parties were not at one as to what the agreement meant, the Solicitor to the Company advised that Parliament would never sanction and enforce the agreement.

It was no doubt as a reprisal to this breaking off of negotiations by the Eastern Counties Railway that the Newmarket proprietors authorised, on 10 August, 1847, a line from Chesterford to Royston, which would have given the Great Northern Company (whose main line was then in course of construction), in conjunction with the Newmarket Railway, entirely independent access to the heart of the Eastern Counties by connections with the Norfolk Railway at Thetford, and the Eastern Union Railway at Bury.

It is interesting to note what would have been the mileages of the various actual and proposed routes from London to Norwich and from Cambridge to Norwich :

Actual. Eastern Counties Railway routes.

	Miles
London (Shoreditch) to Norwich <i>via</i> Colchester	113½
London (Shoreditch) to Norwich <i>via</i> Cambridge and Ely	126
Cambridge to Norwich <i>via</i> Ely	68¾

Proposed. Newmarket Railway routes.

London (Shoreditch) to Norwich <i>via</i> Chesterford and Newmarket	113 $\frac{3}{4}$
London (King's Cross) to Norwich <i>via</i> Royston, Chesterford and Newmarket	120 $\frac{1}{4}$
Cambridge to Norwich <i>via</i> Newmarket	63

At the meeting on 28 February, 1848, it was reported that further futile negotiations had taken place with the Eastern Counties Railway for lease or amalgamation, but that an agreement, conditionally on the shareholders' consent, had been entered into with the Norfolk Railway for the Norfolk Company to transfer, whenever they were free to do so, the proposed Thetford–Newmarket route to the Newmarket Company. This conditional agreement, which would have diverted some £40,000 worth of traffic a year from the Eastern Counties Railway to the Newmarket Railway, evidently frightened the Eastern Counties Railway, and forty-eight hours before the meeting to approve it, the Eastern Counties Railway approached the Newmarket Company with new proposals, and the Newmarket shareholders accordingly held over the question of ratifying the Norfolk Railway agreement.

At this meeting it was also decided to abandon the Royston–Chesterford scheme, particularly in view of the fact that the Royston–Hitchin Railway—a subsidiary of the Great Northern Railway—were promoting a bill to extend their line to Cambridge, where it could, of course, join the Newmarket Company's branch and the same purpose be effected with but small additional mileage.

The period of the original conduct of the Newmarket Company's undertaking by its own management was very short, and it is no doubt for this reason that it has often been stated that the Company never conducted its own traffic.

Goods traffic commenced, as has been stated, on 3 January, 1848, and passenger traffic on 4 April, 1848. The result of the three months up to 30 June, 1848, showed that the total traffic receipts were £3085. 7s. 7d. and the running expenses £2059. 5s. 7d., showing a balance of £1026. 2s. 0d.

The control of traffic was handed over to the Eastern Counties Railway on 2 October, 1848, under an arrangement which was

approved by the Newmarket shareholders on 27 March, 1848. Under this arrangement the Eastern Counties Railway were to provide funds to liquidate the liabilities of the Newmarket Railway and to complete the Cambridge branch, thus avoiding the necessity for calling up the outstanding liability of £5 per share, and the Newmarket shareholders were to receive a guaranteed dividend of 3 per cent. for two years and thereafter $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Although the Eastern Counties Railway took over the management of the Newmarket line as from 2 October, 1848, the agreement still required the assent of the Eastern Counties shareholders, and there proved to be another slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

By the latter part of 1848, the throne of the "Railway King," Hudson, who, in 1845, had been called in as a superman to save the Eastern Counties Railway, was tottering to its fall, and by 1 October, 1848, it had become doubtful whether the Eastern Counties shareholders would give the necessary assent to the agreement with the Newmarket Railway. However, the Newmarket Railway decided that the control of the running of their line should be handed over to the Eastern Counties Railway and that line assumed control on 2 October, 1848.

By the time of the General Meeting of the Eastern Counties shareholders held on 28 February, 1849, Hudson and his Directors, in face of the storm that was brewing against them, did not even dare to submit the Newmarket agreement for confirmation. Hudson personally would not face the music at that meeting and the business could hardly proceed for groans and hisses and cries of "Hudson! Hudson! why is Hudson not here?" and so the ungrateful shareholders, to whom Hudson had generously paid dividends out of their own capital, cast out Hudson bag and baggage including therein the agreement with the Newmarket Railway.

The unfortunate Newmarket Railway was then indeed left high and dry. Notwithstanding the doubts that were already appearing in October 1848 as to whether the Eastern Counties proprietors would sanction the agreement, the Newmarket Company had handed over the working of its line to the Eastern

Counties Railway who then proceeded with the double treatment of simultaneously starving and bleeding the Newmarket line.

The Eastern Counties Railway sought to charge 1s. 5*d.* a mile for locomotive power, while on the South Western Railway the cost was but 9*d.* and on the Brighton line 8½*d.*; they also charged the Newmarket Railway £600 a year for the management or rather—as the Chairman of the Newmarket Railway did not scruple to call it—the mismanagement of the line.

As a result the three months working to 4 January, 1849, showed a gross profit to the Newmarket Company of only £704, out of which—save the mark—they had to pay bond interest of £2000, a problem rendered all the more difficult because the Eastern Counties Railway held on to even this small balance on the ground of alleged other claims, and in addition the Newmarket Company had to defray out of capital the cost of maintaining the permanent way and stations.

The Directors considered resuming possession of the working of their line, and making arrangements with Mr Jackson, the contractor who had built the line, to work it. In fact they achieved nothing, except, after a final futile appeal to the Eastern Counties Railway for justice, to close the line without even consulting the shareholders. And so, on 30 June, 1850, the line from Chesterford to Newmarket was closed to traffic, and Newmarket was cut off from any railway connection with the outer world.

The Newmarket Company was now in a parlous position. It was in pawn under debentures issued to Mr Jackson for the Company's unpaid obligations to him as contractor and to other debenture holders. No doubt the policy of starving and bleeding the line adopted by the Eastern Counties Railway was deliberately intended to enable that Company to buy up the concern when the debentures fell due. All the engines and rolling stock had to go to the Eastern Counties Railway under what the Newmarket Directors called an equitable arrangement, but which looks uncommonly like a case of the Eastern Counties Railway astutely taking the rolling stock in payment of what otherwise might prove a bad debt.

The Chesterford line was closed, the Cambridge branch was

unfinished and the Company had no money to pay the contractor to complete it, except an uncalled £2 per share on the shares, which it might be very difficult to collect from disillusioned and disgruntled shareholders. Other creditors were pressing and the Company was involved in a Chancery suit.

It was at this hopeless moment that a vigorous personality, in the person of Mr Cecil Fane, who held the office of a Commissioner in Bankruptcy, came on the scene and took control.

Mr Commissioner Fane had already been Chairman of the Committee appointed on 22 March, 1849, to go into the affairs of the Company. The report of the Committee handed in on 14 May, 1849, had urged the immediate pressing on with the Cambridge branch as the Company's one hope of salvation. He had also been a Director for a time of the Company and had resigned, owing to his dissatisfaction with the management of its affairs.

When however at the Meeting of 27 July, 1850, the Directors came forward and told the story of their defeatist policy of closing the line on the previous 30 June, without ever having called the shareholders together on the matter, Mr Fane rose in his wrath and tore the Board to shreds. He showed that if running the line would probably entail a loss, keeping it shut would mean a larger loss; he criticised the mistake of making, as the pivot of the line, Chesterford, a small village, and not Cambridge, a large town, and denounced in no measured terms the bungling of the various negotiations with the Norfolk and Eastern Counties Railways and the Directors' tactless handling of Mr Jackson, the contractor and debenture holder.

So the shareholders by a large majority cast out Lord George Manners and his Board, and Mr Commissioner Fane with his Directors reigned in their stead.

The result was magical. The line was reopened from Chesterford to Newmarket on 9 September, 1850, with rolling stock borrowed from the Eastern Counties Railway. Mr G. W. Brown, the Secretary of the Company, became Manager and by his zeal and economy increased revenue and decreased expenses.

Mr Fane came to an arrangement with Mr Jackson, the contractor (whom, considering how much was owing to him, the old Board had unwisely angered), to readjust his 1846

contract prices made during the boom then prevailing and write £26,000 off his bill and reduce his debenture interest from 5 per cent. to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and induced other debenture holders also to reduce their interest. He even got the carriage builder and engine builder to reduce their accounts, when they must have been rather exasperated that the Company had sold the rolling stock to the Eastern Counties Railway before it was fully paid for.

He stirred up the defaulting shareholders in arrear two years with their calls and got in the calls on 3000 shares and forfeited 2000 shares.

He settled the Chancery suit on the basis of the other side paying the costs and buying for £500 a piece of land which the Company did not want.

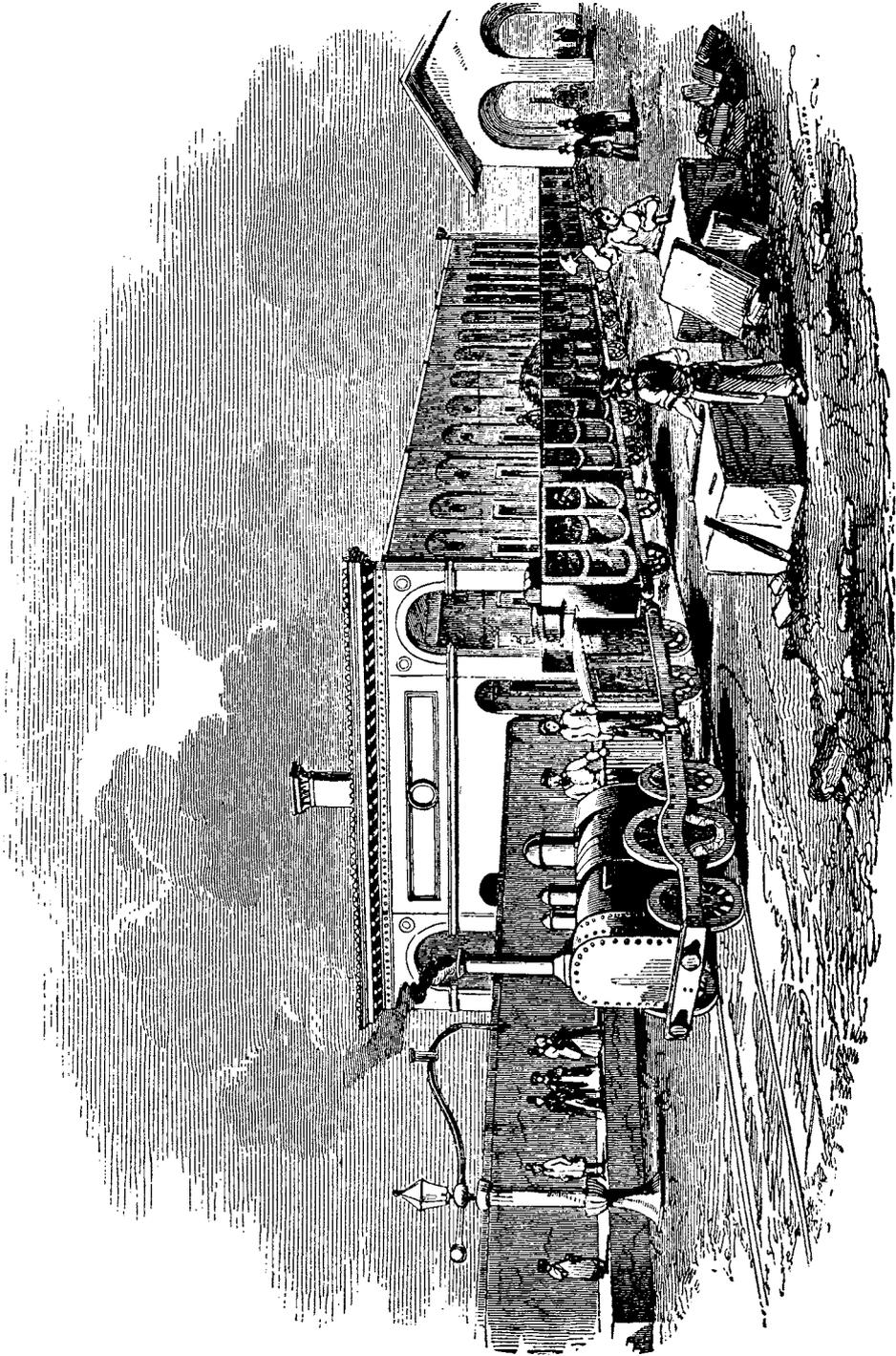
But better still he made an arrangement with the Eastern Counties Railway to accommodate, when opened, the Cambridge branch at Cambridge Station and so avoid the expense of a separate station and staff there, and he also secured certain advantageous traffic arrangements, together with an undertaking embodied in an agreement, dated 28 May, 1851, that in any year after the opening of the Cambridge branch in which the revenue was insufficient to pay a dividend of 3 per cent. on the Newmarket Company's capital of £350,000 the Eastern Counties Railway would make it good up to not exceeding £5000 in any one year. This agreement was confirmed by the Eastern Counties and Newmarket Railways Arrangements Act 1852¹, and we learn, from the law report in 1854 of the case of *Newmarket Railway v. Churchwardens of St Andrews*², that in the first year of its operation this agreement cost the Eastern Counties Railway £3705. 9s. 7d.

In addition Mr Fane got Mr Jackson to agree to complete the line to Cambridge for a sum not exceeding £9000, on being furnished with a certain quantity of rails and sleepers which the Company would have at its disposal.

This last phrase covers a most ingenious move on Mr Fane's part. The original main line from Chesterford to Newmarket

¹ 15 Vict. c. 51.

² *Law Journal Magistrates' Cases*, N.S. 23, II, p. 76.



Cambridge Station in 1845. (From *The Illustrated London News*.)

was laid with double lines. A single line was ample for the traffic; so Mr Fane had one set of rails and sleepers (barring presumably necessary passing places) pulled up from Chesterford to the junction with the Cambridge branch, and so had some eleven miles of rails with sleepers to pave the branch to Cambridge and some £7000 worth of rails over.

The urgent desire of the energetic Mr Fane to get the Cambridge branch open as soon as possible was met with annoying technical difficulties as to the junction with the Eastern Counties Railway at Cambridge. In the Parliamentary plans the curve at the junction was shown as one of a radius of 20 chains, but it was found necessary from unavoidable circumstances to alter the curve to one of 8 chains. For this the consent of the Commissioners of Railways was required and was applied for in July 1851. As however the Company's compulsory powers of acquiring land had expired the Commissioners refused to approve of the deviation without the consents of the owners and occupiers of the land affected. This plunged Mr Fane into despair, as he wanted, in order to save time, to get the deviation approved first and the consents of the landowners after, and on 30 July, 1851, he wrote to Captain Simmons, R.E., of the Railway Commissioners Office, the following pathetic note:

Wednesday $\frac{1}{4}$ before 10.

DEAR SIR,

As it will be impossible that the Company should make the curve *without the consent of the owners of the land*, no possible evil can arise from the Commissioners considering the curve first. If therefore, they could be induced to approve or disapprove the curve first, it would be the greatest possible convenience to me personally.

Every day's delay is a question of £50 at least, and the difficulty I have to deal with is enormous. The land I have to negotiate for is vested in two trustees—one in Derbyshire and one in Yorkshire—in trust for a wife, nearly out of her mind, and her two children, and afterwards for her husband, who will not see or speak to her.

I am off for Lincoln this moment to see one of the trustees; and to labour to get five or six consents to the sale, and then to get written consents to the curve again, would be more than one's life is worth.

Pray help me, if you possibly can.

Yours truly,

C. FANE.

Captain Simmons, R.E.

But the Commissioners were not to be touched by any such human appeal; it was very much more important to them that the due course of procedure should be preserved than that Mr C. Fane's life should be worth living, and therefore they rendered the following icily regular reply:

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONERS OF RAILWAYS,
WHITEHALL.

August 1, 1851.

SIR,

I have been directed by the Commissioners of Railways to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo; and to inform you that they cannot enter into the consideration of the propriety of sanctioning the proposed deviations in the curve therein alluded to, until they are satisfied that the consents required, before their authority can be given, have been obtained.

I have, etc.,

DOUGLAS CALTON,
Assistant Secretary.

C. Fane, Esq.

So that was that, and Mr Fane had to get on with his job, whether the husband aforesaid would see and speak to his nearly-out-of-her-mind wife or whether he would not.

On 29 September, 1851, the Inspecting Engineer of the Commissioners having inspected the line reported that the connecting line at Cambridge was not laid—poor Mr Fane was still waiting for the Commissioners' consent to that new curve—that the fencing near the junction at Six Mile Bottom was far from complete, that at one of the stations no platform had yet been laid and that the permanent way was as yet in a very rough state and required a good deal of adjustment. Wherefore the Commissioners declared the opening of the line must be postponed for a month.

Mr Fane however was not to be done, whether life was worth living in a world that was neatly tied up in red tape of the finest quality or not, and even succeeded in infusing some of his abounding energy into a Civil Service Department, for on 7 October, 1851, he got both the Commissioners' approval of the new curve and the passing of the line by the Inspecting Engineer—the fencing and junction having been completed—and on 8 October

the formal consent to the line being opened for the purposes of public traffic, and which was in fact opened on 9 October, 1851.

Immediately the Cambridge line was opened the fortunes of the Company were retrieved from their former hopelessness and bankruptcy, and actually by the end of the following February (1852) the Company declared a dividend of 1s. 6d. per share—not much it is true on a £25 share, but still something—and in the following August a further dividend for the preceding half-year of 5s. per share.

It was indeed no small accomplishment from the end of July 1850 to February 1852 to have raised a bankrupt, closed and apparently hopeless concern to the state of being able to pay a dividend.

Immediately the Cambridge line was opened the Chesterford line was closed to passenger traffic, the distance from London to Newmarket thus being increased by about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

There were to be two stations between Six Mile Bottom and Cambridge, one at Fulbourn, where the original station still extant was on the west (instead of as now the east) side of the level crossing, and the other at Cherryhinton. These however were not ready for the opening of the line and do not appear in Bradshaw until August 1852.

At the level crossing at Cherryhinton there is to be seen a similar building to the old station at Fulbourn marking the Cherryhinton Station now closed.

The Cambridge branch was originally laid as a single line from Six Mile Bottom to Cambridge. Although the so-called main line from Chesterford and the Cambridge branch converged about a mile west of Six Mile Bottom Station the actual physical junction did not take place until that station was reached. For that mile the two lines ran side by side as independent single lines.

There is little left to tell. The Act of 1852 authorised the Eastern Counties Railway, if they thought fit, to buy up the Newmarket Company when that Company had written its £25 shares down to £15 each and give in exchange for the shares $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. debentures payable in three years' time. This the Eastern Counties Company did. They took over the Newmarket Company's bond debt of £116,666 and by 30 June, 1854, had

paid off the debentures of £210,000 in cash which they had issued in purchase of the Newmarket Company's lines. They thus paid (including stamps for bonds) £326,923 for 13 miles of line between Cambridge and Newmarket with the white elephant of the line from Six Mile Bottom to Great Chesterford.

The Bury Extension, which was incorporated as a separate undertaking, the Eastern Counties Railway took over on the basis of paying a 5 per cent. dividend on the cost.

Although the Chesterford to Six Mile Bottom section does not appear to have been worked even for goods traffic after the opening of the Cambridge line, the power actually to abandon it was not taken until the Abandonment Act of 1858.

Thus this line, unique in the history of English railways, was dismantled and abandoned, and whilst many of the works are, as has been shown, still clearly marked and defined, some of it has been obliterated by agriculture and concealed by wood and undergrowth until it does not seem altogether inappropriate to say in the words of Rudyard Kipling:

*They shut the road through the woods
 Seventy years ago.
 Weather and rain have undone it again,
 And now you would never know
 There was once a path through the woods
 Before they planted the trees:
 It is underneath the coppice and heath,
 And the thin anemones.
 Only the keeper sees
 That, where the ring-dove broods
 And the badgers roll at ease,
 There was once a road through the woods.*

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