

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY



VOLUME XLII
JANUARY 1948 TO DECEMBER 1948

CAMBRIDGE
BOWES AND BOWES
1949

THE CHURCH OF
ST MARY THE GREAT

THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH
AT CAMBRIDGE

by

W. D. BUSHELL, M.A.

with a Foreword by

PROFESSOR G. M. TREVELYAN, O.M.

Master of Trinity College, Cambridge

The Church of Saint Mary the Great, in Cambridge, may justly be described as one of the most interesting in the country, deeply associated as it is with the growth and spread of the Reformation in England, with the history of the University of Cambridge and with the great scholars who have preached in it. Mr Bushell has written not merely an architectural history of the church, but has done full justice to the many aspects of its story, social, political and religious.

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From the
FOREWORD

by PROFESSOR G. M. TREVELYAN, O.M.

THIS INTERESTING AND VALUABLE RECORD of the history and antiquities of Great St Mary's, in all aspects architectural and human, should receive a warm welcome both from town and gown. As High Steward of the borough as well as Master of a college, indeed of the college which holds the patronage of St Mary's, I may be allowed to speak for both the two sides of Cambridge life, to whom St Mary's is respectively the University church and the central church of the borough.

The assiduous scholarship of Mr Bushell has been admirably employed in collecting and ordering this large mass of material, all of it interesting in one way or another to Cambridge folk. An old Trinity man, Mr Bushell spent the greater part of his life in arduous and valuable public service, but since his retirement the historical and antiquarian instincts which he has inherited from his father the Reverend W. D. Bushell, F.S.A., of St John's College and of Harrow School, have prompted him to this labour of love, by which he has put Cambridge greatly in his debt.

G. M. TREVELYAN

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*Published for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society
by Bowes & Bowes Publishers Limited
Cambridge*

*Printed in Great Britain at the University Press, Cambridge
(Brooke Crutchley, University Printer)*

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RAILWAYS TO CAMBRIDGE, ACTUAL AND PROJECTED: A CENTENARY REVIEW

CANON R. B. FELLOWS, M.A., LL.M.

THE formal opening of the railway from London to Cambridge and thence to Norwich took place on 29 July 1845, and on the following day it was available for public use.

SOME PREVIOUS SURVEYS THAT CAME TO NOTHING

(1) In 1822 William James issued his *Report on an Engine Railroad from Bishop's Stortford to Clayhithe Sluice below Cambridge with a branch to Waddon and an estimate thereof*. This was for a railway to connect the existing Stortford navigation with that at Cambridge.

(2) In 1825 John and George Rennie surveyed a line for the Northern Rail-Road Company from London through Hoddesdon, Ware, Braughing and Barkway to Cambridge and beyond, to Cromford in Derbyshire, and to join the High Peak Railway and thence reach Manchester.

(3) In 1834 Nicholas Wilcox Cundy surveyed a line for the Grand Northern and Eastern Railway from London to York through Bishop's Stortford and Cambridge, with a branch from Bishop's Stortford to Norwich.

(4) In 1835 Joseph Gibbs surveyed a line for a company to be called The Great Northern Railway (not to be confused with the well-known railway of a later date), for a line from London through Dunmow and Saffron Walden to Cambridge and York.

A survey, however, that met with some parliamentary success was that completed by James Walker in 1835 for the Northern and Eastern Railway from London to Cambridge through Broxbourne and Bishop's Stortford, and a line from Cambridge to Norwich. A further survey was made by him for continuing the railway from Cambridge to York, but was not sufficiently advanced to be included in the Bill for the Session of 1835-6. The Bill as deposited was for a line to Cambridge, with a branch thence to Norwich. Parliament only sanctioned the line to Cambridge. The Act, 6 and 7 William IV, c. 103, was entitled *An Act for making a railway to form a communication between London and Cambridge with a view to its being extended hereafter to the Northern and Eastern Counties of England*.

Want of money, however, prevented the Company from getting as far as Cambridge. Bishop's Stortford was reached in 1840, and an Act was obtained to enable the Company to abandon their powers to continue the line beyond that point.

The railway to Cambridge was therefore made later and by virtue of fresh legislation, which, unlike the Act of 1836, gave extraordinary powers to officers of the

University to search the station for members of the University, and also prohibited the Company from conveying by train any member of the University not having the degree of Master of Arts or Bachelor of Civil Law or Medicine, if requested not to do so in any particular case by an officer of the University; the embargo lasted for 24 hours.

The Company could be fined for taking up or setting down any member of the University *in statu pupillari* and known to be such 'except at the regular appointed stations on the line'. Another section prohibited trains from taking up or setting down *any* passengers at Cambridge or within 3 miles of the same between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Sundays, unless the train had been delayed by some unavoidable accident.

CAMBRIDGE STATION

The station, described as 'built in a style superior to any other along the line', had one long platform for use by both up and down trains, but after a few years a wooden island platform was built for the up trains. This was approached from the main platform and booking-office by a footbridge with steep stairways, but a tunnel was made under the down line for the transfer of luggage. All this was altered in 1863 and one long platform of about 1,200 feet was substituted to serve both up and down main-line traffic. This still remains (1945), though lengthened to 1,650 feet.

Plans for a completely new double platform station were got out in 1886, with a better lay-out for the Newmarket line, and were embodied in a Bill for the Session of 1887, but this involved taking $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of Coldham Common, which Parliament refused to sanction, so the Company did not proceed with any alteration at all.

In 1893 the Company got power to acquire some of Coldham Common and reconstructed, with an easier curve, the Newmarket branch. They were again prepared to rebuild the station, but the Cambridge residents are said to have asked the Company to leave the station alone as they preferred the one platform. Except, therefore, for the addition of 'bays' at both ends, a one-platformed station still remains. The addition of bays became necessary chiefly to admit other companies' trains that terminated at Cambridge in the days when the station was the property of the Great Eastern Railway.

THE OPENING TRAIN SERVICE

When the railway was opened for the public on 30 July 1845, the week-day service consisted of seven down and six up trains, one train each way being described as a 'quick train' for which extra fares were charged. The quick train was advertised to reach Cambridge in 1 hour 50 minutes from Shoreditch, and at first called only at Broxbourne and Wenden (Audley End). The corresponding up train took two hours. The distance between Shoreditch and Cambridge via Stratford was $57\frac{1}{4}$ miles. A revised service was almost immediately introduced in which the quick train made an extra stop at Bishop's Stortford, but no more time was allowed. A night mail was added, leaving London at 8.40 p.m., and up from Cambridge at 2.24 a.m.

The single fare from London to Cambridge was 10s. 6d. first class, 7s. 6d. second and 4s. 10d. third, but by the quick train 13s. first and 9s. second. Third-class passengers, it may be mentioned, were only conveyed by one train each way, which took about four hours on the journey. On Sundays the service consisted of four up and three down trains, none being timed to leave or arrive at Cambridge between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on that day, in accordance with the prohibition in the Company's Act. The quick train was withdrawn after a month or two, and the best timing was 2 hours and 7 minutes down, and 2 hours 24 minutes up.

In August 1852, the Company achieved a record by putting on a non-stop train from Shoreditch to Cambridge, which at that date was the longest non-stop run in Great Britain. The time allowed was 1 hour 25 minutes (average speed just over 40 m.p.h.). The corresponding up train called at Stratford and took 1 hour 30 minutes from Cambridge to Shoreditch. After running for two years a stop at Bishop's Stortford was put in, and the trains were decelerated.

From that time onwards there were frequent variations in the times allowed, but by the summer of 1883 a great improvement had been made, and the journey both up and down between Liverpool Street and Cambridge was done by one train in 1 hour 16 minutes. The distance had been reduced by the opening in 1872 of the Hackney Downs line from Tottenham to Bethnal Green, and, even with the extension of the line from Bishopsgate to the new terminus at Liverpool Street in 1875, the mileage was only $55\frac{3}{4}$ miles as compared with $57\frac{1}{4}$ in 1845.

In the summer of 1904 four minutes were knocked off the down timing and two minutes off the best up express.

In 1914 a new General Manager, Mr (later Sir) Henry Thornton, further improved the timing of the best non-stop express, both up and down, to 1 hour 10 minutes. The European War of 1914-18 soon put an end to the improved timings. Since the grouping in 1923 the best service between Cambridge and Liverpool Street consisted of some trains put on in September 1937, running on week-days (Saturdays excepted) in 1 hour 5 minutes non-stop, up and down. Another European war brought these timings to an end, nor have they, or anything like them, been yet resumed (1945).

ST PANCRAS STATION (MIDLAND RAILWAY) AND CAMBRIDGE

From 1 July 1870, under an agreement, access was given to St Pancras over the Tottenham and Hampstead Junction line to trains of the Great Eastern Railway from Cambridge. The through service consisted at first of through carriages attached to main-line trains which were detached or attached at Tottenham, but after a few years some through trains were put on between Cambridge and St Pancras. A great improvement was made in the speed and, in the summer of 1904, the midday express from St Pancras reached Cambridge in 1 hour 11 minutes. The distance was 56 miles. The service was discontinued in 1917 as a war economy, but, except for the running of one train to and from Hunstanton in the summer of 1922 and 1923, it was not resumed.

THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY

This Company after a hard struggle got access to Cambridge by obtaining a lease of the Royston and Hitchin Railway, which it eventually purchased. The small Company was incorporated in 1846 and was part of a much larger scheme for which the Bill had been deposited. The Bill was for a railway from Cambridge to Oxford, and was to pass through Royston, Hitchin, Luton, Dunstable, Cheddington, Aylesbury and Thame, 73 miles in length, and the Company was to be incorporated as 'The Cambridge and Oxford Railway'. Parliament, however, cut the line down to 13 miles—from Hitchin to Royston only—and the Act was entitled *The Royston and Hitchin Railway Act*. Under the original scheme several alternative sites for stations in Cambridge had been proposed for the Cambridge and Oxford Railway, but as Parliament did not sanction access to Cambridge nothing came of the selection.

In conjunction with the Great Northern Railway, which was constructing its main line from the North to King's Cross through Hitchin, where the Royston branch would join it, every effort was made to get Parliament to sanction the extension of the branch from Royston to Cambridge; several Bills, all unsuccessful, were introduced, and various sites for the station in Cambridge were proposed. The Company did succeed in getting leave to extend the line to Shepreth, and in August 1851, on the completion of the Shepreth extension, advertised, from an office in Trinity Street, Cambridge, through bookings to King's Cross. The journey between Cambridge and Shepreth was by the Company's four-horse omnibus. By the best train, 9.15 a.m. from King's Cross, Cambridge was reached in 2 hours 10 minutes, but by other trains the journey took about three hours. This attempt to capture Cambridge traffic came to an end after a little more than six months, when the line from Hitchin to Shepreth was leased for 14 years to the Eastern Counties Railway, and that Company continued the railway from Shepreth to join their main line near Shelford (as it does at the present time, 1945). A local service was run by the Eastern Counties Railway between Cambridge and Hitchin for 14 years.

In 1864 the Great Northern made another effort to get their own trains to Cambridge, and this time succeeded in compelling the Eastern Counties Railway to grant full facilities.

In 1864 the position was that the Great Northern would in two years time again have possession of their line from Hitchin as far as Shepreth, as the lease of it to the Eastern Counties Railway would expire; but, except with the permission of that Company, they would not be able to use the line beyond Shepreth to get to Cambridge, and it was most unlikely that permission would be granted.

The Great Northern, therefore, promoted a Bill in Parliament for the Session of 1864 to obtain *statutory* powers to run their trains to Cambridge in one of two ways:

- (a) By a new line from Shepreth independent of the Great Eastern Railway (the new name of the Eastern Counties Railway).
- (b) By running powers from Shepreth to Cambridge over the Great Eastern, with power to make a line in Cambridge to an independent terminus of their own in a central position in the town.

Under proposal (a) the Great Northern would make a line from the end of their own Hitchin-Shepreth railway from Shepreth through Barrington and Haslingfield to join the Bedford and Cambridge Railway (then a single line just constructed which the London and North Western Railway worked), the junction to be about three miles west of Cambridge, they would have running powers over that line, which would be doubled, to a point short of Cambridge (G.E.R.) station, and from that point the Great Northern would make their own line to a terminus on a site bounded by Orchard Street and Emmanuel Road and close to Christ's Pieces. In Cambridge the line would have run in a cutting and would have been crossed at Brooklands Avenue, Hills Road, Station Road and Mill Road by bridges at the existing road levels.

Under proposal (b) the Great Northern Railway would have statutory running powers over the Great Eastern Company's line from Shepreth to Cambridge, and through Cambridge station to a point beyond Mill Road from which the Great Northern would make a line branching to the left and running between the Workhouse and the Cemetery to the proposed terminus in Emmanuel Road already referred to.

The Bill was supported by the Cambridge Borough Council and by the Board of Improvement Commissioners of Cambridge. The Master of Christ's College, however, strongly objected to a goods and coal depot being attached to the terminus in Emmanuel Road. In his opinion both Christ's and Emmanuel Colleges would be made almost uninhabitable by the continual howling and whistling of the engines. His objection was supported by the Vice-Chancellor, and the Great Northern agreed to have the goods station to the east of Clarendon Street.

The Great Eastern petitioned against the Bill in its early stages in Parliament, but later came to terms with the Great Northern. The Great Northern thereupon withdrew their Bill for separate lines, etc., and the two Companies executed an agreement which received the sanction of Parliament and was incorporated in the Bill, the proposal for an independent terminus in Emmanuel Road being dropped. Under this agreement, incorporated in an Act which received the Royal Assent on 23 June 1864 (27 and 28 Vict. c. 124), the Great Northern was granted effectual running powers over the Great Eastern line between Shepreth and Cambridge, with the use of all stations, booking-offices, etc. The Great Eastern undertook to double the line between Shepreth and their Cambridge main line near Shelford before 31 March 1866, and to provide a line fit for express traffic. They also undertook to provide the Great Northern with a separate booking-office and platform at Cambridge, and accommodation for their locomotives, etc. Satisfactory financial arrangements for working the traffic were also made.

Thus a competing line reached Cambridge, but made use of the existing station.

TRAIN SERVICE BETWEEN KING'S CROSS AND CAMBRIDGE

In 1866 the time taken by the best down train was 1 hour 47 minutes, and up 1 hour 50 minutes.

The times were gradually improved, and in 1880 one train reached King's Cross, calling only at Hitchin, in 1 hour 15 minutes. From 1904 the best down train did the

journey in 1 hour 15 minutes but the best up was allowed five minutes more, and this timing became the standard for the two best trains till the summer of 1918, when the continuation of the earlier European war caused a deceleration. After the grouping in 1923 improvements were made, and in July 1932 several up trains, with three stops, reached King's Cross in 1 hour 12 minutes, and down trains in 1 hour 15 minutes, but another war brought these good timings to an end. The distance between King's Cross and Cambridge was 58 miles.

CAMBRIDGE TO OXFORD

Though a 'Proposed Cambridge and Oxford Railway' was shown on a map attached to the Report of the Directors of the Northern and Eastern Railway for their first General Meeting at Cambridge on 5 August 1836, it was not until 1 August 1862 that railway communication was established. Neither this scheme of 1836, proposed by an independent Company to join the Northern and Eastern's London-Cambridge line, which, as already mentioned, itself failed to reach Cambridge, nor a later scheme in 1846 for a line between the two University towns, came to anything. When a line was opened in 1862 it was worked by the London and North Western Railway. The time taken on the journey has been much criticized. It has usually taken $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 hours each way. There was, however, a brilliant but short-lived exception, in the autumn of 1938, when a through Diesel train did the journey in $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours or thereabouts.

CAMBRIDGE AS A RAILWAY CENTRE

When the Great Northern Railway commenced their through service of trains from King's Cross in April 1866, Cambridge Station became an important railway centre. Trains reached it

(1) *From the North and Midland counties:*

- From Norwich, since 1845.
- From St Ives, since 1847.
- From Peterborough, since 1847.
- From Kettering, since 1866.

(2) *From the South:*

- From London (via Bishop's Stortford), since 1845.
- From London (via Hitchin), since 1866.
- From Colchester and Haverhill, since 1865.

(3) *From the East:*

- From Newmarket, since 1851.
- From Bury St Edmunds, since 1854.

(4) *From the West:*

- From Bedford, Bletchley and Oxford, since 1862.

Since 1866 there have been a few additions, e.g.:

- (1) Through trains from St Pancras.
- (2) A new line from Fordham.
- (3) Through expresses from Lincoln, Doncaster and York.
- (4) A better approach line from Newmarket.

Not all the services instituted since 1866 run now (1945).

All trains running into Cambridge use the same station near Hills Road, built in 1845, but many times enlarged.

A list of other sites proposed at different times for through or terminal stations may be of interest. Parliamentary sanction was obtained for the building of two of those on the list.

- (1) The Northern and Eastern Company's station at the river end of the present Latham Road. The line failed to get beyond Bishop's Stortford for lack of capital, though authorized by its Act of 1836 to get to Cambridge.
- (2) The existing station near Hills Road opened in 1845.

Some sites proposed for railway stations at Cambridge, 1834-64

| <i>Approximate site</i> | <i>Year of scheme</i> | <i>Proposed by</i> |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Huntingdon Road, south side, near present St Giles' and St Peter's cemetery | 1834 | N. W. Cundy, for a line from London to York |
| East end of Jesus Green | 1836 | Joseph Gibbs, for a line from London to York |
| Near present River Farm House and river end of Latham Road 'In the parish of Little St Mary' | 1836 | Northern and Eastern Railway |
| PRESENT STATION NEAR HILLS ROAD | 1844 | Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds Railway |
| 'In or near Coe Fen' | 1844 | Eastern Counties Railway: opened July 1845 |
| Near Old Town Gaol, now Queen Anne Terrace, as an additional station, with line from the main station | 1846 | Cambridge and Lincoln Railway (original plan) |
| North end of Sheep's Green, as an additional station, with line from the main station (possibly for goods only) | 1846 | Mayor's Committee |
| Botanic Garden (opposite to) | 1846 | Eastern Counties Railway |
| " (south side of) | 1847 | Cambridge and Oxford Railway |
| " (north-east of) | 1848 | Royston and Hitchin Railway |
| " (adjoining) | 1850 | Royston and Hitchin Railway |
| Queen's Road, near Sidgwick Avenue | 1846 | Cambridge and Shepreth Junction Railway |
| Silver Street, at river end | 1851 | Cambridge and Oxford Railway |
| Little St Mary's Lane and Mill Lane, near river end | 1846 | Royston and Hitchin Railway |
| Emmanuel Road, where Orchard Street abuts on it | 1864 | Cambridge and Oxford Railway |
| | | Great Northern Railway |

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