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From Border Stronghold to Railway Station: The Fortunes of Berwick Castle 1560–1850*

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THE almost total disappearance of the great medieval castle of Berwick-upon-Tweed must be a matter of deep regret to students both of the history of the Anglo-Scottish borders, in which it featured prominently for centuries, and of the military architecture of the British Middle Ages. Certain stages in the process of that disappearance—the use of its masonry to build a parish church, the construction of a station on its site—are well known, but only as unconnected episodes, unrelated to any wider context, and the full story of how the castle became the pitifully sparse collection of broken walls visible today has remained untold. That gap in the historical record this article will try to fill, starting, like so many investigations of England's relations with Scotland in the sixteenth century, with Mary Queen of Scots. It was that monarch's marriage to the heir to the French throne in 1558, and the danger posed by a Franco-Scottish alliance to the northern borders of England, which as much as anything else prompted the radical reordering of the defences of Berwick which began shortly afterwards. That reordering gave England its only set of bastioned defences in the continental manner.[1] But the bastions projected from a circuit of walls defending an area much smaller than that enclosed within the now-superseded medieval walls—a pointer to the extent to which the population of the town had shrunk since its first annexation to England in 1296—with the result that the castle, having previously been linked to the defences of the town, was now left stranded some distance outside them. Formerly an integral part of Berwick's defensive system, it rapidly became militarily redundant. In 1587 only six of the 667 men reported to be manning Berwick were allotted to the castle,[2] and though in 1590 there still seem to have been some guns kept there, from the fact that in that year part of the round tower supporting the "great ordnance" fell down,[3] and that by 1597 the rest of it had collapsed,[4] it would appear that its upkeep as a fortress was not regarded as very important. In only one respect was the castle still militarily useful, and that was as a barracks. At the end of Elizabeth's reign money was still being spent on the repair of old lodgings in the castle, and even on the construction of new ones.[5]

Those new lodgings were probably soon put to other purposes. The accession of James I and VI in 1603 was followed by a determined policy of pacification in the long-disturbed borders. As they were transformed into what the new king wanted to be styled the Middle Shires of Great Britain, one of his most important agents would be Sir George Hume, lord high treasurer of Scotland. In 1604 Hume was appointed lieutenant of the three Scottish marches, and no doubt it was as an aid to this work that in March of that year King James gave him the castle of Berwick, and "the whole of that our house newly built within the said castle"—presumably the new lodgings.[6] Since Hume would later serve as principal commissioner for the pacification of the borders, having been raised to the peerage as earl of Dunbar in 1605, it is not surprising that he should have chosen to proclaim his, and his office's, consequence by building himself a splendid new house. Its site was Berwick castle, and it seems likely that he used the Elizabethan lodgings as the basis for his work. His house was unfinished when Hume died in 1611, and nothing of it survives. But several references in seventeenth-century

sources make it possible to attempt a rough reconstruction.

Probably it was intended to be one of the so-called "prodigy houses" which architects like Robert Smythson were building in England in the years around 1600.[7] Laid out in the form of a square ("squadron" was the word used), it was very tall, with turrets above, either at the corners or in the middle of each elevation. It seems to have had a typically ornate facade—"the Walls and Gates made beautifull with pictures of stone, ye worke curious & delicate"—and above all it had a magnificent gallery, which, since it had a lead roof, must have been on the top floor, facing to the west, judging from a reference in 1651 to "the Long Gallery or west part of the Castle".[8] Of this last it was rumoured that the one at Worksop was "but a garret in respect of the gallery that would be there . . ." Since the gallery at Worksop was 212 feet long and 36 feet wide,[9] Hume was clearly thinking very big indeed. In this he may have been moved at least in part by a conception of himself as the king's representative. In 1608 he was made a Knight of the Garter, and the following year he celebrated St George's day at Berwick (quite possibly in the castle) on a scale which greatly impressed Robert Delaval, who wrote to tell the Earl of Northumberland all about it. His guests were twenty-four Scots—two earls, six barons and sixteen knights and gentlemen—and twenty-four Englishmen, all of them knights and gentlemen. The feasting lasted for three days, "with great plenty and store of good fare", and with what Delaval called "the Scottish fare" observed after each meal, that is, with a reading from the Bible or part of a psalm by one of Hume's chaplains, "and immediately after such as listed to drink had ready set upon the table in several glasses, 8 several wines . . ." And when Hume went to church , he did so in a stately procession, formed by the garrison armed with pikes and muskets at the front, thirty-two of his own men in blue coats, the mayor and aldermen of Berwick, and many others.[10] His death without an heir deprived the town of what might have been a valuable counterbalance to the diminution of its military importance after 1603.

It also meant a renewed decline for the castle, though it continued to be habitable. When Charles I came to Berwick in 1639, he stayed at first "at an ould ruined house of his owne called the Castle" (a rather misleading description in one respect, in that the castle had a fact passed to the Earl of Suffolk, who had married one of Hume's daughters), though he was later persuaded to lodge with his troops under canvas. And the castle was afterwards patched up enough to give it a renewed defensive function, the walls being reinforced at two points to enable them to carry guns.[11] The war against the Scottish Covenanters which would eventually lead to the English Civil War was imminent, but the citizens of Berwick were not yet thinking of things military. In the reign of Henry VIII their parish church had been demolished to provide materials for fragile defences, and ever since then they had had to make do with a church described as "very small, cracked, rent and ready to fall, not able to hold the sixth part of the inhabitants".[12] The townsmen grumbled intermittently, and at last, in 1641, they did something about it. Perhaps they were encouraged in their action by King Charles himself, who had probably worshipped in the town two years earlier. Be that as it may, during 1641 John Sleigh, one of the aldermen, went to London, and there obtained a brief, a royal warrant, licensing the townsfolk to collect money throughout the realm for a new church, and he also negotiated with the Earl of Suffolk for the purchase of the castle. The latter was, according to the records of the town's head guild, "intended for the better erecting of a new church here", and the total price paid for it was £330.[13]

Although the townsmen took possession of the castle at once, they experienced considerable difficulty in making use of it as they wanted. A particular problem was posed by the fact that, with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642, there were soldiers continually stationed in or near it, who were particularly apt to pillage any timber they could find, especially for firewood—by 1646 they were said to have "carried away, burnt in the Guards and other-

wise disposed of" timber worth £150.[14] The corporation seems to have made additional difficulties for itself by leasing part of the fabric to a townsman, a clothier called Ralph Lovell, who built himself a dyehouse under the castle bridge and lived in at least part of the structure erected by Sir George Hume, with the unexpected result that the town authorities were apt to find themselves paying for repairs to the roof and windows of a structure they had bought in order to pull down.[15] Lovell only left Hume's gallery when the garrison took it over to accommodate sick and wounded soldiers,[16] and the work of demolition was slow to start. Quite possibly it only got under way in 1646, beginning with the eastern side of the castle, that is, at the back of Hume's great house,[17] and the removal of stone from the castle certainly did nothing to hasten work on the church, whose foundation stone appears to have been laid only in the spring of 1650.[18] The result of so much delay was a series of quarrels, between the corporation and its architect, a Mr Young, whose work was examined and found wanting,[19] and within the corporation itself. Robert Denton, who had been closely involved in the purchase of the castle, saw fit to publish a little tract called *Berwick's Beauty, or a Church Erecting there*, in which he complained of ill usage and hinted at financial improprieties.[20] Nor were matters simplified when in 1651 the governor of Berwick, Colonel George Fenwick, suggested that the castle's fine gallery ought to be left standing. With some exasperation the corporation replied that "we are most willing to let that part of the castle stand if his honour can find or think of any way to supply and provide us with timber, and withall that we are informed that there is not timber, without that timber of that part of the Castle, which will nigh serve the half of the work for the new church."[21]

But in spite of all these difficulties work went on, the castle coming down and the church going up, and in March 1652 the old church was sold (except for fittings which included the pulpit), it being "the Town's intention to leave that church and go to the other".[22] There was still work to be completed on the new church's interior, including the construction of a gallery, for which five main beams from the castle were commandeered in October 1654,[23] but by then it had been long decided that the castle had served its essential purpose, for in 1652 its site was sold to one Robert Curvin, "all the house called the Lanthorne pillars, Gatestead stones, timber, and Mr Lovell's dyehouse excepted and reserved to the Town . . ."[24] The reservation of timber was doubtless made with the needs of the church in mind, and would have been invoked when the beams were removed in 1654. The Lanthorne pillars are mysterious; clearly part of a standing structure, one which in 1656 was given a slate roof,[25] the word "Lanthorne" may indicate that it was a domed turret surviving from Hume's great house, and now being used as a lighthouse. The gatestead stones must have formed part of an ornamental gateway, again part of Hume's mansion—in 1666 they were given to the town's military governor, so that he could use them to enhance a house he was building to control the bridge over the Tweed.[26] But the other remains of the castle ceased to be the concern of the town. As early as April 1653 Curvin had "transferred his interest" in them to Stephen Jackson,[27] who was then mayor, and afterwards they passed to a succession of private individuals, the owners of the site until it became the property of the North British Railway.[28] The castle itself was a ruin, and was perceived at such—a military survey of Berwick and Holy Island made in 1682 referred only to "the Ruines of the Old Castle"[29]—and when it was next mentioned in an official document, it was only with the suggestion that it be ruined still further.

Berwick remained a garrison town after the Restoration, but the demolition of the castle had reduced the possibilities available for lodging soldiers, who were therefore billetted upon the townsfolk. This led to persistent friction, and the town's letter-book for the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is full of complaints to central government about the behaviour of the military—their violence, their disrespect for the mayor's authority, the way "Soldiers married and unmarried get women with child & so leave the children to be main-

tained by the Town which is to the Town an intolerable burden"—and of petitions for the building of barracks, as a way of keeping soldiers and civilians apart.[30] At last, following the Jacobite rising of 1715 (during which the destruction, for defensive purposes, of houses standing between the castle and the town had separated the two still further),[31] the Ordnance Board resolved to act. There remained the problem of finding materials. Not for the last time, it was difficult to find suitable stone for building in the neighbourhood of Berwick, but the town's military governor thought he had found the answer, for in May 1717 he informed the Board that "there was an old castle that had belonged to the Crown but had been sold often, from which very good stone might be had for the said building much cheaper than what could be got from the Quarry".[32] The Board undertook to investigate, and may have made arrangements with its owner to take stone from the castle, but if it did so, the yield must have been disappointing, for in 1720 workmen from the Barracks were reported to be taking down the White Wall, near the castle but not part of it, and had to be stopped by the mayor.[33]

For well over a century after that the castle was largely ignored—not surprisingly, since there was little left to see. Hutchinson, in 1778, referred only to "scattered fragments, and confused heaps of foundations",[34] and Grose, in 1789, described it as "now totally in ruins".[35] The latter's watercolour of the same year suggests that what survived then, at least on the west side of the castle, was very largely identical with what survives now, just the last few feet of towers and curtain wall.[36] Subsequent writers struck the same melancholy note; "confused heaps of stone", wrote Fuller in 1799,[37] "A few walls and one old round tower are all that remain", reported the Newcastle Antiquaries in 1829,[38] "little more than a confused heap of ruins", declared Rose in 1834,[39] and the visual record bears them out.[40] The White Wall down to the Tweed has lasted well, but the castle has become one with Nineveh and Tyre. By the time Rose was writing the threat to what little was left of the castle which the railway posed was imminent, and with hindsight it is possible to see that the fate of the ruins was effectively sealed only four years later. The railway mania of 1845–1847 is well known. But there had been an earlier, briefer, one, in the late 1830s, and its by-products included two plans for railway lines connecting Northumberland with Scotland. One would have gone over the border at Carter Bar, but the other, the Great North British Railway, would have gone up the east coast, via Berwick, where its consultant engineer, George Stephenson, recommended crossing the Tweed "a short distance above the present bridge"—in other words, from south of the river to the site of the castle.[41] This particular scheme was brought to nothing by a severe economic recession, but as conditions slowly improved in the 1840s, so plans were once more made for building railways, including lines to link England with Scotland. And no more than in the 1830s was it possible to contemplate a line which would only stop at Berwick.

The line to Berwick was planned in Edinburgh, where proposals for what would become the North British Railway were floated in 1841. But the Scots needed English capital, and to obtain it they approached the great man in the world of English railways, George Hudson, the "railway king". Hudson's outlook matched his nickname. He appreciated the need for amalgamation, for a unitary, nationwide, *system* of railways.[42] And though his financial methods were later found to have been irresponsible, reckless and very dubiously lawful, for most of the 1840s he was better able than anyone else to raise the money needed to launch the railways that he supported. When the Scots approached him in 1842, the North British was only planned to go from Edinburgh to Dunbar. Hudson told them that they could expect no English support for such a project, but if they continued to Berwick, he would give his backing to a Newcastle to Berwick line, and help them in every way he could.[43] Encouraged by this, the North British produced a prospectus in 1843 which announced their intention of meeting Hudson at Berwick. In the following February the Newcastle and Darlington rail-

way, with Hudson in the chair, resolved that *it* would push north to Berwick, while the York and North Midland, another of Hudson's companies, by way of giving the assistance Hudson had promised, subscribed for £50,000 worth of shares in the North British.[44] With a meeting of lines at Berwick now inevitable, the only question was where the Tweed was to be crossed, and the North British settled that in 1844, when it bought the Great North British Railway's plans of 1838, complete with Stephenson's recommendations.[45] Stephenson's plan, and Hudson's financial support, had arguably doomed the site of Berwick castle before an inch of line was laid on it.

There was no prospect of serious local resistance, at any rate in Berwick itself. Sir John Hall of Dunglass complained in 1844 that plans made in 1839 had since been silently adjusted, proposing to bring the line much closer to his house near Cockburnspath, spoiling his view of the sea, and generally injuring "those objects which a country gentleman so highly cheriches [*sic*] . . ."[46] But humbler folk, for whom the early 1840s were a time of great economic hardship, had more immediate priorities, particularly employment, and people wanted railways anyway.[47] Both the Berwick newspapers, the Whig *Berwick Advertiser* and the Tory *Berwick and Kelso Warder*, were warmly in favour of the proposed line through the town.[48] As the *Advertiser* put it, "The connection of the North and South by railways is certainly an undertaking of vast national significance, and one which would prove a immense advantage to this town and neighbourhood". The advantage lay in the fact that Berwick in the 1840s was above all an entrepot, a place of distribution and exchange, by sea and by land, for the produce of its region, the region being principally the Merse, which had been made the most prosperous part of the Scottish lowlands by a determined programme of agricultural development in the late eighteenth century.[49] But in spite of its place on the London and Edinburgh road, and its coastal trade to north and south (assisted by a pier built shortly before 1820),[50] Berwick's trade was hampered by serious problems of communication.[51]

In the 1840s Berwick's shipping service consisted of four steamboats going to Edinburgh, Leith, Hull, Newcastle and London, once a week for each journey. Otherwise it had to make do with little sailing ships, or smacks, which could get to London in three or four days, or send goods by cart. For a town with its region's large surpluses of grain to dispose of (in the 1840s Berwick had a weekly corn market), with coal from just south of the border to sell, and above all with fish to market, it was not enough. Fish, either salmon, or sea fish in the form of haddock, cod or herring, and at certain times of the year shellfish as well, was almost impossible to distribute and keep fresh. Either it had to be cured, which reduced its appeal, or it was packed in ice, which added to its cost, and both were at risk if the winds were unfavourable. Much fish went by land anyway—even if its eventual destination was London, fish might be sent to Leith first—with inevitable results. "Fresh herrings are much injured by being conveyed in common carts during the heat of the day . . .", as a submission to Parliament put it. The result was that most of what was caught had to be sold locally, at prices so low that fishing was only profitable because of the huge amounts of fish caught. It was estimated that full-sized cod were being sold to curers at Berwick at the rate of 7s. to 8s. a score, when in London they would fetch between 4s. and 18s. each. In such circumstances the railway, which was reckoned to be able to make the journey from Berwick to London in well inside twenty-four hours (only two and a half hours to Edinburgh), held out the hope of considerable economic benefits. The disappearance of the castle, or most of it, might be a matter for regret, but few were prepared to oppose it.

The likelihood of the railway's coming to Berwick could be seen at the beginning of 1844, when workmen were observed investigating the ground.[51] But before anything could happen, the North British had to obtain its Act of Parliament, enabling its directors to form a company, raise money from shareholders, buy the necessary land by compulsory purchase, and build the railway. As part of this process, it

had to find out the attitude of every landowner involved, whether in favour, neutral, or opposed. Sir John Hall of Dunglass made difficulties, but was persuaded to accept £12,000 in return for fifty-seven acres, together with £14. 14s. 9d for the loss of the oats and straw then on each of those acres.[52] Berwick Town Council let it be known that it was in favour, but still drove a hard bargain for the conveyance of such of its land as was required, ultimately obtaining £5,250, compared with the £4,500 originally offered.[53] The owners of the castle site were three maiden ladies, Misses Elizabeth, Anne and Isabella Askew, and they were reported to be neutral. They were concerned about the future of the castle, in July 1844 writing to the directors of the North British "requiring the preservation of the ruins of Berwick Castle",[54] and at around the same time one J. W. Belford wrote an angry letter to the *Berwick and Kelso Warder*, denouncing the "sacrilege" involved in driving the railroad "through the very centre of that venerable relic of antiquity—the castle of Berwick".[55] But there is no reason to suppose that anyone paid much attention. The Askew sisters settled with the North British for compensation of £3,050, and a contract which laid down that "any coins, pieces of armour, or other relics of antiquity" found on the site were to be theirs. They were also to remain the owners of the West Wall, that is, of most of the castle remaining above ground.[56] Archaeologists and antiquarians in London might fume that "The few remaining traces of Berwick Castle are also condemned, to suit the convenience of a railway company",[57] but in Berwick itself the proposal seems to have been received with resignation, when it was not positively welcomed—in December 1843 townsfolk had subscribed for 120 shares worth £3,000 in the North British Railway Company.[58]

It would soon be too late even to complain. Among the railways planned in the great railway mania of the mid-1840s was a west coast line from England to Scotland via Carlisle, and as it was an article of faith that Great Britain could only support one line between the two countries, the companies involved were soon engaged in a race to complete, each desperate to have its line down and working first. The North British saw its act through Parliament remarkably quickly—it received the royal assent on 4 July 1844—and on 12 July it was advertising for contractors.[59] In August quantities of rails, barrows, trucks and other equipment was reported to be arriving in Berwick by sea,[60] and by the end of September work was in progress at Marshall Meadows, just two and a half miles north of the town.[61] The contractor for this southernmost section of the line was John Evans of Darlington, who submitted a tender of £22,460 for laying 6940 yards (about four miles) of double track.[62] By 21 September he had 160 men at work, a month later, about 500, and the line was said to be advancing with "railway speed".[63] It was still two miles away from the terminus on 9 November, but the *Warder* found the speed with which the work was progressing astonishing, and clearly it would not be long before the navvies would arrive in Berwick. Indeed, some of them were probably there already—presumably they were the "drunken and evil-disposed persons" whose disturbances prompted An Inhabitant to write a letter of complaint which the *Warder* published on 5 November.[64] In fact, apart from a tendency to get drunk, the navvies were consistently peaceable, so much so that the only response which the Corporation found it necessary to make to their arrival was the appointment of a single police officer to patrol Castlegate, where most of them took up residence.[65] Much of the credit for this should be given to John Evans, who paid his men regularly—usually fortnightly, though weekly if asked—and always in cash, never resorting to the tommy shop, that is, to payments in tickets for food and drink, the tickets being presented at the contractor's own shop, which usually gave goods worth much less than the nominal value of the tickets.[66] He was also a man who believed in working with his men, which was doubtless good for morale and discipline. When the town's theatre caught fire on 6 January 1845, prompt assistance was

given by the workers on the railway, led by Mr Evans himself, even though this happened at 6 a.m.[67]

Such generous responses may have helped to reconcile the townsfolk to the assault on the castle ruins. In its issue of 30 November 1844 the *Advertiser* had tried to reassure its readers that those ruins would "suffer no deterioration".[68] In terms of the standing masonry this was probably true, the permanent way kept well clear of the most prominent above-ground remains. But in terms of the archaeological record it was certainly not true. Of course, in 1844 the art of archaeological excavation was in its infancy. It is true that Lewes Priory, also a victim of the railways in the 1840s, was examined archaeologically while work was in progress.[69] But the difficulties created by a restricted site, the need for haste on the part of the North British Railway, the apparent lack of anybody skilled or interested enough to do it, all prevented anything similar from happening at Berwick. The nearest thing to an active response to the intrusion of the railway on the castle came from the Newcastle antiquary G. B. Richardson, who in a letter to the *Warder* appealed to Berwick's "artistical townsmen" to make a record of the "venerable structure" before it disappeared, and his appeal seems to have gone unanswered.[70] A letter of 12 December from Mr. Evans to the directors of the North British, "regarding his right to the materials, coins &c. which may be found in the old Castle of Berwick" showed that he was then about to start work there.[71] And on 16 December he did so, watched by large crowds of townsfolk.[72] In his history of Berwick, published in 1849, Sheldon gives a vivid, if rather fanciful, account of the process, telling how when the stone resisted blows from picks and crowbars, it was uprooted with gunpowder. "Busy as bees, the workmen advance, and sap, and mine and blast the walls . . ."[73] Their principal object was to level the ground—"levelling heights and filling up ravines" in the *Advertiser*'s words—so that it could safely bear the permanent way and station buildings, and to that end a good deal of stonework was removed. As the *Advertiser* went on to report—"In the course of the excavations here large clumps of masonry have been found underneath the surface mould and removed. These are generally in masses, without form and arrangement, which leads one to suppose they must be fragments of a building huddled together by some desolating process. At other places again, design may be traced where an arch or gateway is visible . . ."[74]

Those hoping for buried treasure must have been disappointed—a cannon ball weighing seventy-five pounds, a silver spoon, a few coins, then a richly carved piece of black oak (perhaps from Hume's early seventeenth-century mansion), an inscription commemorating the building of a stretch of wall by a sixteenth-century governor, a piece of carved stone "on which is cut the bust, apparently of a man, with the arms lying on the breast, and a serpent entwined round them", and very little else.[74] Had the navvies been required to go deeper, they might have made more exciting finds—in October 1850 some workmen digging at the station, in an excavation described as "deeper than any which was made at the time the railway was formed", turned up cannon balls, silver and copper coins, and bones.[75] As it was, some people felt so let down that they turned to treasure-hunting on their own account, in the process undermining the ground the navvies had to work on and causing a landslip which broke the leg of one of them.[76] But in spite of gunpowder being used, injuries were rarely reported, and the work went quickly on, occasional diversions notwithstanding—in March 1845 many of the men downed tools in order to see a prize fight between one of their number and a Berwick man, the fight taking place on Lamberton racecourse.[77] Outside working hours, the navvies were still inclined to get drunk, the inevitable result, perhaps, of a want of anything better to do and of squalid living conditions. One labourer was found to have sublet a single room, fourteen feet by eleven, to "eleven persons, including himself, wife and two children".[78] Others lived in huts, like the one whose name. "Little Dublin",

would have betrayed its occupant's origin even if the name of Charles Rafferty had not.[79] Many, though by no means all, of the workmen were Irish, and the Berwick papers enjoyed trying to convey their accents and rhythms of speech when they appeared at the Petty Sessions, most often on charges arising from drink.[80] The magistrates were usually lenient, and when the navvies left, early in 1846, the *Advertiser*, estimating that some 1,200 of them had stayed in Berwick at some point, though never more than 200 at any one time, paid tribute to their generally good behaviour, and though regretting their fondness for the bottle, suggested that "were some means used to provide him with social recreation, the intemperance of the *navy* [*sic*] would gradually become less and less . . ."[81]

By July 1845 three quarters of Evans's contract was said to be finished, the bridge over the future line to connect the town's road system to the future station was nearly completed,[82] and on 25 August the North British invited tenders for stations and engine sheds at Berwick and Dunbar.[83] For Berwick the successful tender was made by Robert Dodds, the sum being £3,780, and once more the work went swiftly on.[84] By December Evans had practically finished his work on the railway itself, and was preparing to go elsewhere (he had a contract on the Chester and Holyhead line), and work on the station was in progress.[85] In the following February it was reported that the station houses on the North British Railway were "in course of rapid erection",[86] and as the moment approached for opening the Edinburgh to Berwick line, "extraordinary exertions" went into getting Berwick station ready, with "relays of workmen" toiling night and day.[87] In fact the work was done too fast to be done properly, and in the following year there was a "partial subsidence of the foundation", which eventually needed substantial repairs, costing between £1,000 and £1,200.[88] But at the time the frantic rush seemed justified, when on 18 June 1846 the North British Railway was formally opened. Berwick celebrated with a half holiday, shops and offices closing at noon. Flags were hoisted over the station itself, and one, bearing the arms of Berwick, floated over what was left of the castle, while "thousands of gaily dressed spectators of both sexes" came to enjoy the spectacle.[89]

Although its surroundings still left a good deal to be desired—the approach was unflagged, and a lack of gas lighting made it hazardous at night[90]—the station itself was a building of some charm, in a late Georgian style (see fig 1). Its crenellations might appear to evoke the shade of Horace Walpole, but they were actually intended, as the *Advertiser* put it, "to keep in remembrance the erection which preceded it on the same site",[91] and seem to have done so successfully, a visitor to Berwick in the late 1850s referring to "the railway-station, looking like a castle . . ."[92] One of the towers was probably intended to serve as a water column to feed the engines. At ground level there was a booking office, three waiting rooms (one for ladies only), two refreshment rooms, and rooms for the station staff, including a cook. The first floor was the residence of the station master, who received a yearly salary of £150 plus a house. The station was not very big, and had to be enlarged as early as 1850,[93] but in spite of complaints about its "congested state"[94] it lasted into the mid-1920s, when it was replaced by the present inoffensive but unremarkable structure.[95] In terms of architectural quality, the disappearance of the station of the 1840s seems at least as regrettable as that of the castle before it. The station opened for business on 22 June 1846, the trains at this time going only north from it, five a day on weekdays and two on Sundays,[96] in spite of protests that the trains were running on Sundays at all.[97] The journey to Edinburgh took two and a half hours, less than half the time previously taken by coaches, and it is not surprising that the opening of the railway led to the immediate discontinuance of the Berwick to Edinburgh coach service, with the sale of between thirty and forty horses.[98] Yet at the same time the opening gave a stimulus to coach traffic for people wanting to use the station, and six coaches a day left for or arrived from Newcastle.[99]

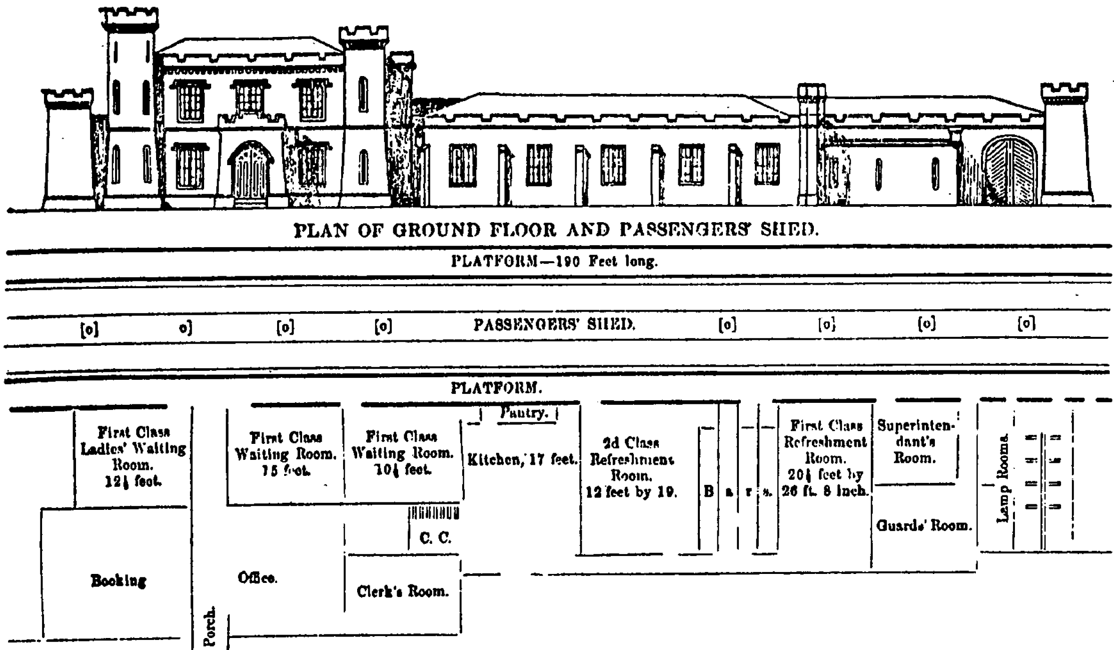

Fig. 1 Plan and elevation of the Berwick Terminus from the Berwick Advertiser *(1846)*

It was not only coaches which were coming from Newcastle, for the Newcastle to Berwick Railway was coming slowly along too. Although the line from the south had only a little further to go than the North British—sixty-two miles compared with nearly fifty-six—it took a good deal longer. Its progress was hampered by shortage of labour, and by the inability or reluctance of its contractors to pay their men punctually and in cash,[100] with the result that the project was held up by a series of strikes, exacerbated by the tendency of the workforce to go absent without leave. In March 1846 the *Berwick and Kelso Warder* reported that a public execution at Morpeth had been attended by eight or nine hundred people, "principally composed of agricultural labourers and 'navies' from the works of the Newcastle and Berwick Railway . . ."[101] Consequently, although work on a proposed temporary terminus at Tweedmouth had begun in a rather desultory way in October 1845,[102] not until 1 July 1847 was the Newcastle to Berwick line opened.[103] All that remained was to carry the railway over the Tweed. In the meantime, people and goods going from Scotland to England had to pass from one station to the other over Berwick's narrow seventeenth-century bridge, a journey which took forty minutes.[104] The railway bridge, which was constructed by the Wigton company of McKay and Blackstock, was designed by Robert Stephenson, who was also responsible for the High Level bridge in Newcastle, in progress at the same time. In Newcastle Stephenson used iron, but at Berwick he chose to build in stone. The result was surely one of the truly great achievements of Victorian engineering, but this choice of material delayed its conclusion, since it proved very difficult to find enough stone of the requisite quality locally, and it had to be brought in from fifteen to twenty miles away, which was only possible when the main line was completed.[105] And so, although the first stone was laid in May 1847,[106] the continuing need for haste led to the remarkable decision

to construct what was in effect a double bridge, what the *Advertiser* described as "a strong wooden framework to serve the double purpose of forming a scaffolding for the stone work, and also of supporting temporary lines of rail, over which the passenger trains both from the north and south will be able to pass". Even though it required an estimated 90,000 feet of timber, the wooden bridge would take only eighteen months to complete,[107] compared with three years for the stone one.

Stephenson's bridge has twenty-eight arches, each of them with a span of sixty-one feet six inches, and carries the line 126 feet over the bed of the river.[108] Its construction on the north side of the Tweed inevitably impinged on the remains of the castle, and for the second time railway works brought ancient structures to light. In August 1847 excavations on the side of the hill revealed what the *Warder* described as "the face of a large and massively-built tower".[109] And even more exciting, in the following March, was the rediscovery of the castle well, brought to light when a massive stone, accidentally placed above it, caused the ground to subside and reveal the well's existence. The *Warder* reported a tradition that, during the last siege faced by the castle, "all the valuable plate belonging to the castle was deposited in this well", and it expressed the hope that "these enterprising Railway people" would excavate the well in the hope of finding it.[110] There is no reason to suppose that they contemplated doing any such thing, although three years later problems with the station's water supply led to proposals that the well be cleared out, to meet that much less romantic need.[111] Work on the bridge—or bridges—went on, hampered as the Newcastle to Berwick line had been, by strikes for arrears of pay, for better pay, for an end to the tommy shop.[112] Nevertheless the wooden bridge was opened on 4 October 1848—a significant moment, marking the linking of London with Edinburgh by a continuous line of track, which the contractors celebrated by giving their workmen several barrels of beer.[113] On 10 September 1849 the foundation stone was laid of the last pier of the stone bridge, an event greeted by a volley of artillery,[114] and a similar volley was fired when the keystone was placed in the last arch on 26 March 1850, followed by a banquet.[115] All that needed to be done now as to fill in the ballast on the top of the arches, complete the parapet and lay the rails,[116] and as that happened the wooden bridge was dismantled.

Stephenson's splendid bridge finally came into use on 20 July 1850. A contemporary illustration (fig 2) shows it with a train upon it, steaming into the equally brand-new station, whose towers, visible over the castle wall, show it to have been built as designed. It would have looked thus on 30 August 1850, when Berwick celebrated the formal opening of the Royal Border Bridge by Queen Victoria herself, in the presence of what the *Advertiser* estimated to be between ten and twelve thousand people.[117] Galleries were erected along the walls of what remained of the castle, one for ladies, one for the press, and a large one for ladies and gentlemen, all of them admitted by ticket. Humbler folk sat on benches between the castle and the railway, that is, on the west side of the line. The Queen's train came into the station through a triumphal arch fifty-five feet high and twenty feet across, decorated with medallion portraits of Victoria and Albert, the arms of York, Newcastle, Berwick and Edinburgh, Minerva and Mercury "from the antique", the rose and thistle set against a background of "rich Victorian tartan drapery"—the adjective "Victorian" to describe it all seems inescapable. Set into the arch were the words "The last act of the Union". The phrase might have prompted hollow laughs from the Scots who in July 1846 had made an excursion from Glasgow to Berwick on the North British Railway, only to have their luggage searched on their arrival by English customs officers looking for illegally-imported whisky—the law eventually had to be changed to abolish this anomaly, derived from an over-strict interpretation of the Act of Union.[118] And it took time to coordinate the work of the two companies whose lines met at Berwick. In August 1850 representatives of both found it necessary to meet in Edinburgh, for purposes which included "To propose by

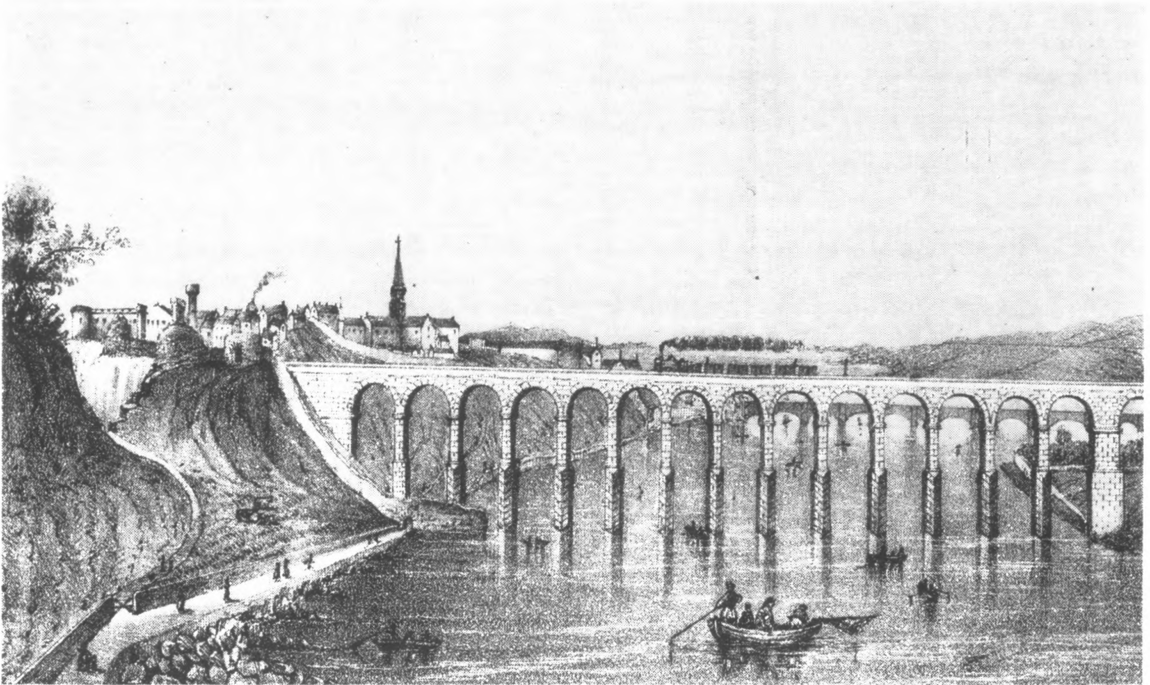

Fig. 2 The North British Railway viadut over the Tweed at Berwick, from Sheldon's History *(1849)*

means of an interchange of opinion that each company should consider the interests of the other as its own, and should by every proper means promote both Passenger and Goods traffic on the East Coast line for mutual benefit".[119]

Although it is hardly possible to draw up a precise balance sheet of gains and losses resulting from these events, it can at least be said that, as far as Berwick was concerned, the coming of the railway does seem to have had the results that its promoters hoped for. Almost at once there was an early morning service to carry fruit and farm produce to Edinburgh, there were cattle trains bringing livestock from Edinburgh in time for Berwick's Monday market, and then carrying cows and sheep on to Newcastle next day, and trains which as early as 1849 could take Berwick fish to London in sixteen to twenty hours, thereby helping to make fish a staple of their diet for the metropolitan poor.[120] In 1851 the town's exports to London were also said to include agricultural produce, coal, ale, wool and whisky.[121] But the railway also had an effect that went beyond purely material considerations, for it helped to integrate Berwick into the wider life of the nation, not least in matters of time.

Before the advent of the railways, time was a local affair, reckoned according to a place's special relationship with the Greenwich meridian. This would cause immense problems when it became necessary to produce timetables for railways making unprecedently quick connections between different parts of the country, problems most easily perceived in the solutions proposed to resolve them. In 1845, for instance, a meeting of the Institute of Civil Engineers heard it suggested that station clocks be made with two minute hands, "one pointing to Greenwich mean time, the other showing the time of the place where the clock is situated".[122] Berwick appears to have gone by

Greenwich time anyway, perhaps as a result of its position on the east coast and its regular maritime contacts with the South East. But Edinburgh was twelve and a half minutes behind Greenwich, and it was Edinburgh time which prevailed along the length of the North British Railway, with the result that, at Berwick, town and station were perpetually at chronometrical odds. Only in January 1848 did the magistrates of Edinburgh move their city's clocks back so as to observe Greenwich Mean Time, a change which, as in many other places in these years, can be very largely attributed to the railways.[123] After that, the time at Berwick station was identical with that of the town, and with that of every other place along the line on which it stood.

The loss to the archaeological record resulting from the construction of Berwick station is certainly something to be regretted, not least because the massive royal castle of Berwick is likely to have exerted a considerable, but now incalculable, influence on the development of other fortresses in the English borders in the later Middle Ages. Yet even in architectural terms, the disappearance of most of the remains of the castle had mitigating features, when the structures that replaced it or were created from it are taken into account—the parish church, perhaps the barracks, the charming station (while it stood), above all Stephenson's superb bridge. If taken at face value, the claim made for the Royal Border Bridge in 1850, that its opening represented "The last act of the Union", was a considerable exaggeration, in that over a century had passed since England had last been invaded from Scotland, in the Jacobite rising of 1745. Yet a plaque on the present-day station platform informs the observant passenger that "This Station stands on the site of the great hall of Berwick Castle. Here on 17 November 1292 the claim of Robert Bruce to the crown of Scotland was declined and the decision in favour of John Baliol was given by King Edward I before the full Parliament of England and a large gathering of the nobility and populace of both England and Scotland". And the decision taken in 1292 turned out to be one in a series of manoeuvres intended ultimately to bring Scotland under English overlordship, and so constituted an important step on the road that would lead to centuries of Anglo-Scottish hostilities, hostilities in which Berwick castle played a central role. Seen in this light, the replacement of the castle by a station may perhaps with justice be allowed a certain symbolic importance. Easier physical contacts, the freer movement of people, ideas and goods, may not by themselves make for friendlier dealings between nations, but at least they can help to make them possible.

NOTES

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BA	*Berwick Advertiser*
BKW	*Berwick and Kelso Warder*
BL	British Library, London
BRO	Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office
PRO	Public Record Office, London
SRO	Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.

[1] For the story of the construction of the Elizabethan fortifications at Berwick, see H. M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works* Vol. IV (1982) pp. 613–64.

[2] PRO SP59/25 f. 153v.

[3] PRO SP59/26 ff. 252, 283.

[4] PRO SP59/33 ff. 108, 205.

[5] PRO SP59/38 f. 172; E351/3480 m5d; E351/3481 m5; E351/3482 m6d.

[6] Translated from BRO X5/1, itself a copy of the grant enrolled on the patent roll for 2 James I.

[7] Details from Lambeth Palace Library MS 3202 f. 122v; BL Harl.MS 7017 ff. 167v–168; J. C. Hodgson (ed.), *North Country Diaries, Second Series* (Surtees Society Vol. 124, 1914) p. 25 (Journal of Sir William Brereton).

[8] BRO B1/10 f. 189.

[9] M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (Yale, 1978) p.102.

[10] Syon House, MS QII no. 66, cited with the permission of the trustees of the tenth Duke of Northumberland deceased.

[11] The Journal of John Aston (ed. J. C. Hodgson), in *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club* Vol. XXI (1909–1911) pp. 86–88.

[12] J. Bain (ed.), *The Border Papers Vol. I 1560–1594* (Edinburgh, 1894) no. 240 (pp. 142–3).

[13] BRO B1/10 ff. 212, 216, 217v; Robert Denton, *Berwick's Beauty, or a Church Erecting there* (London, 1650) pp. 12–13. F.Sheldon, *History of Berwick-upon-Tweed* (Edinburgh, 1849) pp. 208–10 gives the sum paid as £320, but Denton, who was involved in the purchase, seems the more reliable witness.

[14] BRO B9/1 ff. 2v–3.

[15] BRO B1/10 ff. 41–41v, 58, 169.

[16] BRO B1/10 f. 169.

[17] BRO B1/10 f. 38v.

[18] BRO B1/10 f. 162v.

[19] BRO B1/10 ff. 190v–191.

[20] Robert Denton, *Berwick's Beauty, or a Church Erecting there* (London, 1650) pp. 9–10.

[21] BRO B1/10 f. 189.

[22] BRO B1/11 f. 7.

[23] BRO B1/11 f. 73v.

[24] BRO B1/11 f. 3v.

[25] BRO B1/11 f. 104v.

[26] BRO B1/12 f. 122v.

[27] BRO B1/11 f. 35.

[28] See W. Maddan, Berwick Castle and the Modern Owners thereof, in *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club* Vol. 19 (1903–1905) pp. 348–54.

[29] PRO WO55/1788.

[30] BRO B9/1 ff. 84–84v, 89, 105v–106, 119, 135v–136v, 138, 143.

[31] BRO B1/14 ff. 295, 298–298v; PRO MPH 993.

[32] PRO WO47/30 pp. 138–9.

[33] BRO B1/15 f. 56v.

[34] W. Hutchinson, *A View of Northumberland* Vol.II (Newcastle, 1778) p. 41.

[35] F. Grose, *The Antiquities of Scotland* Vol. I (London, 1789) p. 109.

[36] BL Egerton MS 1843 f. 27.

[37] J. Fuller, *The History of Berwick upon Tweed* (Edinburgh, 1799) pp. 467–8.

[38] *PSAN* 3rd Series Vol. 10 (1921) p. 78.

[39] T. Rose, *Westmorland, Cumberland, Durham and Northumberland Illustrated* Vol. II (London, 1834) p. 113.

[40] As in, for instance, views by Sam Bough, William Daniell and J. M. W. Turner.

[41] C. J. A. Robertson, *The Origins of the Scottish Railway System 1722–1844* (Edinburgh, 1983) pp. 270, 291; J. Richardson, *An Account of the Public Meetings holden in the several towns in Scotland through or near which the Railway from Newcastle to Edinburgh and Glasgow is proposed to go* (Newcastle, 1837), in SRO BR/NBR/4/85 (line over Carter Bar); SRO GD206/1/63A/5 no. 2; *Parliamentary Papers 1841* Vol. XXV Accounts and Papers 13; Railway Communication p. 29 (Stephenson's plan).

[42] J. Simmons, *The Railways of Britain: An Historical Introduction* (London, 1961) p. 12.

[43] J. Thomas, *The North British Railway* Vol. I (Newton Abbot, 1969) p. 18.

[44] R. S. Lambert, *The Railway King 1800–1871* (London, 1934) pp. 92, 97; Robertson, *Origins of the Scottish Railway System* pp. 292–3; Thomas, *North British Railway* I p. 21.

[45] Robertson, *Origins of the Scottish Railway System* p. 292.

[46] SRO GD206/1/63A/5 no. 12.

[47] M. Robbins, *The Railway Age* (London, 1964) p. 60.

[48] *BA* 26 August 1843; *BKW* 30 September 1843.

[49] Sir John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland* Vol. IV (Edinburgh, 1792) p. 383; Fuller, *History of Berwick upon Tweed* pp. 397–8; G. Chalmers, *Caledonia* (1810) Vol. II pp. 312–13.

[50] J. N. Brewer, *The Picture of England* (London, 1820) Vol. II p. 116.

[51] *BA* 27 January 1844.

[52] SRO GD206/1/63A/5 nos. 12–16.

[53] SRO BR/NBR/1/2 pp. 7, 353, 366.

[54] ib., p. 28.

[55] *BKW* 27 July 1844.

[56] SRO BR/NBR/3/1 pp. 376–82.

[57] *The Archaeological Journal* Vol. I (1845) p. 389.

[58] *BA* 16 December 1843.

[59] *BA* 13 July, 20 July, 1844.

[60] *BKW* 31 August 1844.

[61] ib., 21 September 1844.

[62] SRO BR/NBR/1/2 pp. 52, 230.

[63] *BKW* 19 October 1844.

[64] ib., 9 November 1844.

[65] ib., 7 December 1844.

[66] *BA* 7 February 1846.

[67] *BKW* 11 January 1845.

[68] *BA* 30 November 1844.

[69] J. Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991) p.162; G.Coppack, *Abbeys and Priories* (London, 1990) pp. 21–22.

[70] *BKW* 21 September 1844.

[71] SRO BR/NBR/1/2 p. 175.

[72] *BA* 21 December 1844; *BKW* 21 December 1844

[73] Sheldon, *History of Berwick-upon-Tweed* pp. 361–7.
[74] *BA* 22 March 1845; *BKW* 15 March, 19 April 1845.
[75] *BKW* 25 October 1850.
[76] ib., 8 February 1845.
[77] ib., 12 April 1845.
[78] ib., 16 January 1845.
[79] ib., 5 April 1845.
[80] e.g. ib., 13 September 1845.
[81] *BA* 7 February 1846.
[82] *BKW* 12 July 1845.
[83] ib., 30 August 1845.
[84] ib., 4 October 1845; SRO BR/NBR/1/2 p. 419.
[85] *BA* 27 December 1845.
[86] *BKW* 14 February 1846.
[87] ib., 20 June 1846.
[88] ib., 17 April 1847; SRO BR/NBR/1/4 9 August 1849.
[89] *BA* 20 June 1846; *BKW* 20 June 1846.
[90] *BA* 21 November 1846.
[91] ib., 20 June 1846.
[92] W.White, *Northumberland and the Border* (2nd Edn., London, 1859) p. 284.
[93] *BKW* 29 November 1850.
[94] *BA* 30 June 1905.
[95] J. Grundy, G. McCombie, P. Ryder, H. Welfare, N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Northumberland* (Harmondsworth, 1992) p. 185.
[96] *BA* 27 June 1846.
[97] SRO BR/NBR/1/3 pp. 145–6.
[98] *BKW* 11 July 1846.
[99] *BA* 11 July 1846.
[100] *BA* 15 August, 12 September 1846.
[101] *BKW* 21 March 1846.
[102] *BA* 25 October 1845.
[103] ib., 3 July 1847.
[104] Thomas, *North British Railway* I pp. 43–45.
[105] W.Whelan, *History, Topography and Directory of Northumberland* (Manchester and London, 1855) p. 963.
[106] *BA* 17 July 1847.
[107] Details from *BA* 2 September 1848. In 1850 there were said to be 135,000 feet of timber in this structure, *BA* 15 June 1850.
[108] L. T. C. Rolt, *George and Robert Stephenson* (London, 1960) pp. 285–86.
[109] *BKW* 7 August 1847.
[110] ib., 18 March 1848.
[111] SRO BR/NBR/1/5 p.81.
[112] *BA* 29 July, 12 August 1848; *BKW* 5 August, 30 September 1848.
[113] *BA* 14 October 1848.
[114] ib., 15 September 1849.
[115] ib., 30 March 1850.
[116] ib., 18 May 1850.
[117] ib., 31 August 1850.
[118] Thomas, *North British Railway* I pp. 29–30.
[119] PRO RAIL772/4 p. 479.
[120] Thomas, *North British Railway* I p. 52; Sheldon, *History of Berwick-upon-Tweed* pp. 278–9; J. Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830–1914* (Newton Abbot, 1986) p. 47; id., *Victorian Railway* p. 352
[121] *The Rail Book of England* Vol. I (1851) pp. 100–1.
[122] *Railway Express* 27 June 1845 p. 39.
[123] *BA* 29 January 1848. See Simmons, *Victorian Railway* pp. 345–7.

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37A St. Giles, Oxford