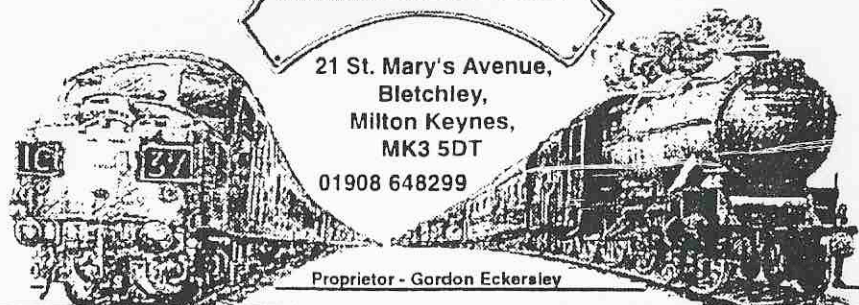


BLETCHLEY RAILWAYANA

21 St. Mary's Avenue,
Bletchley,
Milton Keynes,
MK3 5DT
01908 648299

Proprietor - Gordon Eckersley



Model Railways, Railway books, Ephemera and Relics BOUGHT AND SOLD

We buy or part exchange unbuild or part built kits

MODELS

Gauge O - Try a kit or ready to run model - we stock both. The following O gauge ranges are in stock: Slaters, RJH, Janick, Mendip Models, Parkside Dundas, Connoisseur, Mikes Models, Oakville, Pocket Money Kits, Scorpio, Alan Gibson, Westdale.

OO gauge models by: Lima, Bachmann, Dapol, Ratio, Hornby, Slaters, Peco.

N Gauge models by: Graham Farish, Minitrix, Ratio, Peco, Slaters, KRS.

We also stock - paints by Humbrol and Railmatch, transfers by Fox, Howes and Woodhead, Nameplates from CGW and Jackson Evans. Electrical items by Seep and Gauge-master. Try us for tools, drills, cutting mats, soldering irons, flux, glues and sundela board.

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Telephone for details.

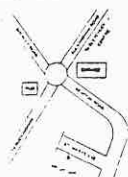
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Photographic prints and post-cards always in stock to please the collector.

WANTED

Commercially made trains in all gauges, clockwork, steam and electric by Hornby (Dublo & O), Bassett Lowke, Trix, Bing, Marklin etc. Also early brass, tinplate, wood or cast iron trains, stations and accessories. Also required more recent models by Airfix, Lima, Mainline etc. American & Continental also purchased.

Where to find us



Open 6 days a week

Mondays	1000 - 1730
Tuesdays	1000 - 1730
Wednesdays	Closed
Thursdays	1000 - 1730
Fridays	1000 - 1730
Saturdays	1000 - 1730
Sundays	1000 - 1300

Free parking outside shop.



MKMRS NEWS

No. 50

MAY 1996



A 50 for our 50th edition. No. 50 040 Levithan stands at Andover in 1988

Photo: Dennis Lovett

Published by Dennis Lovett, Chairman, Milton Keynes Model Railway Society

Telephone 01908 376750

MILTON KEYNES MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY

Founded 1969

President	Jim Wood	Committee	Geoff Bell
Vice Presidents	Les Wood		Chris Garner
	Gordon Etherington		Chris Lester
Chairman	Dennis Lovett		Colin Jamieson
Vice Chairman	Fred Collins	Librarian	Mark Wilson
Secretary	Chris Hughes	Museum Co-ord.	John Hatton
Treasurer	Eric Bowman	CMRA Rep.	Chris Lester

50 x 50

Whenever you look at some of the many railway magazines both model and prototypical, they celebrate the publication of special issues by talking about the locomotives which carried the number of the front cover. Just in case you missed it, this issue is our 50th and to keep with tradition, then this issue will do the same. I shall not be referring to steam locomotives numbered 50 but with a Class of 50 x Class 50 locomotives, Let me explain!

In the period 1983 - 1988 I worked for the Southern Region (later the South West Division of Network SouthEast). On the Exeter services from Waterloo, the Class 50 locomotives ruled the roost. These were real locomotives which in the mostly EMU environment of Waterloo, was a welcome relief to someone who had been used to real locomotives on the London Midland Region!

I enjoyed many a trip during my days in the advertising department. I was often involved in photo shoots and filming and the sight of a 50 in full cry going underneath Battledown flyover or hitting the bank outside Templecombe was a sight not easily forgotten. True they could be troublesome, but I have lasting memories of these locomotives, not to mention one or two experiences to which any professional railwayman today dare not admit to - for fear of pursuing his career elsewhere! Needless to say, I got to know the train crews quite well and they would always put on a good show enroute to Salisbury or Yeovil.

My first photographs were of blue ones, then blue ones with big white logos. No. 50 007 was spotted one morning on the "stops" at Waterloo, sending many of us in for our cameras to catch it in temporary GWR livery. It stayed that way until withdrawal and was always the pride of the fleet. All locomotives were allocated to Plymouth Laira and one of my duties after I joined the Network SouthEast PR team was to arrange for an artist to paint a special picture of them inside Laira, as they neared the end of their BR careers. This picture is still advertised in the press from time to time.

I can recall, on my way to finalise preparations for the Richmond regional launch of Network SouthEast catching a glimpse of the first Class 50 to carry NSE livery (the original livery not the later one), as it was being cleaned outside the drivers training school ready for its grand entrance into the official launch later that morning.

One Class 50 went on to appear in Railfreight livery. I can well remember a phone call from a photographer who had been entrusted to get the perfect shot. The sun shone, the coaches were right but never guess what b----y colour the loco was!

Such memories and there are plenty still in service on our preserved lines today.

Dennis Lovett, Chairman



FOUNDED 1955

The E.M. Gauge Society presents . . .

expoEM 1996

A Programme
of fine scale railway modelling in 4mm scale

SATURDAY 18th MAY 1996
10.30am - 6pm

SUNDAY 19th MAY 1996
10.30am - 5pm

**THE LEISURE CENTRE
BLETCHLEY - MILTON KEYNES**

Admission
£4

EMGS MEMBER £3

- * Trade
- * Layouts
- * Lectures
- * Demonstrations

Further details of the Society and this event, send sae to :
Mike Bell, (Chairman) 200A Prospect Road, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 7NG

The E.M. Gauge Society presents . . .

expoEM 1996

PROGGERA MEMBER
of fine scale railway modelling in 4mm scale



SATURDAY 18th MAY 1996
10.30am - 6pm

SUNDAY 19th MAY 1996
10.30am - 5pm

**THE LEISURE CENTRE
PRINCES WAY - BLETCHLEY
MILTON KEYNES**

How to find us :

By Car :

M1 Junction 14 if travelling from the North or Junction 13 from the South. Alternative is to use the old A5 route which gives direct access to the town

By Train :

The Centre is a short walk from BLETCHLEY (not Milton Keynes) station

Further details of the Society :

Mike Bell
Chairman & Membership Secretary
200A Prospect Road
Woodford Green
Essex IG8 7NG

Admission
£4

2 day
ticket (*)

EMGS MEMBER
£3

(*) This is a single price ticket and allows for a family of 2 adults plus a child (each additional child £1). However, as this is a specialist show we leave it to your discretion whether you bring very young children as this may spoil your appreciation of the models, demonstrations and lectures available throughout the weekend

Club Notices

HMRS Diary 1995/6 Season

MKMRS members are welcome to attend the meetings held in our club room free of charge. The programme is published well in advance to enable you to book dates in your diary. Meetings are held on Wednesday evenings in our main club room, commencing at 7.30 pm.

24th April - MKMRS Club Room The Barry Railway by C. Chapman

Following the interesting talk he gave on the Taff Vale Railway, the speaker returns to give the history and an operating review of the Barry Railway in South Wales. The movement of coal both for inland use and for export was the principal function of the Barry Railway.

MKMRS members are invited to attend the meetings free of charge. Further details from Eric Bowman.

Swapmeet dates

A swapmeet will take place at Woughton Campus on the following dates during 1996;

14th April
7th July
13th October
8th December

Opening times are 1100 - 1500. Admission is 60p, child/senior citizens 30p

Lavendon Exhibiton

This takes place on the 20/21st April at the village near Olney. John Hatton will be on duty with his Trix Twin and Brian & Stan are regular attenders with their vintage O gauge tinplate layout.

Bletchley Project

As outlined in the last issue of MKMRS News it is essential for us to collect the information required to meet the future aspirations of the Bletchley Park Trustees to build a OO scale model of Bletchley Station in 1939.

Gordon Shrimpton has kindly volunteered to collate plans and information and would welcome copies of pictures etc so that we can make a start on planning this project.

ExpoEM

This event is being held at the Leisure Centre during the weekend 18/19 May.

Gauge O Guild - Spring Convention 8th March 1997

The Gauge O Guild will be returning to Bletchley Leisure Centre after a gap of a couple of years for their Spring Convention - next March.

We have almost a years notice to round up volunteers for stewarding etc. We have also been asked to provide catering and to assist with the setting up on the Friday evening (7th March 1997).

Please book these dates in your diary a.s.a.p Please note this is a **one day show** (mainly trade with some supporting layouts).

Gordon Etherington, Vice President

The Bletchley Park duty roster now appears on Page 3. Your suport is greatly appreciated. John Hatton will explain the procedures and how to operate layouts.

Cotton further along the line at the passing loop at Quarry Siding.

The lake in the front of the Bletchley Park mansion provided the scene for many antics. One morning as I drove in, a shark's fin and leaping dolphins (inflatable) were seen and on another, the island was occupied by penquins, an eskimo and an igloo (all full size and cut from expanded polystyrene)! One night at a Disco the D.J. offered a prize for the first person to "streak" around the lake. I met the prizewinner (a successful local teacher) the other day in Middleton Hall - now very respectable!

On April 1st the whole building was invaded by hundreds of caterpillars. There were lines of green, brown and yellow ones above the door frames and on the window ledges. More were found in the staff pigeon holes and in the mouthpieces of telephones. These were actually polystyrene packing granules which had been carefully painted for weeks before and stuck in all sorts of places with shaving foam. We were finding them for weeks afterwards!

Each time I turn into the clubroom entrance I see to the left the bin marked "grit". In our days its predecessor was labelled "salt" and

the protective concrete bollard across the road had had the inscription "pepper" added.

Yes there was plenty of fun, but plenty of hard work too. Many of our students who came without especially good academic qualifications left with good degrees. Many are highly respected teachers and Headteachers locally and further afield. I get occasional news of ex-students via Jenny Lovett who was a student when we moved to Wolverton Mill and news of staff from Don Pigott, whose wife Jean was one of our Admin. staff. Incidentally Don was my first contact with MKMRS. He was on the door of the 1981 exhibition when I arrived back shortly before closing time, having had to dash down to Dorset and back that weekend. That was shortly before the college closed and though I hadn't been a railway modeller since my sons were young, I had been thinking of taking it up again in retirement.

Anyway, in 1975 the College left Bletchley Park for new purpose-designed premises at Wolverton Mill, and though the buildings were much more convenient to work in they somehow didn't have the character of the sub-standard premises at Bletchley Park.



Not Quite so secret Bletchley Park by Ken James

I came to Bletchley in 1972, to take up a post as Senior Lecturer in Learning Resources at Milton Keynes College of Education. The college was situated in the premises later known as the CAA building, though from soon after the war until 1975 these had been used successively by three Colleges training teachers. These were an Emergency Training College for ex-servicemen taking a concentrated 13 month course, a Ladies Training College which later moved to Oxford and North Buckinghamshire College of Education which eventually changed its name to the Milton Keynes College of Education. This was a mixed college pioneering a joint University of Oxford Teachers Certificate and an Open University B.A. degree. The college also had premises in the house and outbuildings of Elmers, adjacent to the Parish church of St. Mary (NB This was large house, which had served the town for many years as a private school - Ed.). The college trained Health Visitors as well as teachers and moved out to new premises at Wolverton Mill in 1975, being closed by Government edict in the cut back of teacher training at the end of 1981.

My section was situated in half of a double Terrapin classroom on the lawn, enclosed by the horseshoe of permanent buildings and can still be seen through a screen of conifers as you drive up the back route to our car park.

This half of the Terrapin contained my study / tutorial room, stores, the technicians workshop / television control room and the classroom with curtained carrels around the edge. This classroom doubled as the TV studio. When in use as a classroom, students would be trained to use a variety of equipment: projectors, recorders, duplicators, copiers etc and were taught how to prepare teaching material: handouts, wall charts, overhead projector transparencies etc. We had certain problems when the room was being used as a studio, as

the other half of the Terrapin was occupied by Barbara Hogg who taught the First School course. If she decided to do a Music and Movement session (colloquially known as Barbara's rain dance!), the whole floor vibrated and the cameras jumped up and down in sympathy!

Other "problems" were caused by the way the portable buildings had been added to the original. Two classrooms tacked into one end of the building were normally reached by walking across the lawn in fine weather. However, if it is was raining they could be approached via the corridor of the Hostel Block and it was then reckoned that there was a 50/50 chance of meeting a certain well-endowed blonde student in a state of half dress and embarrassment! One of my colleagues claimed that his late arrival for a lecture was due to offering assistance after finding her trying to dry a flooded laundry room floor with a face flannel.

All students took the basic "hands-on operation" course in audio-visual media in their first year and in a later year could take a more advanced course in Educational Technology as a module in the Education Course. Each student (or a small group of two or three chose a subject and appropriate media, and, subject to approval of the course tutor (myself), produced their material using their own or college facilities. Two students Dale Coton and David Benjamin sought and obtained approval for a tape/slide package on the Talyllyn Railway. They made a first class job of this and when reviewing their work I commented to the class that I'd really have to visit the railway myself. A few weeks later my son and I drove to North Wales one weekend and were on the platform at Towyn for the first train. My cheery " Good Morning David" was replied to with "Good God" by a surprised David Benjamin who was acting Station Master for the day. We met Dale

Bletchley Park Roster Board

By the Chief Roster Clerk

1996 Open Days and staff arrangements

January 13th: JH, Fred Collins, Ernie Johnson	July 13th: JH, Don Pigott
January 14th: JH, Ray/Richard Cousins, John Tennant	July 14th: JH, Roger Blackburn
January 27th: JH, Richard Cousins	July 27th: Colin Jamieson & Peter Moore
January 28th: JH, John Tennant	July 28th: Jim Wood, Dennis Lovett
February 10th: Bruce Garwood, Ken James	August 10th: JH, Tim Davey
February 11th: JH, Chris & Nick Hughes	August 11th: JH, Dennis Lovett
February 24th: JH, Dennis Lovett, John Tennant	August 24th: Chris Lester
February 25th: Chris Garner, Ken James	August 25th: TBA Bletchley Park show
	August 26th: TBA
March 9th: JH, Geoff Bell	September 7th: JH, Ernie Johnson
March 10th: JH, Dennis Lovett	September 8th: JH, Bernard Worden
March 23rd: Tim Davey, Ken James	September 21st: JH, Phil Gilbert
March 24th: Chris Hughes	September 22nd: Dennis Lovett, Les Wood
April 6th: JH, Ernie Johnson	October 5th: JH, Tony Winn
April 7th: JH, Bernard Worden	October 6th: Ray & Richard Cousins
April 20th: Eric Bowman, Gordon Shrimpton	October 19th: Eric Bowman, Colin Underwood
April 21st: Richard & Ray Cousins	October 20th: JH, Gordon Shrimpton
May 4th: Chris Hughes	November 2nd: Geoff Bell, Colin Jamieson
May 5th: Roger Blackburn Tattoo Weekend	November 3rd: JH, Fred Collins
May 6th: Chris Lester	
May 18th: Bruce Garwood & Ken Wiggins	November 16th: Ken James
May 19th: Gordon Shrimpton	November 17th: Chris Hughes
June 1st: Tony Winn	November 30th: Ken James
June 2nd: Dennis Lovett	December 1st: Chris Hughes
June 8th: Jim Wood, Eric Preston	December 14th: Chris Lester
June 9th: Dennis Lovett, Les Wood Military 96	December 15th: Chris Garner
June 15th: Bruce Garwood & Ken Wiggins	JH = John Hatton (Museum co-ordinator).
June 16th: Chris Hughes	
June 29th: Richard & Ray Cousins Boat Club	If you are unable to work the day allocated please arrange a "swop" with another
June 30th: Chris Garner	

From the Secretary - Chris Hughes

John Mann

It is with regret that I have to inform you of the death of one of our founder members - John Mann, aged 78. He was an active modeller and a founder member of the EM Gauge Society. His name can often be found in the pages of old magazines as J.L.K. Mann.

Born in Batley, John began in the hobby with Hornby O Gauge. He moved to Hertfordshire and worked in engineering, during the war he was in a reserved occupation. He joined the railways in 1946 and worked his way through the grades from a porter to signalman and eventually to a Station Master in the West Midlands. He moved to the vacant post at Verney Junction in 1960 where he remained until closure of the line at the end of 1967. John moved to Bletchley where he undertook a range of parcels and booking office duties.

John was a keen modeller and three of his locomotives live on in the Conwy Railway museum where they are featured in the famous dioramas of the late Jack Nelson. These were built to HO scale. John was, however an enthusiastic EM modeller and was the first Secretary of the EM Gauge Society. He was honoured by that Society in 1994, becoming an honorary life member.

In 1969, John became a founder member of MKMRS along with son Chris. He served on the first committee and became Editor of the club magazine. During his years in the editorial chair, he produced 26 editions, the magazine being published twice a year in those days. During his long membership of MKMRS, John enthusiastically supported the building of the OO Verney Junction layout and in more recent times has taken a keen interest in the current EM Gauge project. John was not quite so active in the club of late but still visited us from time to time. He continued to contribute to this magazine and in assisting with exhibitions etc.

John will be sadly missed by all of us. Our President, Jim Wood, led the various club officers and members who attended the service at Milton Keynes Crematorium on Wednesday 20th March.

Smoking

I have been asked to remind members that Bletchley Park operates a NO SMOKING policy in its buildings. Whilst we have not experienced any problems with this so far, our club smokers are well used to a breath of fresh air at tea time!, I have nonetheless been asked to bring it to your attention.

S Gauge Celebrations

Our Honorary Member, Ian Pusey is Chairman of the oldest of the scale/gauge societies and the S Gauge Society which celebrates its 50th Birthday later this year. This will result in a special one day exhibition in conjunction with the 2mm Association at Bletchley Leisure Centre on October 19th. Further details will be circulated in due course.

Another Member?

Congratulations to Alison and Chris Lester who recently announced the arrival of Jonathan.

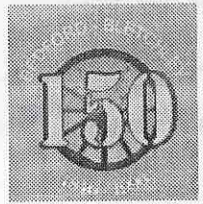
We look forward to welcoming another team member to the EM Gauge Project in due course.

QGM Reminder

Members are reminded that a short QGM will be held in the Club room at 8pm on the 30th April.

Bedford - Bletchley 150

By Colin Jamieson



Diary of Events

21st March

AGM of the Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association, Lidlington.

27th March

Talk - Bedfords Railway Age at the Historical Model Railway Society

3rd April

Talk - Bedfords Railway Age at Toddington Methodist Church

21st May

Talk - Bedfords Railway Age at Bedford U3A Group

1st July

Talk - Bedfords Railway Age at Bedford U3A Group

Saturday 21st September

Model Railway Exhibition Fulbrook School, Woburn Sands

Of importance to our club, is the model railway exhibition at Woburn Sands on Saturday 21st September, 1996, which MKMRS will be organising on behalf of the celebration committee.

30th September - 12th October

Bletchley - Bedford 150 Exhibition Bedford Library

12th October - 4th November

Bletchley - Bedford 150 Exhibition Bedford Museum

October

Special Trains on the line (provisional)

16th November

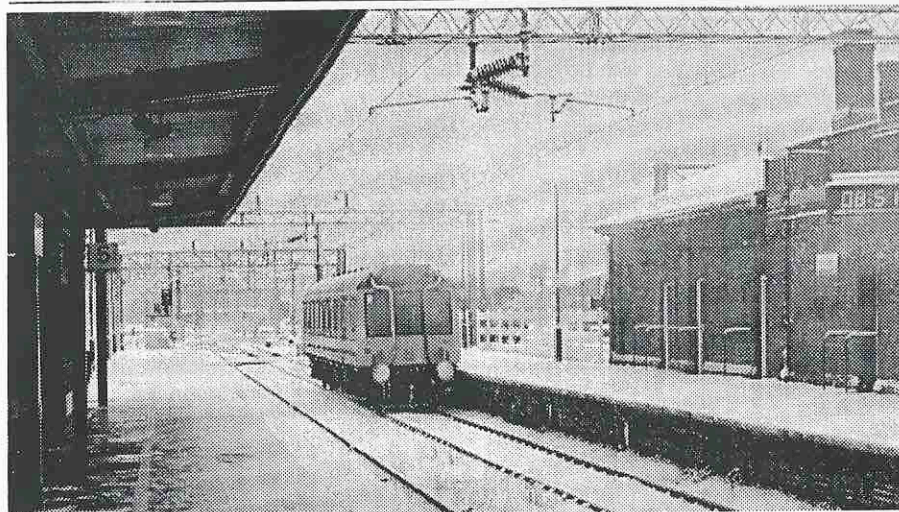
BBRUA Rail Day
Civic Theatre, Bedford
John Huntley Film Show
Civic Theatre, Bedford

Saturday 16th November (provisional)

Re-enactment of the Opening Ceremony

Sunday 17th November (provisional)

Special Train to Civic Service etc at St Pauls Church, Bedford.



A train for Bedford leaves Bletchley in the snow

road from the local goods yards. The expansion of the motorway network and the road haulage contractors had a devastating effect on the local facilities, all of which were closed in the 1960s.

Railmotor services introduced

In December 1905, a railmotor service was introduced to provide a local passenger service between Bletchley - Bedford. Railmotors were an early form of multiple unit, being a railway coach which was self propelled, in this case with a steam locomotive boiler in one end of the coach. The unit could be driven from either end. Passengers joined / left by using the steps released from the vehicle, so it was not necessary to build proper stations.

In an effort to boost local traffic new halts were constructed to serve areas through which the railway passed, but at where no station had previously been provided. These were located at:

- Bow Brickhill
- Aspley Guise
- Husborne Crawley

- Wootton Broadmead
- Wootton Pillinge (now Stewartby)
- Kempston Hardwick
- Kempston & Elstow

The Grouping

In 1923, most of the main railway companies were grouped into 4 larger companies following the passing of the Railways Act 1922. The London & North Western Railway were grouped with the Midland Railway and others to form the London, Midland & Scottish Railway (The LMS). This company now owned both of the stations in Bedford and in order to differentiate between the two, in 1924, the main station became Midland Road and the station on the line from Bletchley was renamed Bedford St. Johns. In 1939 the LMS was the largest private company in the world with:

19,000	track miles
250,000	staff
25	docks and harbours
66	ships
4,000	vehicles
8,000	horses
28	hotels
25,000	houses
500	miles of canal

To be continued next month

The Marston Vale Line -Bletchley to Bedford

150 years of serving the community

Part 1

By Dennis Lovett

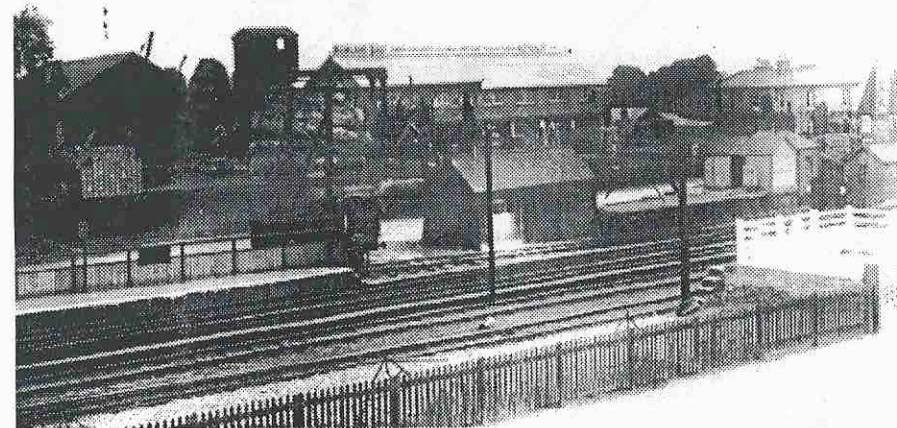
The opening of the line from Bletchley to Bedford was a very important event. It gave Bedfordshire its first railway line, the important market town of Bedford its first of several railway links and resulted in the small village of Bletchley starting on the way to becoming a major railway town.

The first railway arrives

Railways first reached the Bletchley area in 1838, when the London & Birmingham Railway opened its line to a temporary terminus at Denbigh Hall. This was provided to allow transfer between Denbigh Hall and Rugby by stage coach as the section between the two required additional work. This temporary arrangement only existed between 9th April and 17th September, 1838.

Bletchley at that time consisted of two small villages (Old Bletchley and Far Bletchley). The important stage coaching town of Fenny Stratford lay one mile to the east and was separated from the railway by open farmland. The area was not considered important enough to warrant a station.

At the time the line was being constructed between London and Birmingham (1833 to 1838) the only other transport arteries were the Watling Street, dating from Roman times, and the Grand Junction Canal which had opened in 1805. The roads were little more than muddy lanes and the canals, whilst greatly improving transport in the area, were slow and also relied on horse power as a means of traction. The coming of the railway would



The Timber yard at Fenny Stratford was rail served. Note the old position of the platform

The Marston Vale Line

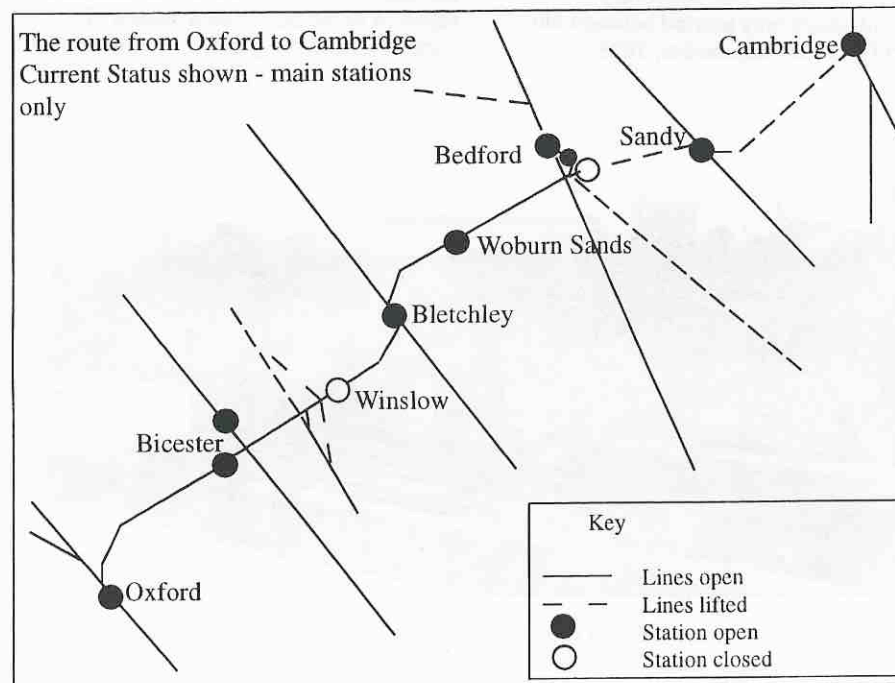
influence the decline of the stage coaching towns of Dunstable, Fenny Stratford, Stony Stratford and Towcester and the development of others, such as Bletchley and Wolverton.

Bedford expresses interest

Once the main line between England's two largest cities was operational, the desire to join other towns and cities into the network soon emerged. Bedford, an important market town, was one such town. In 1844 the businessmen of Bedford, led by their Mayor, formulated their plans and set out to raise the necessary funding. George and Robert Stephenson were soon appointed engineers for the line and the Duke of Bedford subscribed to its building. In return, the Duke stipulated that all station buildings within the estate of Woburn (Fenny Stratford, Woburn Sands, Ridgmont and Millbrook) should be of half timbered design.

The Bedford and London & Birmingham Railway was incorporated on June 30th 1845. On completion it was intended that the line would be operated by the London & Birmingham Railway although by the time it opened that company had joined with two others, in 1846, to become the London & North Western Railway (L&NWR).

The start of work was often a grand ceremonial occasion, witnessed by many of the local population. There were speeches and it became the custom to invite a local official to start the work by "cutting the first sod", which was often followed by a banquet for the assembled guests. The event for the Bletchley - Bedford line was planned for 10th December 1845 near the site of the current Ridgmont station, with the Duke of Bedford invited to officiate. Unfortunately, the event had to be postponed until the 13th December, when the Duchess of Bedford represented her husband. The



official silver shovel used to start the work, had already been inscribed with both the earlier date and the Duke as the recipient!

Benefits for Bletchley too

The building of the line also saw the building of a station at Bletchley, so that passengers could interchange between the two lines. This resulted in Bletchley developing into a major railway town and an important junction, with links north, south, east and west. A locomotive depot and extensive freight handling facilities were also provided.

Services begin

The first trains ran from Bletchley to Bedford on the 17th November 1846. This was a major celebration with bands and caused much excitement along the route. 600 people travelled on the first train and, for the next 20 years, the line provided Bedford with the rail link to the capital it so desired. At the opening ceremony reference was made to the line becoming part of a grander scheme that would see lines from the North Sea linked with those on the Bristol Channel!

Extensions east and west

Shortly after it opened other lines radiating from Bletchley began to emerge. Lines from Bletchley to Buckingham / Banbury opened in 1850. To the west of Winslow a further line was built to Oxford (via Bicester). The point where these two routes joined required a station on a greenfield site and this became Verney Junction, after the key promoter of the schemes Sir Harry Verney who lived at nearby Claydon House.

There was soon a call to build a line east of Bedford to Cambridge. The original scheme failed although a later scheme was more successful and opened on 4th July 1862. Part of the line utilised the

earlier Sandy and Potton Tramway which had opened on 5th November 1857.

The Midland Railway arrives in Bedford

The arrival of the Midland Railway's Leicester & Hitchin Extension (MR) from the north, via Kettering and Wellingborough, was to have a dramatic effect of Bedford's future railway operations. It would also provide a more direct, main line, link which would remove the need to travel via Bletchley. Continuing south of Bedford the line ran via Cardington and Shefford to Hitchin, where it joined the Great Northern Railway (GNR) route to London (Kings Cross). The line opened to passenger traffic on 7th May 1857, with trains operating in and out of the L & NWR station at Bedford (St. Johns). Initially there were plans for a joint station but these never came to fruition and the MR opened its own station off Midland Road. Relationships between the MR and GNR companies were not always amicable, so the MR decided to construct its own main line from the town to London (St. Pancras) via Luton and St. Albans. This line opened on 1st October 1868 and is often referred to as the London Extension.

Freight traffic

Freight traffic was attracted from the opening of the line. Most stations were provided with goods yards and sheds. Woburn Sands was used mainly for coal, whilst Fenny Stratford attracted a great deal of traffic from the adjacent timber merchants.

Woburn Sands also had a brickyard and from the opening of the line the railway was used to transport bricks to other areas.

Until the late 1950s, most freight was transported by rail and then distributed by