

WORKING A SINGLE LINE RAILWAY

Wheatley station had two tracks: one running towards Oxford, and the other towards Thame and Princes Risborough. However, between the stations there was only a single track which had to carry trains in both directions.

In order to ensure that there was only ever one train on any section of single line a system was devised whereby a locking collar would be fitted over the signal lever in the signal box, to remind the signalman. However, a better precaution was the 'Single Line Token System'.

THE SINGLE LINE TOKEN SYSTEM

- No train could proceed onto the single line without the token.
- Only one token could be issued from a signalbox at a time because of mechanical interlocking between the issuing equipment of the boxes at each end of the single line.
- A new token could only be released when the previous one had been returned safely into the equipment in either box.

To make it more convenient to transfer the token between the signalman and the engine it was placed in a leather holder attached to a wire loop. This could be looped over the arm of either signalman or fireman while the train was still moving. This meant that the token for one section could be returned, and that for the next section collected, while the train passed without stopping.

If, as occasionally happened, the fireman dropped the token for the new section, the train had to stop while he got down from the engine and went back to fetch it!