

Railway from Potts book

The coming of the railway to Wheatley

Information is taken from C. Potts, *Oxford to Princes Risborough: A GWR Secondary Route*, (Oakwood Press, 2004).

The Wycombe Railway Company (WRC) leased part of the GWR local rail network in order to promote the extension of the rail line from Thame to Oxford (p.7).

It appears that there was a cheaper alternative which was to run the line through Garsington but, by November 1860, it had been agreed to run via Wheatley, albeit at an increased cost of £20,000, of which part was due to the cost of the Horspath tunnel, (pp. 34, 35 & 38).

Service to Thame had opened on 1st August 1862 (p. 45). Work on the next phase was in hand by then and quotes from Rev Elton's diary state that

On 9th October 1862, 'The railroad is now begin in earnest with 100 men near here' and that 'men fetched buckets of spirits on yokes from the *King & Queen*' (p. 50).

On 15th November 1862, 'Passed over a new bridge over the railroad [at Horspath]' (p. 50).

On 21st November 1862, 'The railroad rapidly advances near the village' (p. 50).

23rd February 1863, Littleworth, saw the engine drawing a line of carriages going to & fro, repeatedly up and down from the cutting to the end of the embankment (p. 51).

7th August 1863, 'To the tunnel, saw the place for brick making, the deep cuttings...Much progress is made (p. 53).

30th April 1864, Wheatley station was almost finished (p. 57).

5th May 1864, 'A telegraph station was about to be opened at Wheatley' (p. 57).

Thereafter, Elton did not diary the opening of the railway.

On 10th October 1864, a second platform had now been provided at Wheatley, albeit with no shelter (p. 62).

On Monday 24th October 1864, the line was opened (p. 63). There were four down and four up trains daily.

Early in 1865, WRC was in financial difficulties, and GWR took it over (p, 65).

An elderly lady was killed at Mead Lane accommodation crossing, near Wheatley, on 1st June 1870 (p. 73).

In 1871, GWR improved the awkward and narrow approach to Wheatley station, where the milk carts had caused a number of accidents (p. 75).

On 19th January 1881, the Oxford branch was blocked by an extensive snow drift between the Horspath cutting and Wheatley (p. 85).

In July 1883, the large sum of £2,800 was approved to line the Wheatley tunnel (p. 89). This is shown in a Bodleian copyright photograph, and an artist's sketch at archive number 450.



By January 1893, a passing loop and the second platform were brought into use; both platforms lengthened and widened; new footbridge; new signal cabin with 18 working levers and 7 spare (p. 90).

The costs and receipts at Wheatley where there was 1 station master, 1 general clerk, 1 porter signalman, 2 porters and 2 signalmen were (p. 251).

| Year | Paybill £ | Receipts £ |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 1913 | 461 | 6,875 |
| 1922 | 1,095 | 8,962 |
| 1923 | 1,040 | 9,606 |
| 1924 | 1,015 | 8,213 |
| 1925 | 1,027 | 9,255 |
| 1926 | 922 | 8,353 |

Pages 253 and 254 lists now appointments to or from Wheatley. In 1905, W. T. Ashley, stationmaster, was moved to Burnham. In 1917, S. C. Chesterman, stationmaster, was moved to Paddington as relief clerk. In 1923, A. J. Clark was moved from West Drayton to Wheatley as stationmaster. In 1947, H. E. Carpenter was moved from Hampstead Norris where he was stationmaster to Wheatley. In 1962 Mr Kimber was at Wheatley, presumably stationmaster.

In preparation for closure, it was reported in 1957 that Wheatley had a 6-ton fixed crane; cattle pens; coal merchants being W Tombs & Son, J Reid & Sons, C. Hempsted; 7 staff including station master (p. 207).

Freight was still going through Wheatley in July 1961 (p. 217)

