THE LEICESTER & SWANNINGTON RAILWAY

by

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APPENDICES:

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

I. GENERAL HISTORY OF THE RAILWAY

The reader who is anxious to obtain a picture of transport conditions in West Leicestershire prior to the formation of the Leicester & Swannington Railway, cannot do better than consult The Making of the Leicestershire Canals, 1766—1814 by A. Temple Patterson.¹

As will be seen from this excellent account, the failure of the Charnwood Forest Canal and the need to open up new markets for coal, lime, stone and other products, compelled those interested in the prosperity of the district to come together and look for a solution to the common problem. They found it in the promotion and construction of a railway from the Coleorton area to the town of Leicester.

The first move in the promotion of a railway from West Leicestershire to Leicester itself was made in the autumn of 1828 by William Stenson, a partner in Long Lane Colliery, Whitwick, after returning from the north-east of England where he had inspected, and had been much impressed by, the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Long Lane pit had been sunk in 1827, but its development was seriously hampered by the necessity of carrying all the coal to Leicester by horse and cart.²

Stenson discussed the idea of a railway to Leicester with his co-partners, Samuel Smith Harris and John Whetstone, both surveyors living in the town. After going over the ground together, they decided to approach John Ellis, a prominent landowner at Beaumont Leys, on the northern outskirts. He joined them in a further inspection of the proposed route and

¹ Trans. Leics. Arch. Soc., xxvii (1951). It will be obvious to the reader that the greater part of the following account of the railway is based upon the minute books of the Leicester & Swannington Company which cover the period of 1830 to 1846, and after that date, upon those of the Midland Railway. For this reason it is considered unnecessary to footnote each reference to these sources, but other references are inserted in the usual way.

² Information per Paul W. Glover, Esq.
Fig. 1. Map of the Leicester & Swannington Railway.
agreed with their views on the importance, to both town and county, of having such a railway. The next step was a visit by Ellis to Liverpool to consult George Stephenson, then engaged on construction of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, as to the best way of setting machinery in motion for bringing the project into being. Along with his son Robert, Ellis, Stenson, Whetstone and Harris, he also inspected the suggested route and at once grasped the traffic potentialities which would make the scheme a success.

A meeting, attended by the principal interested parties as well as local hosiery manufacturers, merchants and bankers in and around Leicester, was held at the Bell Hotel, Leicester, on Thursday 12 February 1829. The scheme was explained and approved. A Provisional Committee of eight, with John Ellis as chairman, was formed to deal with promotion of the railway. Thus the Bell Hotel was the birthplace of the Leicester & Swannington Railway.

The Committee engaged Robert Stephenson, then 25½ years of age, as Engineer and Thomas Miles, of Leicester, to survey the line and present an estimate of the cost of construction. This was reported to a further meeting on Wednesday 24 June 1829. It showed the best route as commencing near West Bridge, thence to Glenfield where a tunnel about one mile long would be necessary, Desford, Bagworth, near Whitwick to a terminus close by Swannington village. The only serious engineering works would be the tunnel, an incline near Bagworth and another to reach the terminus, but it was thought both these “might be safely and expeditiously worked by stationary engine power”. The estimated cost of constructing the 16-mile line as single track “with all necessary equipments” was put at £75,450. It was resolved to accept this estimate and to seek Parliamentary approval for construction of the main line, together with a short branch to the North Bridge, where a riverside wharf would be built at Soar Lane, and powers to purchase land on which colliery railways to Bagworth, Ibstock, and Whitwick (Long Lane) pits might be built. The estimated cost already quoted was not increased to permit inclusion of the four branches and there is no evidence that they were ever allowed for; the difficulties caused by this and other defects in the estimate are mentioned later.

The next step was to obtain promises of sufficient capital subscriptions to enable the Committee to promote a Bill in Parliament and the chairman, John Ellis, called upon those present to name the number of £50 shares they were prepared to take up. George Stephenson took 50, Isaac Hodgson (Thurnby) and Thomas Pares (Kirby Frith) 30 each, and sixty-two other local bankers, merchants and hosiery numbers ranging from 20 to 2 shares apiece. In all, £58,250 was raised on the spot. George Stephenson promised to obtain further sums amongst his Liverpool friends to bring the total up to £90,000, the sum to be named in the Bill as the capital required. When the Bill came before Parliament in April 1830, the subscriptions totalled £61,950, with promises well beyond that figure. As will be seen from the table in Appendix E, of the original £90,000 capital, £46,950 was raised in Leicester and Leicestershire and £24,300 in Liverpool. It is

3 *Leicester Journal*, 13 February 1829.
desirable to draw attention to these figures lest it be thought, as has sometimes been stated, that the bulk of the capital was found by George Stephenson in Liverpool. Of the final capital, £140,000, a little over one-third came from that city.

The Company's first Act received the Royal Assent on Saturday 29 May 1830. It incorporated the proprietors under the title "Leicester and Swannington Railway Company" and authorised them to construct, within five years, a railway "for the passage of waggons and other Carriages, to be drawn, propelled, or moved thereon by stationary and locomotive Steam Engines, Horses or other adequate Power" from the West Bridge in the parish of St. Mary, Leicester, to a termination "at the public Turnpike Road from Hinckley to Melbourne Common", with four branches therefrom:

1. "at or near the ancient Foss Road and extending to the River Soar near North Bridge in the parish of St. Leonard, Leicester".
2. to Bagworth colliery.
3. to Ibstock colliery.
4. to Whitwick colliery.

Authority was given to raise £90,000 capital, with borrowing powers for a further £20,000; the estimated cost of the line was £75,453 but, as will be seen hereafter, this was a serious miscalculation. The gauge was to be not less than 4 ft. 8in. measured between the inside edges of the rails and not more than 5 ft. 1 in. outside; the rails were not to project more than 1 in. above the road at level crossings. The usual provision as to engines consuming their own smoke was inserted and—probably as usual—ignored. The width of the land taken, except at junctions, sidings, etc., was restricted to a maximum of 15 yards. The provisions as to tolls and their collection were unusual. Tables of tolls were to be put up at gates, "the table to be painted in distinct and legible black letters on a board with white ground". Tolls could not be demanded if the board was not affixed and legible. The Collector's christian and surname were to appear in letters at least 2 in. high on a similar board. Quarter-mile posts were to be placed in position and maintained.

The Company "may carry goods" (i.e. be carriers) and in addition to normal tonnage rates (see Section X) might levy an additional 4d. per ton on all traffic conveyed up or down the inclines to compensate them for the extra expense in working these portions of the line. They were, however, restricted from making this levy during the first year of working and at any time after the gross annual income reached £10,000. Gross weight restrictions per vehicle were fixed at 4 tons for a 4-wheel wagon and 6 tons for a 6-wheel wagon.

The plans showed nine bridges under the railway and one over it; the latter was on Swannington incline. There were sixteen level crossings over turnpike or parish roads.

The first meeting of the proprietors, required by their Act to be held within two calendar months of its passing, took place at the Bell Hotel on Friday 25 June, when 66, including Robert Stephenson, attended in person and 56 were represented by proxies. A Board of Directors—which numbered fifteen throughout the company's existence—was elected as follows:

5 II Geo. IV & Wm. IV cap. 58.
Clement Winstanley (Chairman)      Braunstone
Isaac Hodgson (Deputy-Chairman)    Thurnby
Robert Birkley                     Leicester
Benjamin Cort                      Leicester
John Ellis                         Beaumont Leys
James Goddard                       Market Harborough
Joshua Grundy                       Leics.
Thomas Leach                       Leicester
William Martin                      Leics.
Richard Mitchell                    Leicester
Richard Norman                     Melton Mowbray
Charles James Packe                 Prestwold
Thomas Pares                         Kirby Frith
Joseph Phillips                     Leicester
Thomas Stokes                        Leicester

It is of interest that Clement Winstanley and Isaac Hodgson were re-elected Chairman and Deputy-Chairman respectively each year until the company’s independence ceased in 1846.\(^6\) Considerable changes took place in the constitution of the Board in the course of its sixteen years’ existence, several directors being disqualified by the number of their shares falling below ten. These included George Stephenson, who was elected to a seat on 3 February 1832 and ceased membership on 5 November 1841.

The Board met for the first time on Friday 9 July at the Bell Hotel, and proceeded to elect Finance and Works committees. Though the separate proceedings of these bodies have not been traced, their deliberations were reported in detail to the Board and are fairly fully recorded in the Minutes. Thomas Miles, who had surveyed the line for the Provisional Committee, was confirmed in his appointment as Agent (after the opening he was referred to as “clerk”) and Robert Stephenson as Engineer. The former was instructed to design a common seal. This depicted the “Rocket” standing upon a bridge spanning a small waterway whose banks were fringed with some rather exotic looking trees. A nonchalant gentleman, with arms folded, adorned the tender.\(^7\) The author understands from Mr. George Dow that the company’s crest was the Wyvern, but it is not known whether this was used on the rolling-stock. The Wyvern was the standard of the ancient Kingdom of Mercia, of which Leicester was the principal town. It is therefore appropriate that the Wyvern was incorporated in the Midland Railway heraldic device, bearing in mind that the Leicester & Swannington was that company’s oldest railway component.

Little time was lost in getting to work. On 23 July 1830, Miles reported that the line was being staked out and on 20 August the Board examined Stephenson’s elevation of the Glenfield tunnel entrances. As this was the most important engineering work on the line, and in contemporary experience one of the first magnitude, they desired the portals to be “impressive but not too costly”. The first designs “were not thought sufficiently handsome” and fresh ones were called for. They can hardly have foreseen that the tunnel was eventually to cost over £7,000 in excess of the

\(^6\) A silver vase bought from Messrs. Storr & Mortimer for 120 guineas was presented to the Chairman for long service on 27 July 1837.

\(^7\) Illustrated in Clement E. Stretton, *History of the Midland Railway*, 11.
estimate, and that the Mountsorrel granite facings were to be left out, a
curious omission which surviving records do not explain.

The first General Meeting of Proprietors was held at the Bell Hotel on
Monday 6 September 1830. Shares Nos. 1 to 1639, representing £81,950,
were allotted and the Register signed and sealed by the Chairman.8

Much goodwill existed toward the railway from its inception and little
difficulty was experienced in purchasing the necessary land, mostly at
moderate prices. Thomas Pares, a Director and member of the well-known
Leicestershire banking family, for example, sold all the land required on
his Glenfield estate for £100 per acre. On 22 September 1830, Miles was
ordered “to find out from owners of lands through which the tunnel will
be built, what price or terms they will expect for a mere subterranean
passage through their lands”. The company decided to purchase the lands
outright, but after construction of the tunnel and conversion of the working
shafts into ventilators, sold it back to the original owners at the same price
as they had paid for it.

On 17 September 1830, the Board forsook the Bell Hotel as their
meeting place and moved to the “Directors’ Room”, Friar Lane, which was
rented from a Mr. Hardy and nearer the railway itself.9 They continued
to use this accommodation until 26 August 1833, when they removed to
their own offices at West Bridge terminus.

The first contract for construction of the line was let on 17 Sep-
tember when Thomas Richardson undertook the portion from West Bridge
to Ratby, excluding the tunnel; the excavation of the cutting approaches to
each end of the tunnel was fixed at 8d. per cubic yard. Five days later the
Board authorised the purchase from William Putt, Lubenham, of 1,000 oak
posts (9½d. each) and 1,000 oak staves (3½d.) for fencing in their property
as the various purchases were completed; final fencing costs averaged 3s.
per yard. In anticipation of rapid progress in preparing the greater part of
the route, which presented little engineering difficulty, the first consignment
of rails, 100 tons from Cort, the Leicester ironfounder, was delivered early
in October, the Board ordering that 40 tons be delivered on the first of each
month from November onward.

Actual construction of the railway commenced on Friday 1 October,
when Thomas Richardson formally placed in position a large slate slab, the
doorstep of the offices at West Bridge and datum point for measuring
distances and levels. It was calculated as 180 ft. above mean water mark
at Liverpool.

The subject of Glenfield tunnel was discussed at length by the Board
on 29 October 1830, and Robert Stephenson’s new design for the entrances,
including facing with Mountsorrel granite, approved. The contract for the
whole work was let to Daniel Jowett, of Buxton, with William Clark and Job
Jowett as his co-partners. Little was it realised what difficulties lay between
sealing the contract and its completion! To save expense it was arranged
for bricks to be made from clay on Mr. Thomas Pares’s estate, a royalty
of 2s. 6d. per thousand being paid to him.

8 Leicester & Swannington Railway Shareholders’ Register (Newarke Houses
Museum, Leicester).

9 Presumably this was John Stockdale Hardy, attorney. Contemporary directories
give no indication as to the number in Friar Lane.
THE LEICESTER AND SWANNINGTON RAILWAY

Two further contracts, at the western end of the line, were let on 27 December; from Battleflat (half a mile beyond the present Bagworth and Ellistown station) to "the Whitwick-Hugglescote lane", about 2½ miles, was awarded to William Bates Senr. and thence to the termination at Swannington, about 1¼ miles, to his son, William Bates Jnr.

On 4 February 1831, a progress report on the tunnel showed that 38,030 cubic yards had been excavated, leaving 13,982 to be done, and a request from the contractor for extension of completion to 21 March was agreed to.

In common with many early railways, difficulties soon arose with the inexperienced contractors. On 12 February, Rudkin, who held a separate contract for construction of all underline culverts, etc., was reported as "having been detected in using bad mortar" and the Board requested one of its members, John Ellis, "to have an eye to him". This was followed on 4 March by the default of Thomas Richardson, who abandoned his contract from West Bridge to Ratby. Subsequent enquiries showed that he had been overpaid £101 10s. 4d. for work not done. Though they were forced to pay compensation to the platelayers, experienced men sent by Stephenson from Newcastle, and local labourers who were thrown out of work by Richardson’s action, they did not press for repayment of the amount, feeling that his bankruptcy would probably preclude any chance of recovering the debt. Very unwisely, since they were already much in arrear with work on the tunnel, Jowett and his partners took on completion of Richardson’s unfinished contract as between the west end and Ratby Lane. The section from West Bridge to the east end of the tunnel was re-let to William Bates Jnr. at 10d. per cubic yard for the excavations, the rest being more or less completed.

On 18 March 1831 it came to light that faulty trial borings for the tunnel had caused the contractor to think he was working in stone throughout and that only some short sections through sand would require bricking. In fact, a 500 yd. length was entirely through sand, necessitating the erection of a wooden "shell" within the tunnel. Robert Stephenson was hurriedly sent for and, after an examination, told the Directors the roof and sides would have to be brick-lined throughout to a depth of 14 in., and in some vulnerable parts, 18 in. He estimated the cost as £11 per yard and the total expense nearly double the original estimate. As if this was not sufficient to cause the Board anxiety, the contractor, Daniel Jowett, was accidentally killed on 5 April by falling down one of the working shafts; his partners were released from a portion of their contract, but undertook to finish the western end of the tunnel. The contract for the unfinished eastern end was let to Messrs. Copeland & Harding, of Leicester, at £4 per lineal yard, the work to be finished by July 1832. The fifteen months allowed is evidence that the works were not in a very advanced state and that much remained to be done before the tunnel was ready for use. Joshua Richardson, who had been Robert Stephenson’s Resident Assistant since the beginning, was replaced by Gillespie in April 1831. Richardson had previously acted in the same capacity on the Canterbury & Whitstable Railway, to which line he returned as Manager.

As a result of their experiences with the various contractors, the Directors were very concerned at the state of the works generally and asked George Stephenson, the largest shareholder at this time, to carry out an
inspection. He did so on 28 April 1831, and reported the position as unsatisfactory, due mainly to the inexperience of the contractors, none of whom had undertaken this type of work before, a lack of attention to his son's instructions as Engineer of the line, and faulty distribution of labour. He recommended various measures which were acted upon at once.

But the constructional difficulties had only just begun. On 13 May 1831 William Bates Senr. threw up his contract for the work westwards from Battleflat and its completion was re-let to Robert Hutchinson. Six weeks later Job Jowett relinquished his undertaking to finish the western portion of Glenfield tunnel and the work was taken on by Copeland & Harding. Thus the tunnel was again in the hands of one contractor. On 10 June there had been complaints as to the poor quality of the bricks used in lining the tunnel and instructions were given to erect a kiln on the spot so that Gillespie might keep it under supervision. The Board also set up a temporary sub-committee ("The Brick Committee") to watch this matter specially. On 14 October Gillespie was instructed to "descend the Tunnel and carefully inspect the Brickwork three times a week".

It will be remembered that the company's Act included powers to construct a branch to the River Soar near North Bridge. The plan had not been followed up because it was obvious that the main line, and the three colliery branches if built, would strain the company's financial resources to their limit. The subject came under consideration during the summer of 1831, and George Stephenson was asked to examine some alternative proposals and give his views to the Board. This he did on 28 October 1831, suggesting that a suitable site for a wharf could be found by crossing the Soar, and the Directors decided to pursue the matter with the only landowner concerned, Charles Paget, after learning that the Leicester Navigation Co. did not, subject to certain stipulations, object to the scheme. By the spring of 1832 it was clear that Paget was unwilling to come to terms with the railway for the purchase of what was admittedly valuable land, and at their meeting on 30 April 1832 the Board resolved to abandon the project.

Reporting to the Annual Meeting on 11 January 1832, the Chairman said that about one-sixth of the Glenfield tunnel remained to be finished and it was expected the main line from Leicester to Bagworth would be completed in May and the rest before December.

It was expected that lime from kilns in the district would figure prominently among the traffics the company would encourage and on 16 March 1832, the Clerk, Miles, presented an estimate for erection of the necessary sheds, etc. at appropriate places:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hugglescote Grange</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(north side of Ashby—Leicester turnpike) now Bardon Hill station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battleflat Lane</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(east side of railway where Ibstock—Staunton road crosses) now Ellistown colliery sidings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton Lane</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desford</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratby</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>435</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Orders were given that the work should be put in hand, but these were rescinded on 13 April and tenders invited for establishment of depots at these places to be built at the expense of those undertaking the work, payment being made by the railway on a commission basis. It may be inferred that the new depots were envisaged as being for handling all classes of traffic and that the commission would induce canvassing of it to the railway.

On 8 June an offer was accepted from Daniel Marvin for construction of a wharf at Ratby Lane and opening and closing of the crossing gates there for £12 per year. A similar offer from Chamberlain in respect of Desford was also accepted. On 6 July Joseph Freeman undertook to build a house at the former point “and engage it should be used as a Gate House”. A list of the company’s property dated 10 January 1834 is reproduced in Appendix D.

The novelty of a tunnel appears to have been a considerable attraction to the local populace and in March 1832 temporary gates at the entrances were erected “so as to keep out intruders on Sundays until the permanent gates can be put up”. In the same month, the fourth branch, to Whitwick Colliery, authorised by their Act, was discussed with Stenson & Co., the proprietors, and agreement reached that the railway should purchase the necessary land, the line being built by the colliery company. When completed, Stenson & Co. undertook to repay the cost of the land and the title deeds of it would be handed over to them.

It was, perhaps, natural that the Board should by now be a little apprehensive as to the tunnel and Robert Stephenson was requested early in June 1832 to make a thorough examination and report. His letter of 21 June says he found it “sound” but that there had been deviations from the stipulations of the contract, viz:

1. Tapered bricks had not been used in the arching.
2. Thickness of brickwork not uniformly 18 in. where this should be so.
3. The mortar used had not been ground.
4. The fronts had not been faced with granite.

On 6 July the Board ordered “that a caution against passing through the Tunnel, similar in purport to that inserted by the Clerks in the *Leicester Journal* of this day, be painted on the boards and fixed up at each end of the Tunnel”.

On the same date, the line now being almost ready for opening, a sub-committee of three directors, John Ellis, Robert Birkley and Richard Mitchell, was set up to make all necessary arrangements for this on Tuesday 17 July 1832, and the Engineer instructed to fit up temporary seats in three of the open wagons. A table of fares was approved as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st class</th>
<th>2nd class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leicester to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratby Lane</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desford Lane</td>
<td>1 4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merry Lees</td>
<td>1 8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton¹⁰</td>
<td>2 0</td>
<td>1 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and intermediately calculated from the above. Maximum weight of baggage etc. was fixed at 60 lb. per person.

¹⁰ Presumably also Bagworth, a further ½ mile.
An extension of the railway beyond the foot of Swannington Incline had been under consideration by the Board for some time. The object of such a line would be to link up the lime works at Cloud Hill (Bredon-on-the-Hill) and collieries in the Coleorton area and at Peggs Green with the Leicester & Swannington, thus bringing valuable additional traffic. On 6 July they asked George Stephenson to "take a view of the neighbouring country" and report upon the prospects of such an extension. The Clerks were instructed to inform Lord Stamford (Cloud Hill), Sir George Beaumont (Coleorton) and the owners and lessees of Peggs Green colliery accordingly. An interim report was received on 16 July saying that he had surveyed the country and that levels were being taken. The report and sections were inspected on 24 July and discussion deferred until 17 August, when a letter from Sir George Crewe was read, asking that any such extension should include his lime works at Ticknall.

A public announcement of the opening of the line appeared in the *Leicester Journal* of 13 July 1832 in the following form:

THE OPENING of the RAILWAY will take place on TUESDAY NEXT the 17th instant. The Locomotive Engine, with a train of Carriages, will start from the Augustin Friars at 10 o’clock, and proceed to Bagworth; and the Proprietors may be supplied with Tickets on application at the Directors’ Room in the Friar Lane, between the hours of 10 and 12 this day.

It will be absolutely necessary that the Line of Railway should be kept clear, and the public are warned that any person venturing upon it will expose themselves to imminent danger, as well as become liable to the Penalty imposed by the Act, which the Directors, with a view to prevent accidents, will strictly enforce against all trespassers.

By order of the Directors

The opening of the line from West Bridge to the summit level at Staunton Road level crossing, 11 m. 55 ch., took place on Tuesday 17 July as planned. For all practical purposes the opening was to the junction with the Bagworth colliery branch, 10 m. 65 ch., as there were then no sidings between that point and Staunton Road, beyond which the line was not yet ready for use.

The inaugural train, drawn by the *Comet* and consisting of an open wagon specially covered in for use of the Directors, the company's only open second-class carriage and ten new coal wagons with improvised seats, conveying in all about 400 passengers (directors, proprietors, officials and important guests) left West Bridge at 10.0 a.m. and reached Bagworth at 11.0 a.m. Slight delay was caused by the engine chimney striking the roof of the tunnel at a point where the platelayers had temporarily raised the track to pack a "low" place. The train was halted specially at Glenfield Brook to enable the passengers, especially the ladies, to remove the effects of the enforced sojourn in the tunnel. One may imagine the anxiety felt by the Directors at this incident and their relief on learning that the tunnel itself was not at fault! The chimney was later reduced in height by 6 in. At Bagworth a marquee had been erected and the customary "cold

*Leicester Journal*, 20 July 1832.
collation and champagne” provided for the proprietors; the usual toasts to
the prosperity of the line and district it served were drunk with musical
honours. The return train, conveying additionally two wagons of Bagworth
coal which had been brought down the incline specially for the occasion,
left at 2.0 p.m. and reached West Bridge in an hour without mishap. The
official proceedings were wound up by a “grand dinner” at the Bell Hotel,
but the public were able to travel to Bagworth and back by a second special
train at 4.30 p.m. From the Wednesday, there were normally three empty
wagon trains each weekday, leaving West Bridge at 8.0 a.m., 1.0 and 4.30
p.m., the passenger carriage being attached to these and the corresponding
return loaded trips. It appears, however, that special trips were run as
required during the first few weeks after opening, until the novelty of “a
ride on the railway” had worn off.

The lower part of the line being now in working order, though certain
necessary buildings had not yet been authorised and other minor works
were in arrears, attention was turned to completing and bringing into use
the remainder of the “upper section”, Bagworth to Swannington, as it was
from this that the company expected to derive the bulk of its revenue. The
Whitwick colliery proprietors wrote to the Board on 3 August 1832, “we
are very desirous of sending coal down the line as soon as possible and
anxiously hope the cutting at Battleflat will be expedited”, to which the
Directors replied that this would certainly be completed by the middle of
October, an estimate which proved to be very far from the mark.

The need for pressing on with the “upper section” was emphasised in
a special report from the Finance Committee on 31 August 1832. This
referred to the coal traffic being “very scanty” (only Bagworth was linked
with and used the railway) and the general fall in receipts; passengers had
decreased “due to the uncertainty of the weather”, making decisions as to
permanent staff establishment very difficult. In order to increase the coal
traffic by catering for Whitwick and Ibstock output (both pits being as yet
unconnected to the railway) it was agreed to allow 9d. and 6d. rebate per
ton respectively to cover land carriage to the railway. A further induce-
ment to the colliery owners was the prompt meeting of a request for some
allowance to offset the losses caused to them by the breakage of coal in
transit; a drawback of one-fourteenth on the tonnage rate was agreed until
throughout rail transit could be given.

With the exception of Battleflat cutting—an excavation only about 35
ft. deep and a little over a quarter of a mile long lying between Staunton
Road and Ashby to Leicester turnpike crossing (now Bardon Hill station)—
the “upper section” was almost completed. On 12 October 1832,
Gillespie reported “the cutting is going on well”; 7,000 to 8,000 cubic
yards being left to excavate. He estimated it would be finished in about
six weeks. Red House cutting, further west, he expected to be ready in two
weeks and the laying of the permanent way to Swannington would occupy
further six weeks after Battleflat cutting was finished. The Directors
were dismayed to learn that the line might not be available for use through-
out until the middle of January 1833, and on 9 November they appointed a
sub-committee from amongst themselves to inspect the works and make it
clear to Hutchinson, the contractor, that they would enforce the contract or
dismiss him.

Suspecting that Gillespie’s dilatoriness was partly responsible for the
backward state of the works at Battleflat, George Stephenson was asked to
examine them and inform the Board of his conclusions. On 26 December he reported that “Battlesflat cutting will not, if the weather continues unfavourable, be ready till early February. From Whitwick Colliery to the end of the line would be ready by the end of March”. Robert Stephenson was thereupon asked to withdraw Gillespie, and his place was taken by Birkenshaw, one of Stephenson’s most experienced assistants.

The effect of the substantial rebate granted to the two collieries not yet connected with the railway was soon evident. From mid-September to the end of 1832 (14 weeks) Ibstock forwarded 1,078 tons and Whitwick 2,843 tons, an average of 77 and 203 tons per week respectively. Bagworth, whose first wagons of coal had been attached to the inaugural train on 17 July, sent only 2,104 tons between that date and 31 December, an average of 96 tons per week.

The precise date on which the next section of the line was opened, from Staunton Road to the Ashby-Leicester turnpike, cannot be traced, but it is evident from the wording of a minute of 1 February 1833, which quotes a special rate of 2s. 3d. per ton for Whitwick coal railed at Ashby Road, as the new stopping place was now named, that it was brought into use on, or a few days before, that date. It is known, however, that a passenger carriage was first worked to and from Ashby Road on Friday 22 February for the accommodation of people attending Leicester market. They were, of course, expected to walk down Bagworth incline and resume their journey in another train from Bagworth station, but in practice they appear to have ridden on the wagons. The carriage was a specially constructed 1st and 2nd class composite for use on the “upper section” only (see Section IV). The opening from Ashby Road to Long Lane (now Coalville) took place on Monday 22 April 1833 for coal traffic and the following Saturday for passengers, thus completing the sections on which it was intended to convey passengers and providing the much-desired rail link with Whitwick colliery.

In his routine examination of the line before the Annual Meeting in August 1832, Robert Stephenson found “the Newtown curve” (near Desford) required realignment, the work being sufficient to occupy eight men exclusively for a week. Apart from this, the line was in good working order and he thought the time had come when it should be taken out of the contractors’ hands and an agreement entered into with them for maintenance, including fences and ditches, at £70 per mile per annum, single line, the company to find a source of suitable ballast. This was agreed to. The Board also approved the building of a cottage at Foss Lane for the crossing keeper and another at the east end of the tunnel over the water tank which had already been installed there.

As has been noted, the company had already experienced trouble with people who felt attracted to the tunnel on Sundays and their Sabbatarian views found further expression in an instruction (31 August 1832) to Gillespie: “no traffic is to pass on Sundays and the engine is not to be used on that day without the Directors’ sanction”. Nearly two years later (7 March 1834) they reminded Bagster, the Manager, that he must enforce the rule prohibiting all work on Sundays “the Company preferring to incur the loss

12 Bardon Hill station.
which would arise from omitting to work on that day rather than countenance the regular violation of the Sabbath”.

Amidst the press of current business, the question of the proposed extension beyond Swannington had not been overlooked. After further consideration and in view of the unconsolidated state of the company’s finances, the Directors decided not to proceed with the scheme and those concerned with it were so informed. On 28 September 1832 Sir George Beaumont wrote to the company saying that he would be willing to promote a railway to connect the Coleorton colliery area and Peggs Green13 with the Leicester & Swannington if the latter would be prepared to meet the cost of the necessary Act out of the receipts derived from the carriage of his coal. This the company agreed to do and, in conjunction with his friends, Beaumont immediately proceeded to lodge a Bill in Parliament. The financial arrangement so agreed was referred to subsequently as the “Coleorton Pledge”. The plans drawn up by William Dickin, who had been engaged by Beaumont as Engineer of the line, were inspected by the Leicester & Swannington Directors on 18 February 1833 and approved so far as these concerned their line. The Coleorton Railway Company was incorporated by an Act of 10 June 1833;14 the total cost of obtaining this was £2,372 11s. 11d. At the Annual Meeting on 14 August 1833, the Leicester and Swannington Railway Chairman congratulated the proprietors on the passing of the Coleorton Railway Act despite opposition15 and added: “there can be no doubt of the Coleorton Railway ultimately proving a great Helpmate to this Railway”.

It is necessary at this point to refer to a supposed accident which, it has been claimed, led to steam trumpets being fitted to the Leicester & Swannington locomotives. According to Stretton,16 this took place at Thornton Lane level crossing on Saturday 4 May 1833, when Samson collided with a horse and cart. As a result, steam trumpets made by “a musical instrument maker in King Street, Leicester” were fitted to the locomotives. The only evidence which can be considered is an elevation (a blueprint copy of which is held by Leicester City Museum) signed by Cabry, the engine superintendent, showing the trumpet, 1 ft. 6 in. high and 6 in. diameter at the top. The Minutes of Directors’ meetings contain numerous references to accidents and mishaps—some of a very trivial nature—and it is inconceivable that a major occurrence of this kind was not reported to the Board in the normal way. It is the fact, however, that no reference of any kind occurs in the Minutes, neither is there an entry amongst payments made (the allocations of which are given in detail) or cheques signed in favour of the claimant for damages or of the “musical instrument maker”. Furthermore, the engine superintendent’s monthly report for May 1833 contains no mention of it, nor do the Leicester directories current at the time show any manufacturer of musical instruments or kindred trade practising in King Street. The present author is unable to find any confirmation of this story. The existence of the elevation, however, suggests that some kind of warning

13 Peggs Green colliery was in use some years before 1830 and is believed to have been connected with Charnwood Forest Canal (information per Paul W. Glover, Esq.).

14 3 & 4 Wm. IV cap. 71.

15 A lessee of Wyggeston’s Hospital land who alleged damage to the property, although the owners were agreeable.

16 History of the Midland Railway, 26-7.
apparatus may have been in contemplation, but again it should be pointed out that the Minutes, normally very detailed in regard to even the smallest happenings on the line, do not mention the fact. If they were so fitted, neither the fact nor the reason for it appears in surviving original records.

On 10 May, Birkenshaw reported that the earthworks between Long Lane and Swanston would be completed within a week and the rails laid to Spring Lane level crossing, 12 chains short of the top of the incline, before 24 May. On 12 August he was able to say “the whole of the works to the termination at Swanston are now done with the exception of the Swanston Engine house and a few trifling things and that the stationary engine at Swanston will be completed within three weeks”.

Although the Swanston engine was expected to be ready for use by the first week of September, there seems to have been some delay. On 4 October Mr. Rodgers, Beaumont’s agent, informed the Board that he was ready to send 40 tons of coal daily to the Leicester & Swanston “as soon as the stationary engine is ready”. The present author has been unable to find any record of the exact date on which Swanston Incline was brought into use, but the traffic returns show 138 tons of coal from the Coleorton Railway conveyed in November 1833. From this it would appear reasonable to assume that the incline was first worked towards the end of that month; the actual date may well have coincided with the appointment, as from Monday 25 November of Coulson Dunn to be “Superintendent of Bagworth and Swanston Inclines and such other parts of the line as may be given to him”.

The very small profit (£19 os. 11d.) made between the opening date of the first section and 31 December 1832, coupled with the heavy excess in capital expenditure beyond the original estimate of £75,450, which had raised the cost per mile from £4,716 to £7,740, caused the Directors some concern, and it was expected the proprietors would comment upon these figures at the Annual Meeting in August 1833. The Board therefore requested their Finance Committee to prepare a full report on the excess capital expenditure, with reasons for overspending. Their findings were as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Excess expenditure</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuttings and embankments</td>
<td>£12,234 8 7</td>
<td>Mainly due to deepening Battleflat cutting by 6ft. and additional excavations elsewhere, resulting in greatly improved levels and reduction in gradients. About 200,000 cu. yds. extra were excavated, of which 135,000 was agreed by the Directors on 4 April 1831.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>£1,175 14 3</td>
<td>No explanation given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail chairs, sleepers, etc.</td>
<td>£7,699 12 3</td>
<td>Due to increased strength of sleepers based on experience of other railways, oak being used instead of larch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry</td>
<td>£4,601 16 5</td>
<td>Estimate covered bridges and culverts only. There was not only an increase in the number of these, but also in walls in cuttings and tunnel approaches, gate houses, engine house and warehouse at West Bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engines, wagons and coaches</td>
<td>£7,187 7 5</td>
<td>Not provided for in original estimate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tunnel 7,326 12 2½ No explanation given, but presumably mainly due to faulty trial borings and need for bricking throughout.

Land 3,652 13 10 Mainly due to higher cost than expected at the Leicester end of the line.

Superintendence and legal expenses 1,345 7 9 No explanation given.

Parliamentary 3,171 9 11 Not provided for in original estimate.

The committee expressed the view that the additional expenditure, though heavy, was justified by the increase in efficiency which would result and they thought a saving in the long run had been achieved by improvement in levels and other works. It may be remarked in passing that it is strange no provision was made in the original estimate for expenditure on rolling-stock, since it was never contemplated the line should be a "toll road", but always that the company should work the traffic itself. In the event the statements were accepted by the shareholders without discussion.

The project, abandoned in April 1832, for a branch to a new wharf at Soar Lane was soon revived when a Bill to include powers for other branches and certain miscellaneous provisions was decided upon. The decision to proceed with the Soar Lane branch and one to Snibston colliery was taken on 22 October 1832. On 5 November representations were received from Mr. Martin, Lord Stamford's Agent, that the intended Bill should include the branch to Groby stone quarries, and from Edmund Mortimer Green, owner of Ibstock colliery, for a line to connect his pit with the main line. It was agreed to include these two branches in the Bill, the cost of construction to be borne by the owners. In the case of Groby, the line had already been constructed (in 1832) and the required powers were merely to confirm title to lands and legalise its construction in retrospect.

The Act,17 the second obtained by the company, received Royal Assent on 10 June 1833 and empowered them to build the Soar Lane branch (with a "swivel, draw or floating bridge" over the Leicester Navigation) and a branch to Snibston colliery, belonging to George Stephenson, Joseph Sandars and Joshua Walmsley. It also authorised and/or confirmed purchase of the land for the Groby quarries and Ibstock colliery branches. The Act granted powers to raise a further £10,000 capital and amongst some miscellaneous clauses was one prohibiting "the use of horses on the main line without the Licence and consent of the Company".

On 21 June Robert Stephenson was requested to present an estimate for the Soar Lane branch and also for completing the main line, this latter item referring to various sidings at the intermediate depots and also the equipment for Swannington Incline. His figures, presented a week later, were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soar Lane branch (excl. land)</td>
<td>4,681</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing main line, etc.</td>
<td>1,845</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swannington Incline</td>
<td>1,331</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for details see Section VI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,857</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 3 & 4 Wm. IV cap. 69.
At the end of November 1833, trouble developed in the Swannington stationary engine. Temporary arrangements were made with Joseph Bostock, a shareholder in the company and lessee of Cloud Hill lime works, for his horses to haul wagons up the incline, and this working was still in force on 18 February 1834, when Harding, who held the contract for maintenance of the whole line, was asked if he objected to horses working the traffic along the entire length of the "upper section" as far as the top of Bagworth incline, an expedient made necessary by the acute shortage of engine power, referred to in Section III. Though it involved keeping the ballast up to sleeper level throughout this 5½-mile stretch, he does not appear to have asked for extra payment over and above his contract figure. A rebate of one-sixth of the tonnage rate per mile was allowed on all coal and lime during this "horse-drawn period", and arrangements were made for railway staff to take charge of the wagons from the summit level at Staunton Road (Battle-flat cutting), sufficient competent men being placed there for that purpose. Working by locomotive on the "upper section" was resumed on 1 April, when Atlas was sent up after repairs.

The working of Swannington Incline was entirely suspended on Friday 7 March 1834, in consequence of the Breedon Hill lime and Peggs Green coal traffic ceasing as a protest against a rate increase. The senders, finding the company adamant, resumed despatches on 11 May under protest, the incline being worked only 2 or 3 days per week.

The contract for making the Soar Lane branch was let on 24 August 1833 to Messrs. Copeland & Harding for £3,960. This line, 27 ch. long, diverged from the main line 31 ch. short of West Bridge and crossed the Leicester Navigation by a small wooden lift bridge slung from four pillars, over which the counterbalance weight chains ran in grooved wheels. It was designed by Robert Stephenson and built by the company in its own shops. On 27 December 1833 Stephenson agreed to an amendment of the original design, reducing the height above water-level from 11 ft. 4 in. to 9 ft. 10 in., which the Leicester Navigation Co. considered sufficient. The movable portion was 28 ft. 6 in. long and 11 ft. 6 in. wide, carrying a single line of railway. The branch was brought into use on 4 October 1834 and provided valuable additional accommodation for coal traffic for shipment by the Navigation, and also for the town itself. The original bridge was replaced by a new one towards the end of 1845; this was also made by the company and was almost identical with the old structure. Parts of it have been retained in the existing bridge. The Leicester & Swannington lime shed at Soar Lane was demolished in March 1863, the materials being sold for £45; it had cost £200 to erect 29 years earlier. A long-standing grievance against the Union Canal Company was ended in 1835 by purchasing outright for £1,681 a piece of leased land on which part of the West Bridge terminus stood.

The lessee of Cloud Hill lime works (Bostock) again became active in 1835, with suggestions for improving the handling of his traffic. The company agreed to remove the lime shed at Swannington to the further end of the Coleorton Railway in order to reduce the distance from the works to the railhead. They also agreed to support him in an approach to the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal Company asking for their tramroad from Cloud Hill to be repaired and improved so that it might convey his traffic to the Coleorton Railway for transhipment into wagons suitable for working through to Leicester.
The question of adapting the Ashby Canal’s Cloud Hill tramroad, so that wagons might pass without transhipment from the lime works to Leicester, arose on 3 March 1837, when the Board discussed the very small volume of traffic received via the Coleorton Railway. They instructed Samuel Smith Harris, who will be remembered as one of the original promoters of the Leicester & Swannington, “to inspect the line of tramroad from the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal to the Lime Works of Lord Stamford and Sir George Crewe, and report thereon”. There is no evidence that permission was obtained from the Canal Co. for this intrusion: up to this date the Leicester & Swannington had no direct dealings with them, so far as can be judged from either railway or canal records. The Leicester & Swannington Board agreed to join forces with Bostock and the Coleorton Railway in improving and altering the tramroad if this appeared possible: a deputation from the Coleorton Board were informed of this decision on 5 May 1837.

Harris’s report was presented on 7 July. He had surveyed the tramroad from Worthington Rough (termination of the Coleorton Railway) to Cloud Hill lime works and found its length to be 1 m. 66 ch. The first 1 m. 53 ch. was on a falling gradient of 1 in 66 and the remainder rising at 1 in 72. The average width within fences was 12 ft. He reported several curves as needing alteration, “but this cannot be done without further powers beyond the Ashby Canal Act”. The estimated cost of “laying down edge rails by the side of and parallel with the present tram plates, disturbing the present road as little as possible so that tram and railway wagons may be used thereon without obstruction or impediment” would be £3,615 17s. 0d., exclusive of superintendence, etc. This estimate was sent to Bostock and the Coleorton Company, asking what proportion they were prepared to contribute.

On 7 December 1838 the result of Bostock’s approach to the Ashby Canal Co. was communicated to the Leicester & Swannington Board in a copy of a minute from a meeting held three days previously. They agreed to Bostock laying “a rib rail on the line of Railway from the Smoil to Cloud Hill” on payment of a toll of 14 d. per ton per mile, with a drawback of ½ d. per ton per mile for 40 years, thereafter the rate to be 1½ d. The Leicester & Swannington agreed to lend Bostock £600 free of interest for the first six years and, by arrangement with the Coleorton, an amount equal to the residue of the “Coleorton Pledge”, viz: £633 13s. 11d. The Agreement was sealed on 7 June 1839. Nothing further is recorded until the Chairman told the Annual Meeting on 5 August 1840 “the Cloud Hill Lime works connection has been completed”. This refers, presumably, to the connection between the Ashby Canal tramroad and the Coleorton Railway near Newbold and would, it is assumed, be in the northerly direction, allowing a direct run from Cloud Hill to Leicester. There is no mention of a westerly connection affording a similar facility from Sir George Crewe’s lime works at Ticknall.18

It would appear that any traffic passing from Ticknall to the Leicester & Swannington was transhipped into railway wagons at the western end of the Coleorton Railway.

18 The Canal Company had themselves considered replacing the tram plates on their Cloud Hill and Ticknall lines by rib rails. This would probably have drawn off some of the Cloud Hill and all the Ticknall traffic to the canal. (Minutes of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal Committee, 11 September 1837, in British Transport Commission Archives.)
The company’s third Act received the Royal Assent on 30 June 1837, and authorised the raising of £40,000 additional capital required to pay off the loans, mortgages, etc. still outstanding from the two previous Acts. Under Section II of the Act, the holders of 5 or more existing shares had the option of purchasing the new stock.

The first competitive proposal which faced the Leicester & Swannington was the Midland Counties Railway, chiefly sponsored by the coalowners of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, for a line from those areas to Leicester and Rugby, where it would join the London & Birmingham. Such a railway would, of course, enable the newcomers to compete with West Leicestershire in supplying coal to Leicester itself and also to London, to which point local coal now passed by canal. Furthermore, though there is no positive confirmatory evidence, it seems likely that an extension of the Leicester & Swannington from Desford to Rugby to connect with the London & Birmingham had been in mind for some time. The new scheme would make such an extension valueless unless the Swannington Company were content with a shorter branch connecting with the proposed new line. On 3 June 1836 the Leicester & Swannington seal was affixed to a petition to the House of Lords against the Midland Counties Railway Bill, but this received the Royal Assent 18 days later.  

Meanwhile, various additions and improvements were made to the line. A siding at the 144 milepost for the new Snibston No. 2 colliery was brought into use in October 1836, and a weighing machine, supplied by Cort & Co. for £73 10s. od., was installed at West Bridge in the following January. The replacement of all wood in the bridges by cast-iron was authorised on 4 December 1837.

The effect of the opening of the Midland Counties Railway to Leicester on Monday 4 May 1840, providing a new route for coal from the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire fields, was felt in the first instance by the Leicester Navigation, with whom the line was in direct competition. Canal rates were lowered immediately, bringing the price of coal in Leicester well below that for which West Leicestershire products could be sold. This was met, after representations from Whitwick and Snibston collieries, by a reduction of 6d. per ton in rail rates as from Saturday 27 June 1840, allowing the price in Leicester to be cut by 1s. 8d. per ton. This appears to have enabled the Leicestershire coal owners to hold at least a substantial part of the town’s trade until, in the autumn of 1844, things seemed to be worsening and consideration was being given by both collieries and railway to finding new outlets to other areas.

On 7 January 1845 a memorial was sent to the Lords Committee of Privy Council for Trade, supporting the proposed Oxford & Rugby railway on the narrow (standard) gauge, pointing out that it would afford a valuable outlet for West Leicestershire coal in conjunction with a revival of the earlier idea for an extension southwards from Desford. Steps were taken in March to survey a route from Desford to Broughton Astley, on the Midland Counties main line to Rugby, so that it might be considered if or when the Oxford & Rugby Bill was passed. Although this Act received the Royal Assent on 4 August 1845, the promoters decided four years

19 6 & 7 Wm. IV cap. 69.
20 8 & 9 Vic. cap. 188.
later not to construct the section between Fenny Compton and Rugby, but to divert the line to Leamington and Birmingham.

But the Desford—Broughton Astley scheme had another purpose. This was to counter a proposed Leicester & Birmingham Railway whose plans included a branch to the Swannington near Desford. A special meeting of the Swannington Board on 17 April 1845 agreed to advertise the company's intention to promote a Bill for the Broughton Astley line and this was inserted in the London and local papers, as well as the four railway journals of the period. On 26 June a deputation of four from the Leicester & Birmingham Committee met the Board and enquired on what terms they could lease the Leicester & Swannington, with an option to purchase in due course. The Board deferred an immediate reply, and in view of subsequent events it is obvious that no reply was needed.

On Friday 4 July 1845 Joseph Ellis communicated to the Board the following proposals by George Hudson, Chairman of the Midland Railway.

The Midland Railway Company are prepared to purchase the Leicester & Swannington Railway at a price of 8½ per cent upon the Share Capital of £140,000—wit power to redeem the same at any time within three years at the price of 100½ for every 50½ share.

The Midland Company to become possessed of all the Stock of every description belonging to the Leicester & Swannington Company, and to be answerable for all liabilities of that Company provided they do not exceed 10,000£. This Agreement to commence from the 1st of July 1845.

If the Leicester & Swannington Company prefer it, the Midland Company are prepared to take their Railway as Midland Stock, and to amalgamate on equal terms as soon as an Act of Parliament can be obtained.

London, July 2nd, 1845.

George Hudson

The bargain was a good one and the Board decided to recommend the shareholders to accept the first two proposals as a basis for treaty with the Midland. These were approved at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday 20 August 1845. The draft of the Bill for the absorption was put before the proprietors at a special meeting at the Bell Hotel on Monday 15 June 1846, almost exactly 16 years since the first Annual Meeting in the same place, with Clement Winstanley in the chair. It was approved by 176 to 10 votes. The Board had met at the hotel for the last time earlier that day.

The Midland Railway (Leicester & Swannington Purchase) Act 21 received the Royal Assent on Monday 27 July 1846. Clause I enacted that “from and immediately after the passing of this Act the Leicester & Swannington Railway Company shall be and the same is hereby dissolved... and be absolutely vested in the Midland Railway Company”. Other provisions included the exchange of every £50 Swannington share for one of £100 in the Midland Railway, a restriction upon the passenger fares which the new owners might charge on the Leicester & Swannington line, and a stipulation that on and from 1 January 1848, “every Locomotive Steam Engine to be used on the said Leicester and Swannington Railway shall, if it use coal or other similar Fuel emitting Smoke, be constructed... so as to consume its own smoke”.

21 9 & 10 Vic. cap. 243.
So, after a life of 16 years, the Leicester & Swannington ceased to exist as a separate entity and became a small, but important, part of the Midland Railway, of which it was the first section to be opened. It was amongst that company's first acquisitions since its incorporation in 1844.

The last stages in the Company's dissolution are recorded in the proceedings of the Midland Railway (Leicester & Swannington) Committee who were responsible for the reorganisation, etc. and management of the recently acquired line until the Midland's new lines from Knighton Junctions to Desford and Coalville to Burton were constructed. On Friday 1 January 1847 the Committee reported: "Mr. R. Miles, late Clerk to the Leicester & Swannington Railway Company delivered up the common seal of that Company which was then broken in the presence of the Directors".

Thus came the final act and the end of the Company which had been the means of bringing much prosperity to the Leicestershire coalfield, lime works and quarries.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

(N.B. Swannington to Leicester is "up" and Leicester to Swannington "down").

Originally, access to the West Bridge wharf (the canal term was perpetuated by early railways when referring to depots or stations) was almost direct from the West Bridge itself, but the lane is now blocked up. The buildings comprised a wharf shed and joiner's shop adjacent to the company's office, which housed the Manager and included a small room upstairs for the Directors. There was also an engine shed for two locomotives, workshop and smithy. The wharf was lit by gas from September 1833. In November 1840 alterations were made to the office building to provide "some accommodation" for passengers. The work was done by a local contractor, Thirlby, for £79.

There was, of course, no platform at the original station, passengers entering the carriages from ground level, using the steps and handrail provided on each vehicle. This arrangement continued until 1876, when the Midland erected a narrow platform on the east side of the running line immediately before the office building. The platform remained in use until a new passenger station, lying at the end of a 30-chain branch on the west side of the original lines, was brought into use on Monday 13 March 1893. The old station and original office building were later demolished and warehouses now occupy the site. The passenger service between West Bridge and Desford was withdrawn on Monday 24 September 1928. The station office building has since been let and the tracks used for holding wagons under or awaiting repairs, but the platform remains intact. The Leicester & Swannington engine shed originally held two locomotives; the accommodation was doubled early in 1834 at a cost of £200. The Midland Company stationed a tank engine at West Bridge for shunting purposes, but this was withdrawn and the shed closed on 28 June 1926. The building was demolished in 1945 but the water tower at the north end of it is still in use.

From near the engine shed the line rose at 1 in 147 past the junction with Soar Lane branch and Foss Road siding and level crossing. The original plans provided for a railway overbridge here, but on 1 October

22 The line is still used by occasional excursion trains.
1830 it was agreed with the local authority that as this would cause a steep incline on the railway, the road should be raised and crossed on the level. The crossing was removed by the Midland and replaced by a bridge in 1900; the signal box was not abolished until 28 April 1929. A gatekeeper's cottage was erected at Foss Lane crossing, but it has now been removed. Originally a single-story building, two bedrooms above were added in 1861.

A "tunnel house", built over an engine water tank on the up side of the line 8 ch. before the east end of Glenfield Tunnel, was occupied by permanent-way staff and later those who regulated the working of trains through the tunnel by means, according to Stretton, of a 15-minute sandglass. Late in 1841 the sand-glasses were replaced by signals, probably of the disc type. The tunnel itself is 1 mile 36 yards long, perfectly straight and level. It is of very narrow bore, the maximum dimensions of vehicles using it being restricted to 7 ft. 7 in. (8 ft. 9 in. between 3 ft. 6 in. and 8 ft. 6 in. above rail level and 8 ft. 4 in. between 8 ft. 6 in. and 10 ft. above rail level), 12 ft. 10 in. high in centre and 10 ft. 9 in. high at the sides. The Leicester & Swannington official plan shows the semi-circular arch roof described with a radius of 5 ft. 8 1/2 in. and height from rail level as 13 ft. 6 in. The Midland Co. built special six-wheel passenger coaches with barred windows for use on this section, but in later years a set of four ordinary six-wheel oil-lighted stock was used. The west end was closed at night by a high wooden gate, an arrangement dating from early Leicester & Swannington days. The gate was removed in 1929.

The tunnel is ventilated by seven small and three large shafts, the former about 8 ft. high and 4 ft. diameter, the latter 10 ft. by 7 ft., placed on an average of 150 yards apart, though some are as little as 75 yds. from the next adjoining shaft. All are in blue or red brick with stone coping around the top and covered by metal grilles. They are of both vertically-sided and coned construction. Some of them are situated amongst houses on a new estate and two are actually in the gardens of private dwellings, a most curious arrangement. Despite the number of ventilators, they do not appear to have been very successful in keeping the tunnel clear of smoke. Francis Giles, appearing as a witness for those opposing the G.W.R. Bill in June 1835, said: "The ventilation of the tunnel upon the Leicester & Swannington Railway by shafts is a complete failure. I sent my son to investigate it and he was nearly smothered".

The original station building at Glenfield was, like that at the top of Bagworth incline, a replica of the familiar bow-fronted toll house; this house still stands on the west side of the level crossing. The present station, east of the crossing and on the down side, was erected by the Midland in 1876, at a cost of £305. The old pattern rails and chairs on an extremely sharply-curved private siding in a small yard are worth inspection.

The Groby Granite Company's private branch connects with sidings on the up side of the line by a double-line junction facing Desford. In Leicester & Swannington days the transfer of wagons was by a turntable to a loop siding. The present layout dates from May 1866; Midland property extended for 5 ch. towards the quarries, where the private line becomes single and included until recently a curious assortment of old fashioned chairs.

23 Re-leveling by the Midland Railway introduced two short sections of 1 in 360 and 1 in 450 rising towards Glenfield station.
Between Groby Junction and Ratby an occupation footpath crossing is constructed of Leicester & Swannington stone sleepers: close by on the down side is a stone believed to be L. & S. milepost 4, although no numeral is now visible.

There was no station proper at Ratby, but a wharf building on the east side of the level crossing was erected by Daniel Marvin in 1832 and is still standing. Though an inn adjoins the station, there is no contemporary evidence that it was used for accommodation of passengers as were similar buildings at Ashby Road and Long Lane. The present station, west of the crossing, was built by the Midland in 1876; the platforms were extended westward in 1887. It was closed to goods traffic from 4 October 1954. Two gated level crossings—Ratby Road and Desford Road—8 ch. apart, intervene between Ratby and Desford Junction. Gatekeepers are not now employed at either crossing, though the small gate huts remain.

Desford Junction was opened on Wednesday 1 August 1849 with the Midland’s line thence to Knighton Junctions. The two cottages under one roof on the up side are Midland Railway buildings, erected early in 1851, at a cost of £298 10s. od. by Messrs. Holland & Smith. Ellis’s private siding also dates from the same period, having been put in in 1850 originally to serve a manure depot.

At Desford station the Leicester & Swannington office stood on the right hand side just inside the entrance to the present goods yard; it was demolished and the weighbridge removed in 1941. Like the similar building at Ratby, it dated from 1832 and was erected and maintained by a contractor, Chamberlain, who ran the station and worked the gates. His plate “H. C. 1832” remained on the building to the end. “A shed for the accommodation of passengers” was added in 1833 at a cost of £25. The present station buildings and station house (except the west end, which is a later addition) were erected by the Midland in 1848. A shelter on the up platform was put up in 1862. This is the only station to retain a platform of the original (1848) height, viz. 10 in. above present rail level, but the extension westwards is of normal height.

Prior’s Barn. The author has been unable to ascertain why this place was included in the Leicester & Swannington official distance table (Appendix A). Before the alterations of 1848, the line ran alongside a building whose foundations are still to be seen and the deviation made at this time is clearly marked by the position of the present hedges. It is possible it was some form of private or “conditional” stopping place, but no mention of it occurs in the Minutes or other contemporary documents, apart from the distance table. There was, however, a shareholder named Prior, described as “gentleman”, living at Desford.

Until 27 March 1848 there was a level crossing at Merry Lees, the present bridge being substituted when the line was doubled in that year. The existing house (up side, east of bridge) was built by the Leicester & Swannington early in 1839 as a combined station building and living quarters for a permanent wayman, whose wife attended to the crossing and performed station duties. It was in use until 27 March 1848, on which date a new station building and short platform on the down side, west of the overbridge, was opened. The station was closed for passengers on 28 February 1871, but the building remained until the spring of 1941. The siding here was brought into use on 19 July 1875; it was taken out on Sunday 20 April 1941.
Stag & Castle Inn. So named from the main feature of the arms of the Maynard family. This was an original Leicester & Swannington stopping place and is referred to in the company’s records as “Thornton” and by the Midland as “Thornton Lane”, to distinguish it from a similarly named station in Yorkshire. The inn, which adjoined the line on the east side of the Thornton—Bagworth road level crossing, was a “conditional” stopping place. It was at this level crossing that it is alleged Samson collided with a horse and cart in 1833. The number of passengers using the facility dwindled to a figure which made it uneconomic and it was closed as a stopping place on 31 December 1841. An application from residents of Thornton, Bagworth and neighbouring villages to resume the stopping of trains here reached the Board on 22 July 1842, but was declined on the grounds “that it would be a serious inconvenience”.

When the Thornton Deviation line was opened on 27 March 1848, the Midland decided not to erect a station on the new line, here on a considerable embankment, but as a result of pressure from local people they ordered on 30 July 1850, “that a cheap platform on old sleepers, with steps up the embankment, be made at the Thornton station”. On 5 September 1865 the General Manager reported that for some time past trains had only called at “Thornton Lane” on Saturdays. There were no signals to protect trains calling there or passengers crossing the lines to reach the down platform. Traffic was described as “very trifling” and it was decided to close the station on and from 1 October 1865.

There was originally no passenger accommodation at Bagworth (old station), but what the Minutes describe as “a suitable room” was built in 1841 for this purpose. For some years after closing in 1848 it was used as a farm building. The original buildings at the foot of the incline consisted of a water tank, coal bunker, bell house and office. At the top there was a house, of the familiar toll-house type, for the incline contractor, and a weighing machine.

The Bagworth colliery private railway approached the Leicester & Swannington along a site which is now a road, crossing the present line by an overbridge about ¼ mile east of Bagworth and Ellistown station. The actual junction was by a turntable in the main line. This form of connection remained until, in the 1848 alterations, Bagworth incline was replaced by the existing line and the colliery branch altered to join the new line at Bagworth station.

Bagworth (new station) was erected by the Midland and opened on 27 March 1848; it consisted of the building and house still in partial use for their original purposes, and two platforms. The down platform was lengthened in 1861 by 60 ft. The tracks were slued slightly in 1882 and a new down platform constructed; the site of the 1848 down platform is now occupied by a loop-line which runs immediately past the station buildings. It was renamed “Bagworth and Ellistown” on 1 May 1895.

Ashby Road station (now Bardon Hill). This stopping place was on the north side of the level crossing of the Ashby—Leicester turnpike road. There was no railway building here, the necessary business being transacted in the adjoining “Ashby Road Hotel”, where rooms were rented by the Leicester & Swannington. Some idea of the importance of the hotel may be gained by inspection of the extensive “posting” accommodation at the rear, where there was a considerable yard. It ceased business as a hotel
in 1848 but on 29 September 1849 the Midland leased the building for 14 years and converted part of it into a stationmaster’s house; another part was let as a shop. A renewal of this arrangement was cancelled in January 1865, the shop portion being converted to a waiting room by making a doorway out of the booking office. Subsequently the building was purchased outright.

The main part of it is now derelict, but until 1953 the railway goods office was housed in a room added in later years. Though now of rather gaunt appearance, the hotel must have been a fine building in its day and witnessed a good deal of coming and going by coach and rail.

The Midland constructed platforms on the south side of the crossing in October 1849; these were lengthened in 1861, waiting sheds being added in 1875. Control of the crossing gates was installed in the signal box in 1890. The station was known as “Ashby Road” in Leicester & Swannington days, but is referred to in the earliest Midland official records as “Bardon Hill”. The change of name may therefore, be said to date from Friday 1 January 1847, on which day the actual working of the Leicester & Swannington was taken over by its new owners. The station was closed to passengers on Monday 12 May 1952.

As at Ashby Road, there was no railway building at Long Lane (now Coalville), business being carried on in the adjoining “Railway Hotel”. The Midland opened a passenger station at Coalville in 1848 on the site of the present one, which dates from 1894. For the same reasons as applied to Bardon Hill, the name “Coalville” was not officially adopted until 1 January 1847, although the township had been known by that name at least since 1835, when it was recognised as separate from Whitwick. A more uninspiring, if possibly appropriate, name could hardly have been selected!

A footbridge to avoid the dangerous level crossing was authorised on 18 March 1851.

In 1848 the Midland purchased the “Railway Hotel”, but the owner, Mrs. Sheffield, was retained as tenant until 6 March 1855, when she was given notice to quit. The hotel was sold on 6 May 1856 for £700. Gates across the Whitwick and Snibston colliery branches where they joined the main line were installed in 1861, to prevent cattle straying.

The Leicester & Swannington engine shed, built in 1833 and called “Snibston”, housed the two locomotives working the “upper section”; it stood on the down side just before the old Mantle Lane level crossing. It was rebuilt on the opposite side of the line in 1848 and later replaced by a more modern Midland one. After agitation started in 1892, Mantle Lane level crossing was abolished in 1911 and the roadway carried underneath the railway, by Agreement dated 22 December 1910 between the Midland Railway, Leicestershire County Council and Coalville Urban District Council. Evidence produced at a Board of Trade enquiry on 13 December 1907 showed that the number of weekday shunting and train movements over the crossing averaged 418 per day, and that the gates were closed across this important road for 93 hours between 7.0 a.m. and 7.0 p.m.24

At the present Mantle Lane Junction, adjacent to the East signal box, the Midland’s Leicester—Burton line, opened for throughout traffic on 1 August 1849, curves away in a north-westerly direction, leaving the

24I am indebted to H. B. Chynoweth, Esq., for allowing me to inspect the Coalville Urban District Council file on this subject.
original Leicester & Swannington to proceed straight ahead past Snibston No. 3 colliery sidings (removed in 1952), to Spring Lane level crossing. Immediately after the crossing the line became double to the top of Swannington incline, where the stationary engine and boiler house, enginemen's dwelling house and brakesman's hut were on the up side. Safety points were provided in the up line and on the single (incline) line a few yards beyond the change of gradient.

At the bottom of the incline, the line divided into two tracks forming a loop and passed through a gate, the last 9 chains being level. An end-on junction with the former Coleorton Railway and California branch was made at the termination of Leicester & Swannington property.

III. LOCOMOTIVES

In all the company possessed ten locomotives, but only eight were in use at any one time. Full particulars of these, with dimensions, are given in Appendix F. It should be pointed out that the engines bore names only, not numbers, and are invariably referred to by name in the company's own records.

On 18 January 1832, the greater part of the line being well on the way to completion, the Directors somewhat belatedly turned their attention to the question of locomotives and rolling-stock required to work it. George Stephenson was asked to furnish an estimate of the locomotive power which would be needed at the outset, and the expected cost. A month later, no reply having been received, he was also asked "whether he preferred Steam or Horse power and, if the former, whether he would contract for haulage of coal, etc. at 4d. per ton per mile". Writing from Liverpool on 25 February 1832, he informed the Directors that "steam power is much to be preferred in view of the volume of traffic" but he could not undertake the suggested contract. He added that he had ordered a 25-horse power engine to be built at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the cost of which was quoted by his son as about £1,000; although there is no minuted evidence that this had been sanctioned by the Board, they confirmed the order with Robert Stephenson & Co. forthwith.

The first engine, Comet, was shipped from Newcastle late in April 1832 per The Nymph (Capt. Smith, Gainsborough) and reached Leicester by canal, being handed over to the company on Saturday 5 May 1832. Together with the spare parts which accompanied it, the engine cost £1,028 2s. 6d. Writing from his new home at Alton Grange near Ashby-de-la-Zouch on 1 August 1832, George Stephenson said the engine was able to haul 120 tons gross on level track at 10-12 miles an hour. On a gradient of 25 ft. ascent per mile, "the steepest on the line", it would be 50 tons. He estimated the general working load should be about 20 per cent less than these figures. It is worthy of remark that this engine was ordered by George Stephenson as suitable for the line, but if his calculations were based upon the above-mentioned maximum gradient, 1 in 211, that may account for its failure to handle the traffic, since the steepest actuality on the "lower section" was, in fact, 1 in 119, between Merry Lees and the foot of Bagworth incline. It was presumably not visualised the engine would work on the "upper section" and there is no evidence that it did so.

It is a curious fact that it does not seem to have occurred to the Directors to set aside a sum for the locomotives in their original estimate nor
to make provision for a second machine to replace Comet should it break down. The Board discussed the matter on 3 August 1832 and decided to order three more locomotives. Enquiries as to price, etc., were sent to Robert Stephenson & Co., Rothwell, Hick & Rothwell (Bolton), The Horsley Co. (West Bromwich), and Fenton, Murray & Wood (Leeds). Two weeks later they accepted Stephenson & Co.'s offer for one of 25-horse power and two of 45-50 horse power at £900 each, excluding tenders, delivery to be completed by the end of November. These were Phoenix, Samson and Goliath. The two latter were found to be unsatisfactory and were converted from 0-4-0 to 0-4-2 by the addition of wheels sent by Stephenson & Co. This work was carried out in the company's shops at West Bridge. The results obtained from the conversions being good, a new engine of the same dimensions, Hercules, was ordered on 24 August 1833 and delivered in December. It cost £1,300 and brought the number of engines to five.

First signs that the locomotive power was falling behind the rapidly increasing volume of coal and other traffic were noted in the autumn of 1833. On 26 November the Board minuted: "It being deemed expedient that in the present state of the Engine Power, some limitation in the carrying of passengers is necessary... for the present the Comet engine shall work 3 days a week and passengers be conveyed twice a day, morning and evening to and from Bagworth and only 2 days a week (Wednesdays and Saturdays) beyond Bagworth but that passengers shall wait at the Bagworth Inclined Plane until such number of wagons shall have been run down as will form a sufficient load for the engine."

At the same meeting Robert Stephenson said his firm could now supply an improved six-wheel engine for £1,050 delivered at Leicester, and it was agreed to purchase this. The new engine, Atlas, was a much more powerful machine. It was the first six-coupled engine built by Stephenson's and one of the first of this wheel formation in the country. Amongst other patents of the builders, it was equipped with a steam brake.

In November 1833 it was decided to replace the iron fireboxes of the engines with copper ones. Though Robert Stephenson told the Board he preferred these to be supplied by The Horsley Co., the contract for the work was let to Messrs. Ryde, Colman & Co., Vauxhall Works, Leicester, the agreed price being £119 28. 6d., including fitting. The dirty state of the engines came under notice and on 13 December 1833 Bagster was instructed to remedy the position and informed that it would be his responsibility in future.

Comet was put out of action early in December by the melting of pipes. It was ordered on 27 December "that it be sent to The Horsley Company for repairs, with copper firebox, and returned as soon as possible". On 27 June 1834, the engine being still at West Bromwich, the Clerks were ordered to arrange for its immediate return. As it had not been returned by 5 September the instruction was repeated, this time with success.

The Board met specially on 1 January 1834 "in consequence of the state of the locomotive engines". It was ordered that the second trip that day to Bagworth for coal be omitted and one to Groby for granite run instead. Another special meeting was held on 18 February "in consequence of the engine power failing". John Nicholson, the newly appointed "engine man" from Stephenson's Newcastle works (Henry Cabry was dismissed on 15 January for "repeated negligence and insolence") reported the crank-axle of Samson had broken the previous day. He suggested the
Fig. 3. Locomotive Hercules
axle from Goliath, which was being fitted with a copper firebox and would be out of use for some weeks, be transferred to Samson, taking about a week, but the Board decided to order a new one from Newcastle.

Bagster’s report on 7 March was very discouraging, only Hercules being in working order, though its brass tubes were “very troublesome”. New copper tubes were expected in ten days. Atlas, newly arrived from Newcastle, would be ready in about a week, but he expected trouble with its brass tubes as with Hercules. Comet was with the Horsley Co. and the other engines in various stages of repairs at West Bridge. George Stephenson was asked, as a matter of urgency, to report on the engines and give his views, particularly in regard to the tube trouble. At another special meeting (15 March) he said “the trouble with the tubes is due almost entirely to incrustation from the water” and recommended a new source of supply. On 21 March Bagster reported that Phœnix had been tried “but is nearly as inefficient as before”. The partial re-tubing of Hercules was being undertaken and Atlas, though working, “is affected by the water and has trouble raising steam”.

The position on 4 April was somewhat improved, though the Horsley Co., who were repairing Phœnix at West Bridge, had been told “to replace the defective firebox or repair the present one”. The new crank axle for Samson had arrived on 1 April and was being fitted. The most significant information, however, was that rain water had been tried in Hercules and found most satisfactory. In consequence it was working the “lower section” and Atlas was removed to the “upper section” on 1 April, where the working had been by horse power only for some weeks.

The Board lost no time in securing a supply of more suitable water on the “upper section”. A spring was found in a field near Ashby Road, the site purchased and on 16 May authority given to construct a reservoir there with a tank at Battleflat cutting.

On 1st July 1834 it was agreed to fit a new copper firebox to Hercules, Messrs. Ryde, Coleman & Co. securing the contract at £150. They were told, however, that their previous work was not satisfactory and their outstanding account was only paid under protest, the Directors finding it “objectionable”. Bagster reported on 1 August “the Samson engine is now in a very precarious state and the Atlas engine will not be able to take its place”. In despair the Directors agreed that if Samson broke down, horse haulage must be resorted to.

An advertisement by the London & Birmingham Railway for locomotives gave the Leicester & Swannington a chance to dispose of Phœnix; though now in good order, it was too small for their needs. They therefore offered the engine to the London & Birmingham for £525. The final agreed price was £600 and it was transferred to its new owners in the following year, leaving the company with seven engines.

Reference is made by the Directors on 2 October 1835 to “damage being caused by the excessive speed at which the engines are driven”, but there is nothing to show what action was taken. It may well have concerned the permanent way which, with its light rails, was already showing signs of strain.

A rather unusual suggestion was made to the Board by Nicholson in December 1836. In it, he and the enginemen offered to take over the locomotives and contract with the Company for the working of the line. The offer was declined, but Nicholson was esteemed by the company as a zealous
and efficient man, and on 2 February 1837 he received an increase of wages to 3 guineas per week for three years, plus an allowance of £12 per annum for house rent. Possibly this was done to ensure retention of his services.

The order for a new engine, Ajax, was given on 23 April 1837 to the Haigh Foundry Co., Wigan, for £1,320. It was delivered in October, two months ahead of contract time.

Comet, having long been of little use except for shunting and other light duties, was sold in October 1838 to the Birmingham & Gloucester Railway for £900. A present of £5 was made to the excellent Nicholson “in consideration of the good state in which the Comet has been got up for sale”.

On 7 June 1839 the Board decided to purchase a still larger engine and accepted the Haigh Foundry’s tender for Hector which was delivered in October. It was the last engine to be purchased by the company. Thenceforth, until 24 July 1845, Nicholson was able to report that the engines were in good order. On that day he informed the Board that Snibston and Whitwick collieries were each building about 25 new wagons to handle increased coal traffic and said “the locomotive power will be insufficient for the volume of traffic this will produce”. In view of the pending negotiations for purchase of the line by the Midland, the Board asked the latter to provide a new engine “which will be paid for by the Leicester & Swannington if the treaty does not take place”.

Two further locomotives require mention, Liverpool, a standard 0-4-0 built by Edward Bury & Co. in 1834, and Vulcan, a six-coupled machine by Tayleur & Co. in 1835. The latter was identical with Atlas, the drawings having been supplied by Robert Stephenson & Co. The reasons for purchasing Liverpool are not apparent. It was a very small engine and only a little more powerful than Comet and Phoenix which, by 1834, were almost useless. At all events it gave practically no trouble; an unsuccessful attempt was made to sell it on a commission through the Haigh Foundry in February 1841, but it continued in service to the end of the company’s existence, being sent to Derby for repairs in September 1845 under arrangements made between Nicholson and Matthew Kirtley, the Midland Locomotive Superintendent.

It is of interest to record that in September 1833 the Board received representations from the Liverpool shareholders asking that, when possible, contracts for locomotives should be given to Lancashire firms when their prices were competitive and that orders should not be given automatically to Robert Stephenson & Co. No doubt this explains why the last three locomotives were obtained from builders in that area.

Thus eight locomotives passed to the Midland in 1846. With the exception of Liverpool, all were in working order of varying degrees of efficiency. They were, however, rather small machines by Midland standards and the majority were soon scrapped and replaced by more powerful engines. Samson was sold to the Ibstock Colliery Co., on whose private branch it worked from 1847 to 1862.

The author cannot escape the conclusion that Robert Stephenson was too busy as Engineer of the London & Birmingham to give proper attention to the locomotive needs of the Swannington company. The locomotives were too small in comparison with the rapidly expanding coal traffic—whose approximate volume and potential development was known beforehand with reasonable certainty—and for the work they had to perform.
Apart from a few months after opening, the line was under-powered throughout its existence. How much this may have been due to the weak state of the light permanent way is a matter for conjecture, but it is notable that the London & Birmingham suffered similarly at the hands of Edward Bury, its Locomotive Superintendent.

IV. PASSENGER CARRIAGES AND WAGONS

The Leicester & Swannington was not primarily a passenger-carrying railway and little provision was made for this traffic. In 1838, when the line had been in operation for six years, it was conveying fewer passengers than any other comparable railway in England, an average of 443 a week, against 11,718 on the Liverpool & Manchester and 26,697 on the London & Greenwich. In the first half of 1843 94-9% of its receipts were from goods traffic, 5-1% from passengers.55 Existing records show that the company possessed only one carriage on the opening day. A blueprint copy of the original elevation,26 signed by Vaughan, shows it to have been an open vehicle with sides about 2 ft. high, in which there was a central door with vertical handrail on the left-hand side and lower step, there being no platforms at the stopping places. The frame was 14 ft. long, the solebar carrying an oval plate "Leicester & Swannington Rly. Co. Builders 1832". It was carried on 4 wheels of 3 ft. diameter and weighed 1 ton 12 cwt. empty.

The second vehicle was a four-wheel, three-compartment, 1st-class carriage on a frame of 17 ft. and wheels 3 ft. diameter, weighing 2½ tons empty. It was ordered in August 1832 and completed in November, being built in the company’s own shops at West Bridge and carrying a similar plate on the solebar.27

The third was the 1st and 2nd-class composite carriage built specially for use on the “upper section” between Bagworth incline and Long Lane. The dimensions were identical with those of the second vehicle, but the body consisted of a single 1st-class closed compartment in the centre, flanked by an open-sided, but roofed, 2nd-class compartment at each end. The usual lower step was provided below each door. Unlike its two predecessors, the coach was equipped with a hand screw brake. This was in a vertical pillar at the end of one of the 2nd-class compartments and actuated wooden blocks on one pair of wheels only. The vehicle was built at West Bridge and carried the usual oval plate on the solebar. It was completed early in 1833.28

It appears that a fourth vehicle was added in 1845, but nothing is known of it except that on 5 December that year a cheque for £150 was drawn in favour of William Hamer “on account of a new passenger coach”. It seems probable that the majority of 2nd-class passengers merely travelled in the coal wagons when empty ones were available; after 1834 practically all the wagons were the property of the collieries and quarries, but no criticism of their use by passengers has survived.

Information as to the wagon stock is scanty. On 2 March 1832 the Board decided that the wagons for all except public traffic should be

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55 Parliamentary Papers, 1839, x. 537; 1840, xiii. 560-4: Journal of the Statistical Society, viii (1845), 225.
26 In Newark & Swannington Museum, Leicester.
27 From elevation in Newark & Swannington Museum, Leicester.
28 Ibid.
provided by the collieries, quarries and lime works, but that the railway
would commence operations by providing some of these until the traders
were able to do so. Thirty were ordered on that date to be constructed in
the West Bridge shops from materials already purchased. The cost was
estimated at £60 per wagon. An order of 22 June to the Engineer in-
structed him to “fit up three wagons for passengers similar to 2nd-class
passengers on the Manchester & Liverpool Railway”. A further thirty
wagons were ordered on this date, making sixty in all. From an instruc-
tion issued on 28 September 1832 it is assumed all these wagons were of 4 tons
capacity. It was then ordered that the maximum load should be 4 tons per
wagon and to enforce this, treble tonnage would be charged on all over-
weight. Subsequent similar instructions all refer to the 4-ton maximum,
though 4½ tons of coal (only) was allowed from 1 December 1844 to 10
February 1845, when it was alleged the excess weight caused some axle
breakages. A resolution of 15 February 1833 decided that “no more than
the 60 wagons now authorised or completed be built. All collieries, etc.
are to be told they must provide their own”. On 23 August the same year
an instruction went forth to the traders that no wagon with unhooped
cast-iron wheels would be allowed on the railway; on 4 October they were
told that every wagon must carry the name and address of the owner, a
consecutive number and tare weight.

The first of a series of minor complaints from traders about the short-
comings of the company’s own wagons came in December 1833, when
they considered they were being overcharged, owing to the painted tare
weight of the wagons being too high. It was decided on 13 December that
all wagons must be re-weighed and the painted figures adjusted; this to be
done in the first week of January, April, July and October each year, the
necessary refunds being made to traders who had been overcharged from
this cause.

Sale of the company’s wagons to the traders was discussed at the end
of 1833, and on 21 March the following year it was decided to sell 40 of
them “beginning with No. 1”. Tenders were invited and that of the
Whitwick Colliery Co. for £1,445 accepted on 4 April. Eight more were
sold on 30 May and a further ten on 18 June for £3 10s. 6d. each to
cort & Co., Leicester, “on condition they are used on the Leicester &
Swannington Railway”. It may be wondered if the firm had any option to
use them elsewhere at this period!

Having disposed of their wagons, the railway started “tightening up”
on the traders’ plant. On 26 December 1834 the Manager was ordered
“to detain all traders’ wagons which are defective, breaks, etc”. This was
followed by a reminder to Bagster that the Board had ordered on 7 Feb-
uary 1834, “all wagons using Swannington Plane must be fitted with
double breaks” and he was told to enforce it. The provision as to brakes
was extended to the whole line by a decision of 4 October 1844, effective
as from 1 January following. This aroused the indignation of the col-
owners. After a meeting of the owners of Whitwick, Bagworth, Smoile,
Snibston and Ibstock held at the Railway Hotel, Coalville, on Monday
11 November, they wrote to the Board: “the order as to double breaks is
unnecessary and cannot be acceded to. The present breaks are more than
amply sufficient if properly applied by efficient breaksmen to convey any
train of wagons down Bagworth Plane”. But the Directors decided to
enforce their order and the traders were compelled to give in.
According to Stretton, six passenger carriages and twelve goods wagons passed to the Midland Railway in 1846, but the present author has not been able to reconcile this statement with the information in the company's records.

V. BAGWORTH INCLINE

It will be recalled that Miles and Stephenson's original report stated that the incline at Bagworth might be worked by a stationary engine. This was, however, an unnecessary expense, as the flow of loaded wagons was down, and the empties up the incline. It was, therefore, constructed and worked on the self-acting counterbalance system though, according to Stretton, against Robert Stephenson's wishes. However, the only reasonable alternative was an incline of about 1 in 60, which was too steep for locomotives of that time.

As constructed, the incline was 43 chains long, on a uniform gradient of 1 in 29 rising towards Ashby Road; the approaches at top and bottom were level. At the bottom, loop sidings on each side of the running line were laid in to accommodate wagons working to and from the "upper section"; the point of convergence at the incline end being actually on the rising gradient. At the upper end a loop, with crossover road, was provided and 142 ft. beyond the actual change of gradient a grooved wheel, 6 ft. in diameter, horizontally-placed below rail-level, around which the cable passed. Braking was not normally effected on this wheel, but by brakesmen riding on the wagons. The upper portion was 3-rail as far as the passing loop, the centre of which was 500 yards from the top, and the lower single track. The lower end of the loop, which was about 140 ft. long, had a pair of self-acting slides to guide up trains alternately to the right or left line; they were made of oak, 8 ft. long, plated with iron and fastened by pins driven perpendicularly through the upper ends. The lower ends rested alternately on the outer and inner rails, the wheels of the descending train pushed the slide over, so that the next up train must go up the line the last one came down. The normal descending load was 10-12 wagons and the time occupied 8 or 9 minutes. The incline was brought into use on the same day as the official opening of the railway, 17 July 1832. Communication between top and bottom was by wire-operated bells.

The difficulties and danger likely to arise in the working of the incline were causing concern at a very early date. The Annual Meeting on 14 August 1833 "resolved that to obviate the inconvenience at present sustained by the inclined plane at Bagworth, the Directors be required to take levels and form estimates for a new line of Railroad from the foot of Bagworth inclined plane to the crossing of the Ashby Road". The estimate, £31,727 16s. 8d., exclusive of land, was duly obtained, but the Directors decided on 18 October that the company's finances could not justify such heavy expenditure and the proposal was dropped for the time being.

The first hemp rope (5 in. in circumference and weighing 2 tons) appears to have been insufficiently robust for the job and it was replaced by a wire cable obtained from Huddart & Co., Limehouse, London; this was put to work in October 1833. The Board ordered "that the old one be

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30 ibid.
disposed of to best advantage”. Subsequent replacements took place in 1841, 1846 and 1847, the last-named being obtained from Taylor, of Hollinwood, Oldham, at 36s. 9d. per cwt.

On 11 January 1841 John Nicholson appeared before the Board with a suggestion for working the incline by locomotives attached to the cable, making it unnecessary to rely upon the even flow of wagons to obtain sufficient counterbalancing load. He stressed the desirability of being able to work a train through from Leicester to points on the “upper section” and thought it practicable for the engine to ascend the incline with a train, if it was rope-assisted. George Stephenson was asked to inspect the incline and advise what might be done. As a result of his report, it was decided not to proceed with the suggestion and nothing more was heard of it until 4 October 1844, when the Board dealt with the subject of a serious accident on the incline.

This accident, which occurred on Wednesday 28 August, was caused by a descending train of wagons with an empty passenger carriage in rear, parting company with the rope and being completely wrecked at the foot of the incline. The Manager had already on 6 September been instructed to “continue to place Passenger carriages uniformly at the end of the train as they have done since the late fatal accident…” a decision which was supported by a letter from the Railway Department, Board of Trade, dated 19 September.31

The Board now decided that Francis Stather, who was in charge of Bagworth incline, should be sent to inspect the Manchester & Leeds Railway incline of 1 in 27 at Werneth, Oldham, and report if the method of working was applicable to Bagworth. His rather quaintly worded report was read to the Board on 8 November:

“It is very simple, safe, Effective, and expeditious. It is put in Motion by the Locomotive Engine and a balance Weight of about 30 tons attached to one end of the Rope as a permanent thing—there is no hooking or unhooking it is always ready, there is no delay, they run from 10 to 18 Miles per Hour with the greatest safety and command over the Trains—they have a double road, the plane is nearly a Mile Long and the Engine always runs up and down one side—they have a Wire Rope about 4½ inches they use no Brake-Sticks.

October 31st, 1844
Francis Stather”

This method, which was not unlike that suggested by Nicholson three years before, did not commend itself to the Board, who decided that a more easily graded deviation line was the only safe solution. Robert Stephenson attended the Board on 6 June 1845 and was asked “to consider the best mode of avoiding or improving the inclined Plane at Bagworth”. The result was the “Thornton deviation railway” opened by the Midland in 1848, of which Stephenson and Charles Liddell were the joint engineers.

A number of minor accidents occurred at Bagworth incline and it is a matter for speculation as to why the company did not specifically prohibit passengers from riding up and down in the wagons, even though this was entirely at their own risk. On 21 June 1833 it was “resolved to put up cautionary direction notices in each passenger carriage and top

31 ibid. The accident is erroneously stated to have occurred in 1843.
and bottom of the inclined plane”, whilst on 23 August following instructions were given “that guards are to warn passengers on arriving at the foot of the inclined plane of the danger of riding up it”. It was also decided that a footpath should be provided “adjacent to the plane” but no steps were taken to compel passengers to use it!

The position in regard to passengers using the incline is obscure and existing records to not give a clear indication as to what regulations, if any, were in force. Stretton\textsuperscript{32} says that after the serious accident on 28 August 1844 the incline was “closed to passenger traffic”. It is the opinion of the present author that it was never officially recognised as a section on which passengers were conveyed, though doubtless the fares between stations on the “upper” and “lower” sections included the incline mileage in their basis.

It appears to have been the practice to bring loaded wagons down the incline without using the rope, relying upon the vehicle’s own brakes. After an accident in October 1833, it was ordered “that not more than one wagon be brought down under the care of one man without being attached to the Rope”. The last, and most serious, accident occurred on 1 January 1847—after the line had been taken over by the Midland Railway—when ten traders’ wagons were badly damaged, costing £124 for repairs. One belonging to Viscount Maynard was totally destroyed and was replaced by a Leicester & Swannington wagon bought recently for £12 at a sale of Groby quarry plant.

VI. SWANNINGTON INCLINE AND STATIONARY ENGINE

The best-known feature of the line has always been the Swannington Incline and stationary engine provided to work it. The incline formed the extremity of the Leicester & Swannington and was single-track only, 33 chains\textsuperscript{33} in length, on a gradient of 1 in 17 falling towards the termination of the railway and junction with the Coleorton Railway. It was, therefore, an adverse incline, the flow of loaded wagons being against the grade, necessitating a stationary engine at the upper end.

With the line completed as far as Long Lane and the construction thence to the termination in hand, the Board decided to take the first step towards providing the now historic stationary engine. At their meeting on Friday 15 February 1833 they ordered “that a Stationary Engine be immediately ordered for the inclined plane at Swannington and that the Engineer prepare proper plans and specifications...the engine to consume its own smoke”.

On Tuesday 23 April 1833 they record: “tenders for furnishing a Stationary Engine for the inclined plane at Swannington were opened and read from the following persons, viz:

2. The Horsley Coal & Iron Company.

\textsuperscript{32} ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} According to the Leicester & Swannington official table of distances (Appendix A), the inclined portion extended from 15 m. 46 ch. to 16 m. 3 ch., but the corresponding Midland Railway milepost distances were 113 m. 64 ch. to 114 m. 17 ch., making the incline only 33 ch. long. The latter measurements were checked by the author on the site before the removal of the 113\textfrac{1}{4} milepost in 1952 and appear to be the correct length.
and a letter of enquiry from Mr. Isaac Dodds, The Horsley Company’s Engineer. It was resolved that the tender of The Horsley Coal & Iron Company be accepted and an order given.” The quoted price of the engine was £750 delivered and assembled to working order on the site. On 10 May 1833 a rope, to cost £78, was ordered from the Webster Patent Ropery, Sunderland, the same firm who had supplied the one in use at Bagworth. Tenders for building the stationary engine house were also invited; eight tenders were received, the contract being awarded to a local firm, Russell & Norman. The engineman’s dwelling house, costing £120, was not erected until December. The boiler stood in the open until 1856 when the Midland built a boiler house around it.

The rails were laid from Long Lane almost to the top of the incline by 24 May and by 12 August to the foot and junction with the Coleorton Railway; on this date it only remained to complete the engine house and erection of the engine, which Birkenshaw said would be done within three weeks. As explained in Section I, the exact date on which the incline and stationary engine were brought into use cannot be determined with absolute certainty, but all available evidence points to Monday 25 November 1833 or within a few days thereof.

An estimate presented to the Board by Robert Stephenson on 28 June 1833 showed the following expenditure on the incline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheaves</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine house</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, etc.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine, etc.</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£1,331</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first trouble with the stationary engine was reported on 29 November, only a few days after its first use, when the Board learned that “an engine shaft had broken” and Bagster had been sent to The Horsley Co.’s works to obtain a new one. Temporary arrangements were made with Bostock, of Cloud Hill lime-works, for his horses to haul wagons up the incline. Before the shaft was replaced, it was found the boiler had developed a fracture and Isaac Dodds was asked to examine it. He reported the defect as very slight and said it could be repaired on the spot for about £10; this work was authorised forthwith. The engine repairs were not completed by 7 March 1834, when the working of the incline was entirely suspended due to a dispute over an increase in rates. This was settled and working by stationary engine resumed on 11 May, though the traffic only required this on two or three days per week. The engine had thus been out of use for about 4½ months.

Though there is record of only one accident in working the incline, in August 1840, an order was issued on 7 February 1834 that all wagons using it must be fitted with double brakes. This may well have been the outcome of mishaps on Bagworth incline.

It is clear from a study of the Engineer’s yearly reports on the state of the line and of the incomplete traffic returns, that the number of wagons using the incline was never very great. Indeed, on 22 February 1842
Stephenson refers to the section as “not much used”. It was, in fact, much less than the company expected and it seems doubtful if they would have gone to the considerable expense and trouble of installing and maintaining the stationary engine if this had been known in advance. As will be seen elsewhere, they did everything possible to increase the traffic passing via the incline but without much success. In his report of 4 October 1836 Stephenson said the lineside drains on the incline required cleaning out and rails adjusting; a similar comment was made on the drains on 22 February 1842.

Though the engine itself gave no further trouble after replacement of the shaft in 1834, the boiler was not satisfactory and on 8 February 1839 it was decided to obtain a new one. The Horsley Co.’s tender was too high and the order was given to Messrs. Waddington & Woodland, of Bradford. Robert Stephenson examined the original boiler in April 1839 and expressed his opinion that “the plates beyond each joint farthest from the fire, where it might be supposed the iron would be comparatively protected from the action of the flame, are much corroded and diminished in thickness”. He suggested this was due to failure to clean out the boiler at short intervals.

The accident recorded as occurring in August 1840 resulted in very considerable damage to some traders’ wagons and the company undertook the repair of these. The Board ordered an enquiry to be held into the circumstances, all negligent servants to be dismissed. Unfortunately there is no report of this enquiry or of the reasons for the mishap.

The last report on the engine before the line was taken over by the Midland Railway is dated Thursday 24 July 1845 and says: “The Swannington Engine is in general good condition, including boilers and every other appendage.” At least the engine cannot have suffered at any time from overwork!

The engine had a number of points of interest and a brief description of it will not be out of place. It was of the single-cylinder, horizontal type, the cylinder being 18¼ in. bore and 3 ft. 6 in. stroke, and boiler feeding steam at 80 lb. per sq. in. The engine was worked by “gab” motion, the eccentric rod not being permanently connected to the valve gear, but having a slot which engaged with a pin on the latter. The valve was worked by hand until the engine was running satisfactorily, and the slot then dropped over the pin to make connection, and then the engine ran in the normal way. This method of working by hand enabled the engine to be started in either direction of rotation, irrespective of the position of the crank. The flywheel, fixed on a massive shaft, was connected to the winding drum by a clutch. A band brake was fixed to the side of the flywheel for controlling descending wagons.

One of the most interesting features was that the valve was a piston valve, an extremely early example of this form of distribution which, in improved form, is extensively used today on modern locomotives. The pump which supplied the boiler was worked by a small “steeple” engine. The wire rope from the drum was connected to the wagon drawhook by a form of “slip” coupling, so that wagons might automatically disengage from the cable and run forward on the level line beyond the drum.

There was no method of communication between the top and bottom of the incline in Leicester & Swannington days. On 27 June 1850 the Midland Railway Way & Works Committee minuted “a wire signal to be constructed to work from the top to the bottom of the incline” and this some-
what primitive method survived until closure of the line 97 years later. The signal, latterly of the upper-quadrant type, was used to indicate to the stationary engine man when the wagons were ready for hauling from the bottom as well as for short movements, transferring wagons from one line to another there, etc. The maximum load up or down the incline was three loaded or six empty wagons at one time.

The importance of the incline started to diminish about 1872 when the Coleorton Railway ceased working. By that year Peggs Green and Calcutta collieries had closed down, leaving only Calcutta and California pits in use. The mining of coal was discontinued at California in 1877.\textsuperscript{34}

At Calcutta a pumping engine, maintained jointly by a committee of Whitwick and Snibston collieries, was installed when the production of coal ceased, to prevent flooding of the lower workings of those pits which were interconnected. It is of interest to note that this engine, a powerful two-cylinder tandem compound of the horizontal type, with cylinders 8 ft. stroke, was built by Robert Stephenson & Co. and raised about 3,000 gallons of water per minute. By a strange freak of history the Swannington incline engine was in 1892 to be involved in a complete change of role, lowering coal to feed the five boilers of the pumping engine and drawing up the empty wagons. In 1947 the pumping plant was converted to electric working. The last loaded wagons were lowered on 20 September and the final empties hauled up on 14 November of that year. The incline was officially closed in February 1948.

Happily British Railways decided in 1951 that the historic stationary engine and part of the flywheel should be preserved in York Railway Museum and dismantling was started on 13 October. They were removed to York on 10 January 1952. In November 1951 the incline was completely dismantled and all the permanent way recovered as from 113 m. 48 ch. (4½ ch. on the Coalville side of Spring Lane level crossing) where buffer stops were placed, making the old Leicester & Swannington running line into a siding. The Snibston No. 3 colliery siding was removed at the same time. The stationary engine house and chimney (a notable landmark in the district) were pulled down; at the time of writing (August 1954) they are left on the site as a heap of bricks and rubble.

\textbf{VII. PERMANENT WAY}

The rails originally in use on the Leicester & Swannington were of malleable iron, of elliptical, or more descriptively “fish bellied”, single head pattern, in 15 ft. lengths, weighing 35 lb. per yard. The running surface was 2½ in. wide. The extreme depth at the “belly” was 3½ in. and at the ends, 2½ in. Fishplates being then unknown, the rails rested end to end in chairs of cast iron, shaped to fit the rails, which were secured outside by wrought-iron keys 10 in. long.\textsuperscript{35} Sleepers were of two types. On open and embankment portions, where ground settlement was likely to occur, wooden transverse sleepers 8 ft. 6 in. long were used; in cuttings the track was supported on stone blocks 1 ft. 8 in. square and 10 in. in depth, placed diagonally at 3 ft. centres. Cross ties about every 12 ft. were later found necessary to hold the line to gauge. The stone-sleepered track required a lot of

\textsuperscript{34} Information per Paul W. Glover, Esq.

\textsuperscript{35} A specimen of the track is displayed in the Transport Room, Newarke Houses Museum, Leicester.
attention, packing up, etc., and, as will be seen later, was gradually replaced on the more heavily-used sections.

In answer to their advertisements, tenders were received for supply of permanent way components from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butterley Co.</td>
<td>Rails and chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakes &amp; Co., Alfreton</td>
<td>Cast iron pedestals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Price, Swansea</td>
<td>Pedestals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley &amp; Co., Stourbridge</td>
<td>Rails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle Furnace Co., Stourbridge</td>
<td>Pedestals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cort, Leicester</td>
<td>Rails, chairs and keys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first contracts for supply of permanent way materials were let on 3 September 1830; for malleable iron rails to James Cort at £10 9s. 0d. per ton, he also to supply keys at £16 per ton. The contract for 300 tons of cast iron chairs was let a fortnight later, divided equally between the Butterley Co. and Oakes & Co., to a pattern furnished by Robert Stephenson. One hundred tons of rails were delivered early in October and arrangements made for 40 tons to be received on the 1st of each month from December onwards until further notice. No risks were taken by entrusting the laying of the track to local contractors; the whole was done by experienced platelayers obtained from Newcastle by Robert Stephenson, with the assistance of some semi-skilled labourers. After laying it was, of course, maintained by the contractor Harding, as described in Section VIII.

Before the contract for wooden sleepers was let, the Board decided to profit by the experience of other railways and use oak instead of larch as originally intended. These were of half-round section, bound at the ends by iron hoops to counteract splitting. They were obtained from William Putt of Lubenham, who also supplied the fencing materials in the same wood. The change to oak sleepers cost £7,700 more than the estimate price, but was amply justified by their greater length of life and freedom from splitting when damp.

The early, somewhat haphazard way in which connections from the running lines to private sidings were laid by the owners with no more than permission from the company, was brought under control in October 1832 after a mishap from this cause. Thereafter, each new connection had to be “passed” by the Manager before use.

A number of “turnplates” (turntables) were in use at various places, notably in the main running line at the junction with the Bagworth colliery railway, 10 m. 65 ch. Here the branch met the main line at right angles. When the layout at West Bridge was improved early in 1835, several additional “turnplates” were installed to give access to the new coal sidings. A saving in space was the chief consideration in this case.

The increased weight of the locomotives and trains naturally had its effect upon the track which, by March 1836, was suffering under the strain of engines nearly twice the weight of those originally employed. In that month it was decided to replace the chairs by a heavier and more robust pattern. The sleepers next received attention. In the winter of 1837-8 a mile of transverse-sleepered track was relaid on stone blocks with new ballast from Groby quarries. Henceforward, all new ballast used was obtained from this source, in place of the slack coal from Whitwick colliery at 3s. per ton, which had done duty from the commencement.
In his report upon the state of the line dated 5 April 1839, Robert Stephenson said that Glenfield embankment had been relaid on stone blocks. He recommended that as the formation was consolidated, any further replacements, except on high embankments, should be on stone sleepers which were now as cheap as the originally proposed larch ones.

An inspection of the track in the autumn of 1839 showed the rails to be in a generally indifferent state and the Directors asked two of their number, Joseph Ellis and Henry Paget, to visit other railways and obtain information as to the best type of permanent way which might be substituted for the existing track. They reported on 3 January 1840, recommending "T" pattern rails, 50-55 lb. per yard and the Midland Counties Railway's type of chairs and keys; stone block sleepers not less than 1 ft. 10 in. square in cuttings and on more level sections, and larch sleepers where the line was not consolidated—both types placed at 3 ft. centres—were also recommended.

At their meeting on 7 February 1840 the Board approved their colleagues' report and ordered 50 tons of 56 lb. rail, with chairs, keys, etc. from John Bradley & Co., Stourbridge. The cost was £593. On 5 August the Chairman was able to tell the proprietors that 520 yards of line had been relaid with old rails on new stone blocks and 900 yards of new 56 lb. rail on the larger blocks.

On the recommendation of the Engineer, the Board decided to try and obtain from the Midland Railway rails suitable for laying on longitudinal sleepers in Glenfield tunnel. A contract was entered into and the relaying carried out during the winter of 1842-3. The author has been unable to find any evidence supporting Stretton's claim that longitudinal wooden sleepers were originally laid in the tunnel, thus anticipating their use on the Great Western Railway. The track replaced by this relaying was stone-sleepered and, so far as existing records show, was that originally used on this section.

In August 1841 the Board received disquieting reports upon the condition of the original rails which, it was now apparent, were far too light for the traffic. A little over a mile was relaid with the new rails during the previous twelve months and it was decided to continue at this rate each year until the whole was completed. They authorised the sale of old rails to Cort & Co., Leicester, at £4 5s. od. per ton. On 3 December a further report was received saying the rails were in a rapidly worsening state and the Board resolved that the relaying must be speeded up. Tenders were obtained from John Bradley & Co. and John Bagnall & Sons which, taking the lowest figures for each component, showed the cost per mile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entirely new track on stone blocks</td>
<td>1,807</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New track on existing stone blocks</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New track on existing wood sleepers</td>
<td>1,457</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allowing for the sale of old rails, etc. at £4 per ton, the cost of relaying 3 miles, one mile each in the above categories, would be £3,791, and the Board agreed this should be done, the contract for 300 tons of wrought-iron rails with necessary fittings being given to Bagnall & Sons.

36 Clement E. Stretton, History of the Midland Railway, 17.
37 On the basis of estimates made by Robert Stephenson in March 1832, these figures would appear to exclude the cost of new ballast.
THE LEICESTER AND SWANNINGTON RAILWAY

Stephenson's annual report of 22 February 1842 was eulogistic—"with the exception of the Stockton & Darlington, on which the rails have been relaid several times, the condition of the rails as well as the other works connected with your line are in better working order than any Coal Railway with which I am acquainted".

The replacement position on 10 August 1842 showed 3 m. 298 yd. as relaid with newly purchased rails; of this, 1,632 yd. was entirely new stone block road, 1,834 yd. new rails on existing blocks and 2,112 yd. on wooden sleepers found to be good. In the twelve months ending 4 August 1843, the figures were 480, 850 and 430 yd. respectively, plus 700 yd. in the tunnel on longitudinal timbers. The stone sleepers were similar to those in use on the London & Birmingham and Lancaster & Preston Junction railways, and were obtained from Samuel Sims of Buxton. Many were later used in the construction of platforms, as at Kirby Muxloe and Desford, and for other purposes. Some are still to be seen in use as stiles, foot-crossings, etc.

A further order for 100 tons of rails from Bagnell's was placed on 6 December 1843, the length being increased to 18 ft. On 14 August 1844 six miles of original track remained to be replaced; on 14 March 1845 the Board decided not to relay Swannington incline, which was little used, but to complete the 4½ miles to Snibston No. 1 colliery. A temporary loan of £8,500 to cover this work was arranged at 4% interest with Pares's Leicestershire Banking Co. This work was not completed before the line became Midland property in 1846.

VIII. MAINTENANCE AND WORKING OF THE LINE BY CONTRACT

The method of maintenance and working of a line by contract or by railway staff varied between the earliest railways. The Leicester & Swannington preferred the former at the outset, but changed over to the latter later on.

On 20 August 1832, the line being open in part and almost completed in material details, the company let the maintenance of the line for four years at £70 per mile, single line, to one of the construction contractors, Harding of Leicester. His contract was extended to Swannington terminus as the line came into use beyond Bagworth Colliery junction and continued until 2 September 1836, when a general reorganisation was carried out and the company undertook its own work. Ballast was found by the company as mentioned in Section VII.

The working of the traffic by contract was less usual and the line of demarcation between what plant and staff was provided by the company and what the contractor had to find, is not at all clearly marked. There is, however, no record of any friction and not a single reference to any complaints against the contractors, which speaks well for what would even now be considered a rather precarious arrangement.

Whether Robert Weatherburn was, as stated by Stretton,38 the company's first engine-driver is open to doubt, but it is certain he was not long in their employment, since he undertook the contract for working the line only five weeks after its opening. Bagworth incline was excluded, the working being a separate contract, as mentioned later. On 21 February 1834 his contract (at 2½d. per wagon load) was extended from Bagworth

38 op. cit., 19.
incline to Swannington terminus, excluding, of course, Swannington incline itself. The Directors deemed it advisable to bring the whole line, except the inclines, into one uniform contract and on 1 May 1834 Wetherburn and MacCree undertook this for three months, a guarantee being given by the railway that 65 wagons per day average over this period would be forthcoming for haulage. It is clear from contemporary records that the locomotives were provided by the railway and enginemen by the contractors. The contract was renewed periodically and terminated with the general reorganisation in September 1836, the enginemen, it appears, then taking service with the company.

The working of Bagworth incline was, after an initial period of direct labour, let on 7 February 1834 to Francis Stather. It was for three months, at 2d. per loaded wagon handled, the contractor finding the horse(s) necessary for shunting, etc. The contract was renewed on 7 May 1834 and periodically until the reorganisation in September 1836. The incline rope was, of course, provided by the railway and maintenance of the permanent way carried out by Harding, as already mentioned. In view of the constant trouble experienced in working the incline and the number of mishaps (some probably unrecorded), Stather may well have had his hands full. If so, the payment of 2d. per wagon seems somewhat niggardly, as it necessarily included handling the corresponding empties ascending the incline.

Swannington incline was worked and managed by the company’s own staff, apart from track maintenance, which was included in Harding’s contract for the whole line.

IX. STAFF AND ORGANISATION

The organisation and staffing of the smaller early railways makes an interesting study. On the Leicester & Swannington it is complicated by the letting of certain work to contractors (see Section VIII) and the division of responsibility is not clearly defined at all points.

Engineer

Robert Stephenson 9 July 1830 – 21 October 1833

Assistant Engineer (Resident)

Joshua Richardson 9 July 1830 – April 1831
— Gillespie April 1831 – December 1832
John C. Birkenshaw December 1832 – 21 October 1833

Agent (later known as Clerk)

Thomas Miles 9 July 1830 – 9 January 1833 (resigned)
Samuel Miles 9 January 1833 – 6 May 1842 (died)
Roger Miles 6 May 1842 – end

Treasurer

John Pares 9 July 1830 – 16 June 1833 (died)
Sir William Heygate, Bt. 19 July 1833 – 6 September 1844 (died)
John Taylor 6 September 1844 – end

39 He continued to visit Leicester fortnightly until the Soar Lane branch was completed and thereafter acted in a consulting capacity only.
Manager
George Vaughan 9 July 1830 – 3 March 1833 (resigned)
Ashlin Bagster 3 March 1833 – 1 June 1836 (resigned)
£250 p.a.

Book-Keeper & Manager
George Gill (as Book-keeper) 11 March 1836
(as Book-keeper & manager) 1 June 1836 – end. £150 p.a.
£200 p.a. from 1 January 1838

Office Clerk (Youth)
John Windram 8 May 1840 – June 1843 (resigned).
6s. per week

Toll-Collector (West Bridge)
William Cummins Appointed 17 July 1832. £100 p.a.

Soar Lane Depot
—— Lewin (clerk) Appointed 31 October 1834.
15s. per week
John Sherwood (weighman) Appointed 3 October 1834.
20s. per week

Foreman Wheelwright (West Bridge shops)
William Atkinson Appointed c. February 1832

“Overlooker of the Locomotive Engines”
Henry Cabry 40 May 1832 – 15 January 1834 (dismissed)
John Nicholson 15 January 1834 – end. 3 gns. per week;
£235 p.a. from 8 May 1840

Wharf and Gatekeepers (contract)
Ratby—Daniel Marvin 8 June 1832 – 1 Sept. 1833. £13 p.a.
—— Slingsby 1 Sept. 1833 – end. 5s. 6d. per week
Desford—— Chamberlain 8 June 1832 – 1 September 1833

Gatekeepers (contract)
Ashby Road—— Orton 31 May 1833 – end. 3s. per week
Merry Lees—— Thomas Drakeley 5 October 1838 – 5 October 1838. 4s. per week
Desford—— “a boy” 1 September 1833 – ? 4s. per week

Gatekeeper (employed)
Merry Lees—— Mary Argyle 5 October 1838 – end. 2s. 6d. per week;
3s. 6d. from 8 January 1847

Superintendent of Bagworth and Swannington inclines
Coulson Dunn 25 November 1833 – 25 June 1834.
£100 p.a. Post abolished and appointment determined

On 2 September 1836 the management and supervision of the line were reorganised, the company taking over most of the work previously let to contract. The principal new appointments were:

40 This spelling is used throughout Leicester & Swannington records, but it is believed the name should be “Cabrey”.
George Gill (appointed 11 March 1836) to be book-keeper. To attend to all office business and accounts; superintendence of bookkeepers at Bagworth and Swannington, also Francis Stather, machine-keeper at Bagworth incline, so far as accounts are concerned.

John Nicholson—care and management of the engines, men and also the smith’s shop.

Francis Lamb—superintendent platelayer and general maintenance of way, “his men to be paid fortnightly through him”. Replaced by Richard Crossfield from 19 April 1839.
“Engine-men, Firemen, Breaks-men, Stationary Engine-men and Francis Stather at Bagworth Incline to be directly under Committee of Management.”

Of those mentioned, Richardson, Gillespie and Birkenshaw were members of Robert Stephenson’s own staff; Cabry, Nicholson and Lamb were recruited by him in Newcastle, the two former from Robert Stephenson & Co. The three Agents, or Clerks, were members of one firm who transacted all the company’s legal business in addition to other work. The Treasurers were partners in, or connected with, the Leicestershire Banking Co. Vaughan, who was also a shareholder, and is later described in the Share Register as “gentleman”, came from Henry Booth’s staff on the Liverpool & Manchester, as did also his successor, Bagster. Gill’s services were obtained in response to a local advertisement; he had been in Pickford’s Leicester office. Orton (gate-opener at Ashby Road) combined this task with his post as toll-collector at Birch Tree turnpike, about ¼ mile from the crossing.

From 4 December 1846 the Midland ordered that all gate-keepers should come under the supervision of Crossfield, “Permanent Way Inspector, Leicester & Swannington branch”.

The attitude of the Directors towards the staff was firm but just, and even benevolent when occasion demanded it. On 28 October 1831 the Board voted “£5 to the Rev. Mr. Irvine for the relief of widow Peggs” whose husband had been killed in the tunnel. Again, on 6 February 1846 “it was resolved that an allowance of 16/- per week be made to George Bott who had both legs amputated as a result of an accident, to be reckoned as from the time of his accident and continued until he shall be put into some way of getting a livelihood”. Extra work required of Gill in preparing Parliamentary returns in May 1841 was rewarded by a present of £30, but when in September 1842 he absented himself for two days without leave, he was “severely reprimanded” by the Chairman. Negligence and insobriety were usually dealt with by immediate dismissal, though on 26 December 1834, possibly due to the Christmas season of goodwill, two enginemen who had caused a serious mishap at Bagworth were given the opportunity to clear themselves before the discharge was made effective.

41 This alternative term is used occasionally in the minutes when matters affecting the day to day working of the line were being dealt with. The constitution of this committee appears to have been identical with that of the full Board and no separate records were kept.
X. THE TRADERS—MINERAL AND GOODS TRAFFIC

The maximum tonnage rates authorised by the company's Act of 1830 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In railway wagons hauled by Co.'s power</th>
<th>In owners' wagons hauled by Co.'s power</th>
<th>In owners' wagons hauled by owners' power per ton per mile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dung, earth, compost, manure and road-making materials</td>
<td>2d.</td>
<td>1\frac{1}{2}d.</td>
<td>1\frac{1}{2}d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal, coke, culm, charcoal, cinders, lime, stone, slate, marl, sand, clay, building materials, pitchings and paving stones, flags, bricks, tiles, deals, lead, pig-iron, and other metals</td>
<td>3d.</td>
<td>2\frac{1}{2}d.</td>
<td>2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber, wool, corn, grain, flour, manufactured goods, lead sheets, iron bars &quot;and all other wares or merchandise&quot;</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>3\frac{1}{2}d.</td>
<td>3d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All traffics (except lime) passing less than 12 miles on the railway—6d. per ton additional to the above per ton per mile rates.

The railway was, of course, built for the almost sole purpose of carrying the above commodities and nearly all owners of collieries, lime works and quarries were substantial shareholders in it. Close co-operation between these and the company was essential and from the beginning the practice grew up of basing the current tonnage rates for coal and lime upon the price which could be obtained when sold in Leicester. If it became necessary to reduce rates to meet some particular competition or other factor, this was done by permitting rebates, or "drawbacks" as the railway, following canal practice, called these allowances.

The first drawback was authorised on 1 February 1833, allowing a deduction of one-fourteenth part on coal traffic from Whitwick railed at Ashby Road, to compensate for losses caused by breakage in transhipment from road to rail wagons. A rate of 2s. 3d. per ton was agreed until the Leicester & Swannington completed its junction with the Whitwick colliery railway. From 15 March 1833 the rate for this coal (and that from Snibston, Ibstock and Bagworth) was fixed at 2\frac{1}{2}d. per ton per mile, the one-fourteenth drawback being continued.

Little difficulty seems to have arisen due to coal or other traffic reaching Leicester in excess of demand, but a glut in the spring of 1833 compelled the company to notify all senders that the progressive wharfage charges stipulated in the original Act would be enforced from 24 May. These provided for a maximum charge of 6d. per ton per week; as will be seen in Appendix H, the company derived a substantial revenue from this source, but there is no recorded protest at the severity of the scale. Another reason for granting a drawback was the inability of the railway to provide enough locomotive power. As mentioned in Section I, relief to the extent of one-sixth of tonnage per mile was given in 1834 during the period when the "upper section" was horse-worked.

42 See footnote 25.
The summer of 1834 brought numerous requests from the coalowners for rate reductions to Leicester, to which the company replied that though they were anxious to assist the traders, the latter must first lower the selling price in the town. A similar request in respect of coal for Market Harborough conveyed by Union Canal from Leicester met with a similar response. As from 5 September 1834 a reduction of 6d. per ton was made on all coal passing beyond the junction of the Leicester Navigation with the Wreak, to encourage sales northwards and eastwards from that point.

Thinking that the collieries were not making sufficient efforts to increase the output of coal, the owners were informed on 23 January 1835 that if larger quantities were not dispatched the rail rates might have to be raised. There being no response by the collieries, the rate was raised on 2 March to 2d. per ton per mile, except on coal forwarded by canal from Leicester. The lime rate was increased to the same figure from 11 May. This brought a threat from Bostock of Cloud Hill that he would cease sending lime traffic at the new rate; he expressed the hope that the next Annual Meeting would reverse the decision and allow a refund as from the date of increase. From 10 July 1835 undressed granite from Groby quarries was rated as roadstone.

On 3 June 1836 the Board learned that the coal-owners had increased their prices all round and ordered that all drawbacks, excepting that allowed on traffic to Paddington via canal, be cancelled forthwith.

That the railway was always ready to assist the coal-owners is amply proved by their reaction to representations received in February 1838. It was then stated that Leicestershire coal was being excluded from the southward market by the lower-priced Warwickshire and Staffordshire products. From the 14th of that month substantial drawbacks were allowed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Reduction (d.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coleorton and Peggs Green</td>
<td>5½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snibston and Whitwick</td>
<td>5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibstock</td>
<td>4½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagworth</td>
<td>3½d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The opening of the Midland Counties Railway on 4 May 1840 threw open the gates of Leicester to Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire coal and seriously jeopardised West Leicestershire sales, both in the town and beyond. The canals had reduced their rates also, in competition with the new railway, and letters of 2 June and 25 June from the Whitwick Colliery Co. (Stephenson, Stenson and Whetstone) asked the Board to allow the coal-owners further rate reductions to enable them to compete in what had been, up to now, almost a monopoly market. From 27 June a reduction of 6d. per ton was allowed on Whitwick and Snibston coal to Leicester, other pits being in proportion. It was calculated this would allow coal to be sold in Leicester at 1s. 8d. per ton less, and place the competition on a fair basis. The final cancellation of the temporary drawbacks, as distinct from reductions which were regarded as permanent changes within the rate structure, was made on 1 December 1845, when coal sent by canal from Leicester reverted to the normal rates. By that date all London-bound coal was passing by rail throughout from other pits and West Leicestershire had ceased supplying the metropolis.

No immediate change was made under the Midland regime, but the distance covered by the statutory rates was reduced to 10 miles as from 7 December 1846.
XI. FINANCE

The company’s Acts of Parliament gave authority to raise money as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Loans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 Geo. IV &amp; Wm. IV cap. 58, 29 May 1830</td>
<td>£90,000</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 &amp; 4 William IV cap. 69, 10 June 1833</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 William IV &amp; 1 Vic. cap. 66, 30 June 1837</td>
<td>£40,000</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total capital was thus £140,000; it was divided into 2,800 shares of £50 each. New issues authorised by the second and third Acts were offered to and taken up almost entirely by original shareholders. It is indicative of the tranquil state of the company and faith in its future that only 21 shares changed hands by public advertisement in the course of its 16 years’ existence.

Of the original estimate, £75,453, for the construction of the line, £61,950 was subscribed before the Bill was lodged in Parliament. After incorporation, “calls” per share were made as under:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 September 1830</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>2 September 1831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 April 1831</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>28 October 1831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 June 1831</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>11 May 1832</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statutory borrowing powers were exercised in full, in addition to which one temporary loan was negotiated. The loans of £35,000 authorised by the first two Acts were paid off with the money raised under the third Act; the balance of £5,000 was for purchase of locomotives and for various capital works. The additional loan was on 4 April 1845, when Pares’s Leicestershire Banking Co., a firm closely associated with the railway from the beginning, agreed to advance £8,500 at 4% interest, repayable in half-yearly instalments of £1,000. The money was required to enable the company to complete relaying of the line. The balance of this debt was, of course, assumed by the Midland Railway on taking over in 1846.

Under the terms of the amalgamation with the Midland Railway, each £50 Leicester & Swannington share was exchanged for one £100 Midland 8% share, a very attractive arrangement for the Swannington proprietors.

Dividends were paid as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td>4³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

XII. PRIVATE CONNECTING RAILWAYS

The private railways connecting with the Leicester & Swannington were all built and worked by their owners, though in some cases the land was obtained under powers of the company’s Acts.

³ Described by the Chairman as due to “the depressed state of trade generally”.
Groby Granite Quarries

This railway, connecting with the Leicester & Swannington at 3 m. 68 ch. between Glenfield and Ratby, was built without Parliamentary powers by the Earl of Stamford & Warrington, owner of the quarries. The original junction was by turntable into a loop siding off the Leicester & Swannington running line. It was brought into use on 17 July 1832, the 25 wagons used being Lord Stamford’s property. The irregular legal position of the railway was put in order by the Leicester & Swannington Act of 10 June 1833, which authorised, in retrospect, purchase of and title to the lands used.

The quarries were in low water by 1864, traffic being taken to Glenfield station for loading, and the rails removed. In the following year the assets were acquired by the Groby Granite Co., the railway reconstructed with ex-Midland Railway material and a proper running junction with sidings put in in place of the former turntable. The present private sidings were brought into use in May 1866.

Bagworth Colliery

Bagworth colliery dates from about 1826. Section II of the Leicester & Swannington Act of Incorporation, 1830, gave the company powers to construct a branch to Bagworth colliery, but they transferred these to the owner, Lord Maynard, who built and equipped the line at his own expense. It came into use on the same day as the Leicester & Swannington, 17 July 1832. The junction was direct with the main line in which there was a turntable at 10 m. 65 ch. Under the 1848 alterations, the colliery railway was altered, at the expense of the Midland Railway, to join their Leicester & Swannington line at Bagworth station, as it does today. The old site became a roadway, crossing the present line by an overbridge about ½ mile east of Bagworth & Ellistown station.

Nailstone Colliery

Sunk by J. J. Ellis in 1863. Railway and siding connection with Midland opened early in 1866 at 11 m. 24 ch. (L. & S.) between Bagworth and Bardon Hill stations.

Ibstock Colliery

This was the oldest of the collieries connected with the Leicester & Swannington, the original pit having been sunk by Thirlby in 1825. The branch railway was also authorised by the Leicester & Swannington Act of 1830, but the company allowed the powers to lapse. The line was built by the then owner, Green, by a wayleave arrangement with the landowners, and opened in 1832. It is not apparent why the powers given in Section IV of the Leicester & Swannington Act 1833, which authorised acquisition of the lands on which the line had been built, were not exercised. The position was finally legalised by the Midland Railway (Leicester & Swannington Amendment) Act, 1847, which also included powers to improve the gradients on the line.

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44 Information per Paul W. Glover, Esq.
45 ibid.
46 ibid.
Ellistown Colliery
Sunk by J. J. Ellis and brought into use 1875-6. It seems probable the output passed via the Nailstone line in the first instance.

Long Lane (Whitwick) Colliery
The first pit was sunk in 1827; subsequent new sinkings were in 1838 and 1876. The Whitwick Colliery Company was incorporated in 1875. Powers to purchase the necessary land were given by Section II of the 1830 Act and construction was delegated to the colliery owners, Stenson & Co., to whom the title deeds were handed over on completion. The line joined the Leicester & Swannington at 14 m. 31 ch. between Ashby Road and Long Lane stations, by a direct running junction facing towards Leicester. It was ready in 1832, but could not be brought into use until 22 April 1833, when that portion of the Leicester & Swannington was opened for goods traffic. According to Stretton, the colliery had accumulated 800 tons of coal ready for movement to Leicester as soon as the railway was opened. Until that date, they had carted it to Ashby Road for loading into railway wagons.

Snibston No. 2 Colliery
Authorised by the Leicester & Swannington third Act (1833) and constructed by the colliery owners as “agents” of the railway. It formed a direct junction with the main line at 14 m. 29 ch. and was opened in October 1836.

Snibston No. 1 Colliery
This pit was sunk in 1831 and had a siding connection only at about 14 m. 65 ch. opened in 1833. It had ceased production by 1892.

Snibston No. 3 Colliery
Siding connection only at about 15 m. 25 ch. opened about 1850. The pit was closed in the eighties, reopened 1892 and finally closed about 1895.

XIII. MIDLAND RAILWAY REGIME

It is not the purpose of this account to follow in detail all the alterations and improvements made on the Leicester & Swannington section by the new owners, but certain developments are of interest. A number have already been mentioned in their correct sequence.

As soon as the acquisition of the line had been agreed by the Leicester & Swannington shareholders on Wednesday 20 August 1845, firm plans were drawn up for making the line part of a through route from Leicester to Burton by the construction of two connecting sections, from Knighton, on the Midland Counties line 1½ miles south of Leicester, to Desford and from Long Lane (Coalville) to Burton.

The first Act, 3 August 1846, provided for doubling 2 m. 67 ch. 90 links of the Leicester & Swannington line from the 14th milepost, where

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47 ibid.
48 ibid.
49 Clement E. Stretton, History of the Whitwick Colliery (Private) Railway.
50 Information per Paul W. Glover, Esq.
51 ibid.
52 ibid.
the Burton—Coalville line now joins at Mantle Lane East signal box, to
11 m. 10 ch. west of the present Bagworth & Ellistown station. This was
followed on 2 July 1847 by a second Act which, amongst some minor
changes from the preceding one, authorised the "Thornton deviation" on
the present site instead of, as originally proposed, from Bardon Hill to
Merry Lees on a course considerably further east of the Leicester and Swan-
nington route. The new "Thornton deviation", avoiding the old Bagworth
incline, extended from the above-mentioned 11 m. 10 ch. (487-3 ft. datum)
to the 9th milepost (329-2 ft.), a distance of 2 m. 11 ch. 70 links, with a
bridge 25 ft. span and 16 ft. high over Thornton Lane at the Stag and
Castle Inn. Other minor improvements were alterations to the 1 m. 55 ch.
Ibstock colliery railway, where levels and gradients were eased, substitution
for the road crossings at Staunton Road and Merry Lees of overbridges
and a small re-alignment at Priors Barn, between the latter place and
Desford. The Bagworth colliery railway was altered to join the new line
at Bagworth station, the original line becoming a lane which now gives
access to the upper end of the old incline.

Apart from the "Thornton Deviation", for which the land required
was purchased from Lord Maynard for about £500, little additional width
was needed. The contract for the Deviation was let to Messrs. I. & G.
Siddons, Oundle, for £37-339 4s. 4d.

The Leicester & Swannington line in its altered form was brought
into use on Monday 27 March 1848. The Swannington incline section as
far as Coalville station remained unaltered. Thence to Desford Junction
it was a double line, with new station buildings and platforms at Coalville,
Bagworth and Desford. The old Bagworth incline was closed after cessation
of traffic on 25 March and replaced on the 27th by the new double line,
with a ruling gradient of 1 in 66. No alteration was made on the Desford
Junction—West Bridge section.

The Midland connecting lines to Burton and Knighton were brought
into use on Wednesday 1 August 1849, when a through passenger and goods
train service between Leicester and Burton was inaugurated. From this
date the old Leicester & Swannington was no longer a physically isolated
section, but the west end lost much of its importance by diversion of passen-
ger traffic to the former Midland Counties station at Leicester (Campbell
Street); this was replaced by the present London Road station in 1892.
Mixed passenger and goods trains continued to run on the West Bridge
branch until Saturday 31 December 1887, when a separate passenger ser-
vice was introduced; the branch train service did not find its way into
Bradshaw until September 1853. The new Leicester (Campbell Street)—
Burton service did not appear until July 1851, two years after its commence-
ment. Coal traffic continued to be handled in large quantities at West
Bridge as it still is today.

For the first time Swannington possessed a passenger station. It was
located on the new Coalville—Burton line and opened on Saturday 1 Sep-
tember 1849; British Railways closed it as from Monday 18 June 1951.

The reduced importance of the West Bridge branch is illustrated by
the rather curious reversion to the system of maintenance by contract,
abandoned by the Leicester & Swannington in 1836. From 7 June 1854
the Desford Junction—West Bridge section was let to Richard Crossfield
at £234 per annum, equal to £39 per mile. Crossfield, who had been
"superintendent platelayer" of the Leicester & Swannington since 1839, resigned from Midland service as "permanent way inspector" and undertook the above contract.

An early start was made on the installation of semaphore signals, described in the Midland records as "wire signals". The first one was put up at Bagworth early in 1850 and the second at Battleflat water tank in 1851; this was worked by the man in charge of the pump there and was provided to protect engines whilst watering on the main line. Others were erected at Coalville (junction with the Burton line) in 1856—the cost of this was £22—and Coalville (junction with the Whitwick and Snibston colliery railways) in 1857. Block telegraph was brought into use between Bagworth and Desford in August 1856, being installed by the Electric Telegraph Co. at a cost of £169. It was extended to the summit of the line at Battleflat early in 1859. It is remarkable that the West Bridge branch was never provided with any form of telegraph or telephone communication and has none to this day.

The various improvements made at Bardon Hill station are referred to at length in Section II, but it is worth chronicling a minute of the Way & Works Committee of 13 November 1849: "a common desk to be provided for the Station Master". The only remaining section of the original (1833) Leicester & Swannington permanent way in the running lines was between Coalville and the foot of Swannington incline. This was found too light for Midland locomotives and relaying with old North Midland Railway material took place in June 1850.

The single-line sections from the top of Swannington incline to Mantle Lane crossing and Desford Junction to West Bridge were worked by pilot guard and train staff respectively. From the opening of the new West Bridge passenger station in 1893, the branch was controlled by a train staff as far as Fosse Road signal box, thence by pilot guard to the termini. The signal box was abolished on 28 April 1929.

The story of the Leicester & Swannington is not of an exciting or dramatic nature. The absorption of much of its route into a line now busy with coal traffic in a modern, bustling, atmosphere may well cause us to forget the modest company whose railway was responsible for bringing new life to West Leicestershire and, possibly, saving its industries at a critical time. The historian, however, will always remember it as the first railway in the Midlands, opened five years before Birmingham possessed a railway at all and six years before that town was rail-connected with London. As already noted, it was the oldest railway component of the Midland Railway which, many years later, became the second largest company in the British Isles.
APPENDIX A

Table of Distances extracted from Plan and Section of line dated “Leicester Station, July 1832”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles</th>
<th>Chains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leicester station (doorstep)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Engine Shed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junction of intended Soar Lane Branch</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foss Road Siding and Road Crossing</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit, near lane crossing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield Tunnel, East end</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield Tunnel, West end</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield Road and Station</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended junction of Groby railway</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratby station and road</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near road crossings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desford station</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior's Barn</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merry Lees station</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stag and Castle Inn</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road (Thornton—Bagworth road)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagworth Station</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot of Bagworth Incline</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Incline house</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheel</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagworth Colliery Junction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibstock Colliery Railway Junction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit, Staunton Road</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashby Road and Station</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Lane, or Whitwick, Colliery Junction</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Long Lane Station</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantle Lane crosses</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road crossing (now called Spring Lane)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Swannington Inclined Plane and Engine</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot of Inclined Plane</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended junction of Coleorton Railway</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“At present in abeyance”

“Opened from Leicester to Staunton Road Crossing 17th July 1832.” The remainder of the line is marked as “now under construction”. The section shown as “in abeyance” is the short spur sidings leading from the foot of incline sidings to the public road and was presumably intended as a public coal depot for Swannington village.

APPENDIX B

Midland Railway Table of milepost distances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Bridge Branch</th>
<th>From Desford Junction Miles</th>
<th>Chains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desford Junction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desford Road crossing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratby Road crossing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groby Granite Co. sidings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield Brick &amp; Tile Co’s siding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield crossing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfield Tunnel—West end</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East end</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosse Road signal box</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosse Road Wharf</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger Station branch junction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soar Lane Junction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soar Lane Wharf (goods)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bridge passenger</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bridge goods</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Leicester and Swannington Railway

#### From St. Pancras via Knighton S. Curve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Line and Swannington Branch</th>
<th>Miles</th>
<th>Chains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desford Junction</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desford</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrylees siding</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desford Colliery sidings</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagworth and Ellistown</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nailstone Colliery Junction</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibstock Colliery Junction</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellistown Colliery sidings</td>
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<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit level (565-18 ft.)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliff Hill Granite sidings</td>
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<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bardon Hill</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markfield Granite sidings</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalville Junction</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitwick and Snibston Collieries Junction</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalville</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantle Lane Junction</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Swannington Incline</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>64*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom of Swannington Incline</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Midland Railway property</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Erroneously shown in the original table as 113 M. 60 ch.

#### Appendix C

**Table of Gradients extracted from Plan and Section of line dated “Leicester Station, July 1832”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Mls.</th>
<th>To Mls.</th>
<th>Rising 1 in</th>
<th>Gradient (1 in)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>364</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>84</td>
<td>119</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Level</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Level</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Footnotes
- * Erroneously shown in the original table as 113 M. 60 ch.
APPENDIX D

"List of buildings, etc., which have been erected on the Line"
(dated 10 January 1834)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Miles from Leicester</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>Wharf Shed and Joiners Shop</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Office adjoining the above</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Engine Shed</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Workshop and Smithy</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foss Lane</td>
<td>Cottage</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunnel</td>
<td>Water tank and cottage</td>
<td>1½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gienfield</td>
<td>Cottage</td>
<td>2½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groby</td>
<td>Cottage</td>
<td>3½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desford</td>
<td>Booking Office</td>
<td>6½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>6½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagworth</td>
<td>Water Tank</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Coal Place and Office</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Bell House</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Cottage</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Weighing machine house</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battleflat Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td>11½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugglescote Grange Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugglescote Lane Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td>13½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snibston Engine Shed</td>
<td></td>
<td>14½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swannington</td>
<td>Fixed Engine House</td>
<td>15½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>15½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Lime Shed</td>
<td>Termination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Author's Note.—Only buildings, etc., erected by the Company are shown in this list. Those put up by contractors, e.g., at Ratby and Desford, are not included in the original.
### APPENDIX E
Number of Shares held @ £50

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Sept. 1830</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45 (b)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>176 (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Jan. 1833</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
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<td>14 Aug. 1833</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sept. 1833</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Nov. 1833</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Dec. 1837</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>809</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>641</strong></td>
<td><strong>226 (a)</strong></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>246</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representing Capital of (£)</strong></td>
<td><strong>49,450</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,350</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,450</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,650</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,050</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>750</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,850</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- (a) Including 30 Welshpool.
- (b) All Warrington.
- (c) Including large number of persons living immediately outside the town in districts now well within the city boundary.

Compiled from Register of Proprietors preserved at Newsholme House Museum, Leicestershire.

### APPENDIX F
Locomotives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>MAKERS</th>
<th>MAKERS' No.</th>
<th>DELIVERY DATE</th>
<th>WHEELS</th>
<th>CYLS. (a)</th>
<th>WHEELS</th>
<th>WHEEL-BASE</th>
<th>BOILER</th>
<th>TUBES</th>
<th>GRATE AREA</th>
<th>HEATING SURFACE</th>
<th>WEIGHT (d) WORKING ORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comet</td>
<td>Robert Stephenson &amp; Co.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 v 1832</td>
<td>0−4−0</td>
<td>12 × 16</td>
<td>5 0</td>
<td>5 3  3 0 7 14</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6 8 30 3</td>
<td>37 3</td>
<td>9 1 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phœnix</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28 viii 1832</td>
<td>0−4−0</td>
<td>12 × 18</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>5 2  3 0 7 14</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6 8 35 7</td>
<td>37 3</td>
<td>14 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samson</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1 i 1833</td>
<td>0−4−2*</td>
<td>14 × 18</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>3 6* 9 1 9</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7 4 35 7</td>
<td>37 3</td>
<td>10 8 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goliath</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20 iii 1833</td>
<td>0−4−2*</td>
<td>14 × 18</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>3 6* 9 1 9</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7 4 35 7</td>
<td>37 3</td>
<td>10 8 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>36</td>
<td>17 xii 1833</td>
<td>0−4−2</td>
<td>14 × 18</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>3 6 9 11 3 11 8 6 154</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8 9 30 0</td>
<td>67 5</td>
<td>17 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlas</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8 ii 1834</td>
<td>0−6−0</td>
<td>16 × 20</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>11 5 3 11 8 6 154</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8 9 30 0</td>
<td>67 5</td>
<td>17 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>Bury &amp; Co.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>vii 1834</td>
<td>0−4−0</td>
<td>12 × 20</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>6 0 3 6 8 56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 9 30 0</td>
<td>67 5</td>
<td>17 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulcan</td>
<td>Tayleur &amp; Co.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 iv 1835</td>
<td>0−6−0</td>
<td>16 × 20</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>11 5 3 11 8 6 154</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8 9 30 0</td>
<td>67 5</td>
<td>17 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlas</td>
<td>Highbury Foundry Co.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>x 1837</td>
<td>0−4−2</td>
<td>14 × 18</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>3 6 10 8 3 6 8 2 94</td>
<td>2 9 5 9 0 68</td>
<td>70 0</td>
<td>17 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>0−6−0</td>
<td>14 × 20</td>
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<td>11 5 3 8 7</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>13 8 6 4 6 8</td>
<td>70 0</td>
<td>17 0</td>
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* As altered by Leicester & Swannington Railway in 1833 by addition of pair of trailing wheels.
† To designs of Robert Stephenson & Co. (identical with Atlas).
## APPENDIX G
Receipts, Expenditure, and Traffic Carried

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Opening (17 July 1832) to 31 Dec. 1833</th>
<th>6 months ending 30 June 1833</th>
<th>6 months ending 31 Dec. 1833</th>
<th>6 months ending 30 June 1834</th>
<th>6 months ending 31 Dec. 1834</th>
<th>6 months ending 30 June 1835</th>
<th>6 months ending 31 Dec. 1835</th>
<th>6 months ending 30 June 1836</th>
<th>6 months ending 31 Dec. 1836</th>
<th>6 months ending 30 June 1837</th>
<th>6 months ending 31 Dec. 1837</th>
<th>6 months ending 30 June 1838</th>
<th>6 months ending 31 Dec. 1838</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receipts</strong></td>
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<td>Passengers</td>
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<td>653 3 7</td>
<td>945 18 3</td>
<td>611 4 2</td>
<td>472 6 3</td>
<td>608 6 6</td>
<td>540 6 6</td>
<td>324 18 10</td>
<td>477 16 10</td>
<td>435 17 7</td>
<td>450 14 4</td>
<td>401 0 10</td>
<td>492 3 10</td>
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<td>766 3 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>82 11 1</td>
<td>2051 11 11</td>
<td>4276 9 0</td>
<td>4413 1 2</td>
<td>5092 1 1</td>
<td>7057 4 2</td>
<td>8348 6 3</td>
<td>7947 14 11</td>
<td>7396 1 4</td>
<td>5490 4 10</td>
<td>7600 4 8</td>
<td>8674 2 6</td>
<td>9540 14 6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundrys (merchandiz.)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Weighings</td>
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<td>Rents</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
<td>1950 17 0</td>
<td>2728 13 5</td>
<td>5278 9 3</td>
<td>5052 17 10</td>
<td>5758 2 8</td>
<td>8071 15 2</td>
<td>9100 0 2</td>
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## Expenditure

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## Profit on Working

|                     | 19 0 11                                |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |

## Drawbacks allowed on Coal & Lime

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## Traffic carried

|                     | 364 10 7                              | 739 6 8                      | 1710 10 2                    | 335 11 1                     | 111 6 6                      | 194 0 9                      | 268 8 2                      | 366 12 11                     |                              |                              |                              |                              |                              |

N.B.—The half-yearly returns do not show the same information on each occasion; all available data is included above. All the returns preserved with the Company's records are shown above, but the remainder are missing.

(a) Including Interest £1 16s. 1d.
(b) Including £20 4s. 6d. from Union Canal Co.
(c) Interest £4 8s. Od. Sale of "old stocks" (5 sleepers) £3 os. od.
(d) Including Interest 19s. 6d.
(e) Including Interest £1 16s. 1d.
(f) Including Interest £1 12s. 6d.
(g) Including Interest £1 2s. 10d.
(h) Including Interest £1 2s. 10d.
(i) Doubtless due to a strike in the collieries during March, April and May.
THE LEICESTER AND SWANNINGTON RAILWAY

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  do. Minutes of Meetings of Proprietors, 1830—1846.
Midland Railway: Minutes of Leicester & Swannington Committee, 1846—1847.
  do. Minutes of Way & Works Committee, 1849 onwards.
  do. Construction Powers, Parliamentary Office, Engineer’s Department, Derby.
  do. Trains Office Derby records (various references).

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Railway Chronicle, 1845.

Railway Magazine, Vols. 51, 63, 85 and 98.

The Locomotive, Carriage & Wagon Review, Vol. 38 (Centenary article).

Maps, plans, sections, diagrams, photographs and other material held by:
  Leicestershire Record Office.
  City of Leicester Museums & Art Gallery (New Walk and Newarke Houses).
  Urban District Council of Coalville.

——

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  Souvenir of the Visit of the Railway Club to the Leicester & Swannington Railway (1901).
  The History of the Whitchurch Colliery (Private) Railway (1904).
  The History of the Groby Granite (Private) Railway (1904).
  The History of the Bagworth Colliery (Private) Railway (1904).
  The History of the Snibston No. 2 Colliery (Private) Railway (1904).
  The History of the Ibstock Colliery (Private) Railway (1904).

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It is not possible to think of the Leicester & Swannington Railway without remembering the name of Clement E. Stretton who was responsible for so much writing and lecturing upon the line and its history. Whilst a good deal of his published work (mainly in a series of pamphlets) on other railways and tramroads is treated by historians with the utmost caution, there should be less reason to doubt his accuracy where the Leicester & Swannington is concerned. He knew personally many of those connected with the Company in its early days, while residence in Leicester and his professional connections undoubtedly gave him access to official information, some of which is no longer available and may well have been destroyed.

I have, of course, referred to Stretton's several works—it would be impossible to write of the Leicester & Swannington without doing so—though it will be noted that many statements are at variance with those appearing in his writings and others unsubstantiated by the Company's own records. From this fact I infer that Stretton's sources of information did not include the all-important minute books, of which full use is now made for the first time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am greatly indebted to all those who have been good enough to help me in many and various ways. It would be invidious to draw distinctions, but I hope they will consider the finished product worthy of their efforts on my behalf. My sincere thanks for their generous assistance are given to:

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