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OPEN SIDES, NO CUSHIONS — AND THE FARE WAS 5/-

Second Class to Euston — in Open Railway Coaches!

A FAVOURITE PICTURE of bygone Berkhamsted shows our first railway station in all its early Victorian glory, with a near relation of "Puffing Billy" hauling a train of tiny coaches in the direction of Tring.

How many trains stopped at Berkhamsted in those far-off days? How long did it take to travel to and from London? What were the fares?

The answers are given in a slim little book which was recently presented to the Local History Society by Mrs. E. M. Jenkins. It is the third edition of "Bradshaw's Railway Companion," and its forty pages give the times and fares for February, 1840. Berkhamsted railway station (opposite Castle-street canal bridge) had then been open for two and a half years.

Four Up, Four Down

Mr. Bradshaw gave pride of place to the London and Birmingham Railway. There were ten trains each way every week-day, and with one exception (London to Wolverton) the trains ran the whole length of the line from London to Birmingham—112½ miles. But only four up and four down trains stopped at Berkhamsted! The fastest train, stopping at four intermediate stations, steamed from London to Birmingham in five hours, an average speed of 22½ miles per hour. The "stopping at all stations" trains took six hours.

Trains were either "First Class" or "Mixed," the latter taking first and second class passengers. No mention

is made of a third class, but there were two grades of both first and second classes, and consequently four scales of fares. To quote Mr. Bradshaw:

"The first class trains consist of first class and mail carriages, carrying four inside (one compartment of which is convertible into a bed carriage, if required) and of carriages carrying six inside. The mixed trains consist of first class carriages, carrying six inside, and of second class carriages open at the side, without linings, cushions or divisions in the compartments. The Night Mail train consists of first class carriages carrying six inside, and of second class carriages closed and entirely protected from the weather. Each carriage has a small roof lamp by day and night."

The Fares

The single fares from Berkhamsted to Euston were as follows:—

FIRST CLASS (4 in carriage by day, or 6 by night) .. 8/-
FIRST CLASS (6 in carriage, by day) 7/6
SECOND CLASS (closed carriage, by night) 6/6
SECOND CLASS (open carriage, by day) 5/-

Half-price tickets were issued for children under ten years of age; infants in arms, unable to walk, travelled free of charge. Dog tickets were 1s. for up to 30 miles and 4s. for the whole distance from London to Birmingham.

Even by present-day standards, the fares appear high, especially in view of the fact that millions of families had incomes of less than £1 a week in 1840. But as a rule it was only the monied class that travelled—the others stayed at home, walked, or begged lifts from wagoners!

Stage Coaches

In the "coaching days" travelling was even more expensive. For instance, in 1810 the fare from Berkhamsted to London by stage coach was 10s. for an inside seat, and 6s. if one braved the elements beside the driver.

Stage coach fares fell rapidly when the railway age dawned, and in due course railway fares, too, were reduced. In 1875 the single first class fare from Berkhamsted to Euston was 4s. 6d. (8s. 6d. return), and third class single fare was 2s. 5½d. There was also a fourth or "Parliamentary" class—single fare, 2s. 4d. [To compete with low motor coach fares, day return tickets (3s. 9d. first class, 2s. 6d. third class) were introduced in the 1930s.]

A section of the 1840 time table—London to Tring—appears at the top of the facing page. Note the printer's

OUR TRAINS — IN 1840

	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
LONDON	6 0	8 0	8 45	9 30	11 0	1 0	2 0	5 0	6 0	8 30
HARROW		8 30					2 30		6 30	
WATFORD	6 45	8 50			11 45	1 45	2 50	5 45	6 50	
BOXMOOR		9 10					3 10		7 10	
B. HAMPSTEAD		9 20	10 5				3 20		7 20	
TRING	7 25	9 35		10 48	12 25	2 25	3 35	6 25	7 35	9 56

	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	a.m.
TRING	7 45	10 0	12 11	1 40	4 0	4 55	7 40	9 0	9 40	4 3
B. HAMPSTEAD	7 55	10 10		4 10			9 10			
BOXMOOR	8 5	10 20		4 20			9 20			
WATFORD	8 20	10 35	2 10	4 35	5 25	8 10	9 35			
HARROW	8 45	11 0		5 0			10 0			
LONDON	9 30	12 0	1 30	3 30	6 0	6 45	9 30	11 0	11 30	5 30

—Extracts from "Bradshaw's Railway Companion," February, 1840.

unusual abbreviation; "B. Hampstead."

Of the four up and four down trains which called at Berkhamsted on week-days, one was "first class only"—the 8.45 a.m. from London, which made its first stop at Berkhamsted at 10.5 and then called at Wolverton (11.0), Weedon, Coventry, Wolverhampton, and Birmingham (2.15 p.m.). No doubt there was some special reason for this train stopping at Berkhamsted and not at Watford and Tring.

Sunday Trains

Incidentally, Berkhamsted travellers had but two trains each way on Sundays in 1840. If they missed the 9.20 a.m. down train they had to wait exactly ten hours for the next train!

The local railway service may have been infrequent in 1840, but already some improvement had been made. In 1838 there were only three trains each way on week-days! That was before the London and Birmingham Railway was completed; road coaches conveyed passengers between Wolverton and Rugby until September 17, 1838, when the last section of the line was opened.

From the 1840 "Bradshaw" we learn that smoking was prohibited at the stations and in the carriages of the London and Birmingham Railway. No gratuities were to be given, under any circumstances, to servants of the company. Heavy baggage was carried on top of the coach, but passengers could place bags and other small packages under seats opposite the ones they occupied.

Keep Your Seats!

And here was a special warning: "To guard against accident and delay, it is especially requested that passengers will not leave their seats at any of the stations except Wolverton . . . where a female is in attendance, and refreshments may be obtained."

Mr. Bradshaw appended a list of hackney coach fares from Euston to various parts of London. Here are three examples; to the Bank of England, 3s.; to Bond-street, 2s.; to Drury Lane Theatre, 1s. 6d. At the end of the book a special table enables passengers to compute the speed of the train, provision

being made for speeds from one to 400 miles per hour!

After studying a "Bradshaw" of 1840 it is interesting to turn to a time table published in the *Berkhamsted Times* of 1887. On week-days there were fifteen down and twelve up trains. The fastest left Berkhamsted at 8.54 a.m. and, after stopping at Willesden, reached Euston at 9.35. Thus, 64 years ago, one could travel from Berkhamsted to London in 41 minutes. The fastest train of the present day is scheduled to complete the journey in 43 minutes.

However, the train service of 1887 was not so frequent as it is at the present day. The first up train left Berkhamsted at 7.48 a.m., and the last, at 9.52 p.m., did not arrive at Euston until 11.18. Still, this last train called not at "all stations to Watford" but at Bushey, Pinner, Harrow, Sudbury, Willesden, Kilburn, and Chalk Farm!

It is interesting to find that in 1887 a train left Euston at midnight and, to quote the time table, "will stop at Boxmoor on Wednesdays, at Berkhamsted on Thursdays, and at Kings Langley on Saturdays, on information being given to the guard at Euston or Willesden." 'BEORCHAM'

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