

Harvington Railway Station

To glimpse through overgrowth and brambles at the remains of the fast disappearing railway route through Harvington belies the dramatic importance of its past to the community in the area. Although never particularly successful for its investors, the line between Ashchurch and Barnt Green (known as the "Birmingham and Gloucester Loop") nevertheless played its role in the dramatic transformation in the way local people embraced the concepts of distance, speed, time, and convenience.

Britain's world leading "Railway Revolution" took place in three boom periods between the mid-1820's and the mid-1860's from zero to more than 15000 miles of track including branch lines and feeders. (While railways continued to increase up to 1900 to more than 20000 miles of track, the rapid construction peak had passed.)

The Ashchurch - Barnt Green line was built in four phases between 1859 and 1868. The stretch between Evesham and Alcester, (to include Harvington Station as well as Salford Priors, Broom Junction, and Wixford stations), opened in summer 1866 and was operated by the Evesham and Redditch Railway Company, first to goods traffic and soon after to passenger traffic.

While one of the main advantages of The Loop was stated as an alternative route to bypass the problematical Lickey incline on the main route from Birmingham to Gloucester, it had the significant benefit of providing an essential link for the villages and communities in the locality which had been overlooked in the "Railway Mania" years. In more modern parlance, it put Harvington on the map!

Black and White Coaches

In 1925, when the motor car in the UK was still very much the privilege of the few and road travel was generally a somewhat adventurous business fraught with difficulty, unreliability, and of course breakdowns, an enterprising Mr A E Marsh, working from a modest tin hut in Harvington, built a 14-seater passenger coach body onto an Italian Lancia car chassis fitted with solid tyres. He used it to transport paying passengers to a variety of places and venues, but it wasn't entirely satisfactory, to say the least, since it was too highly geared to

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Garages

At one time there were no less than three petrol filling stations within a few hundred yards in Harvington: the Black and White Garage (which had also taken on car distribution), a garage further up the Alcester Road owned and run in the 1930's by Mr Fred Richards who also carried out agricultural repairs, and a filling station located with the caravan manufacturers situated just down the other direction on the Evesham Road.

The Book

It is envisaged that in 2011 a comprehensive history of the industrial activities in the village will be published.

The author, Mr Phil Bawn, says that it will include many historical photographs of commercial enterprise in the village.