Cricklewood
Railway Terraces
A VILLAGE HISTORY

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From Roman times to the year 2001

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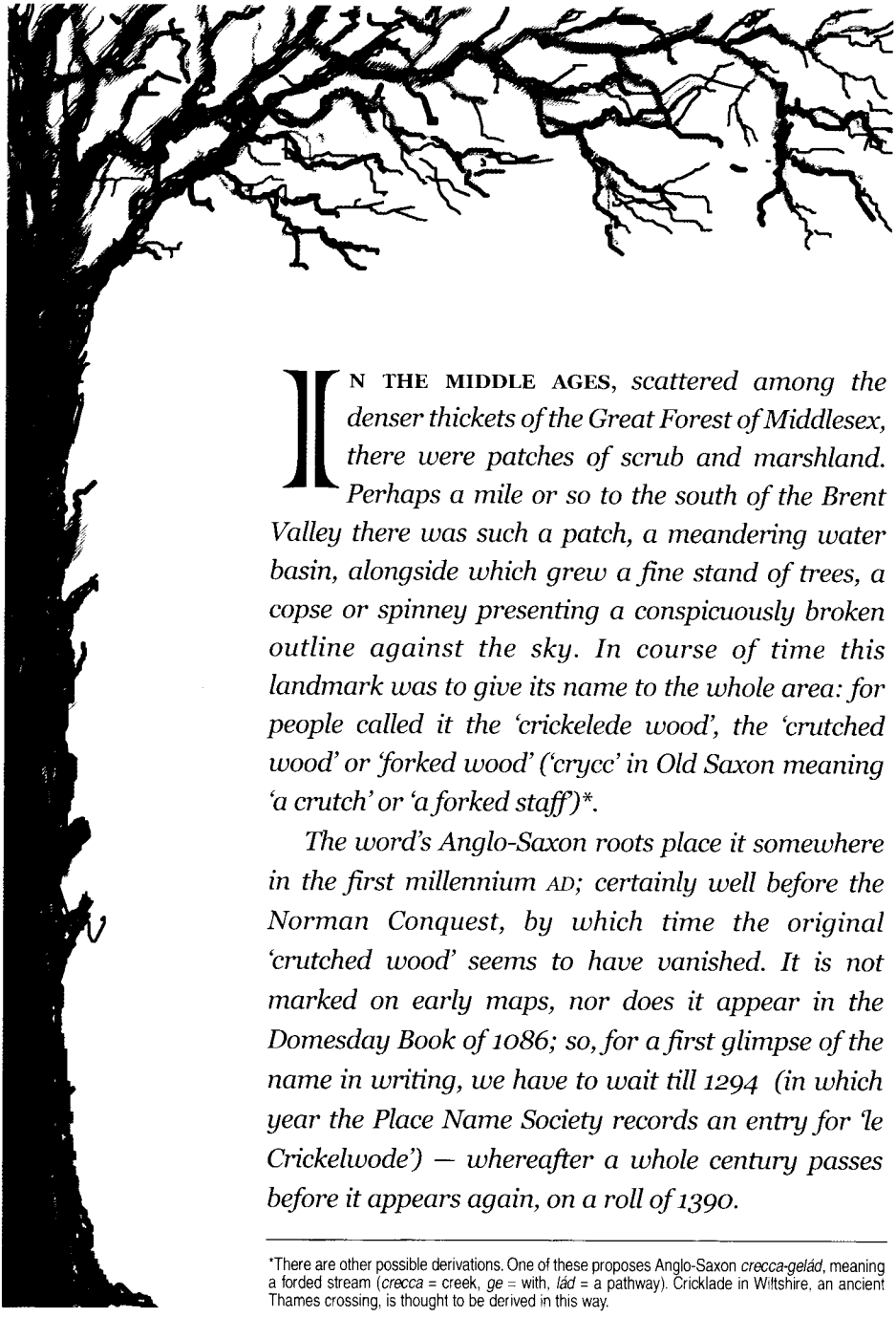

IN THE MIDDLE AGES, *scattered among the denser thickets of the Great Forest of Middlesex, there were patches of scrub and marshland. Perhaps a mile or so to the south of the Brent Valley there was such a patch, a meandering water basin, alongside which grew a fine stand of trees, a copse or spinney presenting a conspicuously broken outline against the sky. In course of time this landmark was to give its name to the whole area: for people called it the 'crickelede wood', the 'crutched wood' or 'forked wood' ('crycc' in Old Saxon meaning 'a crutch' or 'a forked staff')*.*

The word's Anglo-Saxon roots place it somewhere in the first millennium AD*; certainly well before the Norman Conquest, by which time the original 'crutched wood' seems to have vanished. It is not marked on early maps, nor does it appear in the Domesday Book of 1086; so, for a first glimpse of the name in writing, we have to wait till 1294 (in which year the Place Name Society records an entry for 'le Crickelwode') — whereafter a whole century passes before it appears again, on a roll of 1390.*

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*There are other possible derivations. One of these proposes Anglo-Saxon *crecca-gelád*, meaning a forded stream (*crecca* = creek, *ge* = with, *lád* = a pathway). Cricklade in Wiltshire, an ancient Thames crossing, is thought to be derived in this way.

Prologue: The Crutched Wood

The end of the Great Forest

Cricklewood in the Middle Ages would have been quite unlike the metropolitan suburb we know today. At that time even to call it a hamlet would have been exaggeration. The Great Forest still ruled. Wolves and wild boar prowled. But their day was nearly over. The woodland was carefully managed as a resource for timber and kindling but, as needs changed, it slowly dwindled. By the end of the 16th Century it had all but gone, giving way entirely to pasture and arable land.

Today we have only tantalising remnants of that Great Forest: Hampstead Heath, Horsenden Hill, Epping Forest, Scratchwood – these, and a few other such delights, linger as reminders of the wildwood that was.

The first great highway

As the forest diminished, communications improved. But roads in the Middle Ages left much to be desired. Most were muddy tracks linking farm to farm, or farm to market, following natural trails and making great detours to avoid bogs and boulders. In the words of G.K. Chesterton:

Before the Roman came to Rye
or out to Severn strode,
The rolling English drunkard made
the rolling English road ...
... A mazy road, a miry road
and such as we did tread
The night we went to Birmingham
by way of Beachy Head.

But there was one road which owed nothing to that English drunkard; a road that did not meander from side to side avoiding every tree stump and duckpond. It pre-dated some of those winding mud-courses by a thousand years and was, of course, the great imperial Roman road, Watling Street; the national highway which today we call the A5 or Edgware Road; or, if we live in Cricklewood, 'The Broadway'.

Built by the Roman occupiers in the 1st Century AD, this was no wandering cart track. First, a trench was dug down to the existing rock or clay and filled with layers of sand or small rock. When these had been rammed level, an even surface of small curved stones was laid. These were cut and shaped by stonemasons, and were able to support marching legions and their transports. Drainage ditches ran alongside to keep the road surfaces flood and frost free.

The technology was well ahead of its time; indeed, it remained basically unal-

tered until the early 19th Century when John Loudon Macadam introduced revolutionary new methods.

Broad verges

Not surprisingly a road such as this, carrying as it did a continuous stream of valuable cargo, was vulnerable to attack by partisans, and presented a tempting target for bandits and robbers. So the Romans, and the Normans after them, cleared extra-wide verges extending 100 feet on either side. On these they forbade all building and afforestation, often giving trusted retainers simple holdings there in return for protecting the verges and the farm houses nearby.

After connecting the Kent coast to London, Watling Street struck out north-west through the Great Forest of Middlesex (closely skirting the Crickelede Wood), passing on through St Albans and Wroxeter and Chester before finally petering out in the mountains of North Wales.

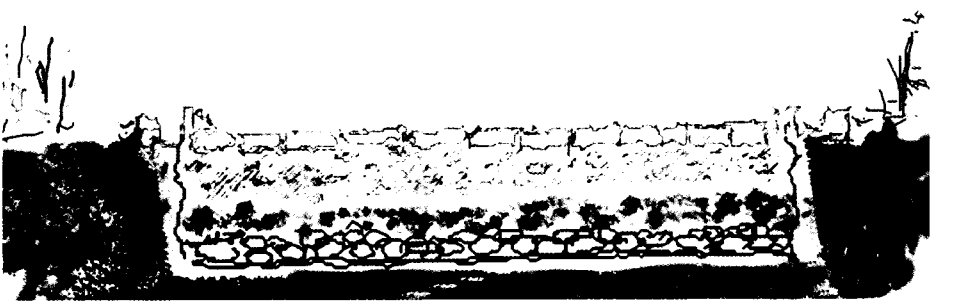
In the fifth century, Rome finally gave up on Britain and called its legions home. New invaders soon took their place – Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, Vikings, Normans, so that the country gradually disintegrated into a collection of petty warring kingdoms. Watling Street fell into neglect. Stones taken from the top layer of the road to build houses were replaced by rubble and dirt, until by the 18th century long stretches of this once-mighty Roman highway had all but disappeared.

Land, the great treasure

Over the centuries, Britain's overlords were not slow to realise that, of all the assets they possessed, there was none more precious than land. Land was wealth, security, power. It could reward loyalty, or be used as a bargaining counter. It could even, for a sinner *in extremis*, help unlock the gates of Heaven. And Le Crickelwode had land aplenty.

For the present, however, let us allow Watling Street the last word. History was not yet finished with it, nor it with the place of the Crutched Wood. Eighteen hundred years on, Watling Street was again to assert itself in a most unexpected way – in, of all things, a cloud of steam. As we shall presently see.

Below: cross-section through a typical Roman road, showing multi-layered construction that was not to be significantly improved upon for some eighteen hundred years.



1. Of Rokholtes and Cliderhous

IT IS NOW the fourteenth century, the late Middle Ages. Richard II is on the throne. The Black Death has decimated the population. Across the Channel, nearly a hundred years of fighting have settled nothing, and now the tide is turning against Britain. It has been a troublesome century.

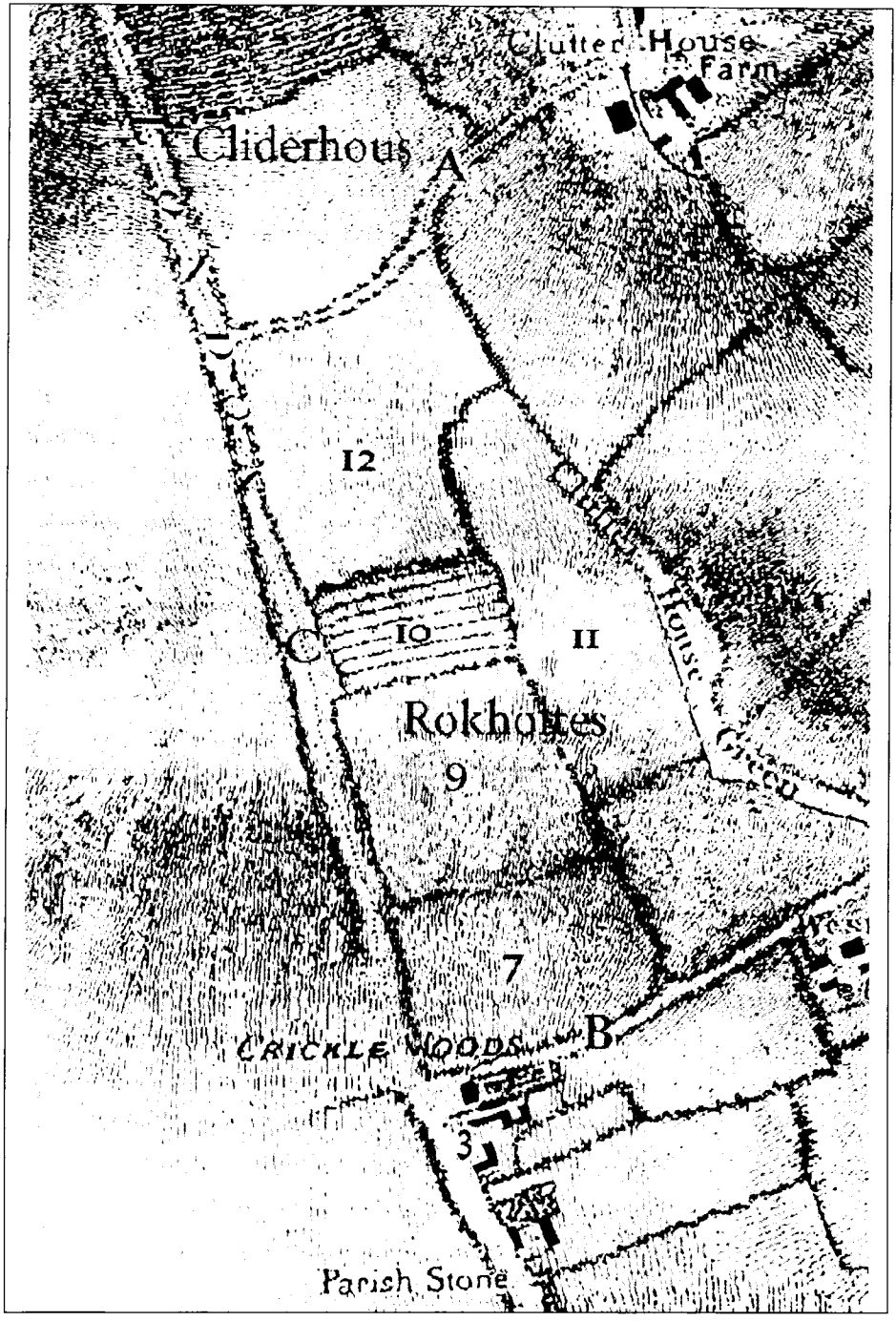
The month is July, the year 1388. Why this particular date? Because, Railway Villager, a deal is about to be struck. Your land is about to change hands; not for the first time, true, but not for the last time either. The importance of this deal is that it will ensure that in 500 years' time, when history decrees the need for a terraced village in Cricklewood, the land for that village will be there for the bidding.

St Bartholomew

The story begins with a pilgrimage, a vision and a vow.

Rahere, formerly a courtier of Henry I while sick on a pilgrimage to Rome, saw a vision of St Bartholomew which inspired him on his return to England to found a priory and a hospital for the poor at Smithfield. In the early medieval period the sick were cared for by the brethren and sisters of the Priory but gradually St Bartholomew's Hospital became independent, relying on rents from the

Serfs cutting corn under an overseer's watchful eye
Ca. 14th century.


Clutter House Farm
Cliderhous
A
12
10
11
Rokholtes
9
7
CRICKLE WOODS
B
3
Parish Stone

leasing of land gifted to it by wealthy admirers of its good work.

Rokholtes and Cliderhous were two such grants and are where our cottages will be built some 400 years hence. In the late 14th century the two names are closely linked to the Wynkebourne family. In 1388 Hugh Wynkebourne and his wife Isobel grant to John Kyng de Willesdon four tofts or homesteads, *"three of which are called Rokholtes* [Fields 10, 11 and 12 as marked on the Cooke map opposite] *and the fourth Neulonde"*.

Following the death of her husband Hugh, Isobel Wynkebourne marries Henry Lynch, probably bringing the Cliderhous lands to the marriage; for in 1403 she and Henry grant to John Wynkebourne (possibly a son by her first marriage) and others *"land and tenements ... called Cliderhous"*.

By the early 15th century Henry Frowyk, a Middlesex MP, has acquired the three Rokholte homesteads and in 1446 deeds them to St Bartholomew's Hospital. The Cliderhous land later becomes the property of Robert Warner, also a Middlesex MP and a close friend of Henry Frowyk. In his will of 1439 Robert Warner leaves his estate of Cliderhous to St Bartholomew's Hospital, but only after the death of his wife and brother and on condition that the chaplain pray for his soul.

There may have been a dispute over this land. It was in fact given by Warner's widow to her son-in-law, Walter Green, who does not deed the Cliderhous land to John Wakeryng, Master of St. Bartholomew's, until 1446. The Cliderhous land remains in the ownership of the Hospital, eventually becoming Clitterhouse Farm with a handsome manor house built in the late 18th century.

The area known as Rokholtes, it appears, is made up of five fields, Nos 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12, fronting Watling Street (C) between Cletherhous Lane (A) and what became known as Cricklewood Lane (B). The early history of Fields 7 and 9 is uncertain. A map of 1570 shows only that No 9 is owned by a Mr Rayner.

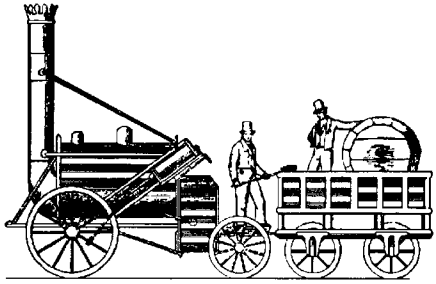
In 1796 these two fields are the property of Mrs Harriet Mencelin, who also owns The Crown public house (No 3) along with another field and a house on the corner of Cricklewood Lane. By 1828 Fields 7 and 9 have been sold on to a Mr James Denew and sometime after 1840 they become the property of William Slark Esq. By this time Fields 11 and 12 are one field, No 12, and together with No 10 these former Rokholtes fields have become part of Clitterhouse Farm.

And so by the early 19th century Rokholtes and Cliderhous are known as Rockhall and Clitterhouse* and it is on these two areas of adjoining land, specifically fields 9, 10 and 12, that the Cricklewood Railway Terraces will be built.

* Rokholtes appears in the records variously as Rookhold and Rockhall. Cliderhous is spelt from time to time as Cletherhous, Clutterhouse and (more recently) Clitterhouse.

Opposite:
Illustration based on John Cooke's 1796 *Map of the Manor and Parish of Hendon in the County of Middlesex.*

2. The Coming of Steam



Stephenson's prize-winning 'Rocket', 1829

ON SEPTEMBER 27th, 1825, large crowds saw George Stephenson at the controls of the *Locomotion* as it pulled 36 wagons filled with sacks of coal and flour to mark the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. The journey of just under nine miles took two hours and during the final descent into Stockton speeds of 15 mph were achieved.

Not since the invention of the wheel had anything quite so seductive entered the world of transport. The arrival of the railway opened undreamt-of vistas of speed and travel and freedom – not just for the wealthy and privileged, but for the whole population. New lines sprouted in all directions. Speculators scrambled to buy shares.

The Midland Railway

One such speculator was 27-year-old farmer's son George Hudson, a born entrepreneur who in 1827 put £30,000 – an unexpected windfall inheritance from a distant relative – into railway shares.

Five years later he formed his own railway company, the York & North Midland, and persuaded George Stephenson, by then a close friend and partner, to take a seat on the board. Whilst continuing to buy shares in other railway companies, Hudson was the first to see that future prosperity lay in amalgamation.

In 1844 he united the Midland Counties, the North Midland and the Birmingham & Derby Junction railways to form a single Company: and so the Midland Railway was born. It was a bold and ultimately successful venture which earned Hudson the title 'Railway King'.

Hudson's early success as a railway magnate was not to last. Only a year later George Stephenson wrote to a friend, *"Hudson has become too great a man for me now. I am not at all satisfied at the way the Newcastle and Berwick line has been carried on and I do not intend to take any more active part in it. I have made Hudson a rich man but he will very soon care for nobody except he can get money by them".*

By 1847 railway shares were falling sharply. Hudson's promises turned out to be false, and those who had believed in him and invested heavily were ruined. Hudson was forced to resign from all his railway companies and a subsequent investigation found him guilty of bribery and

selling shares at inflated prices. When by 1865 he had still not paid back the money he owed, he was imprisoned for debt in York Castle. He died in 1871.

The Midland Railway comes to London

In the years following Hudson's departure the Midland Railway flourished, expanding its lines to Bradford, Leeds, Bristol, Gloucester and Hitchin. But by 1863, the ultimate prize, a direct independent link with London, was still out of reach, blocked by powerful vested interests.

Clement E. Stretton recorded that *"In the year of The Great Exhibition 1862, no fewer than 3,400 Midland trains – 1,000 passenger and 2,400 goods trains – were delayed on the Great Northern system ... [at one point] five miles of goods trains were waiting to gain access to London from the north."*

According to G.W.Trip in a Railway Magazine article in 1903, *"It was scandalous for respectable people to travel to town by that second-rate concern 'The Old Lady of Bletchley' (meaning the London & North Western branch serving Bedford) – which ... was only fit to convey paupers or convicts; unless perchance, charity children might be entrusted to its care for their railway journey."*

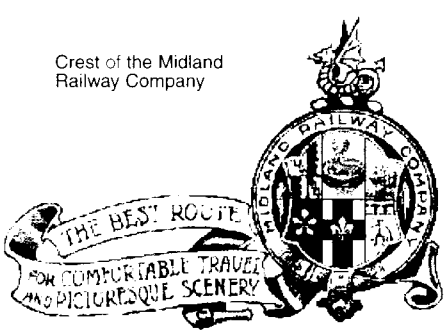
At last, years of intensive lobbying paid off. In 1863, Parliament acted and the Company was given the go-ahead for a 50-mile rail link from Bedford to a new terminus at St Pancras. Work began in 1864, the line was opened for goods traffic in 1867, and a year later was carrying passengers.

St Pancras

Midland's flagship terminus at St Pancras was deliberately conceived as a showpiece. No expense was spared. The building, along with its integral Grand Hotel, seemed to proclaim to friend and competitor alike, "The Midland Railway has arrived". It created a sensation. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878), it was, and remains, a unique treasure of the Victorian Gothic movement and is now Grade I listed. The Hotel, incidentally, though of almost unprecedented opulence by mid-19th Century standards, slipped into commercial decline and finally closed when *en suite* bathrooms became *de rigueur* and public taste no longer tolerated midnight walks along draughty corridors!

Hungry for space

The developing railway network needed an ever-growing complex of marshalling yards, sidings, roundhouses, stables, stores and repair sheds. It was hungry for space, yet such a large amount of land in central London would be both expensive and hard to find. This new depot would be handling huge tonnages of freight, some (mostly coal) arriving from up-country for local delivery in London, some carted



Crest of the Midland Railway Company

from London for despatch to distant destinations.

Coal was essential to the financial wellbeing of the railways, yet it was not at first a sought-after cargo. In the 1840s coal trucks were sheeted over to hide their contents. At one depot special screens were erected to conceal (as one railway official put it) *"the ignominious transaction from the eyes of the passing traveller"*, and another manager complained that his line would next be called on to carry manure.

Predictably, as the new railway sidings came into active use they would be besieged daily by heavy road traffic, mostly horse-drawn, for which a well-developed access and dispersal system would be essential.

But here, at Cricklewood, a bare fifteen minutes by rail from St Pancras, were broad expanses of undeveloped land; moreover Cricklewood offered, almost ready-made, within a few yards of the railway track, a main trunk road, the former Watling Street, straight as an arrow, connecting Cricklewood to all points south, and London to all points north.

Additionally the vast acreage required was conveniently owned by only two freeholders: namely St Bartholomew's Hospital in Smithfield and William Slark Esq. The Midland Railway was able to purchase the greater part of the land for the marshalling yards and railway track from St Bartholomew's in 1865 at a cost of £45,000.

From William Slark in 1869 they acquired Fields 7 and 9 adjoining the St Bartholomew's site – a narrow but crucial strip fronting on the Edgware Road, beginning at the corner of Cricklewood Lane and running in a northerly direction for a quarter of a mile.

And so with relative ease the Railway acquired the freehold of a broad tract of land some 100 to 150 acres in extent, bordering the east side of Edgware Road – all clinging to the course of a forgotten Roman road.

As predicted, Watling Street, spearhead of Britain's first transport revolution, had become pivotal to the expansion of the second.

Pots of gold

The 1870s and 80s were heady days for railway investors. Railway stocks had long since recovered from the 1847 crash and for many punters there was now a pot of gold at the end of every line. Cricklewood was witnessing an almost breakneck programme of expansion.

Sidings were opened at Brent in 1868, and a small four-road structure was added in 1870. A new roundhouse was built in 1882, known until the turn of the century as 'Child's Hill'. In 1893 a number of enlargements were made and a second roundhouse added [the site of one of these is now occupied by Royal Mail's Parcel Force depot].

Cricklewood v. Child's Hill

Cricklewood in 1870 was hardly more than a scattering of farms, fields and haymakers' bothies, barely worth a mention on the map. It had a short row of houses built for what today might be called 'stockbroker belt' gentry, plus a couple of inns for passing coaches; but, though it stood

at the convergence of three parishes – Willesden to the west, Hendon to the east, Hampstead to the south-east – not a single church building of its own (at least, none that appears on contemporary Ordnance maps).

Child's Hill, on the other hand, though a mile away to the east and only a hamlet, showed healthy signs of growth. It boasted a church, two pubs, a kiln for bricks and tiles, and some modest but substantial residential terraces, with more development in prospect. Further, being on the borders of sought-after Hampstead and within a short walk of the Heath, it held promise of future prosperity (not to mention a supply of well-heeled passengers for the railway).

So when the station opened on 2nd May 1870 the sign was not, alas, proudly emblazoned with the name 'Cricklewood'. It read 'Child's Hill' (with 'and Cricklewood' tagged on almost as an afterthought!). Not only that, but Cricklewood Lane was then still called Child's Hill Lane.

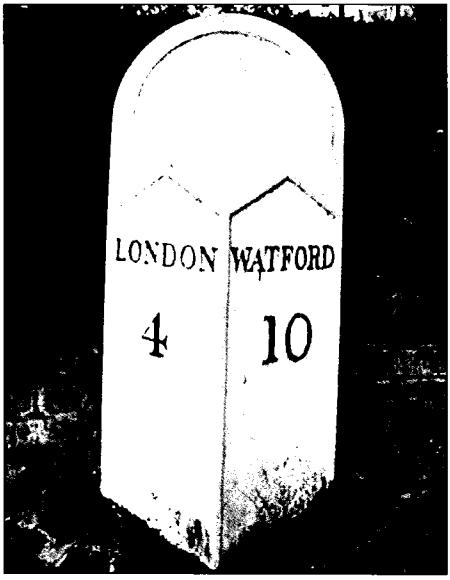
All the same, geographically and commercially, Cricklewood was the true pivot of the operation.

The Cricklewood Curve

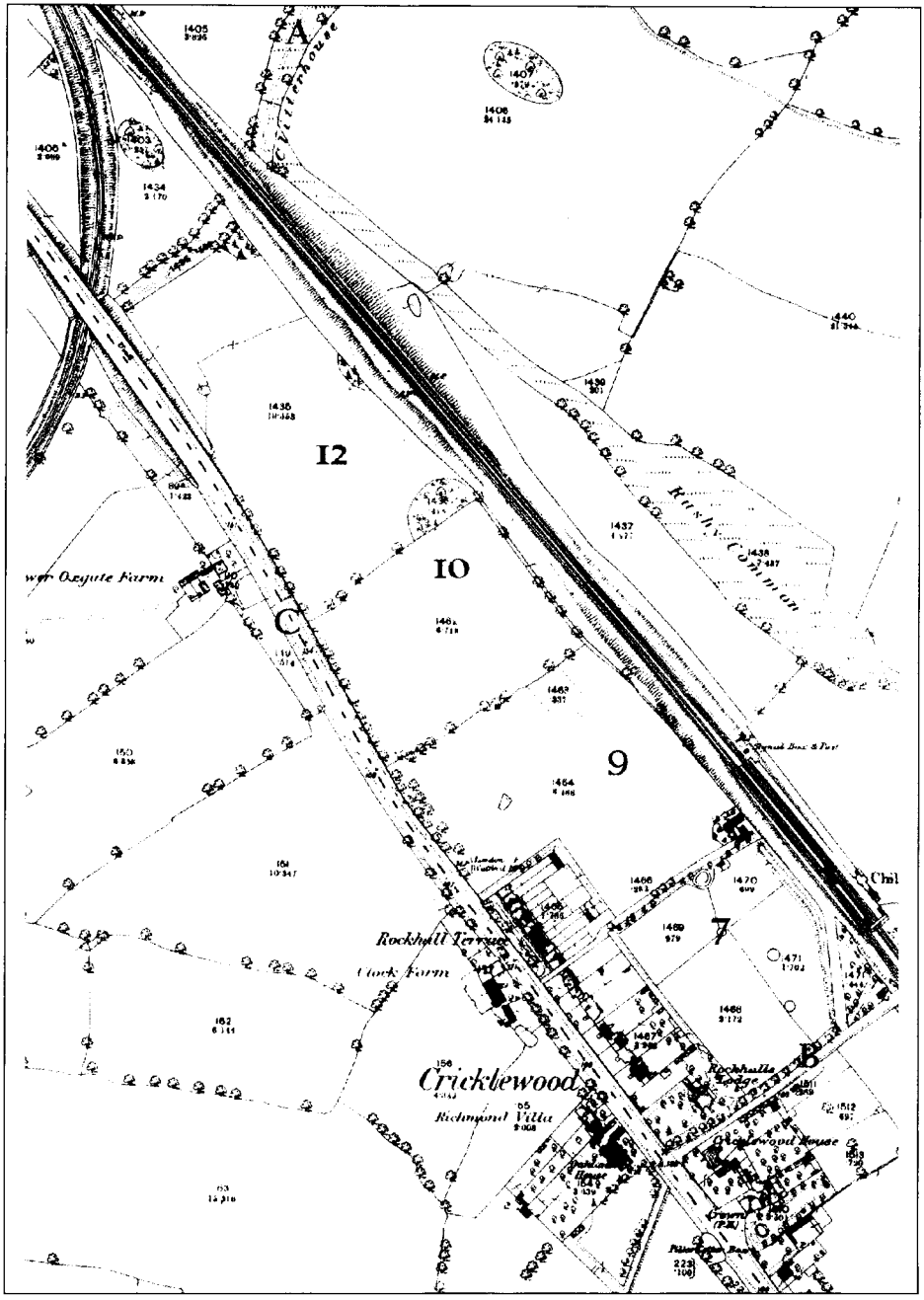
As business boomed, new lines were added. The Midland Railway built a spur just north of Cricklewood.

This important development was known as The North Curve, and was opened in October 1868. It passed under the Edgware Road in a south-westerly direction, connecting the Bedford-St Pancras line to the Midland & South Western Junction Railway terminal at Acton Wells, thereby achieving direct access to what became the North London Line. This also provided valuable freight links with the former London and Southern Railways.

A few years later, in 1875, the Company completed another loop known as The Cricklewood Curve. This passed over the main road on a viaduct which connected Brent Sidings to the London & South Western Railway, carrying both passengers and freight. Cricklewood was now promoted to the role of junction and local terminal. The passenger service was not a success. In defiance of the railway boom, it proved uneconomic and, after abortive attempts at re-launch, was finally withdrawn in 1902.



The '4-mile stone' in front of the Railway Terraces on the coach route to St Albans marks four miles measured from Tyburn (Marble Arch).



This illustration is based on a revised edition of the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1860, showing the Midland Railway lines built by 1870.

3. Bricks and Mortar

BEFORE THE COMING of the Midland Railway, Cricklewood's population numbered in tens rather than hundreds. Yet within a decade Cricklewood was to become a vital accessory to half of Britain's railway system.

Marshalling yards, engine sheds, repair workshops and the huge volume of trade in freight provided work for many. There were jobs for footplatemen, guards, wheeltappers and signalmen, shunters and platelayers, engineers and clerks, hauliers and grooms and cleaners, but few suitably trained local workers.

Skilled workers were drafted in from other parts of the network. Others came from all points of the compass. Cricklewood was becoming an 1870s railway boom town, but there was virtually no accommodation. Where were they to live?

Accommodation

By the summer of 1880, alarm bells were sounding in the boardroom of the Midland Railway company. In July and August of that year, two plans were proposed by the General Purposes Committee and the Way & Works Committee.

The first plan was ambitious: the design and erection of 30 cottages, to be built across three fields (Nos 9, 10 and 12) facing the Edgware Road.

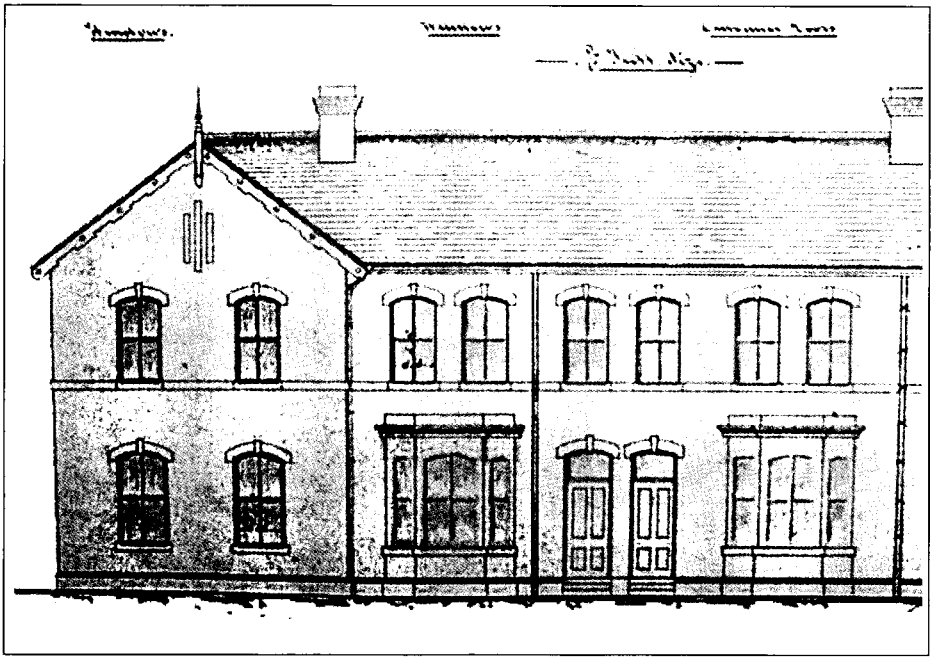
The second involved converting ten houses in Rockhall Terrace [the site of the present Telephone Exchange] into *'dwellings for engine drivers'*, at a cost of £1,500. This plan was quickly dropped, probably when the committee discovered that they did not have vacant possession of the houses in Rockhall Terrace!

In July 1881 there was a further proposal to build 40 cottages at a cost of between £12,000 and £13,000; but the company was still looking at other options, presumably because of the cost and the unavailability of the land adjacent to Rockhall Terrace.

This latter problem originated in the land and properties purchased from William Slark in 1869, 12 years earlier. The company owned the freehold of the land and houses but not their existing leaseholds and had to wait until the leases ran out to obtain vacant possession. Rockhall Terrace and the land adjacent to it would not be available to the company until 1883.

Finally on 20th December, 1881 the Way & Works Committee reported that *"Twenty-eight tenders were received for erecting 40 cottages at Childs Hill. Resolved that Messrs. G. Lilley & Sons tender of £17,758. 18. 0. be accepted."*

Another year was to pass before the project was mentioned again in the Minutes. In January 1882 the estimate was increased by £4,759 for extra foundations



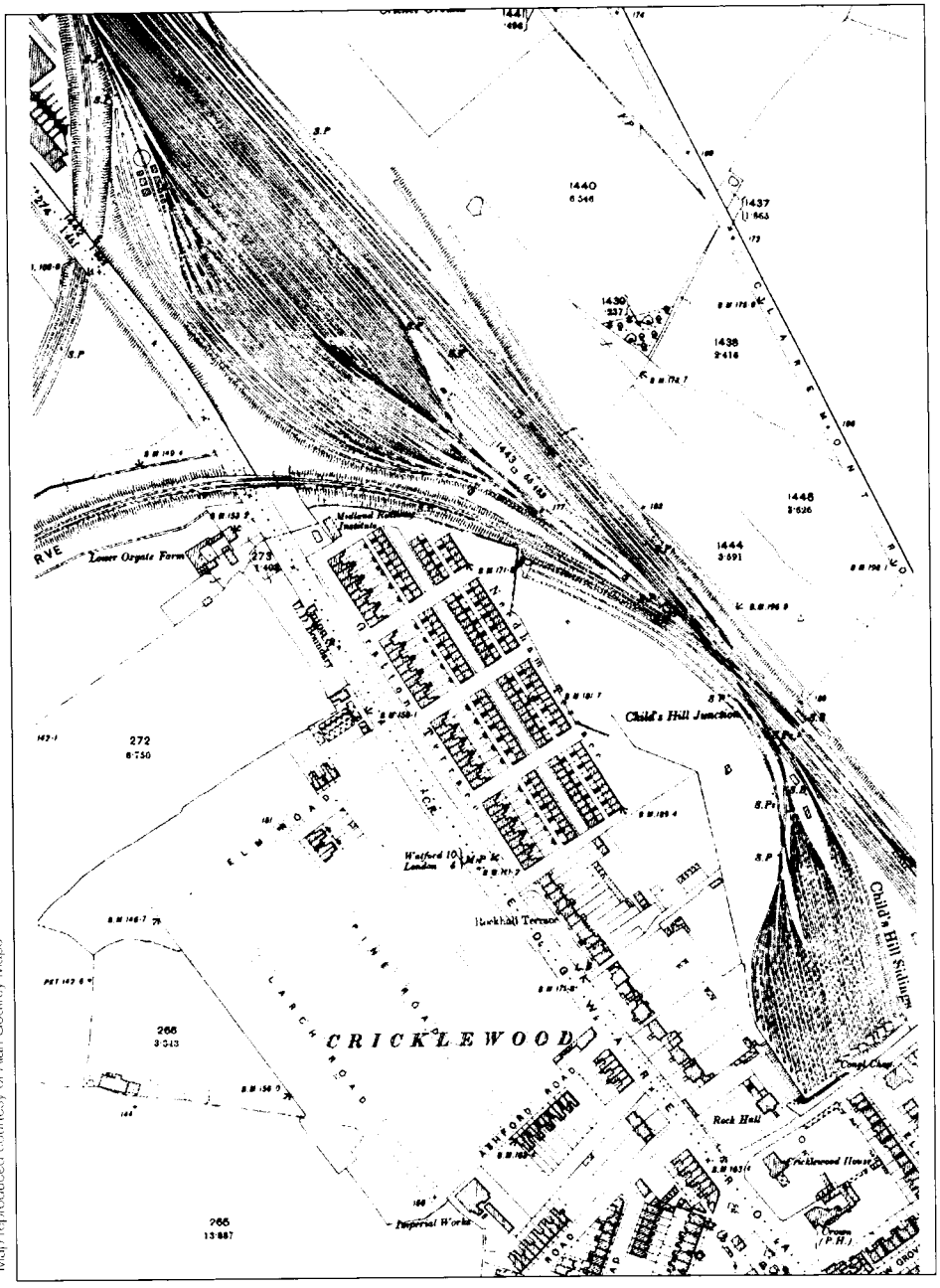
Above: Architect's elevation Ca.1882, showing frontages of three houses planned for Gratton Terrace.
Photograph © London Borough of Barnet Ref MS20430.

The design and detailing were followed closely, as can be seen from the contemporary picture *(printed below)*.

and new streets and in July the Locomotive Department was requested to supply and fix gas fittings at an estimated cost of £260 17s 6d.

But the land next to Rockhall Terrace, on which Nos. 1 to 10 were to be erected, was not available at the commencement of building works. So the first block of Gratton Terrace to be built was at the north end. Nos. 40 to 11 were completed by April 1883 and the first 30 occupants moved in during the summer.

By autumn Nos.1 to 10 were also completed and occupied.



Map reproduced courtesy of Alan Godfrey Maps

On the Ordnance Survey map published in 1894, railway developments can be clearly seen. Sidings have spread fan-like to the south and north, and all the Railway Terraces are in place, with the exception of Campion. The open country facing the Terraces across the Edgware Road is already being engulfed by a tide of housing, with Pine Road and Larch Road appearing as dotted lines.

4. Pathfinders

SUMMER 1883. A horse-drawn cart trundles along Edgware Road. On it, chairs, tables, rugs, pots and pans, bedding, piled high. Also two adults and some children.

The cart creaks past Slade Farm, past Cricklewood Lane, past Clock Farm. It pauses at last opposite a meadow just beyond Rockhall Terrace.

The meadow is heaving with activity. A terrace of redbrick houses is under construction, the bricks still bright from the kiln. The more distant houses are roofed and finished, some of the nearer ones still open to the sky.

The cart labours up a rough slope, lumbers past three blocks of terrace houses and finally draws to a halt outside the fourth block. The address is No.34 Gratton Terrace. The Whitmores have arrived.

Above: The Old Welsh Harp pub looking along the Edgware Road towards Dollis Hill and Cricklewood. Such was the rural scene through which the Whitmores would have travelled on their way to Gratton Terrace in 1883.
Photograph from the C.R.Smith collection, Ca 1902.

Above: William Syre Whitmore and his wife Louisa Annie.

A new life

William Syre Whitmore is a 29-year-old engine driver for the Midland Railway and on that day in 1883 William, his wife Louisa and their four children begin a new life in these Terraces which will be carried on by their descendants – an unbroken family connection – right through to the year 2000, a hundred and seventeen years later.

That day in 1883, had he and his Louisa had time to pause for just a moment and study the view from their front bedroom window, what would they have seen? Their house is near the north end of the Terrace. So they would have had a clear view of the main road, of course, (not yet named The Broadway) with once in a while a wagon heading south towards the railway goods yard, or maybe the clip-clop of hoofs announcing the passing of a haywain.

And beyond that? Straight ahead, on the far side of Edgware Road, where now we see warehouses and offices and side streets full of neat little houses, was a panorama of cow-meadows stretching patchwork-fashion as far as the eye could see, all the way to Willesden a mile to the south. Louisa would soon be walking across those fields to services at St Mary's Church in Willesden.

Were our new arrivals to glance a little to the right, they would see the farmhouse and outbuildings of Lower Oxgate Farm nestling in a slight dip (where Wickes is today). To the left, more open fields, followed by the rambling outline of Clock Farm (across the road from Depot Approach). Beyond that, though out of sight from No.34, more open pasture and then two large houses, Richmond Villa and Oakland House.

Oakland House was a rather grand affair fronting on Edgware Road directly opposite Cricklewood Lane. It had a tiny footpath beside it, a mere cinder-track, that a decade later would become

Above: Sydney Charles Bromley *(standing at rear)*, Lilian Annie, Eric *(standing right)* and Reginald William Bromley *(centre)*.

Chichele Road. Further south still, but beyond their view, was one of the larger farms of Cricklewood, known as The Slade.

From their back bedroom, the view would be much the same: no human habitation in the foreground, just a rolling meadow, the railway embankment beyond, conceivably the treetops of Hampstead Heath on the distant skyline (for then there were few buildings to block the view), and every now and again the distant sound of a passing train or the clink-clink-clink of couplings from the shunting yards.

The Whitmore Dynasty

By 1898, William Syre Whitmore is a widower. Not surprisingly, with 13 children to bring up, four years later in 1902 he marries 48-year-old Mary Ann Stamford, the family's housekeeper. Meanwhile Lilian Annie, William's second daughter by his first wife, has become betrothed to her young man, Sydney Charles Bromley.

They are married in 1904 and four years later Lilian, known as Lily, gives birth to her first son, Eric. Six years later there is a second child baptised Reginald William, but always known as Reg.

Reg himself, who was to live in Gratton Terrace all his life, picks up the story: *"I was born in 1914, but I came to Cricklewood in 1915 when my mother and father took a flat in Mora Road, No.72. My grandfather used to drive one of the famous old single driving wheel engines and earned his Gold Star for being the first to drive an engine at 80 mph.*

"To move into Gratton in the 1880s", Reg recalls, *"you had to earn at least £3 a week, which was a lot of money in those days. My grandfather earned £3 2s 6d a week and his rent was 2s 6d a week.*

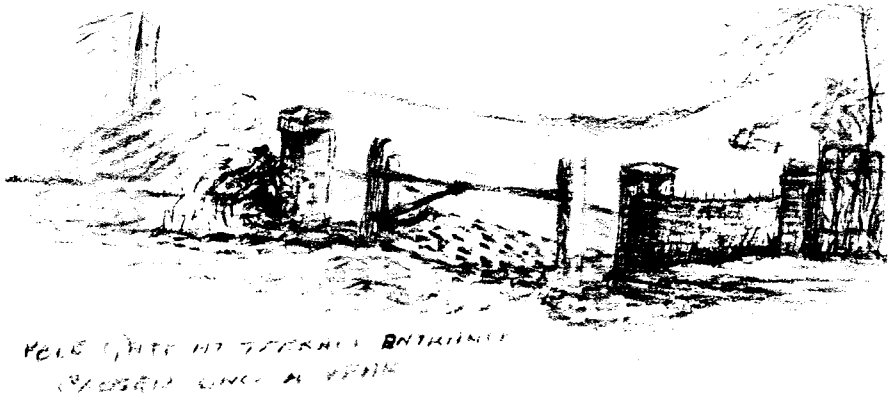
"When my grandfather became ill, he didn't like anybody but Lily looking after him. We moved in with him but we kept a flat in Mora Road. I was only just over a year old when he died and after that we moved in more or less permanently."

In fact Reg settled at No. 3 Gratton Terrace until his death in 1987. He lived there through two world wars, and became a familiar figure in the Terraces. He married Irene in 1944 and had one son, David. Irene died in January 2000.

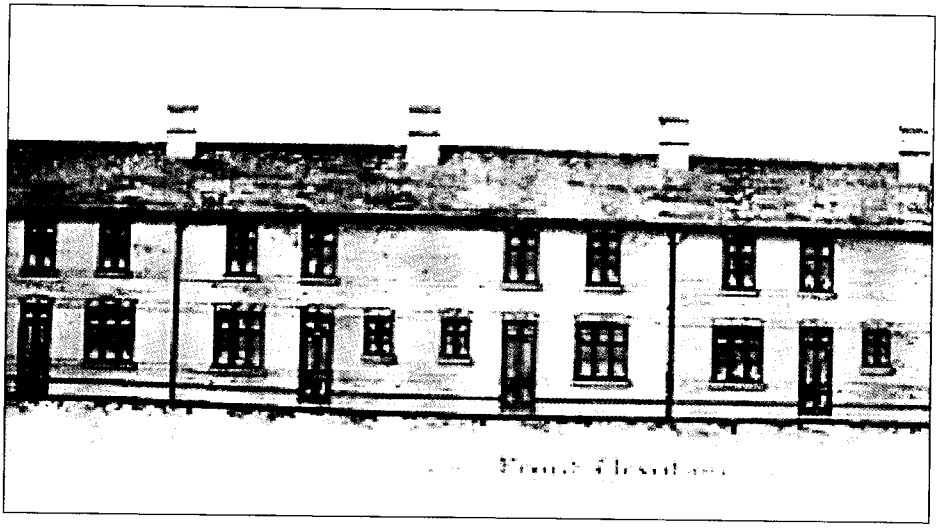
Reg himself always had a keen interest in the past and as well as his own memories he also carried those of the two generations that went before him – his parents and his Whitmore grandparents. He was a talented amateur artist. One of his sketches is reproduced below; others elsewhere in this book.

Right:
Reg Bromley as a young man photographed in his yard at 3 Gratton Terrace.

Below:
"Did you know these cottages had big gates at each end, and were closed once a year, to keep up with an old law, keeping it private?"
— Ida Simpson, Cottage Jottings, Summer 1995.

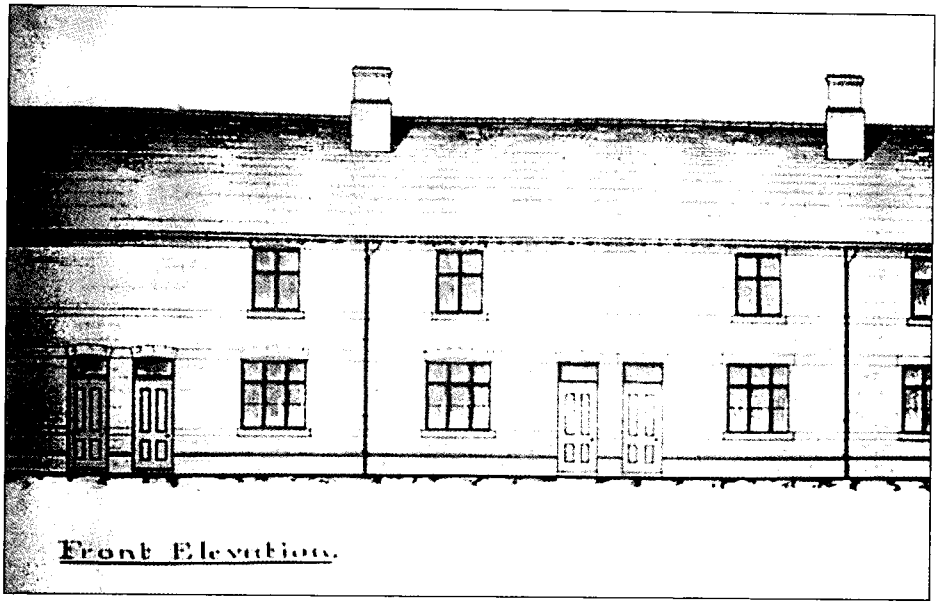


Sketch by Reg Bromley



Above: Gratton had proved an expensive luxury, and a number of drawings were rejected before the Midland Railway settled on a design for the Upper Terraces. The design above ("Number 2") was turned down on the grounds of cost. *Photographs of plans on pages 22 and 23 © London Borough of Barnet Ref MS20430.*

Below: This scaled-down version of the earlier design — designated "Number 1" — was more compact, and cheaper to build. It was eventually approved, but with modifications: the fanlight was to be removed from over the front doors, extra windows provided on first floors, and outhouses to be installed at the back for coal and w.c.



5. The Upper Terraces

FROM THE MINUTES of the Way & Works Committee of May 1883, it is evident that the company had already realised that the accommodation provided by Gratton Terrace would not be enough. The committee members *"resolved that the remaining 10 cottages* [Gratton Terrace] *be completed and made available for the accommodation of the Company's servants."* Then under the heading 'Cottages for Signalmen':

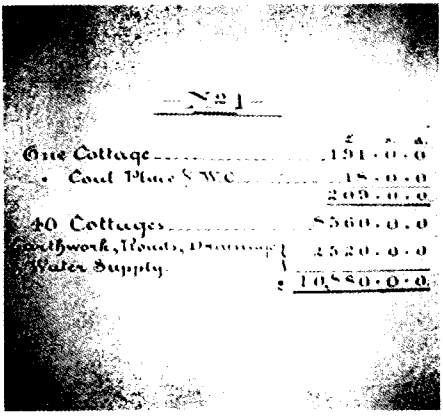
"A minute of the Traffic Committee was read wherein it was recommended to the Board that the Way and Works Committee submit for approval a somewhat less expensive plan than that which has been hitherto adopted for Signalmen's cottages and that for the titure the accommodation may be limited to two rooms on the ground floor and three above. Two plans were submitted, one at a cost of £240 and another at a cost of £180. Resolved that the Traffic Committee be authorized to submit to the General Purposes Committee a plan for a pair of cottages on the less expensive plan to be built as an experiment and that the settlement of the plan for general adoption be further considered."

Had the Midland Railway board already realised that in building for its railway workers imposing and expensive houses such as those recently completed in Gratton Terrace, vanity had overtaken good financial sense? Yet the next reference to plans for smaller cottages does not appear in the Minutes until 1885 when the matter is twice postponed. We do not know whether the 'dummy run' ever happened.

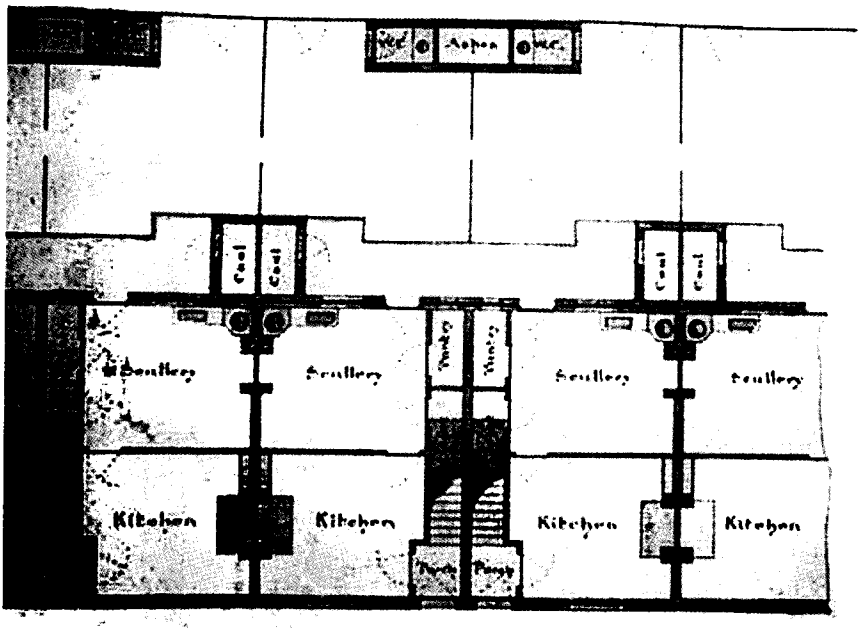
It is interesting to note that this time the choice was very definitely decided by cost. The committee opted for the cottage at £180, though an increase to £197 was allowed to provide for a second window on the upper floor and an extra two out-houses at the rear. Yet for whatever reason, they waited until 1890 before building any more cottages.

Midland Terrace

This second Terrace of 44 houses is not mentioned again in the minutes, yet it was the first Terrace to be built after Gratton and was occupied by the spring of 1891.



Estimate for building our cottages



Cottage No.1: Ground Floor Plan

Photograph © London Borough of Barnet Ref MS20430.

The final cost of these houses is not known as they were not built until seven years after the £197 costing of 1883.

Johnston and Needham

In September 1890, the General Purposes Committee noted briefly: *"Erection of 78 cottages for the staff. The Traffic Committee submitted a plan and estimates amounting to £18,000 were read for the first time."* The number corresponds exactly to Johnston (40) and Needham (38) combined, and the price per cottage is now £230. Johnston and Needham had residents by November 1891, though were not fully occupied at that time.

Brent Terrace

In 1897 the Committee is considering a plan for *"105 cottages for the staff. The Traffic Committee submitted estimates amounting to £26,500."* This was clearly Midland Brent Terrace, later known simply as Brent Terrace. The cost is now £252 per cottage.

Naming the Terraces

There were 176 cottages in the original estate (not including the Gratton Terrace infills built in 1907, Burlington Parade,

later additions at the northern end of the Terraces, and Brent Terrace, which was a separate development).

As the only Terrace, 'Gratton Terrace' was not named for eight years. Houses were addressed simply as *'No.X Edgware Road'*, then *'Cricklewood'*, then *'Midland Cottages'* (the nomenclature varied). When however Midland Terrace was occupied and named in April 1891, Gratton Terrace still remained unidentified. The name 'Gratton Terrace' finally appeared in the Rate Register of November 1891. Each subsequent Terrace was named as the next one was completed.

What could be more appropriate than to name them after prominent railway officials?

Mr J. Sterland Gratton was the Midland Railway Company's Land Agent – a key figure in the planning and development of the Railway Village.

Mr A. Johnston was Engineer-in-Chief of the Midland Railway, successor to the distinguished and recently-retired Mr John Crossley.

Mr A.M. Needham was the Company's Passenger Traffic Superintendent from 1873 until his death in 1890 (he died of Russian Flu caught while on duty in wet wintry weather).

Mr F. Campion was Resident Engineer for the Railway during construction of the Bedford to London extension, 1863-69.

Cricklewood Station

The modest train station at Cricklewood, built by J.E.Hall who was also responsible for the Flitwick and Welsh Harp Stations, had only two platforms and, not surprisingly, lacked St Pancras's grandeur. Another authority, Brian Radford, in *Midland Main Line Memories*, points out that the station had a double function. Not only did it serve the needs of local commuters, but also the recreational needs of the Victorian working classes and the London holiday makers who flocked to The Old Welsh Harp, an inn a mile or so to the north. He might also have mentioned the more local Crown Hotel and its celebrated 'Cricklewood Pleasure Grounds'.

Station upgrade

An upgrade had been under discussion for some time when in 1897 a tender was accepted to enlarge the Station Master's house, erect a new Lamp and Waiting Rooms and to cover the footbridge and its stepways, at a cost of £554 4s 10d. It is also interesting to note that in 1899 a firm called W.H.Smith obtained the concession to sell newspapers at the station.

Following a major programme of track widening in about 1902, the footbridge was replaced by a subway and a new main building was provided, fronting on Child's Hill Lane [now Cricklewood Lane]. From 1st May 1903 Child's Hill and Cricklewood Station became plain Cricklewood Station.

Above: A 4-2-2 No.27 on an Up express passes through Child's Hill & Cricklewood Station. The original 1870 building is still to be seen in the background.

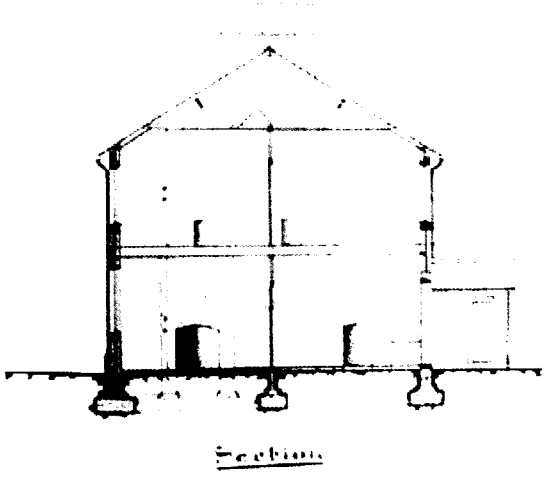
Below: This view of a Down passenger train shows the 1897 additions.

6. The First Families

SAD TO SAY, those first residents of the Terraces wrote no books, published no memoirs. But there is a source which gives us a glimpse into the lives of the Victorian railway workers of Cricklewood: that is the information gathered on one day in 1891 when the Census man came to call.

The National Census, which takes place every ten years, tells us who was in each house on the day, the jobs they did, the age they were, the number of children in the family.

It would be easy to dismiss the Census as a cold catalogue of facts. But behind the figures and columns are real people living their daily lives in the houses in which we of the 21st Century now live.



Sectional view of a cottage in the Upper Terraces.
Photograph © London Borough of Barnet Ref MS20430.

A Victorian family

In Gratton and Midland Terraces (the other Terraces are not yet built) many of the families are large and have lodgers and boarders (in one case the in-laws as well!). Two families often have to live side by side, with children as young as 10 working to supplement the family income. This is what the Census tells us about one of them – the Barnsdall family of 11 Gratton Terrace.

In 1891 the head of the household is 48-year-old railway Fireman William Barnsdall: his wife Eliza is 40 and there are eight children and a granddaughter: eleven people living under one roof. So what is life like for this Victorian family?

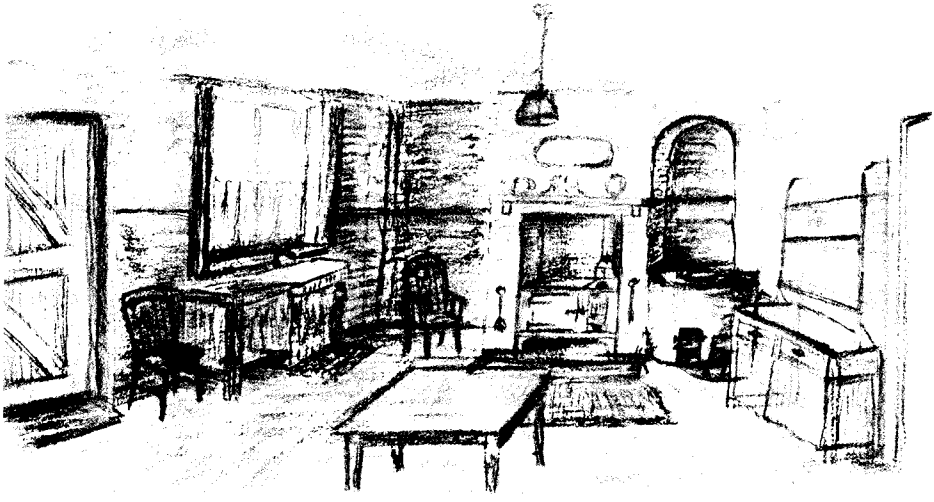
As Fireman, William spends a good deal of time away from home, working 'turns' (shifts) as long as 18 hours. His job is to fire the boiler and prepare the engine at the beginning of each turn. He gets three days' paid holiday a year.

His eldest son, William junior, is 27. As a Fitter's Labourer he repairs and maintains engines. Robert at 23 is also a Fireman, and aspires to be an engine driver [we know from Robert's surviving nephew that he actually made it!].

Walter, at 18, is an Apprentice Railway Fitter, earning very little at the moment; but the acquisition of skills such as technical drawing could lead him to a Railway Engineer's post, or even a managerial position. Of the remaining Barnsdalls, the youngest is two, and the other three children and the grand-daughter attend school.

Married life

What of Eliza, William's wife? She has eight children and has been pregnant for at least ten years of her married life so far. Looking at the gaps in their ages with the knowledge that in the 1890s birth control was rudimentary and not considered proper in Victorian society, it can probably sadly be assumed that she has lost several children either through miscarriage or disease in their early years. (Fatal infections such as diphtheria and tuberculosis are commonplace. In Hendon Urban District Council's Sanitation Report of 1893, a baby and a six-year-old in Midland Terrace have smallpox and are taken to the Holloway Smallpox Hospital in Highgate). Throughout this time she cares for her husband and the other children in conditions which a 21st century British woman



Above: "Cottage Kitchen, Midland Terrace", by Reg Bromley. When this drawing was made — probably in the 1950s — it is unlikely that its furnishings and fixtures would have differed significantly from those familiar to the Barnsdall family in the 1890s. Young Reg Bromley was a frequent and welcome visitor at the Misses Verralls' kitchen at No.4 Midland. The two sisters were daughters of Harry and Ellen Verrall, the first occupants of the house.

Above: Inside Child's Hill Running Sheds in the early 20th century. It was in such sheds that William Barnsdall and his sons would have learned their trade and taken their first steps up the promotion ladder. *Collection O.Carter.*

would consider intolerable. As a good Victorian wife she is expected to keep her children and home clean and well presented – not easy with only a single cold tap in the house and a tin bath in front of the kitchen fire, for which water has to be boiled and carried. One wonders how many have to use the same bath water, and who is fortunate enough to go first!

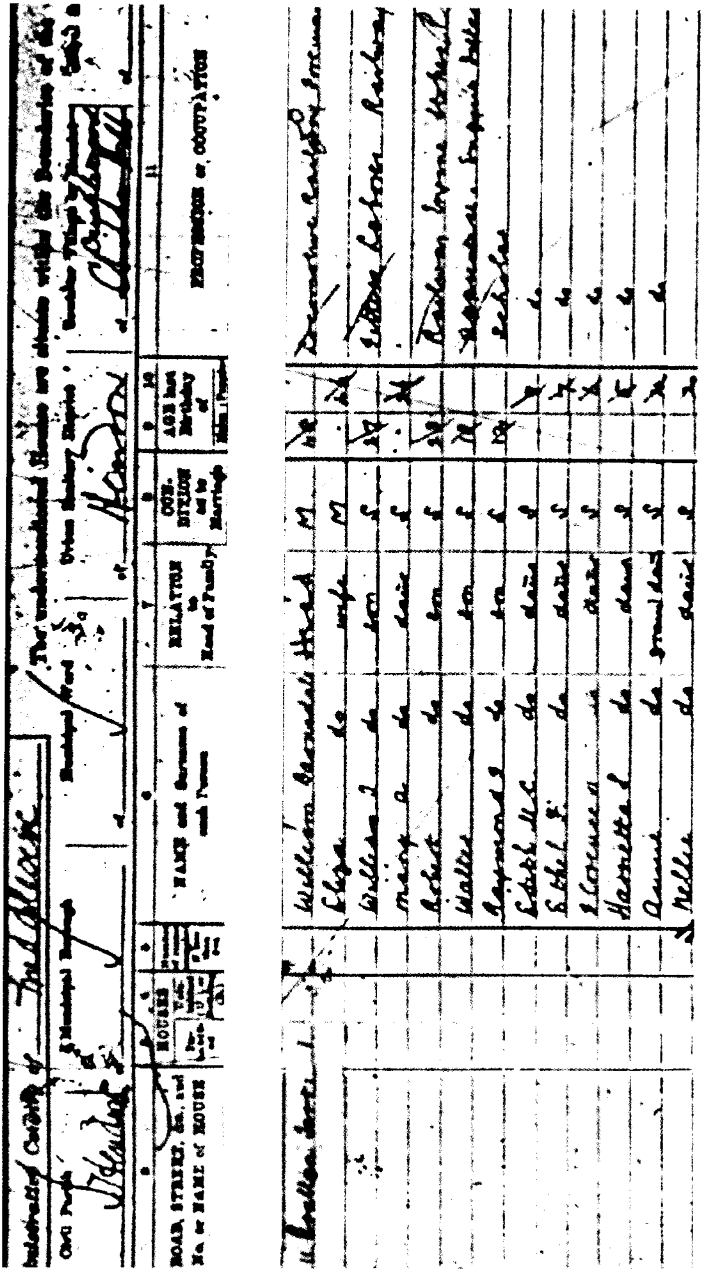
And yet given the relative size and quality of the houses in Gratton Terrace, and the number of incomes coming into this particular family, the Barnsdalls may well consider themselves fortunate compared to the truly poor in Victorian society.

Child labour

In 1891 schooling for most children ends at 13 (though Amelia, a domestic help at 35 Midland, is only ten years old). In Richard Griffin's family at No.27 Gratton everyone over ten is working. Eighteen-year-old Annie Griffin is a laundry maid; her brother Richard, at 16, is a Post Office Telegraph Messenger; Elizabeth at 14 is a domestic servant.

Other children, such as 14-year-old Christopher Wheedle, Wagon Repairs Assistant of 44 Midland, have already begun their life on the railway. They get any job they can: John Timms at 37 Gratton is the office lad in the coal office and young Arthur Lowe next door is errand boy in the oil shop.

It is also traditional for a young lad to be given the job of Knocker Upper or, in



Census of 1891

The entry for No.11 Gratton Terrace shows that thirteen people were living in the house.
Census information remains confidential for a hundred years.
Reproduced courtesy of the Public Records Office.

Scotland, Wakener. A former Wakener, Sandy Begg, describes his duties: *"We had to be up first in the morning to go round and wake up all the other railway workers. All the men we were sent to wake had to be up before 6am so of course we'd start a good bit earlier than that. It was all on foot, too, so we covered a few miles – a bicycle would have been a luxury. We knocked on windows rather than on the door. They'd always stick their heads out and ask about the weather. You might wake seven or eight men in a morning and the biggest difficulty was planning your walk round because they all had to get up at different times."*

Rungs of the ladder

John and Arthur will hope that when they have learnt the ropes they will be taken on as a Steam Raiser or Railway Cleaner like 20-year-old William Hollins who lodges with John and his family. As a Railway Cleaner, William is on the first rung on the ladder to becoming a railway Engine Driver.

The Railway Cleaner cleans the boilers, pipes and other workings, and empties the ash. A Steam Raiser will work in the turning shed, lighting fires and will begin the process of getting up the steam, ready for the Fireman. These men are in the preparation and disposal team and will take several hours to clean and prepare two engines for the next journey.

William Hollins's ambition will be to acquire the title of "Passed Railway Cleaner" which may take ten years but will mean that he is considered ready to take on the job of Fireman: a Passed Cleaner will clean engines one day and the next day may work as Fireman.

It will be the same for Thomas Shadrack of 41 Midland, a Passed Fireman. He is a Fireman but will drive engines when required. It may be several more years before Thomas has enough experience to become a fully fledged engine driver. But if and when that occurs, as in the case of William S. Whitmore, his job will be a responsible one indeed. He will have to know all the routes, much as the taxi driver does today. He will have to know his signals, be constantly alert and above all he will be responsible for the safety of his passengers. And he will earn enough to be able to move into Gratton Terrace.

Working women

According to the Census, few of the married women appear to work. But it is accepted by the Census takers that not all the wives who work will admit to it. It is very likely that some will take in laundry, probably from Hampstead, either on a regular basis or when finances are stretched. But status in Victorian society is extremely important and many a Victorian husband would be loth to be perceived as unable to support his wife. It is accepted however that the daughters might work.

Arthur Lowe, the young errand boy in the oil shop, has an elder sister of 19 who is a dressmaker and Ellen Cox next door at the age of 14 is an apprentice dressmaker. Catherine Rolls of 7 Midland and Alice Allen of 3 Gratton are a little older and go out to work at the Pyramid Light Works, a candle factory in Child's Hill Lane. Several girls are domestic servants and laundry maids and two young women

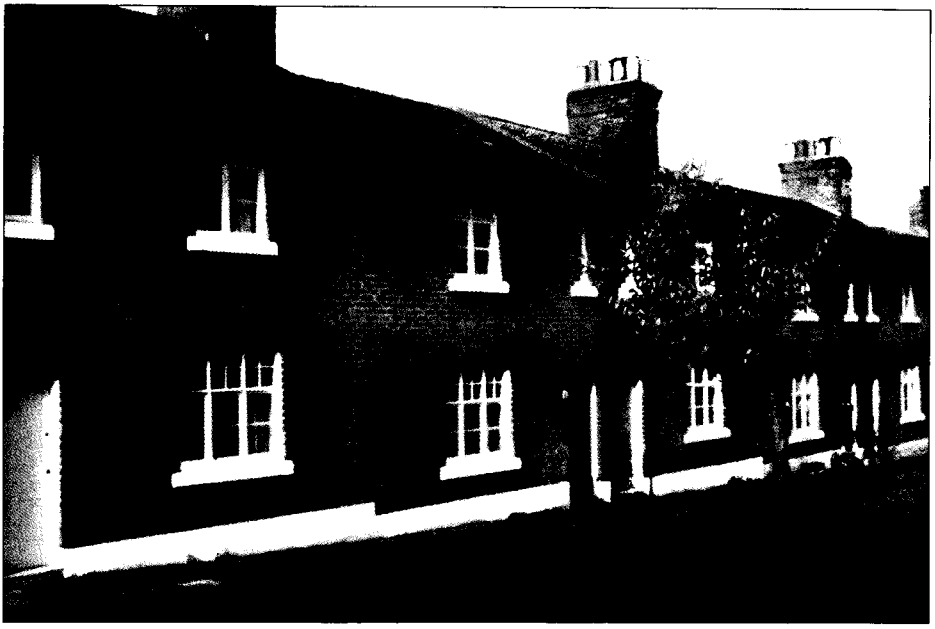
in their twenties work as assistants at the local school.

Reading the statistics

Terms used in the Census have very precise meanings. A boarder shares the dinner table with the family whereas the lodger lives separately. The term 'scholar' describes a child over five receiving daily schooling or regular tuition at home.

The final column which the Census taker has to fill in makes uncomfortable reading today. Any deaf, dumb or blind occupant has to be noted, also a lunatic, described as *"a mentally ill person with periods of lucidity"*, an imbecile, *"persons who have fallen in later life into a state of chronic dementia"* and idiot, *"persons who suffer from congenital mental deficiency"*.

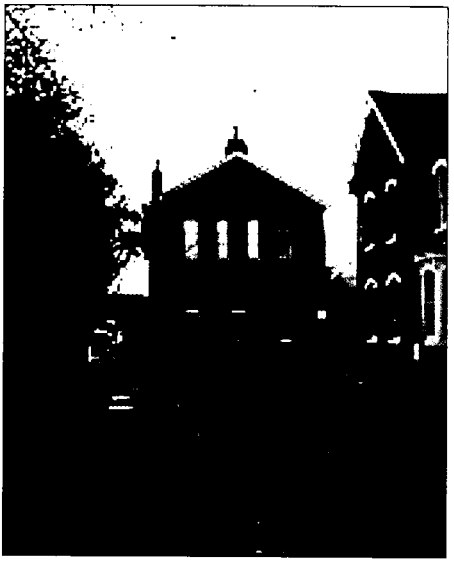
On a different note redolent of Victorian hypocrisy, the description 'Dressmaker' serves also as a euphemism for prostitute. A dressmaker is often a piece worker at home and will only find enough work during the fashion seasons. In between, from economic necessity and lack of education, the girl will earn money selling herself, in a society which avails itself of her services but cannot bring itself to acknowledge her existence openly – though it must be said that the dressmaker cum prostitute would be more likely to be found in the slum areas of the big towns and cities than in a respectable Railway Village!



Midland Terrace photographed in 2001. Modern additions such as TV aerials and gas meter boxes have been processed out to reproduce as closely as possible the appearance of the cottages when the Railway Village was first built.

7. The Institute and Hostel

THE MIDLAND RAILWAY built two properties close together at the northern end of the Terraces. One (on the present site of Dorchester Court) was the Railway Institute, the purpose of which was part-educational, part-social. This building is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1894. The other, built rather later (between 1896 and 1915), fronted on the Edgware Road, and was the larger of the two. Its original function was that of short-stay Hostel for Railwaymen – a role which it continued to play for sixty years or more.



The Hostel building creates a satisfying architectural punctuation mark at the north end of Gratton Terrace. Photographed in 2000.

The Hostel

It was in the nature of a footplateman's job, especially on long-distance runs, that a man seldom slept in his own bed at night – or even in the same one from which he got up the previous morning. So overnight accommodation had to be provided by the Company.

The Hostel at Cricklewood was one of many provided by the Midland Railway offering basic, cheap accommodation, often referred to as 'The Barracks' in railway-speak – and by no means in jest. The Barracks also ensured that the men remained under railway supervision and had eight hours' rest between turns.

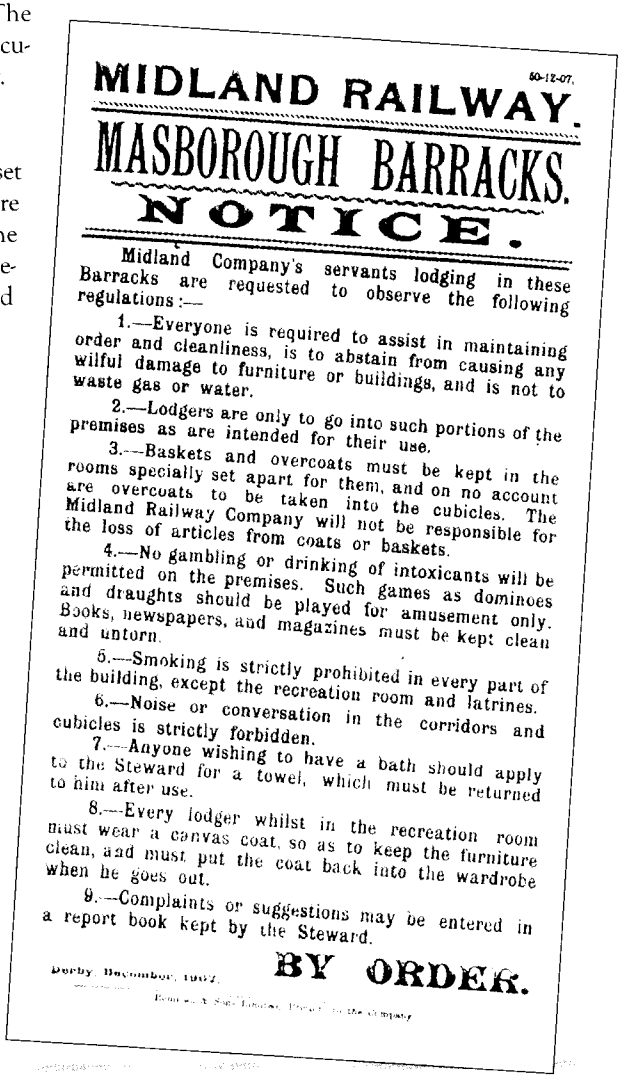
Robert Weatherburn, District Locomotive Superintendent for the Midland Railway at Kentish Town in 1885, wrote, "*Men from the provinces, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham or other large towns, working into London, were naturally open to the hundred-and-one attractions of the great Metropolis, and made the most of their opportunities when there ... the result in too many instances being loss of rest, or late to trains, ... or even worse.*" The Hostels certainly kept their lodgers on the straight and narrow if the Notice for Masborough Barracks printed overleaf is anything to go by!

Glynn Waite remembers the sleep-disturbing noise of Brent Empty Wagon Sidings on one side and Edgware Road on the other when he stayed at the Cricklewood Hostel in the early 1960s. By then, railway working arrangements had changed so much that the hostels went into decline and eventually were no longer needed at all. The Cricklewood Hostel is now occupied by the Sindhi Community.

The Railway Institute

Originally the Institutes were set up by the railway to provide more sober entertainment than the local public house (in Cricklewood the 'notorious' Crown) and to offer further education to the workforce through self-improvement classes. The Midland greatly encouraged such activities.

The Institute later served as a base for the local Scouts and would also be hired out for various occasions. It was demolished in the 1980s to make way for the Dorchester Court apartment block.



MIDLAND RAILWAY.

MASBOROUGH BARRACKS.

NOTICE.

Midland Company's servants lodging in these Barracks are requested to observe the following regulations:—

1.—Everyone is required to assist in maintaining order and cleanliness, is to abstain from causing any wilful damage to furniture or buildings, and is not to waste gas or water.

2.—Lodgers are only to go into such portions of the premises as are intended for their use.

3.—Baskets and overcoats must be kept in the rooms specially set apart for them, and on no account are overcoats to be taken into the cubicles. The Midland Railway Company will not be responsible for the loss of articles from coats or baskets.

4.—No gambling or drinking of intoxicants will be permitted on the premises. Such games as dominoes and draughts should be played for amusement only. Books, newspapers, and magazines must be kept clean and untorn.

5.—Smoking is strictly prohibited in every part of the building, except the recreation room and latrines.

6.—Noise or conversation in the corridors and cubicles is strictly forbidden.

7.—Anyone wishing to have a bath should apply to the Steward for a towel, which must be returned to him after use.

8.—Every lodger whilst in the recreation room must wear a canvas coat, so as to keep the furniture clean, and must put the coat back into the wardrobe when he goes out.

9.—Complaints or suggestions may be entered in a report book kept by the Steward.

BY ORDER.

8. The Stables

THROUGHOUT VICTORIA'S REIGN horses were a necessity, a tool of everyday life. When the Railway came to Cricklewood in 1868, the first cars ("horseless carriages") were still fifteen years away. There were steam wagons designed for road haulage, but these were cumbersome and short-range; so when the Cricklewood marshalling yards were being developed in the 1870s and 80s, extensive stables were built on the site behind what is now the telephone exchange.

Railway companies were big users of horses. The Midland was said to have one of the largest stables in the country, their sidings and tracks being laid to give sufficient space for the horses to pass between them. In the early days the horses would be used for shunting and on the 1896 Ordnance Survey map horse stalls can be seen next to the railway track, presumably for rest periods.

The horses used for pulling carts were also stabled there. The coal would be stored at the 'Wharf' [now B & Q and Pet World car park] and from there distributed to local houses. Parcels, all manner of goods, fresh fish for Billingsgate and fruit

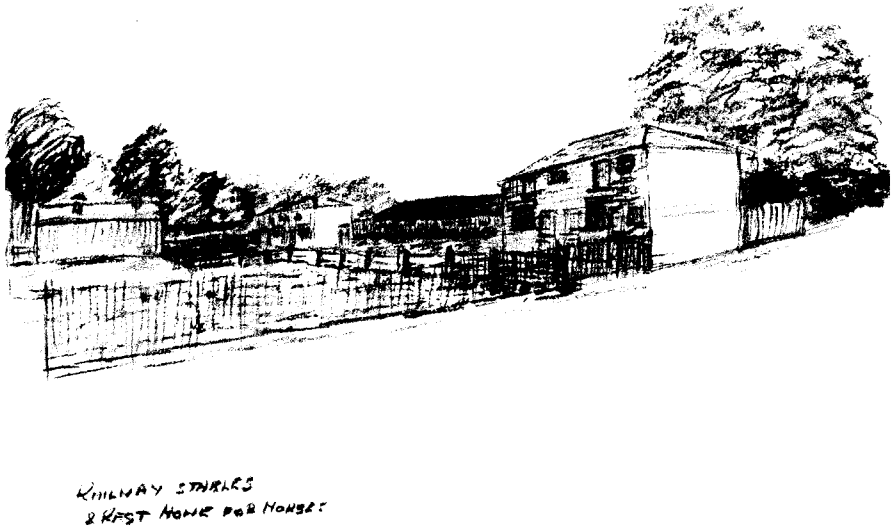
Above: This line-up of horse-drawn vehicles was for city deliveries. The Midland Railway, and its successor the LMSR, were reputed to have the largest stud of horses in the country, and until their final days remained intensive users of horses.

and vegetables for Covent Garden would all be delivered by horses and carts from the Midland Railway (later LMS) stables.

According to Reg Bromley, the stables were also used later on as a Rest Home for sick and tired horses. They would be put out into the field at the end of Campion and Needham Terraces, to rest, play and munch grass. The field later became an unofficial playground and eventually a fully-fledged recreation area with swings, a roundabout, seesaw and climbing frame.

Mr Widdows bought part of the old stable buildings in 1952 and set up a timber business. He converted some of the old stables into workshops and built well-crafted doors and windows as well as supplying timber. He also had a large unloading bay behind the existing garage at the back of Campion where he could take his timber directly from the train. A timber yard and builder's merchants occupy the site today.

Below:
'Railway Stables and Rest Home for Horses'.
Sketch by Reg Bromley.



9. The Turn of the Century

BARELY HAD THE BELLS stopped pealing for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee than they were ringing out again for a new Century; and then again a year later, muffled and draped in black, they were consigning the good Queen to history. A new King was on the throne. The Boer War was at last over. It was the end of an era. The nation was holding its breath.

Gratton on the market?

In the Terraces, life continued much as it had done for 20 years when one sentence in the Midland Railway minutes of February 1904 heralded a period of upheaval, the reason for which can only be a matter of conjecture. The sentence reads *"The Way and Works Committee recommended that with a view to disposing of the same the houses in Gratton Terrace be renovated and the electric light installed at an estimated cost of £2,400."*

Why would the Midland Railway want or perhaps need to sell Gratton Terrace? Campion Terrace had only been completed ten years earlier and the 105 houses of Brent Terrace had been occupied for a mere five years. Perhaps, as with St Pancras, the Company's desire to proclaim its wealth and status by building such grandiose houses for its workers had overridden financial prudence.

It is evident from the Committee Minutes that, even before Gratton was completed, it had been decided that any future cottages would be very much smaller and cheaper. The maintenance of the Gratton Terrace houses must have been costly and perhaps the rents they could reasonably charge their own workers simply did not meet those costs.

An attempt to upgrade

The decision to install electricity was clearly an attempt to upgrade the houses to a standard which would attract a more affluent purchaser. But it was a risky venture. Electricity was not in common use in 1904 and particularly uncommon in a rural and working-class area such as Cricklewood. [Twenty years later in the much more affluent area of Golders Green, scarcely 8,000 out of 25,000 homes had electricity]. It was unreliable, companies supplying electricity were set up and then folded with alarming speed and regularity, and public opinion had yet to be convinced of the safety and benefits of electricity compared with the gas to which they were accustomed.

Despite this the Midland Railway moved ahead with unusual speed, ordering the vacating of the first ten houses on 14th April 1904, and eight weeks later recording *"Mr. Worley's architect's fees for the renovation of Gratton Terrace houses were £13 per house."* [Mr. Worley's fees included the provision of proper plumbing and a bath,

where before there was only a single tap in the kitchen and an outside toilet].

New occupants

By October 1905 new occupants have moved in. But these are not owners, they are tenants. Was the Midland Railway Company unable to find a purchaser or had it simply changed its mind about selling? What is also apparent is that the new tenants are not railway workers. Several are single women and the local authority rates for these houses have increased by a swingeing 30 percent, putting them beyond the pocket of the majority of railway workers.

Eleven more houses are vacated in 1905 and in November the Way & Works Committee recommends *"that two of the cross roads leading from Gratton Terrace to the back houses be closed and utilized for building purposes."* [This refers to the 'infill' houses Nos.10a, 10b, 20a and 20b]. But nothing is done: the houses remain empty for between two and six years.

Two years later, in 1907 [with the eleven houses still empty] another ten houses are vacated. Numbers 11 to 13 are upgraded and the four infill houses are built (all with electricity) within six months. There are now seventeen empty houses and six houses which have yet to be vacated. Finally by 1913 all the houses have been refurbished and are occupied. But there are now two grades of houses in Gratton Terrace. Numbers 1 to 20b (twenty-four houses) have electricity and higher rents and rates. The remaining twenty houses have only the new plumbing but the rates have not increased and are therefore still affordable to railway workers.

Dispersion

Amidst this confusion, one thing is evident. By 1909, out of more than 40 families living in Gratton Terrace when the refurbishment began in 1904, only two had returned to live in Gratton Terrace, one of which was the Whitmore family. (When the census was taken in 1891 there were just under 80 railway workers living there).

Of the occupants in 1904, at least half had lived there for 13 years or more and seven had moved in when the houses were new in 1883. They had brought up families and lived and worked with the same neighbours for all those years. A few were rehoused in the other Terraces here and in Brent Terrace, and the rest were presumably found accommodation elsewhere.

So it was that by 1913 the Cricklewood Railway Terraces had become what they have been ever since, a mixture of Railway workers and incomers – professional and non-professional – accepted, even welcomed, by the Railway people but not quite of them. The tightly knit community which had been forged by the sharing of workplace and home was never to be quite the same again.

10. The Domestic Scene

BY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY STANDARDS the original Railway Cottages were very basic. But most of the cottages remained surprisingly unchanged right up to World War II – indeed in some cases well beyond – so from contemporary accounts we can build up a picture of what life in them was like.

Life in the 1920s

The late Dora Glass of Needham Terrace remembers back to the 1920s. She describes the ground floor of her cottage as consisting of two rooms – a kitchen-cum-living room with a tiny scullery leading off, and a sitting room at the rear (which, she says, was hardly used except at Christmas and for treats).

"All the main rooms and bedrooms had fireplaces," Dora recalls, *"but those upstairs were never lit, not even in winter."* She remembers frost on the window panes, and snuggling under what she calls *"ruggy mats"*, which were thrown over children as extra bed-covers. Only if someone was seriously ill was a fire lit in a bedroom (some said that a dose of flu was no price to pay for such a luxury!). Even downstairs fires were seldom lit except at weekends.

Dora Glass

Daily ablutions for all the family consisted of a quick splash in cold water at the kitchen sink. Dora remembers creeping downstairs barefoot every morning for a wash. There were no bathrooms, no indoor lavatories, and piped hot water and central heating were unimaginable luxuries. A trip to the outside loo on a winter's night was an unforgettable experience! Baths were taken in a tin tub set in front of the living room fire, filled with kettlefuls of hot water from the range.

The cottages were connected to piped town gas from the day they were built and there were wall-mounted gas brackets upstairs as well as down (some of these have never been disconnected, and they still deliver gas!). Fitted with mantles they burned with a greenish-yellow light, and hissed a little. Oil lamps and candles were still in regular use and, being transportable, were clung to as the most convenient way of lighting oneself to bed.

Dora was one of six children – three girls and three boys. Dora's ma and pa occupied one bedroom, while she and the other children slept three to a room – boys in one, girls in the other.

Home in the 1930s

Mrs Barbara Barnes (who died in the early

1990s) moved into Johnston Terrace in 1937. She had a great sense of humour (as demonstrated by her clowning pose for the accompanying snapshot), and it is interesting to read what she thought: *"It was a lovely place here then, very quiet, very countrified. And something new to me, when I first went into the kitchen – a good kitchen – it had a great big copper made out of brickwork with a wooden top with a wooden stick at the side. It had a little tiny fire underneath which you lit to heat up the water. And there was a range (you had to black-lead that) with the most lovely oven for cooking your cakes and your pastry, and you'd have a kettle or soup on the top of the stove. You had the sink on one side and you used to have three big containers: one was for blue, one was for starch, one was for rinsing. And it took the whole morning to do the washing. Father used to push the washing down with this great big stick. This pole used to stand there on top, and when it used to boil, father used to push the lid up and push it down. Mother used to get up: he'd take her a cup of tea and then she'd start the washing. It was from about 8am till about 12, and then you'd take the matting up and put it outside and scrub the tiles – red and blue tiles on the floor and coconut matting on the top.*

Barbara Barnes

"We kept things cold in the pantry, it was cold in there with the window open. And of course things were so cheap, meat was so cheap, you could get an H-bone of beef for five shillings. Father's mother used to make the most lovely cakes – everything tasted so nice. "We made pickles and jams and puddings for Christmas. All lit by gas it was and you'd light it with the match, and if you'd break the mantle you'd have to get another one. You could turn the gas up and down. There was no electricity here then."

The railway company of course was responsible for maintenance and would paint the houses every two years. As Mrs Lena Thompson wryly commented, *"One year they clearly had a lot of leftover bright red paint. It was like living in a fire station until the next redecoration!"*

Childhood Memories

Of those who were born or spent their childhood in the Terraces during the 1920s or 30s, all without exception speak of the wonderfully peaceful, neighbourly atmosphere that existed then ... *"A lovely place to have your childhood" ... "Everybody knew everybody" ... "A real village atmosphere" ... "A close knit community" ...*

Dora Glass spent her childhood in the Terraces. She remembers the street games she and the other children used to play. A favourite spot was 'The Bank', (a grassy slope of ground which lay at the back of Campion), where a wooden stile gave access to a steeply-rising path. This was a useful shortcut for railway staff going to work. For the children it was an adventure playground.

'The Bank' was a special draw in summer because, as Dora tells us, *"They used to cut the grass and it went into hay. We used to lay in this grass, play Dead Man Arise, you know,*

one got buried underneath. And then there was PC99, we used to call him. He used to come by. I remember one time I was underneath all this hay, and I could hear these footsteps, and all the others scattered, and there I was not daring to breathe, 'cos I wasn't supposed to be underneath, and all I could hear was these big feet going by. And I thought, 'If I come out he'll get me' – but he eventually went off."

Jean Garland has equally fond memories: *"We had our seasons for games, conkers, skipping ropes, marbles, five stones, hopscotch, knock down ginger, skates, bikes, bonfires, wall to wall games; the railway children all grew up together, we never had time to be bored. The railway cottages were a haven to us. At Christmas time we used to go carol singing around the cottages and save the money to buy Christmas presents for our families. In the winter cold nights, we'd go into Mrs Randall's in 23 Needham Terrace. She was a wonderful woman, a motherly type, a great cook. Fantastic sweets, she made. I'd take my bread and she let me toast it on her old fashioned fire with a long type of fork. She had an old fashioned gramophone and we used to play records."*

Jean Garland

Many have memories of the horses and stables: as a child Lena and her friends would play *"very carefully!"* in the field. Dora too, speaks affectionately of *"the beautiful horses that were stabled by the Railway Company"*. As a child she had a narrow escape when she found herself directly in the path of a runaway shire horse, a huge creature that had somehow broken free from the stable yard and was galloping wild among the cottages. Despite this, she developed a great love for the animals, and sometimes was allowed to help in the stables.

The Delivery Man

Until World War II travelling tradesmen of every kind came to the Terraces every week with their goods and no doubt a bit of gossip too. There was the fishmonger, the greengrocer, and of course the milkman, who came twice a day (6am and 12 noon). *"The milk didn't come in bottles, though. It was a large churn and you took your jug out,"* Reg tells us. Then there were the ice cream man, the baker's man, the rag-and-bone man, the occasional knife grinder and once a year the onion sellers from Brittany, with long strings of onions hanging from a pole.

"... Sunday evening, and there came the muffin man, carrying the muffins on his head. You had to be standing at your gate with the money in your hand." [This is the late Ida Simpson, writing one of her many entertaining, and sometimes trenchant, letters to Cottage Jottings]. *"We had so much service at the door. The postman came four times a day – 8am, 12 noon, 4pm and 8pm, even on a Saturday."*

The flour man would bring stoneground flour from Elstree Mill but always had live yeast on a Wednesday for the week's breadmaking. Then there was the salt and vinegar man. He came round with a horse and cart bringing vinegar in barrels: malt vinegar or spirit vinegar

depending on whether it was for fish and chips or pickles and sauces. The coarse salt was in large 7lb blocks. *"He would cut off the amount you wanted,"* says Ida. *"Then you would take it indoors to crush and pour into jam jars."* But as Reg remembers there was also table salt. *"He would make up a cone of paper and take you out a scoop of salt and weigh that for you. You had table salt for special occasions, for visitors; but most people used the rock salt ... it was less expensive."*


Ida Simpson

Then again there was the cat's meat man, though it was in fact horse meat. Mrs Barnes remembers him vividly: *"'Cat's meat! Cat's meat!' He used to have a skewer for the joints, round pieces of horseflesh, and he'd come round and say, 'How many pieces do you want?' The old ladies up there, they were very corpulent, they used to wear sackcloth aprons, and they'd just sit and chatter but we all stood out there when the tradesman came, to get various things."*

Survival

Most people didn't just rely on the delivery man. They grew vegetables, kept chickens and rabbits and the Bromleys even kept ducks! And as the roads were unadopted, fire boxes with hosepipes were fixed to the end-of-terrace houses, the assumption being that the cottagers were responsible for putting out their own fires. *[See sketch opposite]*

Charlie Routley remembers that the road in the dip under the railway bridge in Cricklewood Lane was laid with 'tar logs' – blocks made of wood, tar and some grit – a mixture which burnt very nicely. When it rained and there was flooding under the bridge, these tar logs would float to the surface and be there for the picking. The more intrepid local residents would nip down with a sack, and the bricks would end up on their fire and would spit and crack and send cinders flying. Sitting round the fire was a high-risk activity and fireguards were always at the ready!

There was also the racy (but unconfirmed) story of passing train crews throwing coal and competing to fill up the bloomers hanging on the Campion washing lines. "Hang out your bloomers for free coal!" was the cry.

In fact self-reliance was a necessity, for times were hard and there was no National Health Service. Babies were almost invariably delivered at home with the help of a midwife. Hospital deliveries were rare.

Boy with a go-cart

Dora Glass spoke with feeling about the lack of care for poor people in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries; in particular, the medical and emergency services. She still remembered the young boy with a go-cart who was playing one day on 'The Slopes' on the opposite side of the Broadway. *"His cart got out of control and he was run down by a passing van, which drove on, leaving him unconscious. Someone just gathered him up, shoved him in an old*

handcart, threw a bit of rug over him and wheeled him to the doctor's, where he died." Now, with a note of bitterness: *"This was England, this was Britain. Supposed to be the richest country in the world. But we, the people, had nothing. A handcart! A piece of rug! People died. You had to be healthy to survive."*

Making merry

Despite the hardship, there were happy times too and entertainments for the young people, both in the Terraces and along the Broadway.

Mrs Barnes remembers the time they made wine. *"We had a lot of friends there and all of a sudden there was a terrible noise. Bang it went, all through the house and down the back. We didn't know what it was. We were walking along and when we came back there was a great big hole in the ceiling! I suppose there was something in the wine which exploded. It was all over the house, all down the back sink. I've often thought about it and laughed."*

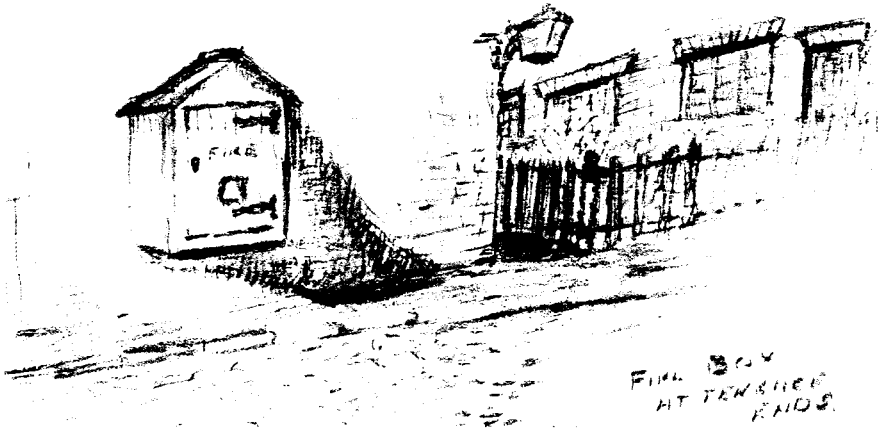
There were dances and events at the Railway Institute and later on it was the base for the local Scouts who hired the hall out for weddings, anniversaries and general celebrations. Lena remembers standing outside when they held tap dancing lessons. *"Along with a number of other kids who could not afford lessons I stood outside and peered through the door and had free lessons!"* Charlie and Gwen Routley and many other couples had their wedding receptions there.

The Railwayman's Club up the Edgware Road did a roaring trade on a Saturday night (it's still there today, just beyond the bus station). There were whist drives too, and "Women's Guild", and live music.

Entertainments

On the Broadway in the late 1890s there was the Metropolitan Theatre where the great actors of the day appeared; but as Cricklewood's population grew, the younger people craved something more

Fire Box at Terrace Ends.
Sketch by Reg Bromley.



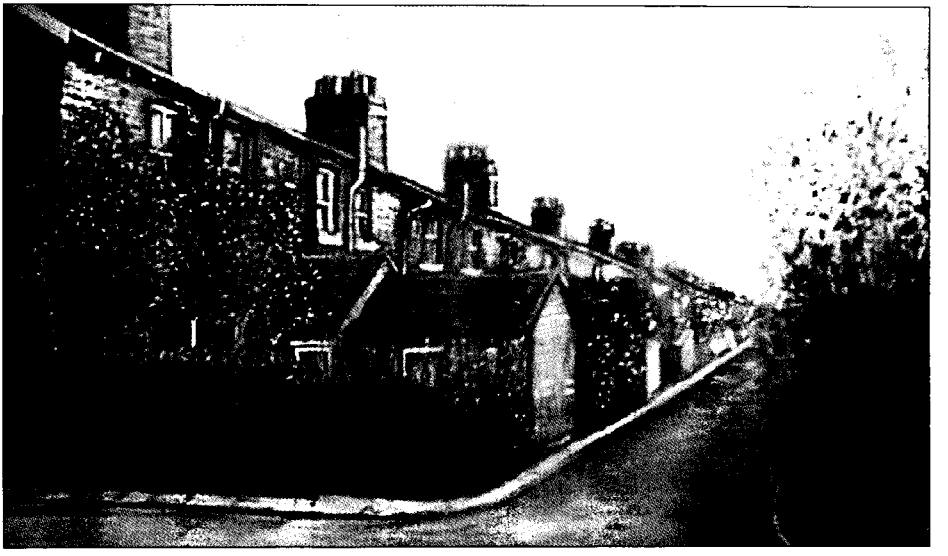
exciting. With the arrival of silent films, the theatre was converted into a cinema and became the very popular Electric Palace.

Saturday morning Children's Matinees were a great draw: very noisy affairs, with lots of cheering and stamping of feet. The cinema was known as 'the flea-pit' or, hardly more politely, 'the bug-hutch' – and, true to its name, the attendants would come round during the performance and spray the air with insecticide! The entrance was 3d (three old pence, just over 1p), for which you could see a Pearl White movie: silent, of course, but accompanied by a pit pianist.

Behind it was the Roller Skating Rink. The latter was a huge attraction, and people flocked in from miles around. Lilian Sargent's brother Bill belonged to the skating club and he and his friend would compete with other clubs in the area wearing their club colours of blue and white.

Next door was the Cricklewood Palais where Dora rather daringly learned the Charleston and the Foxtrot. But the real draw was "the pictures" and in the 1920s Cricklewood had a second cinema, The Queen's Hall, just round the corner in Cricklewood Lane [on the Kwik-Save site]. "Posh," says Charlie. "*A fantastic cinema,*" says Jean Garland: "*My friend Jill and I were in the cinema choir for 2 years. We competed against 17 other cinemas and one year we came 2nd, and the next year came 3rd. I loved it.*" Another popular venue was the Hendon Greyhound Racing Stadium, near the present site of Brent Cross Shopping Mall.

"Midland Terrace"
Pastel by Malcolm Sargent



Above: The Electric Palace Cinema (formerly the Metropolitan Theatre) and, left of picture, the Cricklewood Roller Skating Rink. They were on the Broadway close to the present site of Ashton's.

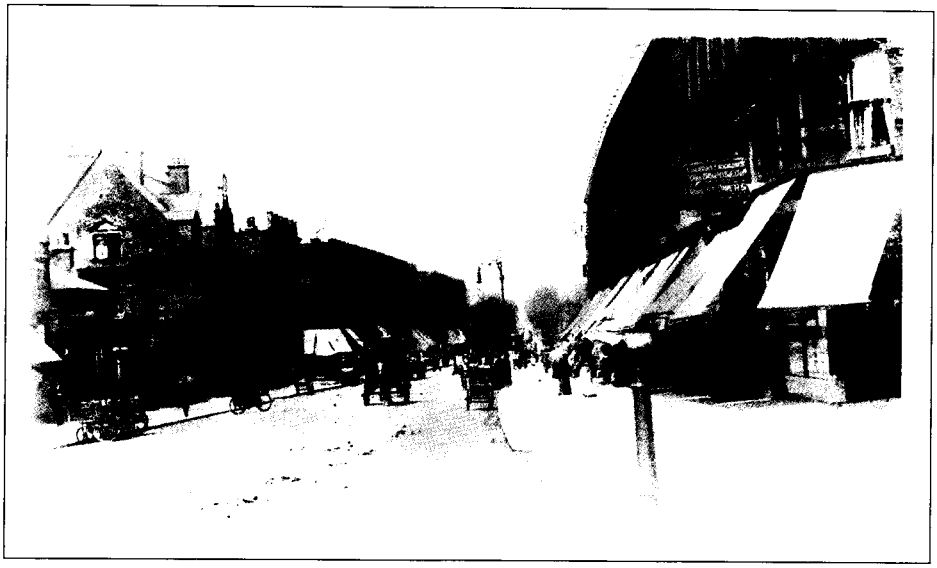
Below: Cricklewood Lane seen from the junction with Edgware Road in the 1920s. The pillared building (centre) was the Queen's Hall Cinema, now a row of shops and offices. W.D.Hull's (right) was a high-class milliner's and draper's. The open-topped tram nosing its way down Cricklewood Lane was the No.62 from Golders Green.

11. The Broadway

WHEN THE RAILWAY came to Cricklewood there was hardly a shop to be seen. By the turn of the century the Terraces of the Railway Village were all complete and new housing estates on the west side of the Edgware Road were mushrooming – some quite gentrified. In 1904 The Broadway was already so-named, and by the 1920s Cricklewood was well on the way to being a full-blown metropolitan suburb, with shops catering for every need and pocket. Most of them were family-run and few of the names, if any, remain today.

Carving the butter

On the corner of Cricklewood Lane and Edgware Road there was a high-class draper's and milliner's called W.D.Hull's. Later the site was taken over by Burton men's tailoring, with assembly rooms above. In the same block, where the NatWest Bank now resides, was a small Sainsbury's where assistants were to be seen carving off butter from a mountainous block and, while the customer waited, beating it into shape between pairs of wooden paddles and then deftly wrapping



Cricklewood Broadway looking north, early 1900s, with the Windmill public house (still extant) on the left.

it in greaseproof paper.

Next to Sainsbury's were a small Boots the Chemist and a Woolworths threepence and sixpence store ("*nothing over sixpence*" – 2.5p!), both of which disappeared in the 1980s. On the Post Office side of the Broadway Crisp & Hodgson the builder's merchant was already there (a friendly shop). Then there was Kean's the fishmonger, and near to that a tiny haberdashery run by a diminutive lady called Miss Walker.

Children's Choice

A great favourite with the schoolchildren was Taylor's Tuck Shop, presided over by the eponymous Mrs Taylor, a short woman of distinction. On the corner of Ashford Road there was the Street and Raymond's Dairy, where one could buy a glass of milk, deliciously cool, served from a splendid china urn that stood on the counter: a great treat on a hot day.

The old GPO Sorting Office was already there (opposite Kara Way, opened 1904, now an electrical warehouse). A few doors away there was Booker's Bicycle Shop, and close to that Retters, a newsagent. On the opposite side, at the corner of Depot Approach, was Charrington's the coal merchant – a red-brick building, typical Midland Railway architecture.

Top end

Moving to the far end of The Broadway, roughly opposite to the Windmill public house, there was Beverley's, an exceedingly high-class grocery. Lady customers were automatically proffered chairs immediately upon arrival, and would sit in stately comfort as they dictated their orders (which of course would be hand-delivered to the house, no matter how small). The shop was also renowned for its beautiful black cat.

On the opposite side of the Broadway, in the entrance to Anson Road, stood a tall and imposing landmark: the Cricklewood Clock. Built in 1910 to mark the coronation of King George V, it was a venerated local feature, with its elaborate clock faces set atop a column of intricately scrolled metalwork. It was later removed, and its present whereabouts are unknown.

Landmark for Travellers

Another timepiece, the huge white revolving clock built in 1956 atop the headquarters of Smith's Industries (on the corner of the Broadway and Temple Road), was visible from afar and served as a landmark for motorists and other travellers arriving at the outskirts of London from the north. Although built to withstand gusts of 100 mph, a particularly strong gale made it unsafe in high winds and it had to be dismantled.

Between the Smith's factory and the railway bridge, in the 1920s, was the rather splendid showroom of a Belgian motor car manufacturer, Metallurgique, whose vehicles set out to rival (both as regards quality and price) those of Rolls Royce.

The Crown

The Crown public house was probably built in the earlier part of the 18th century and was the first four-mile inn north of Tyburn (Marble Arch). Four-mile inns

were staging posts where tired horses could rest whilst fresh horses continued the journey. The exact four-mile spot was a few hundred yards to the north, roughly level with No.4 Gratton Terrace, and was marked with a milestone *(picture, p.13)*. In Victorian times the Crown's 'Pleasure Grounds' attracted swarms of day-trippers from London. The gardens disappeared when the hotel was rebuilt, around 1898.

Burlington Parade

The Parade was, of course, the handy shopping centre for the Railway Cottagers of the 20s, as it is today. What do we know about it then?

The corner shop (now occupied by Mr Shaikh) seems throughout its history to have been a newsagent/tobacconist/confectioner. The proprietor in the 1920s was a Mr Restall and, because of his cut-price policy (for times were hard), the shop was known to all as "Penny Restall's".

Also in Burlington Parade was a busy Cobbler's Shop, and close to that the surgery of Dr Neurick, a GP, who dispensed many a pill for ailing railwaymen and their families. No antibiotics or wonder-drugs then!

Drama came to "Penny Restall's" in the mid-1920s when, during the late afternoon of bonfire night, 5th November, a spark somehow found its way into Mr Restall's stock of fireworks. In seconds the place was ablaze, engulfed in smoke and flames. Burlington Parade resounded to the whizz and crack of exploding rockets and ha'penny bangers.

Fire engines came clanging along the Broadway, causing great commotion and attracting eager crowds. To everyone's disappointment, or at least to the chagrin of the goggle-eyed children who gathered round for the entertainment, the blaze was brought under control quite quickly, and no-one was seen leaping to safety from upper storey windows.

Local Industry

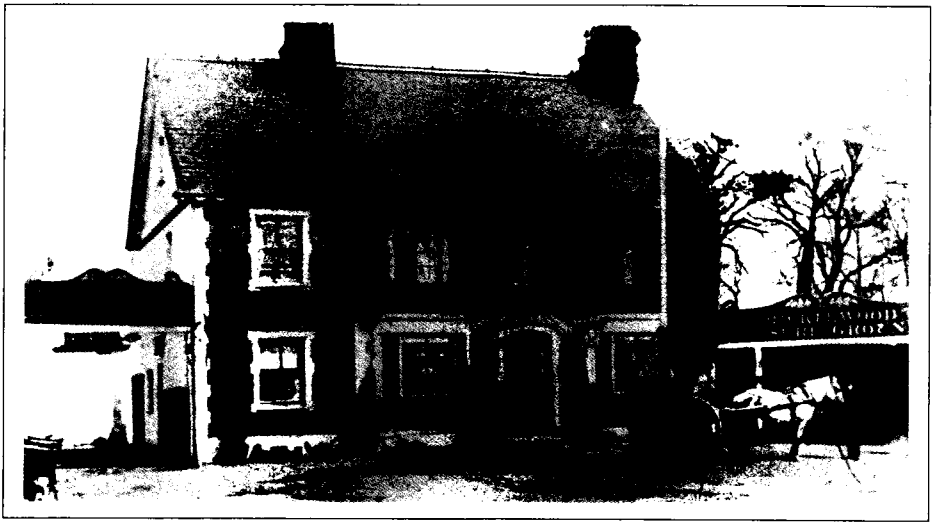
In 1892 George Furness opened the first major factory in the area, the Imperial Dry Plate Company, making photographic materials.

In 1912 Frederick Handley Page opened a 20,000 sq.ft. factory in Claremont Road to manufacture aircraft, mostly under Government contract. The Company had its own airstrip alongside the factory [The Vale occupies the site of the runway now], which for a while claimed the distinction of being Britain's first and only international airport. Reg remembers seeing a bomber flying over with a whole load of training students. *"It got up so high the wings folded up and it went down. It landed on the sidings."*

In the early 1920s one Frank Smith launched Smith's Potato Crisps (with the blue paper twist of salt) from premises in Cricklewood, where they continued to be produced until after his death in 1957.

A large Express Dairies bottling plant next to the station took daily rail deliveries of milk – up to five tankers a day from Rowsley at one time – until it was demolished in the late 1990s.

The Rolls Razor factory on the Edgware Road opposite to Burlington Parade was built before the First World War. It switched to munitions during



Above: The old Crown Inn with its Livery & Bait Stables and Pleasure Grounds. ('Bait' was an old word for a snack — especially for horses, but also for people). It was a designated 'Post Inn' or 'Four-Mile Inn', the closest to the first milestone from Tyburn on the route north.

Below: The old Crown was demolished Ca.1898 to make way for the new building, still standing a century later. The photograph below was taken before the arrival of motor buses, which places it in the first decade of the 20th century. Extreme right of picture is the regular stall of the 'flour man' — one of the visiting tradespeople mentioned in Chapter 10.

Above: Tram inspectors on duty in Cricklewood Broadway

Below: An open-top No.16 motor bus at its terminus outside the Crown, Cricklewood, Ca.1914.
From the C.R.Smith collection.

World War II, and employed many Terrace residents.

Smith's Industries

Without question the biggest local employer (other than the railway, of course) was Smith's Industries. Work began on the first Cricklewood factory in 1915 and in 1916-17 the Assembly Department and Polishing shops were built. Then followed the outbuildings adjoining Langton Road for use as the Carpenter shop. The main headquarters building, which contained the offices, a warehouse and canteen, and which was such a landmark on the Edgware Road, was built in 1936.

Public Transport

When the Midland Railway built its passenger station called Child's Hill & Cricklewood, the intention (according to railway historian Geoff Goslin) was not, as one might suppose, primarily to transport commuter traffic into London, but to serve as an interchange and junction for southbound passenger traffic using Cricklewood Curve en route for Dudding Hill, Stonebridge Park and Acton Wells. The Company had high hopes for this passenger service, but it was not a commercial success and finally had to be withdrawn in 1902; whereafter the station became just another suburban calling point on the run from Bedford to St Pancras (inevitably dubbed 'The Bed-Pan Line').

Meanwhile, road transport was developing apace. As early as the 1880s there was a scheduled half-hourly bus service between Willesden Junction (The Junction Hotel) and Kilburn High Road (The Lord Palmerston), calling *en passant* at Stonebridge Park and Walm Lane. A timetable for that service dated 1889 was found lying under the floorboards of 19 Needham, presumably seeing the light of day for the first time in 100 years. The route was a circuitous one, and the journey took 43 minutes, including stops. Could this be improved upon today?

With the arrival of the 20th century came trams and motor buses (and of course, though in very small numbers, private motor cars). The Tramway system and the Underground Railway in London were developing as quickly as the Railway had before them. For the working class, travelling by train was only affordable for holidays or special days out, so most had to live within walking distance of work. Even for the middle-classes, travelling any distance by train on a regular basis was expensive. Trams were more accessible, frequent and cheap. For those travelling before 7am there were special cut-price Workmen's Return tickets. The Cricklewood to Edgware tram was in service by 1904. In 1907 a resident of Cricklewood could travel by tram to the Underground station at Golders Green and from there to Charing Cross. In other words Cricklewood was becoming 'commutable'.

Cricklewood bus terminus

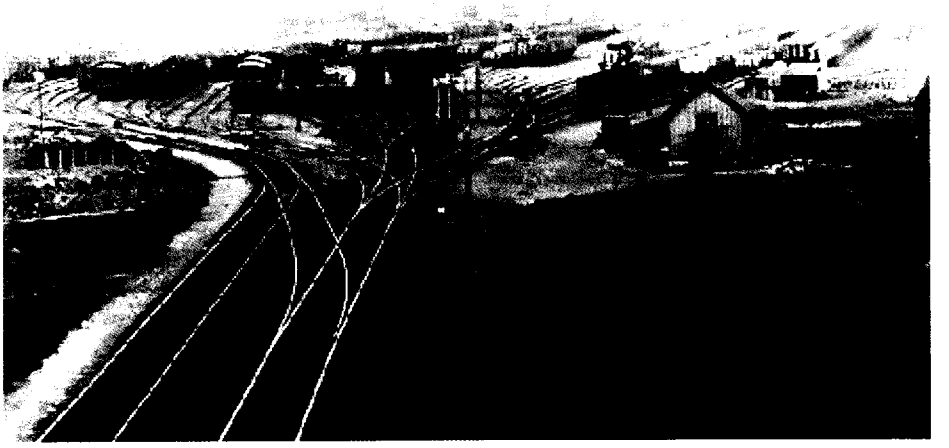
The No.16 route ran, as today, between Victoria and Cricklewood. In the 1920s the buses still had outside staircases and were open-topped. The No.16s came grinding along the Broadway, their

radiators invariably boiling and hissing from the climb up Shoot Up Hill, before turning into their then terminus, which was the forecourt of the Crown Hotel. Once there, the drivers had to get down from their cabs, fill watering cans with cold water, and douse the steam before they could turn round and start the return journey.

Running along the Edgware Road beside the Railway Cottages was the electric tram from Canons Park. Its route passed through Edgware, Burnt Oak, Colindale and the Broadway before turning right into Chichele Road and thence via Willesden Green to the terminus at Harlesden.

In April 1911 Hendon District Council received a letter from the London County Council enquiring whether they would favour a tramway which had been proposed to run from Marble Arch to Cricklewood. On the same day the Council agreed that main roads and certain side streets in the area were to be 'tarpainted' (tarmacked).

A tram service along Cricklewood Lane connected the Broadway with Golders Green. P.J.Kelsey states that the last tram on that route, a No.62, ran in 1936. It was replaced by trolley bus route 660.

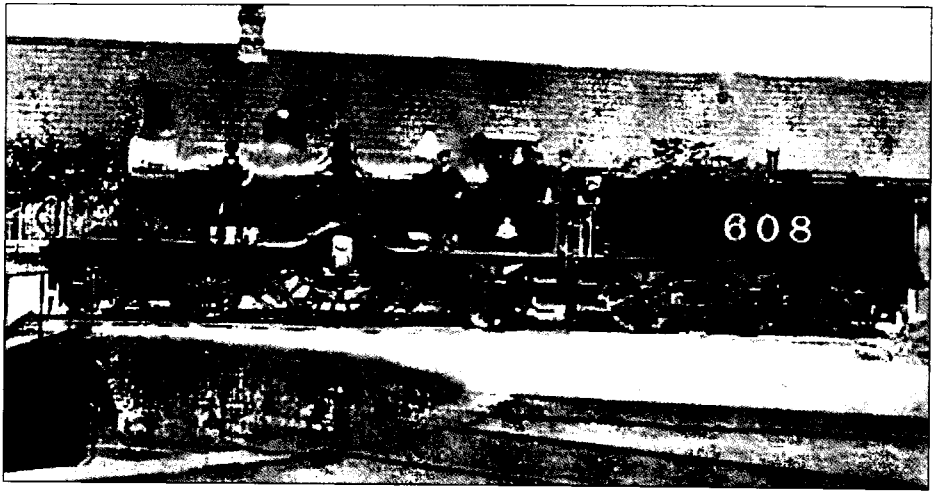


The massive marshalling yards and engine sheds at Cricklewood were a tempting target for enemy aircraft through two world wars.

12. Two World Wars

WORLD WAR ONE, 1914-1918. Nearly 23,000 Midland Railway employees fought in the Great War. 2,833 gave their lives. Nineteen of the fallen were from Cricklewood depot, including at least one gallant soldier from the Railway Village: Pte Leonard W. Barton of 4 Needham Terrace. He was killed on 21st September 1917, aged 25.

Cricklewood-raised James Gravestock, 88-year-old grand-nephew to William Barnsdall, the Gratton Terrace railwayman mentioned in Chapter 6, has a clear childhood recollection of a German air raid. He tells us: *"It was a Saturday in July 1917, and there was a great roaring of engines overhead. Everybody rushed out into the street, for the sight of an aeroplane in flight was still an event in those days, especially a German one. Quite suddenly there they were: Gotha aircraft, six of them, circling over Cricklewood, black against the sky."* James was only four at the time, but he served as aircrew in World War II, so possibly the finer aeronautical points were added later! He says he thinks the planes had probably already shed their load, and to the best of his belief no bombs were dropped on Cricklewood on that occasion.



William George Worker (Midland Railway engine driver and father of Lilian Sargent) posing with his crew. The locomotive was built at Derby in 1889 and won a medal at the Paris Exhibition in the same year. This picture was probably taken shortly after the First World War as the engine was withdrawn from service in 1921.

WORLD WAR TWO, 1939-1945. The Cricklewood marshalling yards presented a tempting target. Mercifully, although there were many air raids and plenty of near misses, the Cricklewood Cottages escaped major damage. The railway lines themselves took a pasting more than once, as did Brent Terrace on the far side of the tracks. Incendiaries fell in their thousands and caused serious fires both near and far, but the Railway Village seemed to have a charmed life.

Gwen Routley

Dug into the front gardens of each Terrace were Anderson underground air-raid shelters, each with four bunk beds. Not every house had one, as there were communal shelters on the present-day allotment site and Andersons were supplied only on request. There used to be many of them, and some are still around. A bump marks the one under the lawn in front of 19 Midland. Gwen Routley's parents decorated theirs, as probably many others did, making it as cosy as possible for the family to sleep in at night. This went on until they were flooded out by torrential rain. After that they took their chances and slept in the house!

As in the first war, the 1939-45 war took a sad toll of Railway Village residents. Charlie and Gwen Routley particularly remember the sadness of Mr and Mrs Burbridge of Midland Terrace whose son, their youngest child, tragically went down with the Hood.

Preparing for a night in the Anderson shelter, gas masks at the ready in cardboard boxes.

Railways at war

The railways were of course vital to the war effort. Many rail jobs were classified as 'reserved occupations' and railwaymen also enjoyed special rations of eggs, bacon and cheese. Another bonus was that, because of the wartime shortage of manpower, promotion was swift. A 17-year-old such as Harry Mears, who was taken on as a Cleaner at Cricklewood Depot in 1940, could graduate to Passed Fireman in less than two years.

In the early years of the war there was a total blackout with no lights at all in the sheds and marshalling yards. This made night work difficult and eventually shaded

lights were allowed. In the event of an air raid, a red light was the signal for the Fireman to extinguish all lights and not to throw fires.

As invasion by German paratroopers was also regarded as likely at that time, Engine Drivers and Firemen were issued with rifles and 25 rounds of ammunition, with orders not to let their engine fall into enemy hands or if need be to scuttle it.

The Blitz

Dora Glass had vivid memories of the Blitz: *"High explosive bombs falling on Olive Road sounded like an express train coming down on you. Another stick of bombs hit a stationary train in one of the railway sidings. Truck parts were landing on the far side of the Broadway, hundreds of yards away! A doodle bug blew up at the bottom end of Mora Road. Shards of glass embedded themselves in a wall, like darts in a dartboard. A woman caught in the blast had bits of ceiling coming out of her head for ages."* Then, as an afterthought ... *"She was never the same after that."*

Lilian Sargent

Harry Mears speaks of the night a landmine fell on Cricklewood Broadway. Landmines were among the largest known bombs – hugely destructive and easily capable of flattening a row of houses. Providentially, this one failed to explode. When the army came to defuse it, they found it had been made in Czechoslovakia, and the contents were ... pure sawdust. (What hero had risked torture to spare Cricklewood? Shades of Schindler!)

The Routleys remembered one particular night in the Blitz when the docks were bombed. *"Gwen and I were in the Regal Cinema at Child's Hill. A message was flashed on the screen, 'Air Raid Sirens sounding'. As usual no-one took any notice. But this time the management insisted, and we all had to troop out through the blackout to the underground shelters by the Castle pub. The whole sky was one mass of red, with clouds of smoke and fire. Bombers were overhead and the guns were firing. Nothing like it has been seen since."* They couldn't leave the shelter that night, so when they returned next morning Gwen's very worried parents were waiting for them on the doorstep.

'Doing their bit'

During the emergency, Smith's Industries switched to essential war production, converting part of the headquarters building into an ultra-modern repair shop for instruments. Almost on the eve of going into production in 1940 the building was destroyed by an incendiary oil bomb. There was a manned artillery ack-ack gun and searchlight on top of the headquarters throughout the war. Its noise was almost worse than the bombs! The local air-raid siren was perched up there as well, and an observation post for firewatchers.

The Rolls Razor, too, was on a war footing, producing parts for guns, planes, torpedoes etc.

A great many Railway Cottage residents (especially wives and daughters) 'did their bit' in the local factories during wartime. Gwen Routley became an Inspector for the Ministry of Defence, and won an award for excellence when she inspected the output of Rolls Razor workers – of whom her husband-to-be Charlie was one!

Doodlebugs and worse

Charlie tells us about the first flying bomb ('doodlebug') that he remembers passing over the Terraces. Residents rushed out into the street to look. Suddenly, almost overhead, its engine cut out. This was the heart-stopping signal that the bomb was about to fall. Luckily it exploded harmlessly a long stone's throw away in Gladstone Park. The blast, even at that distance, threw Charlie against his kitchen door.

Towards the end of the war the feared V2 rockets began. Luckily the war was over before they got fully under way.

VE Day *('Victory in Europe' Day)* 1945: Celebration party at the Railway Institute

13. From Steam to Diesel

UNTIL THE Second World War, the history of the Railway Village had followed closely that of the Midland Railway Company (latterly LMS – satirically known as "'Elleva Mess"*). The two were inextricably linked.

In 1948, at a stroke, that link was broken. The railways were nationalised.

The effect on the Railway Village was, at first, minimal. Job security was not a problem. Most of the residents who had previously worked for LMS kept their positions, and the railway continued as boss and landlord. But under the surface, things were changing. The new masters, the British Transport Commission (BTC), were men of affairs, preoccupied with business, not noticeably motivated to play chaperon for a local community. The umbilicus had, as it were, been snipped.

Many people countrywide were delighted to see the old LMSR-GWR-SR-LNER monopoly broken up. Others felt nostalgia. Whichever way, the trains still ran, and the unspoken byword was 'business as usual'.

But the clouds were gathering.

Competition from the roads

A new challenge was emerging. Road haulage before the war had been a mere bit-player on the transport stage. By the early 1950s, the roads had begun nibbling away at the railways' money-spinning freight business. Soon they were devouring great chunks.

There was a second problem. In 1952, in five days, the Great London Smog had killed 4,000 people. Smoke from coal was held to blame. The railways' single most profitable item of bulk cargo had been turned into a pariah. The 1956 Clean Air Act (the first of several, each more stringent than the last) put the finishing touches to what was already a doom scenario. Coal tonnage fell dramatically.

In consequence of all this, by 1954 BTC was barely breaking even. And then in 1955 a union dispute over pay and conditions – it had already been rumbling away for some months – came to a head. The stoppage began on 30th May 1955. Hardly a train ran throughout the length and breadth of Britain, and the commercial life of the nation ground to a halt. After a fortnight of this the Transport Commission had little choice but to settle. The Unions had won.

Unfortunately, it was a victory with a sting in its tail. Taking fright at the paralysing effect of the strike, commercial users of railway freight accelerated their switch to the roads. The railways, already in the red, were sliding from bad to worse.

* The Company had been amalgamated on 1st January 1923 to form the London Midland and Scottish Railway Company (LMSR).

A modernisation plan

Later in 1955, desperate to reverse the trend, BTC launched a Modernisation Plan which projected, among other things, a phasing out of steam in favour of diesel and electric traction. By 1957 the network had already acquired some 800 diesel or gas turbine engines, and something under 100 electric. But this still left 17,000 steam locomotives in commission, so there was a long way to go.

Railway facilities such as marshalling yards were coming under scrutiny. BTC figures for 1957 show that modernisation was being pressed forward. Twenty-seven new yards were opened and 26 underwent improvement; but against this, 37 were partially shut down and 158 scrapped altogether. Cricklewood was spared for the time being. But under the BTC regime the Railway Cottagers could no longer feel under special protection. Few of them had ever done any other job, and it would have been a rare optimist who did not see writing on the wall. The question was, what did that writing say?

Statistics of decline

For an industry in decline the railway was still a mammoth enterprise. In 1957-58 it was operating over 17,000 route miles and boasted 6,000 stations. It carried a billion passengers a year and (notwithstanding losses to road transport) nearly a million tons of freight *every day*, giving direct employment to well over half a million people (and indirectly many more).

The Modernisation Plan had not come up to expectations, and the industry was still losing money. By 1960 the deficit had plunged to £68 million; the following year it was £87 million. These were staggering sums by any standard. In 1960s terms they were catastrophic. Clearly something more had to be done.

"The Beeching Plan"

In June 1961 the Government appointed Dr Richard Beeching, ex of ICI, to set up a new Committee charged with one simple but formidable brief: *make the railways pay.*

It took two years of intensive study for the Committee to identify the loss-making factors and prescribe a solution. Both problem and remedy made sour reading.

The nub of the matter was this. Of the UK's six or seven thousand railway stations, a bare half were producing 95% of the revenue, while the other half were running at a massive loss. Ergo, close them. Not only close them, but tear up the track that served them, demolish the bridges, and sell the land.

Two successive governments, one Conservative, one Labour, faced the unpalatable task of deciding whether, or to what extent, to implement Beeching's advice. Political hot potato though it was, the Report's financial conclusions were inescapable. By the end of the 1960s some 4,000 miles of route had gone, and 2,361 stations had closed forever, leaving many country areas without trains or transport of any kind.

Some experts say that Beeching's closures went too far; that today the road system of our country is so close to gridlock that the only way forward is to restore the railways that Beeching tore up. To be fair

to Beeching, though, he was briefed to solve an immediate financial crisis, not to provide solutions for thirty years in the future. Moreover, his Plan was not all negative. Alongside the programme of closures, it also promoted far-seeing ideas for upgrades to a number of key routes; recommendations most of which successive governments of varying political coloration again and again shelved – usually on the grounds of expense – or conveniently ignored.

Loose ends

In 1963, the British Transport Commission was wound up and replaced by a brand new executive body, The British Railways Board. Marketing the much-reduced system as 'British Rail' with a logo which survives to this day, the Board ran the railways until 1996, when the network was privatised.

Dr Beeching was elevated to the peerage in 1965, shortly before returning to ICI as Deputy Chairman. He died in 1985.

Below: The Sargent children photographed in the Johnston gardens Ca.1960.
Left to right, Andrew, Julie and Malcolm.

14. Decades of Change

THE CRICKLEWOOD SHED closed to steam on 14th December 1964. Four years later, on 8th August 1968, the entire network followed suit. There were many who mourned the passing of steam. For the layman in particular it exercised a curiously romantic fascination. But, for those whose daily job it was to run the trains, the change was by no means all bad.

George Hartness

The Second Man

George Hartness is the sole remaining Terrace resident still working on the railway. He moved into Midland Terrace in 1961 and is now self-employed, contracted to various railway companies on a free-lance basis – something which would have been inconceivable to those first railway workers.

Talking about the transition to diesel, he began by recalling the harsh disciplines of steam: *"As a Fireman you worked with a shovel. You had to keep a good head of steam. With the big Class 8 engines on a 300-mile run – say from Carlisle to Euston – you were basically firing all the time. It was back-breaking work. People used to say, 'The Royal Scot? How exciting! How you must love it!' Not at all. It wasn't love. It was the job."*

With diesel it was different. *"You weren't called a Fireman, you were the 'Second Man'. It was a bit of a doddle to tell the truth. You just sat on your backside all day. Well, not quite. The diesel locos had a boiler for heating the passenger coaches and making hot water, and you had to keep that going. But after years on steam ... it was dead cushy. And you got the same money.*

"Mind you, the Fireman had important responsibilities in the event of an incident. Like, let's say the train came off the rails, blocking the other track. The Fireman (or Second Man), his job was to go on ahead. He had to get out of the cab and run up the track with detonators and a red flag, to warn oncoming trains. Save lives, you see. The Driver's duty was to stay with his train, no matter what. If he was injured it made no difference: the Fireman still had his job to do up the track. That's why the bosses never let

father and son work together. If the Driver was your dad, and he got injured, you'd stop and look after him. That couldn't be. Passenger safety always came first."

The career ladder

Promotion in the old steam days was very slow (except of course during the war).

For a proficient steam Driver the transition to diesel was straightforward. Electric was even easier. On either, the work was also more congenial, and far cleaner, for the footplate crew were able to wear smart uniforms, not overalls. Some of the intermediate jobs were gradually phased out, and progress up the career ladder tended to speed up accordingly. By the 1970s it was possible for a man still in his 20s to pass out as a Driver, though naturally Top Link work would take longer.

"Links" defined a crew's status, each crew being composed of six, eight or even more personnel of varying seniority. There were five levels of Link, ranging from the No.5 "Bottom Link" doing shunting, freight and odd jobs like ferrying engines; in the middle came "No.3 Link", doing mixed freight and short-haul passenger journeys; at the peak came the No.1 "Top Link" crews, doing prestige mainline passenger work, high-speed expresses, and earning special increments such as mileage allowance and lodging privileges. A Top Link driver could earn very good money indeed.

Pros and cons

On the relative merits of diesel and electric, George commented: *"Diesel can run anywhere, that's where it scores. Electric is good, but you have to have powered tracks or overheads, either of which is expensive and may take months to install."*

Opinions may vary, but the consensus, at least as far as day-to-day operation is concerned, seems to be that electric is cheaper and cleaner, and therefore probably has the edge. The new 92 Class electric locomotives are even stealing a march on diesel as a motive power for freight. In 2001 the national 25,000-volt network is still nowhere near complete. So the days of diesel are far from over, and 66 Class diesels are still being imported from Canada.

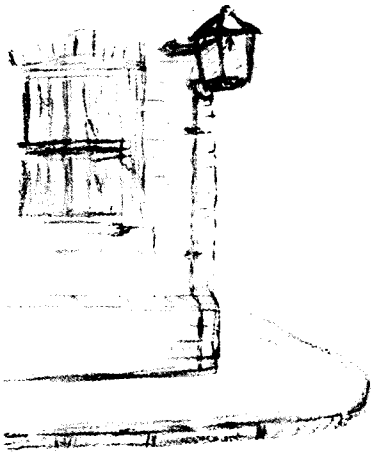
On the market

Beeching's rationalisation of the railways was perhaps slower to affect Cricklewood than elsewhere, but even here the phasing out of steam was inevitably accompanied by a scaling-down of engine shed personnel and marshalling yards. By the middle 1960s there were no longer enough railwaymen to fill the Terraces, and even before that many staff were earning enough to choose their own accommodation elsewhere.

Accordingly, in 1967 British Rail sold the entire Railway Village (192 properties in all) to a commercial developer, Bradford Property Trust, which specialised in buying estates of workers' housing wholesale and selling retail. [They had earlier acquired Sir Titus Salt's large and celebrated Saltaire Village in the textile town of Shipley, Yorkshire. More recently, in another deal with British Rail, the company had purchased the railway estate in Willesden].

Although Gratton Terrace had been

modernised between 1904 and 1913, some with electric light and all with inside bathrooms and plumbing, electric light had not been installed in the rest of the cottages until much later. At the time of the sale of the estate, these smaller cottages were still without bathrooms and indoor toilets. The tenants were offered a choice of continuing to rent or to buy their houses and, whichever they chose, Bradford Property Trust gave occupants the further choice of having a bathroom installed either as an extension to the back of the house or in the smallest of the three upper rooms. And so in the late 1960s and early 70s some of the cottages were for the first time architecturally altered. The extensions replaced the original three outhouses, and the back door was moved from the middle of the rear of the house to the side of the new extension.



Another architectural change came in 1969 when residents were given the opportunity either to have communal lawns walled at either end and planted with cherry trees or retain their individual gardens at the front of the cottages. The residents of Midland and Johnston Terraces chose the lawns while Campion Terrace voted for their own gardens.

The last few years of the Sixties were clearly a period of great upheaval in the Cottages. The addition of indoor plumbing was greatly welcomed, as was the Clean Air Act. Tenants of that time and earlier remember the constant smell of smoke which gradually disappeared with the restrictions on coal fires and the continuing replacement of steam by diesel and electric trains.

But there must have been both a sense of freedom from the total control of a Railway Company balanced by a sense of loss as houses gradually filled up with new occupants who had no connection with the Railway. Gratton Terrace had become accustomed to incomers since the renovations sixty years previously, but until 1967 the other Terraces had remained almost solidly the preserve of Railway workers.

Many residents may have feared the total loss of the community they had known; for, without the cohesive force of a shared occupation, would this new disparate community retain any of its valued closeness, if indeed it survived at all?

As is so often the case, it was a threat from outside which was to galvanise the residents and lead to the formation of a residents' association which has now been active for 30 years, manned by volunteers from amongst 'Railway' and 'Non-Railway' residents alike.

15. The RCA

IN THE EARLY 1970s a planning application was put before Barnet Council for the building of a block of flats on a strip of waste ground behind Needham Terrace. Before the war the vacant site had been allotments but since then had become the local rubbish tip: "*You could get yourself a three-piece suite up there,*" Charlie Routley recalls.

Hilda Thompson

Hilda Thompson, whose house overlooked the site, got together with neighbours Pat Chappin, Vera Tyas, Margaret Westfield and Pam Leonard to discuss what could be done and the decision was made to form a Residents' Community Association to fight the proposed development. [Known as the RCA, the group, made up of willing residents, is still thriving in this second year of the 21st century].

Within months the newly-fledged Association had two major achievements under its belt. It had stopped the unwanted building programme in its tracks and had then persuaded Barnet that the derelict site should be cleared (with the Borough's help) and be restored permanently to its former state as allotments for the cottagers.

Voice of the people

The story of the allotments is for another chapter; but, as regards the RCA, this achievement was only the first of many. From the beginning, the RCA not only fought against the encroachment by businesses on its boundaries but also organised regular community events, times when residents come together to enjoy themselves and celebrate the survival of the Railway Terraces as a continuing entity.

The RCA organised its first of many community events in 1977, a grand party to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. Since then there have been annual Christmas parties, carol singing, coach trips out, bonfires on Guy Fawkes' night, summer flower shows, teas, knees-ups, summer fêtes, and Hallowe'en parties.

The Association has also been proactive in trying to improve its environment. In the late 1970s the RCA tried to persuade Barnet Council to help it refurbish the now dilapidated Railway Institute. Unfortunately events conspired against the accomplishment of this plan, but a £3,000 grant received along the way turned out to be very useful.

Another major concern at that time was the state of the children's playground,

which contained outmoded and subsequently outlawed equipment, including a 'witch's hat' (a swinging roundabout with bench seats), and a slide and helter-skelter set on unforgiving tarmac. Persistent lobbying by the RCA prevailed and a refurbished playground with substantial fencing, a football cum tennis area, and some new equipment on soft surfacing was provided by Barnet Council.

Resident-unfriendly businesses

Other prominent environmental concerns were the siting and operating of resident-unfriendly businesses. One of the most pressing of these was a haulage contractor's yard very close to Campion and Needham Terraces. It was a noisy, dusty, smelly neighbour. And when on one occasion noxious chemicals leaked through the fence and fouled one of the allotment sites, prompt action forced the removal of the contaminated soil and replacement with fresh earth (although a full lorry load of soil was left at the gates of the allotments and had to be wheelbarrowed in by the allotment holders!)

On many occasions the business operated outside legal hours, well into the small hours of the morning. Once again the committee lettered and lobbied, pushed and pursued until the business was at last relocated to a purpose-built site across the railway line, away from any residential area.

In the 1990s there was a planning application to build a cement-batching plant, (an installation which would have polluted the air with cement dust and generated unacceptable levels of noise and traffic) within fifty yards of houses at the North end of the Railway Village. Vigorous opposition from the RCA contributed to the plan being abandoned.

Most recently, a battle with British Nuclear Fuels over the parking of nuclear waste overnight in Cricklewood sidings at the rear of the Railway Cottages achieved national press and television coverage. The case was bitterly fought, and the RCA's part in the successful outcome was significant.

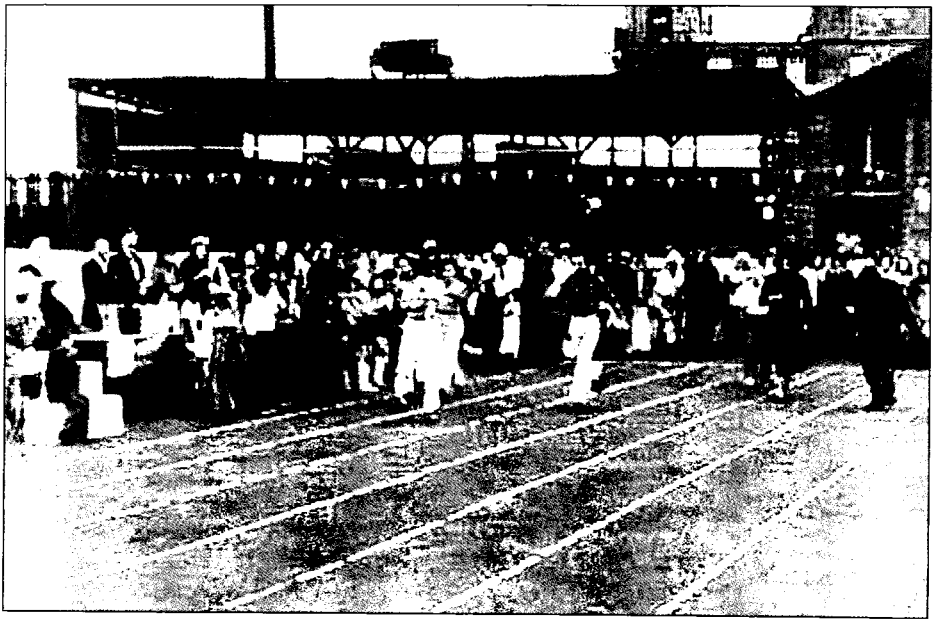
Careful husbandry

One of the most satisfying events of the past decade was the declaration of the Cottages as an official Conservation Area. We would like to think that this may be in some measure a response to the climate of careful and responsible husbandry cultivated by the inhabitants of this Railway Village over more than a century.

Illustrations opposite:

Top: Queen's Jubilee decorations in the Terraces, 1977

Below: Egg and Spoon Race — one of the many events which helped to make the Jubilee celebrations so memorable.



16. The Allotments

AT ONE TIME, there were many more allotments for the railway workers, not just in the Terraces but in the fields on either side of the Edgware Road. They were particularly valued through the hard times of the 1920s and 30s as well as in wartime ('Dig for Victory!'), before going into terminal decline (at least as regards the Needham Terrace site) shortly after World War II.

The restoration of the allotments, fought for so fiercely by Hilda and the RCA, brought to life again not only a venue where green-fingered cottagers could once again grow their own vegetables, but also a gathering place for residents on warm, summer days.

Mike & Anna Faulkner take a keen interest as work begins on clearing the future allotment site. Mike was closely involved in the RCA from its earliest days.

Day-to-day Running

When in the 1970s Barnet assented to the reinstatement of the Needham allotments, one of their conditions was that the enterprise should be properly conducted; more specifically, that a Secretary should be appointed to take charge of administration and day-to-day running.

It came as no surprise to anyone when the name of Charlie Routley came to the fore. Recently retired from his job as a toolmaker, he was fit, capable, and a gardening buff. But would he welcome the responsibility? Lena Thompson – a founder member of the RCA and an old friend – approached Charlie about it. He responded with an immediate and emphatic yes. ("Thank God!" said Gwen, when she heard. Charlie and Gwen are the most devoted of couples, but the thought of having Charlie under her feet 24 hours a day had been somewhat on Gwen's mind!)

Twelve plots

There were many applicants and only twelve plots. A ballot was duly held but by an ironic twist, Charlie was not a winner.

Charlie Routley (right of group) with Marlene Wardle and Tony Souto in front of the summer house of Needham Allotments shortly after winning the Barnet Trophy in 1991. *Photograph, courtesy of The Hendon Times*

The Allotment Secretary had no plot of his own! The problem was solved by typical Railway Cottages neighbourliness: one of the winners, Art Wiseman, stood down to allow Charlie a working base.

Those early days involved a great deal of hard work, converting a rubbish dump into productive allotments. It was very much a communal effort. Jim Whapshott, Peter Thompson (Lena's son), Charlie himself and the other nine plotholders gradually hauled the old bedsteads and rusty bicycle wheels out of the ground and established good, fertile soil. Allotment holders laid paving between and around the allotments. And since that time, so highly prized are the allotments amongst the residents that there have always been

more would-be plot holders than plots.

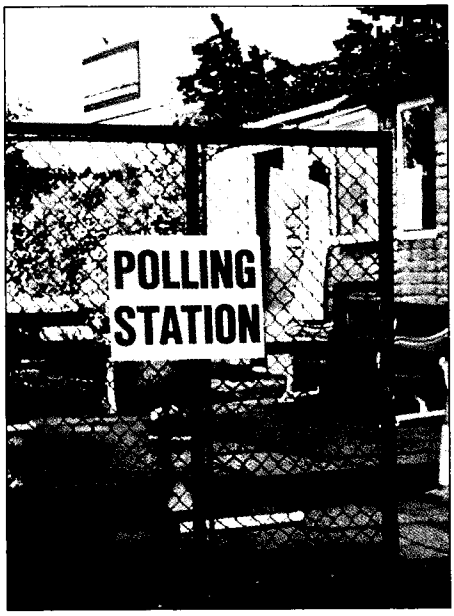
In 1990 a charitable trust granted funds for a summerhouse to be provided for the use and pleasure of the older residents. In fine weather, they were in the habit of congregating on benches by the gates; now, thanks to the summerhouse, they have somewhere warm to meet, whatever the weather.

Another acquisition was the Trading Hut. The building houses not only plot holders' gardening tools and the odd sack of compost but also gas heaters and lamps which supply warmth and light when necessary.

The hut is rented by the Council once every two years or so as a Polling Station. Evidently there is competition among the 'polling officers' to come to the Terraces station, as Gwen Routley and others would provide them with a cooked lunch and Charlie would supply the drinks. If you were a late voter the atmosphere could be very jolly!

(There is a story that one year Dave Ball of Needham Terrace, who worked at London Zoo, provided a parrot to place votes in the ballot box – a charming tale, even if apocryphal!)

Competitions have also been held in the summer, both for the produce grown in the allotments and for the gardens and window boxes in the Terraces. Everyone wins a prize and after the judging, the wine flows freely in celebration. Surplus produce is sold on a stall at the summer fete to earn funds for the RCA or simply given to friends and neighbours. Plot holders also host tea parties for older residents, much looked forward to.



Once every two years or so the 'Trading Hut' is pressed into service as the Terraces' polling station.

By the early 1990s, thanks to the hard work of all the plot holders, the allotments were actually carrying off prizes. In 1991, the allotments were entered for the Best Site competition run by The Barnet Federation of Allotments and Horticultural Societies, to which they were affiliated. Not only did the allotments win the Trophy for their area but also the Trophy for the Best Site in the whole of Barnet. The allotments were also featured in a BBC television programme. Not bad for a former rubbish dump.

17. Cottage Jottings

ONCE UPON A TIME there was an ancient and temperamental Gestetner machine. Donated to the RCA, the old warhorse served the Community well, producing great quantities of newsletters and flyers, and keeping the residents in regular touch with Terrace goings-on. It dwelt mostly in the shed behind No.4 Johnston, though from time to time it migrated to a willing committee member; for it was a cantankerous beast and a messy one, providing ample business for local dry-cleaners.

It eventually found a permanent home with Sid Fryer, who somehow kept the machine going for another few years, doing all the printing for the community (Sid was a railwayman through and through, well liked and a good neighbour).

By the mid-1990s the personal computer and desktop publishing made a quarterly magazine possible, economic to produce and not restricted to text only. The *Cottage Jottings* was born and has provided much lively reading ever since.

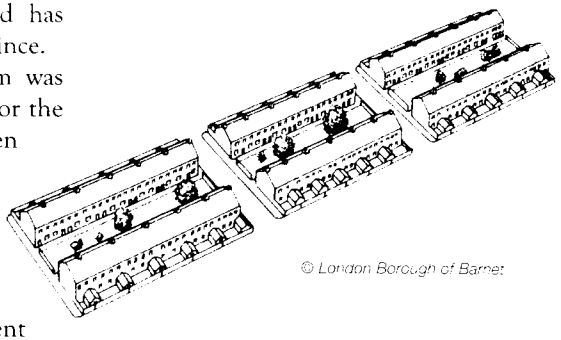
In mid-1995, an editorial team was formed to take over responsibility for the *Jottings*, which until then had fallen on only a few willing shoulders. A new and less costly A5 format was introduced in the Hallowe'en issue of 1995, and has lasted to this day.

Every quarter features different cover designs, created by talented members of the Terrace community. Articles, letters, stories, obituaries, recipes, book reviews, puzzles and anecdotes are contributed by residents.

All Fools' Day

Particularly appreciated is the perennial appearance of the April Fools' Day hoax. Ingeniously conceived and brilliantly executed (many of them by one of our more prolific hoaxers, Peter Elmore), these have successfully gulled many a reader, at least for a while. The illustration overleaf provides an apt example.

Over the years, as we have seen, the Association has swung into action against a whole range of encroachments by outside commercial interests. The *Jottings* has meticulously logged progress on these issues together with plenty of good cheer and fun.



NEWS

Reproduced below is an extract from a lead story in THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS of September 1894 brought to our attention by Mr Joseph Kerr from the Barnet Historical Society

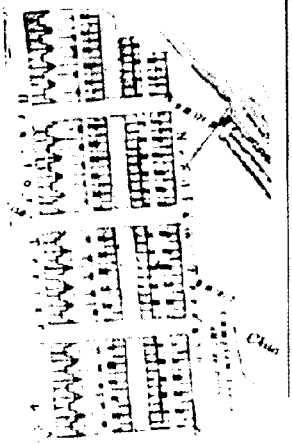
THE ILLUSTRATED
LONDON NEWS

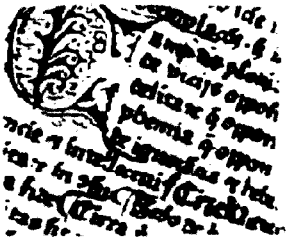
NEW HOMES PLANNED

Dismay at Announcement

The London Ward of Child's Hill on Thursday 12th September gave approval to the planned construction of fourteen new terraced cottages by The Midland Railway Company for the benefit of its employees (see map). One may question the logic of politicians such as Lord Randolph Churchill and indeed Disraeli himself, disagreeing with such social and economic improvements. The answer lies in its historical background.

The site of the new houses (not due for completion until the next century) is *Campion Fields* in Cricklewood North London. The site is the last remaining Norman landmark in the district and is referred to in the Domesday Book (see illustration) by its original name *Camp de Pions* which means 'Foot Soldiers Camp'. This was a semi permanent barrack-field which housed the battallion of sentinels posted beside the old roman road, strategic then, leading into the capital, which is now known as the Edgeware Road.





The detractors of the proposal also include eminent historians and archaeologists. *Camp de Pions*, as it was called until the recent Napoleonic wars has yielded many items not only of great monetary value but also educational and social. The surface has hardly been disturbed and there are still untold riches and, the archaeologists believe, mass graves, the aftermath of several battles in the region. There are today visible signs of the Norman occupation, the willow and holly trees planted to make bows, arrows and other weapons.

Pressure is mounting to have the plan cancelled or moved to a less valuable location.

Cottage Jottings, April 1994. News of archaeological treasure in 'Campion Fields' at the rear of Campion Terrace stirred hopes of more to come among local history enthusiasts. Alas, disappointment was to follow. It was just one of *Cottage Jottings'* brilliant April 1st hoaxes.

18. Beyond the Millennium

WHEN THE COTTAGES were first built the influence of the railway was all-pervasive. The Company undoubtedly sought to control its employees' lives (and to some extent their minds) in ways that would be thought intolerable today.

Whether the workers of the day bowed willingly to this regime, or whether they saw it as a form of tyranny, is hard to say. The fact remains that, even before the first foundations were laid, the Railway Company made decisions affecting their lives and the environment in which they were to live.

Sense of community

Architecturally the Midland Railway created a brick-built village whose very layout encouraged that most elusive of qualities, a sense of community. The density of the housing, the narrow lanes along the back of each Terrace, with gardens and no road at the front, created long open views. Low boundary fences over which neighbours chatted fostered intimacy and the communal occupation also contributed to the creation of a close-knit community.

But with the sale of the estate in 1967 and the subsequent influx of householders who shared neither a connection to the railways nor a common occupation, the community was fragmented. There were external changes too. The Terraces became surrounded by business premises which are noisy and unsightly. Concrete and tarmac replaced the trees of the Crutched Wood.

A village green

However, the communal lawns created in 1969 between Midland and Johnston Terraces did create a new focal point, in effect an extended village green, and although the roads became public, the continued absence of a through road has helped to preserve both the privacy and safety of the Terraces.

Development within the Village itself has never occurred – if for no other reason than lack of space. The only addition was in 1999 when a small new house was neatly tucked into a corner at the north end of Needham Terrace (No.39).

But it was above all the formation of the Residents' Community Association which brought existing residents and newcomers together, forging a new community. There are at least a hundred different professions represented among today's cottagers and at the last count there were over 40 different nationalities.

The community may not be as close as once it was, but that much-cherished friendliness remains and there is always someone happy to lend a helping hand.

Conservation Area

What then does this third millennium

hold for today's residents? The 1998 declaration by Barnet Council of the Cottages as an official Conservation Area – the result of much lobbying by residents – has acknowledged the historical importance of the Cricklewood Railway Terraces. This first year has brought plans for another regeneration of Cricklewood, possibly with its first skyscraper, and more upheaval for the residents of the Railway Cottages. As always, some of the proposed changes will be welcome, some not.

It is almost 120 years since those first families moved in. Despite continuing change and the necessity to adapt which is part of life, there is reason to hope that our inheritance of that pioneering spirit will survive and flourish in the decades to come.

This railway village, this urban oasis, has roots which go back more than a thousand years, to a time when forests spread across the land and a Roman road passed close to the shadow of a certain Crickelede Wood.

The lawns between Midland and Johnston Terraces.

Postscript

To the reader, from the authors

THIS HISTORY of one small corner of the vast enterprise which was the Midland Railway was researched and written by a group of residents presently living in the Cricklewood Railway Terraces.

In 1876 F.S.Williams wrote a history of the early years of the Midland Railway. It was an immediate best seller and remains an invaluable source for railway historians today. In a preface to the fifth edition, dated 1888, Williams describes how he researched and wrote his history:

When the Author inquired for the beginning of the history of the Midland Railway — when he tried to find the source of the highest tributary stream of events — his friends of the Midland Railway Company were unable to help him.

The oldest official records were searched in vain. Sir James Allport, then the General Manager, and Mr. E. S. Ellis, the Chairman, could tell much, but they could not say where the Midland Counties Railway, the first of the three lines that eventually were amalgamated to form the Midland Company, had its initiation.

Fortunately a clue was, unexpectedly, discovered. One day, riding in a train with Mr. Robert Harrison, of Eastwood, near Nottingham, that gentleman suggested to the Author that in the private books of his firm — Messrs. Barber, Walker and Co. — some facts bearing on the subject might perhaps be ascertained. He would have them searched.

And in those musty manuscripts — forty years and more old — a record was found of the greatest interest, which told how the first

ideas that led on to the construction of the Midland Railway came into being.

This story the Author has now to tell. How the Midland Railway originated at a village inn in the necessities of a few coal-owners; how it has gradually spread its paths of iron, north and south and east and west, through half the counties of England, till they stretch from the Bristol Channel to the Humber, the German Ocean to the Mersey, and the English Channel to the Solway Firth; how a property has been created that has cost £80,000,000 of money, and that brings in a revenue of £7,000,000 a year; how it employs more than 45,000 servants; runs its engines a distance equal to five times round the world every day; and how there lies before it a limitless future of usefulness, — these are facts which, in the judgement of the Author, are worthy of record.

Yet it so happens that the men who have been most deeply engaged in this work have been so busy with their work that they seem never to have thought of telling why or how they did it; and so the Author has been led to try, before it is too late, to weave together, from the fragmentary records of the dead and from the fading recollections of the living, a narrative of modern enterprise which has been honourable to those engaged in it, and has been widespread and beneficent in its results.

The Author begs to tender his grateful acknowledgements to the numerous Officers of the Company, and other gentlemen, who have rendered him valuable aid in his work. He hopes that the reader may find as much pleasure in following the thread of this remarkable narrative as the Author has had in unravelling it for himself.

Williams' words marvellously describe the journey we too have taken in writing this book. We also share his hope that we have both entertained and informed the reader of today while at the same time providing a useful resource for historians.

With neighbourly greetings

Heather Atkinson
Dominique Autier
Heather Brown
Margaret Brown
Anna Faulkner
Bruce Fisk
Linda McKeen
Sue Regan
Malcolm Sargent
Marlene Wardle
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British Railways Board (Archives) *Neil Butters*
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Photographs of plans of Railway Terraces — the London Borough of Barnet who assert ownership of all publication right in the original plans, ref MS20430

Alan Godfrey Edition Maps

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Photo Album

No running water in Midland Terrace for ten days ...

... but a sponge full of water on its way to a brave volunteer at the Summer Fair!

Tea in the Allotments on a hot summer day ...

... and eating a very special Terraces cake

Tea on the lawn listening to the wonderful sound of the Terraces String Quartet

Morris Dancing

Barn Dancing

The Terraces Rock Band, in great demand for Summer Fairs and Christmas Parties.

The Terraces also boast their own authentic Rock Star, David Baker (aka Danny Rivers) who, to the delight of all, sings with the band

Grand Victorian Fête

Summer 2001

Past and present merge

In the 1913 photograph of William and Elsie Worker *(below left)*, Elsie is wearing a black skirt. This skirt, kept for almost 90 years by her daughter Lilian Sargent, was worn on the day of the Fête by Eli Jones as part of her Victorian costume. The recreated photograph on the right shows Eli again wearing the skirt, with William and Elsie's grandson, Malcolm Sargent, as her 'spouse'.

Opposite page

Top: Grand Parade in Victorian costume with Fire Eaters and a Unicyclist Juggler, accompanied by Oboe, Trumpets, Drums and Whistles.

Mid-left: Terraces Tug-o'-War.

Mid-right: Strongman arrested by local bobby for disorderly conduct!

Bottom: Children's Sack Race.

A Roman road ... a crutched wood ... a tiny hamlet ... a sinner redeemed by gift of land ... a city hospital ... a disgraced fortune-hunter ... a cloud of steam ... a pioneering family ... a community of railway workers ... a cluster of cottages amid city bustle ... these are some of the ingredients of a book which spans two thousand years of local history and unravels lost threads from the past.