**Social Impact on Amberley of the Building of the Railway**

**Researched by Malcolm Pheasey - September 2018**

The railway through Amberley was opened in August 1863 by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (LBSCR). As with any new railway – and this still applies today with HS2 – permission to build a railway is given by Parliament by means of granting ‘Parliamentary Powers’. In the case of the line between Pulborough (where it joined the line between Horsham and Midhurst) and Ford (where it joined the line between Worthing and Littlehampton) these powers were granted in 1860.

Part of the Parliamentary process is for the promoter to submit drawings showing the proposed route of the railway. These show a proposed ‘centre line’ of the track together with a band of land either side, referred to as the ‘Limits of Deviation’. The Parliamentary Powers grant the promoter authority to build the railway between these limits. This allows for movement away from the assumed centre line as a result of the detailed design work that follows granting of the powers.

In submitting the drawings the promoter also has to show the ownership and current occupier of all properties that lie within these Limits of deviation. This provides a useful source of information regarding the residents who may be affected by the railway construction.

Prior to the eventual granting of authority to construct the line as we know it today there were a number of previous submissions to parliament that were rejected by the Parliamentary committee that considered the applications. These were submitted in 1838, 1844, 1845 and 1858. All of these proposed to build the railway on the east side of the River Arun except the last unsuccessful application. This last was routed to the west of the River Arun passing through Bury between the village and the church. It did not affect any properties (so no demolition or displacement of people) but did pass through the Duke of Norfolk’s lands. 12 months later (1859) a revised proposal was submitted that was authorised, with the railway as now to the east of the river. This did affect properties by Houghton Bridge but did not cross the Duke’s lands. The Duke, as a peer of the realm, did of course have a seat in Parliament.

The earlier proposals having the railway to the east of the river all had the line crossing the turnpike between the current Turnpike Cottage / North Stoke Road and the river. It passed to the east of the canal leading to the lime works wharf, although often required that to be moved a little to the west. As will be obvious, the line finally adopted was to the east of North Stoke Road and did not require changes to the canal.

West Sussex Record Office has copies of the Parliamentary submission drawings and these have been studied. The drawings are not completely accurate and different drawings have different buildings shown. A composite version has been prepared that seeks to incorporate all drawings referenced although not all buildings appear on all drawings. This is shown below



The different drawings used different nomenclature for the buildings that each showed and few named the buildings. The above is therefore an interpretation of the information provided with the capital reference letters being those of the author. Note that building D is variously described as ‘coach house, stable, shed’ (1838); ‘cottage’ (1844); not mentioned in 1845 and ‘barn, stable & yard’ in 1859. Building G is ‘Cottage’ (1838); not at all in 1844; ‘Barn & stable (1845) and ‘House & buildings used as beer shop’ in 1859.

By tracking the apparently same building across the various drawings, using building names where available and the owner/occupier details it was possible to infer an identity for each property.

It was clear from the drawings that some properties would have to be removed by the construction of the railway. The census returns for 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881 were examined in an attempt to identify which families were displaced and also the extent of the families. Unfortunately the census returns have little detail of which property each census return refers to. Some properties (eg Houghton Bridge Inn) were easy to identify and it was assumed that adjacent entries in the census return related to nearby properties. Where possible families have been allocated to the properties in the drawing above and details are given below.

In terms of the displacement of families by the construction of the railway it has been possible to draw two conclusions.

**Property H** – this appears to lie approximately where the current (sunken) station car park is located and thus appears to have been a casualty of the railway construction. This property is shown on the 1838 drawing as owned by the Bishop of Chichester and occupied by James Cooper. The house is not shown on the 1844 or 1845 submissions but in the 1851 census James Cooper is the Head of a family recorded in entry No 92. Note that entry 93 is for the Houghton Bridge Inn (Property C) which supports the linkage of entry 92 with property H (see relative positions on drawing). Entry 92 shows James Cooper to be a 60 year old farmer with 35 acres and also a lime burner employing 5 labourers. He has a wife Jane, also 60. The household also comprises a Sarah Gilbert, age 17, a house servant, and John Marshal age 14, described as a servant/agricultural labourer. There is also recorded a Sarah Smart, age 39, described as a ‘Traveller’.

Property H reappears on the 1859 Parliamentary submission as a dwelling house, now owned by Henry Baker but still occupied by James Cooper (along with Joseph Cooper) but by the time of the 1861 census (railway would have been under construction at this time) there is no trace of a Cooper household anywhere in Amberley.

**It is therefore deduced that property H was demolished as part of the railway construction works and the Cooper household displaced.**

**Property L** – Property L (and also M) does not appear in the Parliamentary submissions of 1838, 1844 or 1845 (maybe it was thought not to be affected by those schemes). However it does appear in the 1859 submission as a cottage (M also appears as ‘Shed & pigsties’), both owned by Lord Hemfield and occupied by Walter Sandon and William Lee. Curiously the same owner/occupiers are shown against property N (Cottage).

William Lee appears as the head of the household in the 1861 census (entry No 1), the 1871 census (entry No 114) and the 1881 census (entry No 124) when the property is described as ‘Stoke Road’. It is deduced therefore that this is probably property N. There is no mention of Walter Sandon in any census nor any other reference to ‘Walter Sandon and William Lee’. It is deduced therefore that properties L (Cottage) and M (Shed & Pigsties) were demolished as part of the railway works. The rough, location of these (see diagram) supports this contention. Walter Sandon appears to have disappeared from the record and was presumably displaced while it is possible that William Lee made property N his sole residence.

Note that William Lee himself appears in the 1851 census (entry No 99) aged 32 in a property described as Bauchain(?), Chalk Pit House, as a Bargeman Labourer, again implying that this is property N. He has progressed by 1861 to be a Lime Burner, an occupation he maintains. His household comprises his wife Susannah (age 27 in 1851) and children Frederick and Lyddea. They are age 5 and 2 respectively in 1851 and Frederick has become an agricultural labourer by 1861 (but is not recorded in 1871 when he would have been 25). Subsequent children are Emma (not recorded in 1871, when she would have been 19), Hugh (who also became a lime burner), Mary Elizabeth and Thomas William (all born between 1851 and 1861) and Walter (born 1863). Only Hugh remains at home with his parents by 1881. Curiously, in 1871, both Susannah and Lyddea are recorded as Lime Burners but this may be an error.

A further item of interest about this household is that there appear to have been two lodgers in 1871. Walter Paish(?) age 15 and a **railway clerk** and Clement Smith age 14, a **railway porter**. They were born in Horsham and Hardham respectively, suggestive of a movement of people in the railway industry.

***Notes:***  
Two preadsheets incorporating all the census/submission findings has been provided separately: *AmberleyStation-nearby properties.xlsx, Amberley Station-affected occupants.xlsx*

A further file provides chronological detailsof the building of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, *Amberley: LBSCR chronology.pdf*