

THE RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EAST NORFOLK 1874-1914

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BY

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NORFOLK 1874-1914



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R.S. Joby,

Norwich,

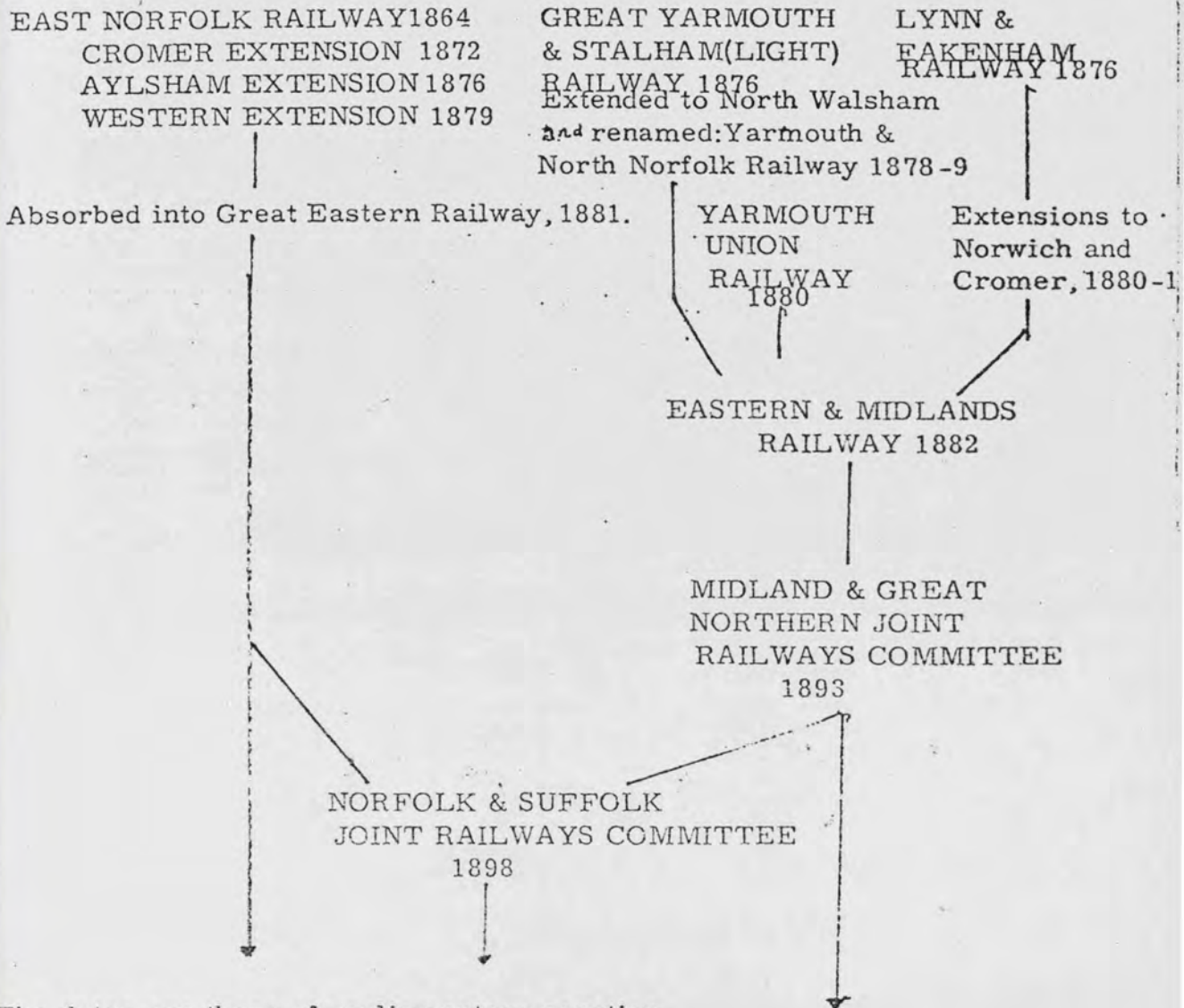
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FAMILY TREE OF THE RAILWAYS OF NORTH-EAST NORFOLK



The dates are those of parliamentary sanction.

THE RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EAST

NORFOLK 1874-1914

PREFACE

Few major areas of lowland England remained without railways as late as the 1870s. North east Norfolk was the most extensive of these areas, continuing to use a transport system last improved in 1826. When railways were eventually built in north east Norfolk, their density finally exceeded the national average.

Scope of the Research

The area here defined as north east Norfolk was set by the building of the Norfolk Railway and its extensions on the periphery of the area during the years 1842-1857. To the south is the Yarmouth to Norwich railway, while the western boundary is defined by the lines from Norwich to Wells-next-the-Sea, via Wymondham, East Dereham and Fakenham. To the north and east is the North Sea. Within this area of over 700 square miles, no railway was opened until October 1874.

The timespan chosen, between 1874 and 1914, represented the period between the opening of the first railway in north east Norfolk, from Norwich to North Walsham and the First World War, by which time the railway system had been completed some eight years and the peak of development, both of the railways and of the resorts as originally planned, had been reached. Structural changes in both took place as a result of the war, thus making it an apposite point at which to conclude the study.

The introduction of the railway into north east Norfolk proved far from simple. Many factors contributed to make the railway development of the region a difficult exercise. The varied interests of landowners, industrialists, local and national railway companies; constructional problems and mismanagement; inter-company rivalry and over-ambitious promotions all resulted in the building of the network being a complex and lengthy process. The tangled story of planning and construction is the subject of detailed examination in the thesis.

Railway development superimposed itself on an existing transport structure, then called into being an ancillary system to serve itself, so it is proposed to study both the adequacy of existing methods pre-1874 and the changes undergone by local transport in subsequent years.

The economic changes arising from the development of railways will be examined by first looking at changes in the economy of north east Norfolk from 1826 until 1874 in order to establish the pattern, followed later by an examination of changes in the period up to 1914, extrapolating where possible those largely due to the arrival of rail communication.

Changes in the distribution of population and settlement will be studied in conjunction with changes in rateable valuations in order to assess the impact of the railway on these movements. Chief amongst these shifts in population and settlement is the growth of seaside resorts and other leisure settlements.

North east Norfolk and its railways in the national context will be examined in the final section of the thesis. There the changes in local industry, agriculture and resort development can be related to national changes, indicating how an isolated and peripheral region came to be tied more closely to the national economy and railway transport network.

Purpose of the Research

Much previous study of railway development and its relationship to broader economic development themes has concentrated on the period up to 1870 (see next section). North east Norfolk offers a number of opportunities to study a much later model of development in an area that is largely peninsular. Approaches to north east Norfolk from the south can only be made through the bridging points of Yarmouth and Norwich. From the seaward, there was only one harbour, that of Blakeney, while routes from the west consisted of a single turnpike until the coming of the railways. This isolation from through routes makes it possible to treat north east Norfolk as an entity in order to see first the effects of lack of railway communication well into the railway age, then to assess the effects of building over a period of nearly 50 years.

As a study of an isolated area during the major changes of its economic history, it is hoped that the problems of local investment as against outside investment can be demonstrated both in the railway and resort development areas.

Railway competition is another major area of study here. Two systems were built in north east Norfolk, so that most settlements with over 1000 population were served by two railways, usually with separate stations and approaches.

Against the backcloth of agricultural depression there were tendencies both towards growth in some parts of the local economy and decline in others. Many of the trends in the microcosm of north east Norfolk conflict with those occurring nationally. The main economic input was the railway. To what extent this input determined other economic factors of late Victorian and Edwardian Norfolk is the theme of this study.

Connections with Existing Knowledge and Perceptions

Little previous original work has been undertaken on north east Norfolk, although it receives mention in several theses and articles on wider Norfolk or East Anglian topics. The railways themselves are unevenly treated in company histories and articles.

Theses and Dissertations

Two theses with railway titles have been presented on purely East Anglian railways. The earlier was the unpublished 1939 London doctoral thesis of Evelyn Doble, History of the Eastern Counties Railway in relation to contemporary economic development. This covers the period 1839 to 1862, with some themes taken beyond that date. Norwich and Yarmouth, on the urban periphery of north east Norfolk, both receive attention, but the wide geographical scope of the thesis leads to superficial coverage of particular locations. The second thesis, from Nottingham University in 1964, was D.I. Gordon's The East Anglian Railways Company: a study in railway and financial history. This was a much more substantial piece of work on a smaller railway, centred on King's Lynn, serving Ely, Wisbech and East Dereham,

covering the period 1845 to 1862. Dr. Gordon has followed this with the East Anglian volume of A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, which devotes some twelve pages to north east Norfolk, giving some of the social and economic development to railway development. Neither in time or geographically do these works impinge on north east Norfolk, but form very useful background material, showing how areas served by railways fared in the foregoing period.

Of great value on a national scale for the period prior to my study has been G. R. Hawke's Oxford D.Phil. thesis The Effect of Railways on the Growth of the Economy of England and Wales 1840 to 1870. Using methodology derived from American practitioners, to be discussed below, Dr. Hawke estimated the social savings of the railways nationally. My initial narrative aims to show the results of the absence of railway construction in one district and the resulting economic stagnation.

The growing body of urban history research, especially that related to resort development, has added insights to the studies below. Lucy Caroe's Cambridge University doctoral thesis of 1965 Urban Change in East Anglia in the 19th Century gives much attention to the role of railways in the evolution of urban settlements, but as with most work over the very wide canvas of East Anglia, little is of direct relevance to north east Norfolk. T.W. Cunningham's Cambridge University thesis of 1972 The Growth of Peterborough 1850-1900 appears to be the only thesis about a town with a large population of railway employees, but has no parallels of note that I found of great use. Two East Anglian towns are studied in contrasting fashions, the earlier being the M.Sc. thesis presented at London University in 1939, A Study of the Function of Ipswich as a Centre in East Anglia and its Development as a Port since 1805. This was geographical in style and very dated at that. A much more modern contribution is C.N. Riches's thesis presented at the University of East Anglia in 1977 on The Development of Felixstowe as a Port and Coastal Resort, 1870-1970. Felixstowe was developed in conjunction with the building of a branch line to the settlement in 1877, thereby being contemporaneous with the development of Cromer and Sheringham in north east Norfolk. In the wider sphere of holiday resort development, J.A. Barrett's London University Doctoral

thesis of 1958, The Seaside Resort Towns of England and Wales expands the pioneering work in this field of J.A.R. Pimlott, while a shorter study of a nearby holiday area was made in 1965 by A.E. Pearson for the M.A. degree of Nottingham University, The Lincolnshire Coast Holiday Region.

The agricultural background is best dealt with in Lillie M. Springhall's London University doctoral thesis of 1935, The Norfolk Agricultural Labourer 1834 to 1884, emphasising the low incomes and poor conditions prevailing. The role of the Methodist chapels in agricultural discontent is exemplified in N.A. Scotland's Aberdeen University thesis of 1975, The Role of Methodism in the Growth and Development of the 'Revolt in the Field' in Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk 1872 to 1895. The particular role of George Edwards, Methodist lay-preacher and founder of unions for agricultural labourers is reinforced in his autobiographical From Crow Scaring to Westminster of 1920. The horticultural developments, of relatively small importance in north east Norfolk, receive mention in R.J. Battersby's London University doctoral thesis of 1960, The Development of Market Gardening in England 1850 to 1914, but the main emphasis is naturally on the Fens, Eversham, the Lea Valley and elsewhere.

An undergraduate dissertation examines the sole harbour in north east Norfolk. Jonathan J. Hooton's The Maritime Trade and Decline of Blakeney and Cley, 1500 to 1900, presented at Selwyn College, 1963, attempts to cover the Blakeney Port Books over a period of five centuries in some 64 pages, while also giving background to the nineteenth century decline of the port.

Published Works

North east Norfolk was eventually served by two railway companies and by a joint committee of the same two companies for the building of the last line to be constructed in the district, the Norfolk and Suffolk Joint Railways. The standard history of the larger of the two companies, C.J. Allen's The Great Eastern Railway, devotes a single paragraph to the Great Eastern Railway in north East Norfolk and a further two paragraphs to its competitor, later known as the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway.

The latter however merits two books, R. Clark's A Short History of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway published in 1967. Much of it is a reproduction of parliamentary Bills, notices, anecdotes and reminiscences of the author as well as engineering notes and drawings. Of social and economic background there is almost none. The second history was published in 1970, being A.J. Wrottesley's The Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway. This is much more a standard company history, but still giving very little background as to why the lines were built when and where or the reasons for development.

The material in journals about north east Norfolk is likewise limited in quantity, apart from general interest articles. The main railway settlement, Melton Constable, was the subject of an article in the Northern Universities Geographical Journal No. 4 1963, by H.D. Watts, using a limited range of the available primary sources. The roads which pre-dated the railways are discussed in A. Cossons's "The Turnpike Roads of Norfolk", which appeared in Norfolk Archaeology Volume XXX, indicating the primary sources for investigating traffic densities and returns. The urban economy of Norwich in the period prior to the arrival of railways was dealt with by J.K. Edwards in his article "The Commercial and Economic Development of Norwich", 1750 to 1850, in the Journal of Transport History of 1965/6. These were the most relevant, dealing largely with the immediate area of study, but many others, detailed in the Bibliography, have added insights from other areas or mentioned connections with north east Norfolk in passing.

The Wider Context

Counterfactual transport history was developed by R.W. Fogel and A. Fishlow in the United States and by G. Hawke and P. O'Brien in England. In the earlier part of this study, the situation is a microcosm of an England without railways, as the area was entirely reliant on coastal shipping, pre-industrial waterways and roads which continued to exist until 1874. The savings in transport costs are apparent from the comments on freight charges given to Committees of Enquiry set up before the building of some of the railways studied here and then compared with the railway rates charged thereafter.

The key role of holiday resort development in north East Norfolk receives little detailed attention in J.A.R. Pimlott's The Englishman's Holiday, but that seminal book gives a framework in which to study the local area within the national pattern of growth of resorts and holiday provision in the last quarter of the 19th century. Most study of resort development focused on the seaside, so that the study of the inland waterways of the Broads has relied for general background on contemporary guides and other writings detailed in the Bibliography.

Primary Sources

The main sources of the domestic history of the canal, turnpike and railway company histories have been the collections of minute books, accounts, published material and ephemera held by the Public Record Office, Norfolk & Norwich Record Office, the Colman & Rye Library, Norwich, and small local collections in branch libraries of Norfolk County Library. Agricultural, industrial and building figures have likewise largely come from these sources. Additional valuable material on the development of the seaside resorts has come from private collections made by local people.

Footnotes are referred to by numbers and appear at the foot of the same page. Figures are incorporated in the text and appear on the page following their textual reference. Capital letters, A, B, C etc. refer to Appendices. After Z the following Appendices are referred to by double capital letters, AA, BB, CC etc.

PART I

BACKGROUND TO NORTH EAST NORFOLK PRE-1874

PART 1

Background to North East Norfolk pre-1874

Chapter 1 Geography & Geology.

Chapter 2 Social & Economic Conditions.

PART I

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY

The setting of north east Norfolk has always been one of isolation from the landward directions and of difficult access from the sea. The East Anglian peninsula itself projects into the North Sea and is difficult of access from the West as the Fens have been a difficult area to cross by road or later by rail. Within this, north east Norfolk is further isolated by the longest river in Norfolk, the continuous stream of the Wensum and the Yare which has few bridges even in its upper course, while between Norwich and Yarmouth there are none for a distance of 22 miles.

The coastline of north east Norfolk forms a smooth arc of ninety degrees from Blakeney Point to Yarmouth. Only at these two extremities are there harbours, both protected by natural spits, both subject to very heavy silting. Between Blakeney and Yarmouth there is nearly fifty miles of unprotected, open beach, forming the longest stretch of harbourless coast in Britain. To the landward of the beaches there is an alternation of dunes, cliffs, marshes and shingle. Of these, the cliff and dune coasts were the most favoured by the resort developers of the 19th century.

Apart from the rivers already noted, the surface of north east Norfolk presents few barriers to communication. Little of the underlying chalk rock appears at the surface, but it is important in providing a deep underground reservoir for waterworks in the area and also a solid platform along the coast from Sheringham to Mundesley where sailing ships could once be securely beached at low tide. Most of the superficial geology consists of material deposited by glaciers within the last million years and by outwash material from the glaciers or alluvial material derived from that outwash.

The highest parts of north east Norfolk, indeed of the whole country, are the sand and gravel hills forming the Cromer-Holt ridge. These hills stretch across the northern part of the area for nearly twenty miles, rising to a height of 326 feet less than two miles inland from Cromer. They are largely infertile, but are the source of many of the local streams and give much of the district an attractive appearance, lacking in the flatter parts of the country. Where the hills meet the sea, they form the highest cliffs in Norfolk, again aiding the appearance of the landscape and thus benefitting the holiday trade when it came. The Cromer-Holt Ridge was not a barrier to communication, since it was crossed by rail at almost the highest point.

With the exception of the two short northward flowing rivers, the Glaven and the Stiffkey, all the other rivers of north east Norfolk flow towards a common estuary at Yarmouth. Their lower courses are broad, marshy valleys which were formally the estuarine arms of the sea, reaching as far inland as Norwich and Wroxham in Saxon times. Erosion of the cliffs further north brought shingle and mud as well as sand drifting down the coast, eventually

blocking all but one of the river mouths. The peaty marshes which were thus cut off from the sea were dug in the medieval period for fuel, creating man-made depressions, flooded by a rise in sea level in the 15th century. These flooded peat diggings form the present day chain of lakes and waterways known as The Broads.¹ They were formerly the main heavy goods routes within north east Norfolk and later developed as a leisure boating area, drawing visitors from many other parts of the country. The other marshy areas are on the north coast, at the mouths of the rivers Glaven and Stiffkey, again developed for leisure boating, but more recently. Both The Broads and the marshes of the north coast have been artificially drained by windpumps in the 18th and 19th centuries. The watertable in these wetlands is too high for cropping, so they form the main grazing area of Norfolk.²

The remaining parts of north east Norfolk form a plateau of about 100 feet elevation. This is largely composed of stiff grey boulder clay in the west of the area, changing to loam, a mixture of sand and clay, towards the east coast. Both are used for arable cultivation, the latter being the better drained and more easily worked. Across this broad and generally level plateau there are scattered deposits of the sands and gravels that were mostly left as heathland or rough grazing until enclosed.

1. Lambert, J. M. et al, The Making of the Broads, London 1960.
2. Martins, S., The Study of the Drainage Mill of the Norfolk Broadland, Norfolk Archaeology, 1970.

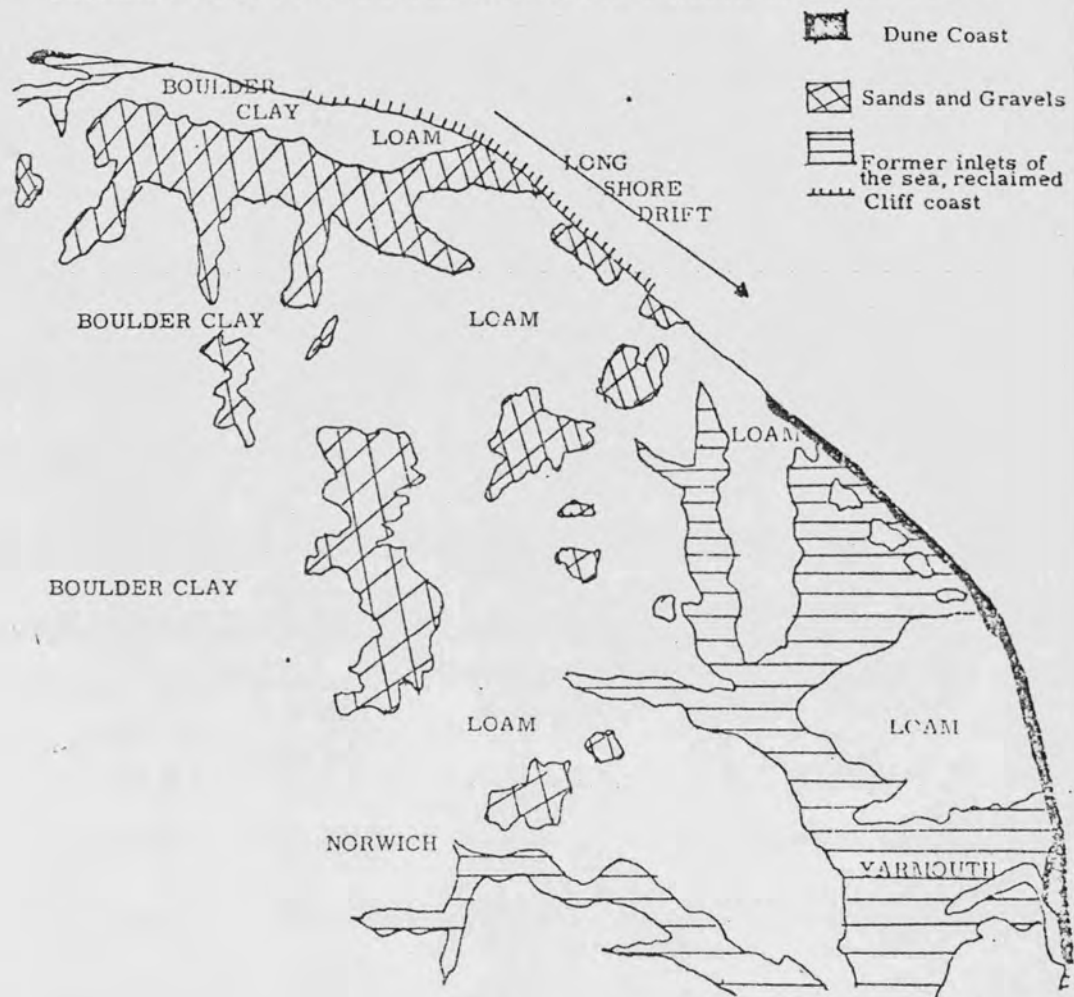
The rocks of north east Norfolk were exploited for a variety of local purposes. Where the chalk is present near to the surface, as at Wells and Haydon, it has been quarried for use in lime kilns. Beach pebbles from Sheringham around to Happisburgh have been removed to provide building materials, traceable up to ten miles inland. Their high silica content also encouraged an export trade by coasting vessel to the Potteries. Sand, gravel and flints derived from pits in almost every parish have been used for making roads and as building materials, while a type of post-glacial deposit known as brick-earth, which occurs sporadically in the loam region, has given rise to brickfields. The widespread nature of most of these deposits made them the ubiquitous construction materials in the pre-railway age, but trade in them with other areas does not appear to have been great and neither their quantity nor quality was such as to make their exploitation a reason for railway building. ^{Fig. 1.} There has been a lack of indigenous fuel and timber since the Middle Ages in north east Norfolk. Peat from the valleys, wood, ling and dried bushes from the heathlands had been supplemented by coal landed on the coast since at least the 17th century. Another source of wood for fuel and building materials was the enormous number of wrecks cast up on the beaches before powered boats became common in the late 19th century.³

The geography of north east Norfolk made access to it difficult in pre-railway times, by sea the coastal geography was exceptionally difficult and by roads there were a limited number of bridging points. But the rivers

3. Hedges, A.A.H., East Coast Shipping, Tring 1974, p. 28.

Fig. 1

GEOMORPHOLOGY AND SUPERFICIAL GEOLOGY OF NORTH-EAST NORFOLK. ▲



converging on Yarmouth allowed relatively easy entry by shallow draught vessels. The ^{dangerous} nature of the ^A coastline focused the direction of trading routes towards the large harbour at Yarmouth and the metropolis of East Anglia, Norwich. In the absence of natural barriers north of the river crossings in Norwich, roads fanned out in radial fashion to serve the district, while Yarmouth, isolated by the broad marshy valleys, was largely dependent on its waterways.

Most of the land was capable of farming use, although the river valleys were subject to inundation in their lower courses. Farming with associated mineral working was the natural economic outcome of the geology of the district.

PART I

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The basis of Norfolk's economy was agriculture, an agricultural system that had undergone the profound changes of enclosure and of improved husbandry in the half century before 1820. By the time that Arthur Young toured Norfolk and published his *Country Report* in 1804,⁴ the extensive former heathlands had shrunk to small proportions in most parishes and much of the former marshland in the river valleys had been drained. Yields on existing and reclaimed land improved throughout the century before the railway was built into the district. Young gives much evidence of carting of manure, marl, chalk and clay in order to improve the soil and correct deficiencies. Much use was made of water to transport these heavy loads, a distance of 20 miles being quoted for the Cubit farm at Catfield.⁵ Experiments with four, five and six course cropping systems led to the eclipse of older methods, which included fallowing. The resultant increase in the acreages under crops⁶ was reflected in the much

4. Young, A. *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Norfolk*, London 1804.

5. *Ibid*, p.408.

6. White, W. *History, Directory & Gazetteer of the County of Norfolk*, 2nd ed., Sheffield 1845.

greater outputs of fodder crops than hitherto, with resultant increases in the animal population. Although the great improvers, the Earl of Leicester and Marquis Townsend resided and farmed on the western edge of the defined area of north east Norfolk, the improvements that they publicised were widely diffused eastwards, being most important on the formerly marginal heath and marshy lands.

Norfolk's economy in the middle of the nineteenth century was still largely rural, but three old established towns and cities dominated the inter-regional commerce of the county and had themselves a range of industries of national importance. Norwich was and remains the dominant centre, while the ancient ports of Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn were each served by an extensive river system, which provided them with hinterlands of some magnitude; north east Norfolk formed the main hinterland of Great Yarmouth, as well as the Waveney valley on the Suffolk border, while King's Lynn served the western fringes of north east Norfolk by both river and road, as well as the valley of the Great Ouse and its numerous tributaries, as far inland as Bedford, Cambridge and Bury St. Edmunds. The three great centres between them had some 25% of the county population, the remainder living in villages and small towns, the largest of which, Thetford, had a population of less than 4000.

The three major towns had been considered large settlements by national standards in the eighteenth century. Indeed Norwich had been the third largest city in the country after only London and Bristol well into that century. However, the much faster growth of towns in the more

industrialised parts of Britain left Norfolk towns much lower down the rank order of settlements by the middle of the nineteenth century. This relegation in national importance was also reflected in the slowness with which railways connected Norfolk to the rest of England. Norwich no longer ranked as a major metropolis in industrial England by 1850.

The major feature of Norfolk's population in the middle of the nineteenth century was that of stagnation in overall numbers. The urban populations of Norwich and Yarmouth were rising steadily, having increased rapidly in the first half of the nineteenth century, but that of many of the rural areas was declining. Once the full effects of agricultural improvement had penetrated the rural economy, there was a decline in rural job opportunities; as early as the 1830s strenuous efforts were made to help paupers emigrate overseas,⁷ while unorganised migration into local urban areas and distant ones too became commonplace once the railways made movement easier in the 1840s.⁸ The population of Norfolk as a whole remained steady while successive censuses recorded lower populations in the majority of rural parishes from 1851 onwards, thus indicating urban growth in the county.

Detailed examination of north east Norfolk is now necessary, in order to give the background to the delay in railway building and also to provide the basis of comparison with the situation after the railways had been built.

7. White, W. *op.cit.* p. 16.

8. Redford, A. Labour Migration in England 1800-50, Manchester 1926.

Within Norfolk, north east Norfolk had been regarded as the easiest part of the county to farm. Many parishes had a little of each major type of land, thanks to the varied surface geology of the district. Its soils were mainly of the easily tilled loam type with few of the very light sandy soils of Breckland, very little of the heavy clays^{and} but limited areas of marshlands, unlike the Fens of the west of the county.

The enclosed landscape of small hedged fields was based on large estates, the individual farms being leased mostly to tenant farmers. The largest of the estates was that of Lord Hastings of Melton Constable Hall, which extended to 21,000 acres. His brother-in-law, Lord Suffield, owned 15,000 acres centred on Gunton Hall near Cromer, while there were many other estates of over 1000 acres widely scattered over the whole of north east Norfolk, mostly owned by resident landlords who are recorded in the directories as having their principal residence on their Norfolk estate. The only concentrations of small farms appearing in the railway surveyor's Books of Reference⁹ appear to have been in the vicinity of Norwich and Yarmouth, where small-holdings and small dairy farms predominated.

The main contrasts in land use in pre-railway north east Norfolk was between the marshlands, used for grazing, and the improved plateau areas. Cattle for the grazings were driven from Scotland to St. Faith's,¹⁰ just north of Norwich, generally arriving by rail after 1850, and were then fattened on the rich grassland until ready to move on to the London market. Other cattle, likewise sold at St. Faith's were fattened on the arable farms, eating

9. C.R.O. Norwich, Books of Reference, Colman & Rye Library.

10. White, W. *op.cit.* p.61.

the waste from the crops, usually in bullock yards, which were a valued source of muck for fertilising the arable fields. Bullocks were an important adjunct of the four course rotation of arable crops, yields averaging 30 bushels per acre for wheat and 38 bushels per acre for barley and as much as 46 bushels per acre for oats.¹⁰ Both the yield in cereals and the employment of farm labour reached their peaks in the period of High Farming up to the mid-19th century. The number of farm labourers falls after 1861,¹¹ while crop yields reached an all time high in 1869. The fall in the farm labouring population appears to have been due in part to the mechanisation of some labour intensive work, notably threshing.

Labour intensive market gardening was only of importance near to Norwich and Yarmouth, the most distant concentration of market gardeners from the major centres being at Ormesby, seven miles from Yarmouth. Elsewhere, a handful of gardeners served each of the market towns and larger villages. There was no sign of any large scale growing of fruit and vegetables for distance markets.

Rural north east Norfolk had in part depended for its livelihood on cottage industries, especially the manufacture of worsted cloth from the Middle Ages until the early nineteenth century.¹²⁻¹⁵ The only attempt to introduce a factory type textile industry was at North Walsham, where a Mr. Deman tried to reintroduce

11. Census - occupational tables 1861 onwards.

12. The cloth had taken its name from a village near to North Walsham, where though the industry was still brisk in the 1830s,¹³ its only mention in a directory of 1845 in the rural areas north of Norwich was at St. Faith's¹⁴ and it was extinct by the end of the Crimean War.¹⁵

13. North Walsham & Worstead Parish Magazine, July 1880.

14. White, W. *op.cit.* p. 782.

15. Edwards, G. *From Crow Scaring to Westminster*, London 1922, p.23.

16. White, W. *op.cit.* p. 486.

the linen industry¹⁶ but no further mention is made of the attempt in directories. By the time that railways arrived in Norwich, the rural textile industry was dead, such textile manufacture as remained was to be found in Norwich and Yarmouth.

The most widespread rural industry was the manufacture of building materials for local use. The main concentration of brickworks was to the north of Norwich, where brickearth was available and there was a ready market in the growing city. There was no similar concentration near Yarmouth, as there was no suitable material, but the waterside brick and tileworks were able to receive coal cheaply and ship back the finished product. Lime was in great demand both for building and agriculture, throughout north east Norfolk. Its extraction was at points where it outcropped near the surface, at Thursford and Heydon¹⁷ and at Wells, where rail transport was available from 1857. The other major site was near Coltishall, on the Bure, so heavily worked that it was known as Little Switzerland. Its product was shipped throughout the district by waterway.¹⁸ Milling and bootmaking were the main other industries to be found in the villages and countryside. Watermills were the most powerful type of mill in rural areas, steam power being found only in towns. Most milled local grains, but the group in the Wensum valley included the Taverham paper mill,¹⁹ which produced paper for The Times, along with other paper products.

17. Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway, 11 June 1880, p. 23.

18. Private communication from N. Peake.

19. Norgate, T. A History of Taverham, Taverham 1973.

Wind and animal powered mills were widely distributed, the latter being favoured in the brickyards.

The other rural crafts bespeak a much more self-sufficient society than that which developed once the railways became widespread. Tailors, milliners, harness makers, farriers, coopers and wheelwrights to name but a few, were widespread. Brewing was still common, while baking and butchery were universally for local consumption. Of the major items of consumption for the mass of rural inhabitants, only cloth, candles, tea and pottery would have come from outside the district. Coal was used where wood or peat was not available.

The rural parishes varied greatly in size and population. Many were nucleated or street pattern villages, dominated by the parish church and largely composed of humble cottages, a few shops and small workplaces and often a nonconformist chapel. Enclosure had resulted in the building of both large farmhouses and labourers' cottages in outlying parts of larger parishes.²⁰ The best maintained villages were those of the great landlords, Heydon village, the property of the Lytton Bulwers being a prime example. In such closed villages, entry and residence was strictly controlled, and emigration was encouraged when a surplus population appeared.²¹ The open villages²² were the

20. White, W. *op. cit.*, p. 486.

21. Both Lords Hastings and Suffield had schemes of emigration.

22. Digby, A.W. *The Labour Market and the Continuity of Social Policy after 1834: the case of the Eastern Counties*, *E.C.H.R.* 1975, p. 74.

main reservoirs of seasonal labour and thus the villages from which most paupers came. The labourers and their families lived in often overcrowded cottages whose structural condition varied from adequate to horrific. Families were often large, and education minimal. The school diaries from village schools of this pre-railway period record recurrent epidemics which either closed the schools or kept the majority of pupils away. Even in normal time absenteeism was as high as 50% in busy farming periods.²³

Wage rates for farm workers were amongst the lowest in England. From a trough of 6/6d. a week in 1851, a peak wage of still only 10/6d. a week was recorded in 1868. There were few cottage industries to add to family income, so that the overtime worked at haysel and harvest time was essential to buy items such as clothing and footwear.²⁴ Few wives had full time work, there being only 1860 women at work on farms in the whole county by 1871,²⁵ but both they and their children worked part time at busy periods to make up the difference between the man's low wages and the 14/8d. actually spent weekly according to an 1873 minimum budget.²⁶ Regular wages were inadequate and for those whose income was irregular, outdoor relief and recurrent stays in the workhouse were the commonplace.

Once the means of transport from Norwich and Yarmouth was available, the younger sons and daughters and often whole families migrated from these

23. School Diaries of Trunch and Erpingham village schools.

24. Springall, L.M. *Labouring Life in Norfolk Villages*, London 1936, p.82.

25. Occupational tables, Census Report, Norfolk 1871.

26. Springall, L.M. op cit, pp. 137-9.

unpromising circumstances. Letters from successful migrants, as well as advertisements in the Norfolk Chronicle must have been persuasive. A migrant from Norfolk to Sheffield claimed to have nearly doubled his income,²⁷ while a family which went to Canada more than quadrupled their income and had four meals a day into the bargain.²⁸

The impression that migration was largely a one way movement is confirmed by looking at the birthplaces of the residents of one farming village, Felmingham, halfway between the market towns of Aylsham and North Walsham. The total population in 1871 was 392 of whom 212 were born in the parish, a further 171 within Norfolk, almost all of them within a 15 mile radius of Felmingham. *Fig. 2.* Of the remaining nine, five were born in neighbouring Suffolk and only four came from elsewhere. The population had fallen by 16 in the period since 1841, whereas the average national increase in population of the same period would have given a population of about 520, thus indicating an outward migration of about 130 people over a period of 30 years. The most noticeable effects in Felmingham and other farming parishes were that "very few young men were left in the villages",²⁹ and that little new construction took place. In some villages, empty houses regularly start to appear in the census returns. Few ~~non-farming~~ occupations existed in villages such as Felmingham. *Fig. 3.*

27. *Ibid*, p. 144.

28. *Ibid*, p. 145.

29. Edwards, G. *op cit*, p. 37.

Fig. 2

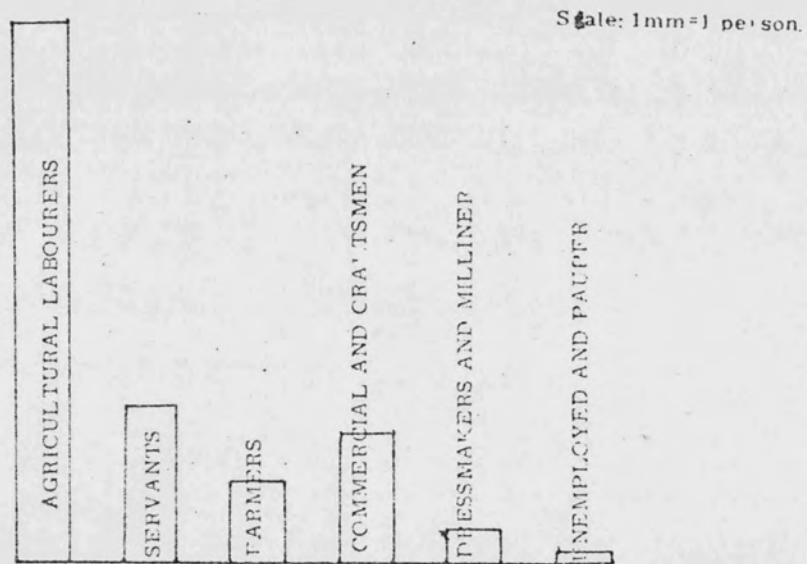
BIRTHPLACES OF FELMINGHAM RESIDENTS, 1871 census.



Source: Census Takers' Notebooks, 1871.

Fig. 3

OCCUPATIONS IN FELMINGHAM VILLAGE 1871 CENSUS



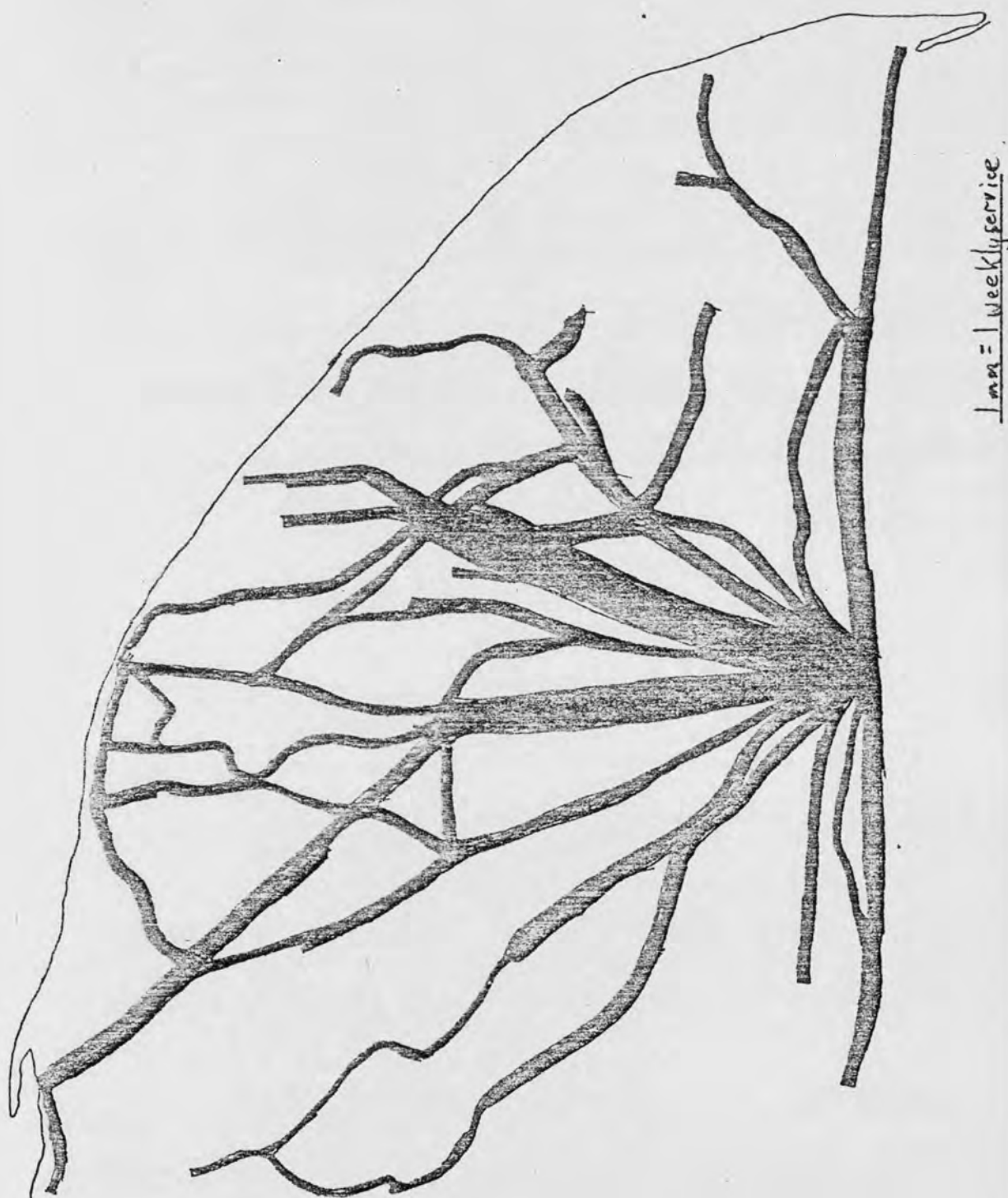
Source: Census Takers' Notebook, 1871.

Yet even in the period of general population decline for north east Norfolk, from 1851 to 1871, there were pockets of population growth. Chief amongst these were the coastal parishes to the north of Yarmouth where fishing was important, as it was in the Cromer and Sheringham area on the north coast. The Norwich fringe also showed growth, in an area where market gardening and residential occupation created more work, also the Broadland and Cley, where recent drainage of the marshes had created new job opportunities.

The market towns reflected the economy and the population characteristics of the areas that they served. Acle and Stalham, both serving the newly drained marshlands, gained in population and in functions in the period 1851 to 1871, while the other four market towns not served by rail before 1874, North Walsham, Holt, Aylsham and Reepham had stagnant or falling populations. The largest of these was North Walsham, with a population of 2896 in 1871, a decline of 69 since the previous census. All the towns had weekly markets and annual fairs as well as a much wider range of shops than the villages. There were also professional services available in the form of doctors, solicitors and schools giving higher education, those of North Walsham and Holt eventually developing into important education centres. They were all connected by coach and carrier to Norwich and North Walsham and Aylsham to Yarmouth by canal, as well as turnpike. Figs. 4 & 5. Such industry as there was tended to be centred in these towns, North Walsham boasting two agricultural implement makers,

CARRIERS SERVING THE NORTH-EAST NORFOLK HINTERLAND
FROM NORWICH IN 1870.

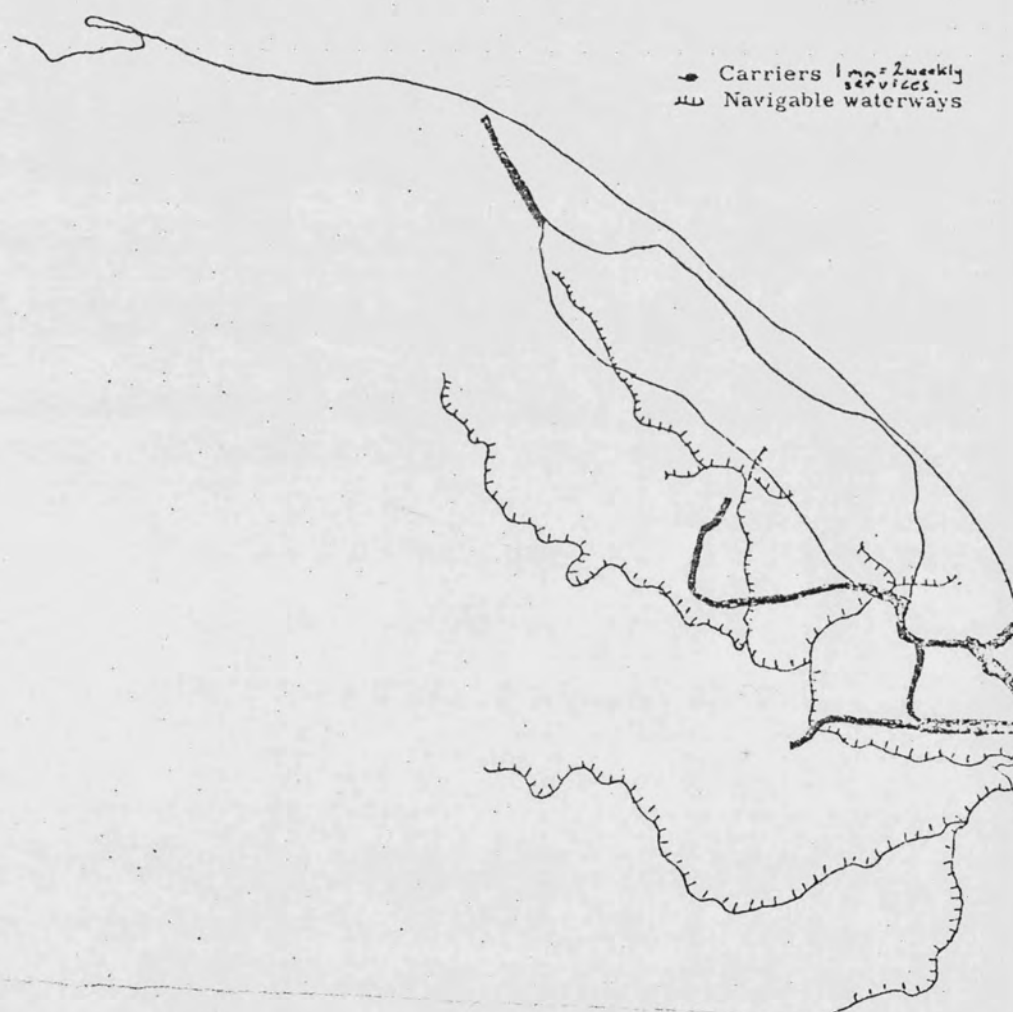
Fig 4



Source: Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1870.

Fig.5

CARRIERS AND WATERWAYS SERVING THE NORTH-EAST NORFOLK
HINTERLAND OF GREAT YARMOUTH IN 1870



Source: Compiled from Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1870.

a brewery, two maltsters and several mills. These small towns acted as service centres to the countryside for a radius of five miles approximately. With their banks, offices and in three cases, gasworks, they provided the closest approximation to urban functions that most farm labourers got unless they migrated.

The other group of settlements which differed from rural village was the fishing community, one of which, Cromer, also had a small holiday function. From Stiffkey, with its locally famous shellfish, around to Yarmouth there were seven settlements where there was a fishing fleet. The largest of these was Sheringham with about 100 boats and a beach-side settlement entirely separate from the agricultural community. Elsewhere the fisheries appear to have been only a supplement to farming. The boats were open, thus suited only to inshore fishing and most marketing appears to have been by hawking inland.³⁰

Until the 1880s there were only three resorts in Norfolk, Yarmouth, Hunstanton and Cromer. The former two had largely developed as a result of railway building, indeed Hunstanton hardly existed before the arrival of the railway in 1862. Cromer had developed as a minor resort since the end of the eighteenth century, small, select, its isolation being made one of the attractions, since the vulgar mob had not the transport to descend on the place. Its population had increased from 601 in 1801 to 1229 in 1841 and then to 1423 by 1871. The first purpose-built hotel had opened in 1851 and by that time the older inns were starting to describe themselves as hotels.³¹

30. White, W. op cit 1860, references under village names.

31. Savin, A. Cromer, Holt 1937.

Rural north east Norfolk had by the early 1870s reached a plateau in its agricultural development, while with its population and handicrafts to some extent in decline, it was badly in need of new investment if further decline were to be checked. Above all an expanding source of new jobs and complementary transport links were needed. The gateways through which it contacted the outside world were Norwich and Yarmouth, which had been much more successful than their rural hinterlands in maintaining and improving their infrastructure.

Norwich had been a major centre of the wool and silk textile industries in the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the nineteenth century the basis of its industry had changed. The traditional textile industries of Norwich had been the worsted and silk weaving, largely on handlooms until the 1830s. Factories were built for both industries, notably the Norwich Yarn Company mill and Albion Mills, both of which made worsted, while the mill of Francis Hinde was a fully integrated silk mill, importing Asian silk, then spinning, weaving and printing the fabric.³² Handloom weaving continued alongside the factories, acting as a reservoir of weaving capacity in times of high demand. Some stability was given to the textile industry in the 1850s by the fashion for the Norwich shawl, a mixture of wool and silk fabrics, but changing fashion in the 1860s ended this market for Norwich products.³³

32. Bayne, A.D. *A Comprehensive History of Norwich*, London 1869, p.622.

33. Clabburn, P. *The Norwich Shawl*, Norwich 1974.

The Norwich Yarn Company collapsed as early as 1848, but the use of imported yarn enabled the textile industries to employ 5419 workers in 1851.³⁴ As late as the 1860s there were 500 power looms at work in the city, together with a similar number of handlooms,³⁵ but the collapse of the shawl industry and the conversions of Albion Mills to a sweet factory in the 1870s³⁶ left only the Hinde silk mills, plus some specialist handloom weaving of Jacquard patterns and of horsehair. This residual industry employed only some 2425 workers in 1881.³⁷

The decline of the textile industries in Norwich was more than balanced by the emergence of an increasingly merchandised boot and shoe industry producing for both home and overseas markets, made possible by the arrival of railways in 1844. There was a movement of operatives from the textile to the boot and shoe trades in the 1840s,³⁸ which appears to have continued until in 1868 there were estimated to be 6000 operatives turning out 144,000 pairs of shoes a week. Such a figure was far beyond the capacity of East Anglia to consume, indicating the importance of railways in bringing in the raw materials and helping distribute the huge output. There were 400 machines in factories and 300 in private homes in 1868,³⁹ but the domestic output was giving way to factories.⁴⁰

34. Occupational Tables, Census Returns, Norfolk 1851.

35. Bayne, A.D. *op cit*, p. 593.

36. Kelly's Directory, Norfolk 1873, 1896.

37. Occupational Tables, Census Returns, Norfolk 1881.

38. Bayne, *op cit*, p. 585.

39. Sparks, W.L. Shoemaking in Norwich, Norwich 1949, p.41.

40. *Ibid*, p. 160.

Other major industries that grew up between 1840 and 1870 were food processing, engineering and printing, while brewing became a much more concentrated and larger industry than hitherto. The chief company in food processing was J. & J. Colman, founded by a local miller using locally grown raw materials of grain and mustard. A wide range of products and markets were developed depending on national and international distribution by rail and steam ship. By 1868 there were 1200 employees at Colmans mill, served by rail and waterway, powered by steam.⁴¹ The engineering and metalwork industry specialised in farm metalwork and in wire, the first machine for wire weaving being invented by Messrs. Barnards. The other firm of wide renown was Boulton & Paul, whose work in wire drawing gave them an export market in fencing materials for Australia and New Zealand.⁴² The printing industry was headed by Jarrolds, printers of school text books, tracts and guide books. Their long runs of cheap popular literature was produced in the former Norwich Yarn Company mill, achieving ever widening sales with the increasingly literate masses.⁴³ The breweries of Norwich were amongst the first large provincial breweries. The Steward & Patteson brewery at Pockthorpe had its own village attached and dated from the 1790s. Bullards and Morgans, Crawshay and Youngs were all within the city walls by the riverside producing beer in far greater volume than local demand warranted. The two largest breweries each employed about 300 men, in marked contrast to the rural breweries. Dozens of other trades were represented in this steadily growing city, which was also the commercial centre of the country.

41. Bayne, *op cit*, p.605.

42. Meacher, G. *Guide to the Great Eastern Railway*, London 1864.

43. Bayne, *op cit*, p. 615.

The Norwich markets by the middle of the nineteenth century had become dominant over a very wide area. The great cattle fair had formerly been at Horsham St. Faith's, but once the railway arrived the transfer took place in Norwich, as many as 57,058 cattle were sold in 1867, while rural fairs declined.⁴⁴ The Chamber of Agriculture, the Corn Exchange, the growing insurance industry and the larger banks all confirmed Norwich as the main centre in Norfolk.

The growth of industries and commercial importance was more than matched by the physical growth of Norwich.^{Fig. 6} New suburbs were built from the 1840s onwards to relieve the overcrowded city centre within the ancient walls. Arlington to the west had terraces of artisan houses, railway cottages at Thorpe housed the mechanics and drivers of the Norfolk Railway and its successors, while better class housing gradually spread along the Newmarket Road, on to the brow of the escarpment to form Thorpe Hamlet. The really rich took houses in the parishes adjacent to the city, the Gurneys of banking fame at Earlham, the Bignolds of Norwich Union at Catton and the Bullards at Hellesdon to name but a few of the fortunate.

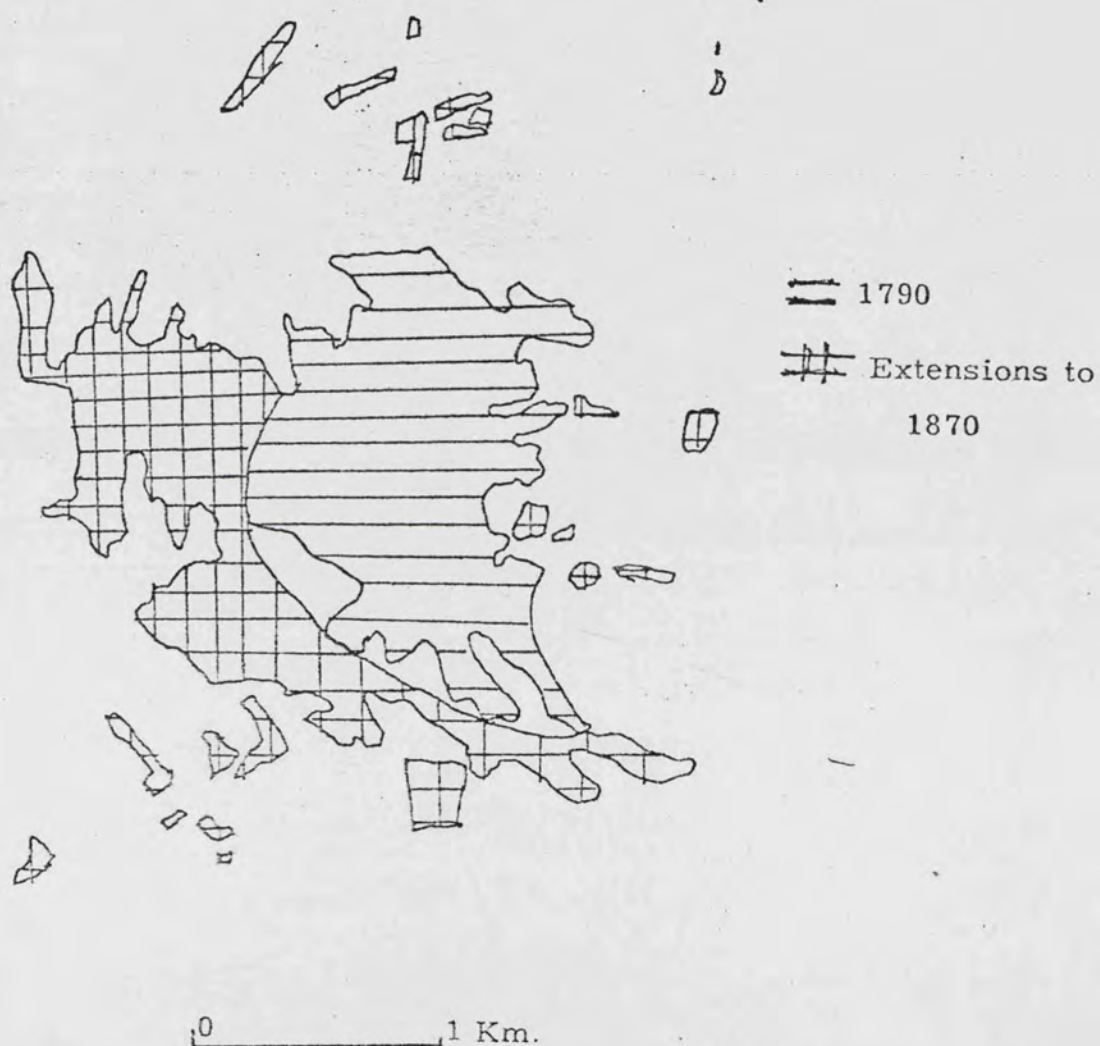
While Norwich doubled its population between 1801 and 1871, its relative position as a leading British provincial metropolis had declined greatly. It had changed from being a textile city to one with a variety of trades, but it was still unable to absorb the county's rural population.

There was also an imbalance in the sexes, women greatly outnumbering men, thus indicating a lack of male occupations.⁴⁵

44. Bayne, *op cit*, p.624.

45. Hawkins, C.B. *Norwich, a Social Survey*, London 1910, gives unbalanced 1871 population: m. 36,628; f. 43,758.

THE PHYSICAL GROWTH OF NORWICH 1790-1870 (Fig. 6)



Green, B.,

Source: Norwich, the Growth of a City, Norwich, 1963.

Great Yarmouth was the other great centre on the fringe of north east Norfolk. Its population in 1871 was, like Norwich's, double that of seventy years earlier, but only half the size of Norwich. On the sea lane down the east coast it was the first port after the Humber on a singularly dangerous stretch of coast. It had some 500 trading vessels, largely under sail, as well as a fleet of 290 fishing craft which landed a fifth of the United Kingdom herring catch in 1870, somewhat larger than its neighbouring rival Lowestoft.⁴⁶

The associated warehouses, smokehouses and coopering establishments created much onshore employment. The other major port activities included the import of coal, 106,025 tons of which was landed in 1868-9, much of it trans-shipped to river craft for Norwich and other waterway destinations. Wheat was imported at the extent of 276,052 quarters, or nearly 70,000 tons, an indication of the extent of local milling even in a period when local wheat production was at a maximum. Barley was the other cereal dealt with, usually malting barley, prepared in the Yarmouth maltings for London or railed to Burton on Trent.⁴⁷

In manufacturing, Yarmouth was second only to Norwich in the country. Grout's silk mill employed 700 operatives and several shipyards built and repaired the traditional wooden trading and fishing boats. There was some specialisation in lifeboats and in 1867 iron shipbuilding started with the launching of a steam tug.⁴⁸ Ropeworks, clothing manufacturers specialising in seamen's outfitting, marine engineers and ironfounders were all essential to the port activities, while cement factories and Lacon's brewery added to

46. De Caux, C. *The Herring*, London 1881.

47. Evans, G.E. *The Days that we have seen*, London 1975, p. 165.

48. Lewis, C. *Journal of the Norfolk Industrial Archaeology Society*, Vol. 1, No 4, Jan. 1973, p. 15.

the variety of occupations. The brewer was also the town's leading banker and its Member of Parliament.

The port, the factories and the population that served them were located in an overcrowded warren of alleyways between the market place and the banks of the Yare. Rather more spacious quarters were being built around the railway stations across the rivers Bure and Yare at Vauxhall and South Town respectively, but the mass of the population, as in Norwich, continued to live in the squalid older parts of the centre. Between the Market Place and the shore, on the remnants of the sandhills known as the Denes a new, spacious sector of the town had developed to accommodate seaside visitors following the coming of the railways. There were 323 lodging houses, also several hotels by 1873. The Victoria Building Company had started to build "large and elegant houses etc. for the accommodation of the higher classes of sea bathers" ... in 1841, also, providing the promenade.⁴⁹

Further stimulus permitted Yarmouth to achieve pre-eminence as a seaside resort by providing Assembly Rooms and the Regent Hall with seating for 2000. Some help was provided by Charles Dickens, who stayed there in 1848 to obtain local background for David Copperfield.

The growth and adaptation of Norwich and Yarmouth to industrial society was in marked contrast to the stagnation of the rural hinterland. The populations of the two towns had doubled between 1801 and 1871, not far short of the 125%

49. White, W. op cit. p. 263.

increase of national population. They had established modern communications with other parts of the country, there had been a great deal of investment in their industries and services. North east Norfolk however showed little change after the major investments of enclosure and its concomitant transport improvements before 1826. A spur was needed if progress was to be made in the countryside.

North east Norfolk had potential for economic growth. The most obvious was that of resort development. At Hunstanton a clifftop with an inn and a solitary house had been converted into a fast growing resort after 1862 by the arrival of the Lynn & Hunstanton Railway. Fishing was capable of development if speedier transport enabled a wider market to be reached quickly, while agriculture would be able to diversify into perishable products with better and cheaper communication. In the Victorian period only the railway could provide such improved transport facilities. The basis of economic progress in Victorian England was the conversion of traditional industries, crafts and services to larger scale production catering for wider markets. There was also the introduction of totally new industries and new services, which either local or national entrepreneurs could introduce. Rail transport became the means of transporting the vastly increased quantities of raw materials demanded; and the mountains of goods produced in fewer centres and fewer units of production were distributed by rail. Passengers were carried in numbers not seen before 1840 to enjoy services formerly consumed locally or not at all. It was in pursuit of such enhanced economic opportunities that local interests strove hard and expended much money in order to get a railway built into their area

if the main lines did not cross their district. Already the benefits had been seen in Norwich, Yarmouth and Hunstanton, whereas north east Norfolk was stagnating with a transport system not improved since the days of George IV.

PART II

THE PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION OF TWO RAILWAY SYSTEMS IN

NORTH EAST NORFOLK 1864-1883

PART II

The Planning and Construction of Two Railway Systems in

North East Norfolk 1864-83

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| Chapter 1 | Introduction |
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PART II

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

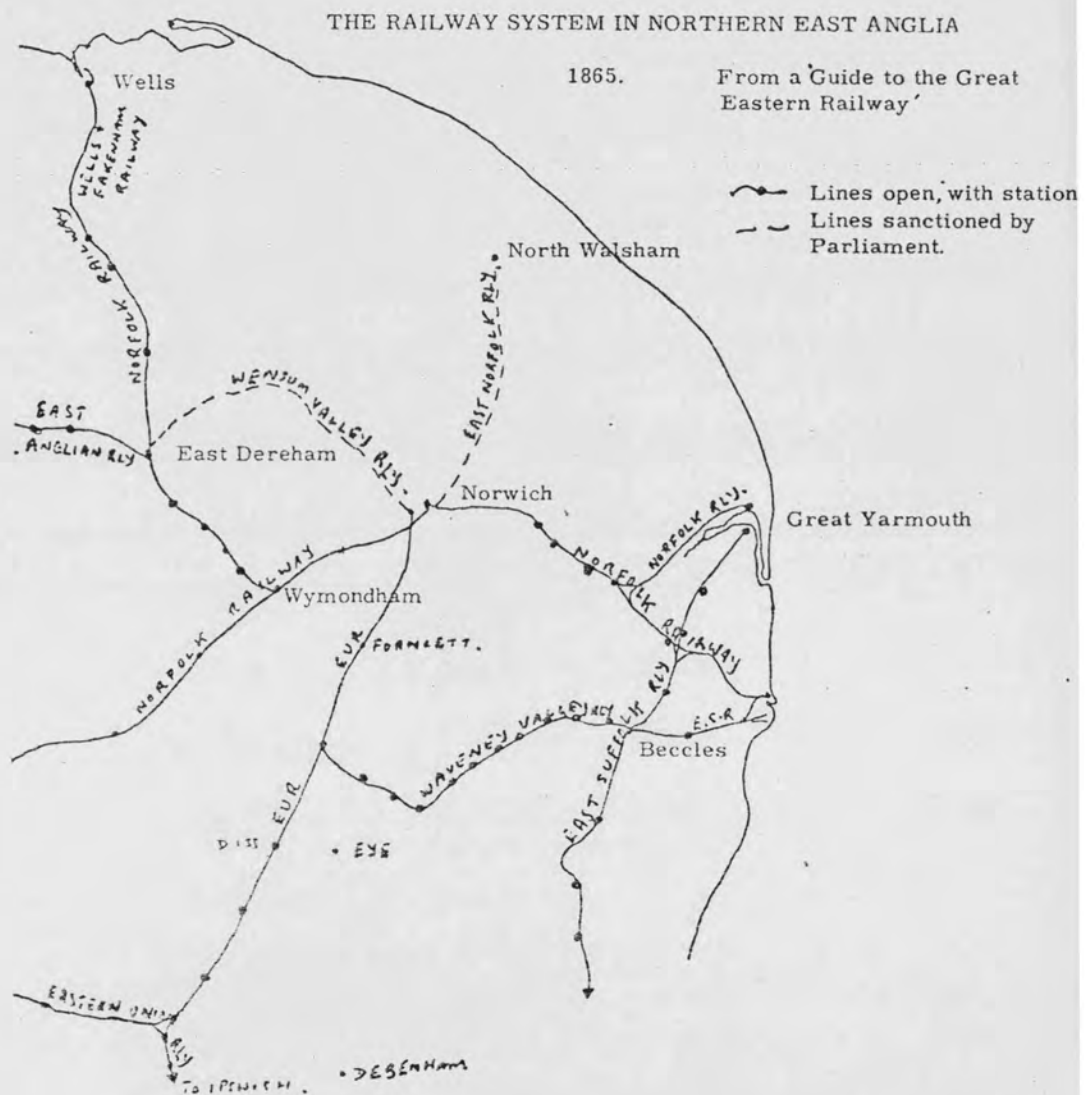
North east Norfolk was eventually a district served by two separate railway systems and a third jointly owned system linking the two original systems. The network that had been constructed by 1906 gave north east Norfolk a railway density higher than that of England as a whole, despite the fact that this was one of the least industrialised areas in the country and had been thought of as unsuited to even a single mile of railway during the second Railway Mania.

The first period of planning a railway system for north east Norfolk was from 1845 until 1872. Little was built. There were many proposals but much indecision, resulting in only a single railway being sanctioned and that lacked the capital, local and main-line support necessary for a successful conclusion. No significant constructional work was undertaken before 1872. Figs. 7 & 8.

The main construction period was between 1872 and 1883, when the East Norfolk Railway, supported by the Great Eastern Railway, opened a system in four sections. (See map ^{p. 65 & 100}) It was built piecemeal, expensively

Fig. 7.

RAILWAYS SERVING NORWICH 1865, INCLUDING PROPOSED RAILWAYS.

Source: Measom, G., Guide to the Great Eastern Railway,

London, 1865.

THE GREAT NORTHERN AND THE GREAT EASTERN-1872.



and its directors made many costly errors at first by using a major contractor and then a Company Agent before settling for a medium-sized contractor who proved most satisfactory. Gradually, control passed from local directors to Great Eastern Railway directors as the East Norfolk Railway became a tool in a war waged against two new railways in the district, which ultimately merged to form the Eastern & Midlands Railway in 1883.

The Eastern & Midlands Railway system started as a proposed trio of small, ostensibly locally promoted railways, not associated with the Great Eastern Railway, which filled gaps in the Great Eastern Railway's coarse-meshed network in north Norfolk. * They were railways constructed by a firm of speculative contractors which had approached local landlords to build railways across their estates on highly favourable terms. Many parliamentary battles between the Eastern & Midlands Railway and the Great Eastern/East Norfolk Railway ensued, resulting in a complete lack of co-operation between the systems that were being built. The Eastern & Midlands Railway was however built, with some additions and few deletions from the original plans, thus giving many towns and villages in north east Norfolk two railway stations.

When the railways were eventually completed and operative, traffic had to be developed in order to provide revenue sufficient to cover the heavy costs of running the lines. Little had been done to erect resort infrastructure while the railways were being built, so that there was a delay of a decade before the

* Only two were actually constructed.

benefits of better transport and of resort development were finally realised. However, by the late 1890s, traffic was sufficiently promising for major improvements to be made to the railways then built, while the joint extensions noted at the outset were constructed to extend the number of resorts on the north east Norfolk coast.

The impetus for providing the eventual superabundance of railways in an area originally not considered suitable for them was the development of seaside resorts and the urgent need perceived by landowners and townsfolk to obtain rail communication later in the nineteenth century. The change in attitudes resulted from the success of resorts elsewhere on the one hand and on the increasing penalties in terms of transport costs on firms and farms that were a long distance from railways, the prime mover of the second half of the nineteenth century.

PART II

CHAPTER 2

THE EAST NORFOLK RAILWAY

Introduction.

The early promotion and building of railways in Norfolk.

Railway promotion in North East Norfolk 1847-62.

Railway promotion and construction in North East Norfolk 1863-82
The Wensum Valley Railway proposals.

The East Norfolk Railway 1864-75: Norwich to North Walsham.

The East Norfolk Railway 1875-82: Extensions north and west.

Introduction

Thirty years elapsed between the opening of the first railway in Norfolk in 1844 and the opening of the first section of the East Norfolk Railway. That first railway was constructed at a time of the second Railway Mania, which produced plans for railways in north-east Norfolk, Fig. 9 as well as a positive spider's web of ^{proposed} railway lines throughout East Anglia. There were also several later occasions when plans were drawn up to build railways in north-east Norfolk but none came to fruition until the Great Eastern Railway's General Manager, Charles Parkes, took the East Norfolk Railway project in hand and pushed it to completion in the 1870s.

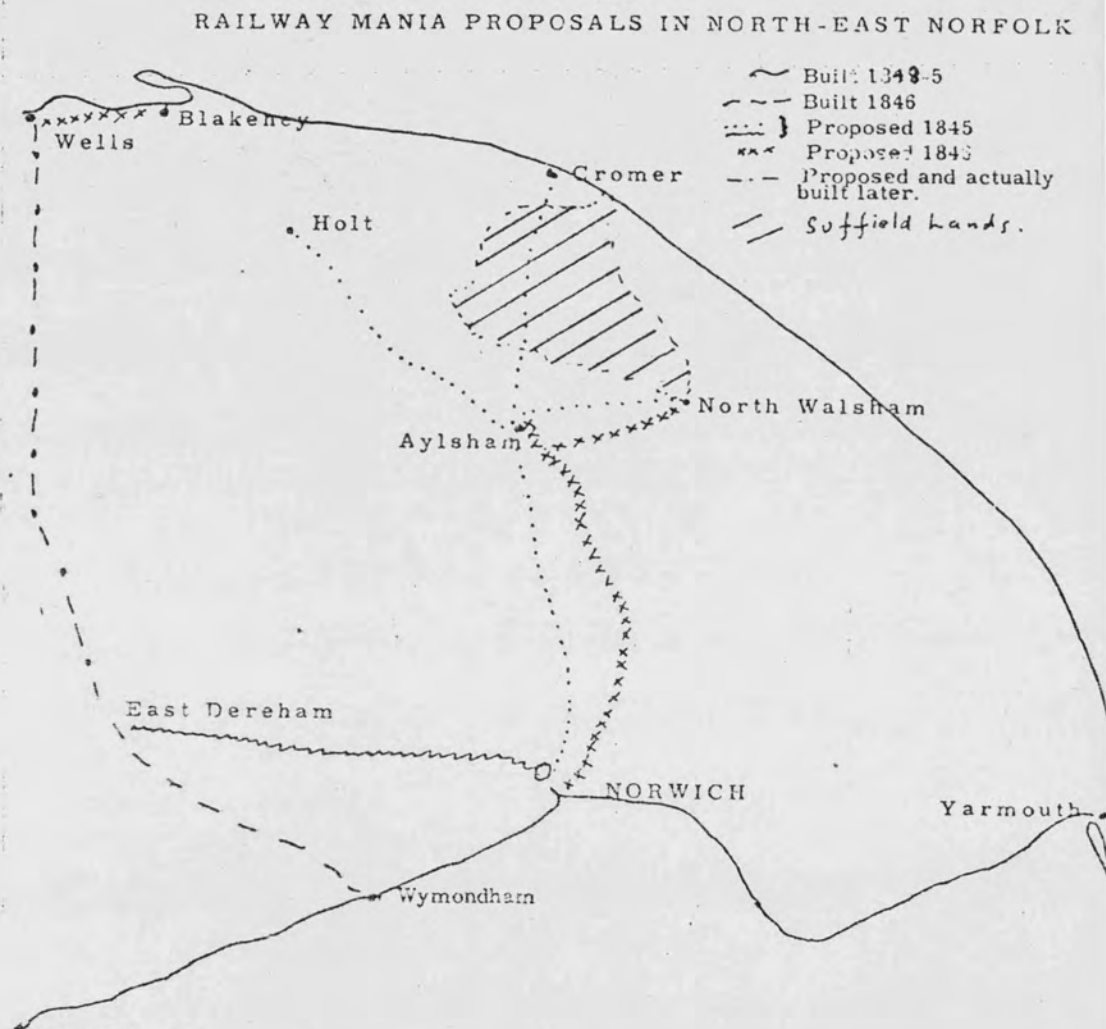
No great quantities of perishable goods were generated within the district, nor were there large population centres requiring the high capacity of trains for local transport. Unless there were no external stimulus to the economy, no major additions to available traffic were then likely. The economy and its attendant transport system thus appear to have been in balance.

Despite the lack of promise for railway investment in north east Norfolk in the 1840s, several plans for railways were submitted to the Board of Trade for railways to serve the area north and west of Norwich.¹ These proposals were rejected by the Board of Trade on the grounds that there was a "dearth of traffic".² There was little direct support for these local lines from the Norfolk Railway or from the Eastern Counties Railway, which were both financially embarrassed after the construction of their own major routes.³

1/2. Lewin, H. G. The Railway Mania & Its Aftermath, London 1936, p.163.

3. Gordon, D. I. *op. cit.* p.31.

Fig 9



Source: Lewin, H.G., The Railway Mania & its Aftermath, London 1936.

The capital required to build a railway appears to have been beyond the resources of the local population in north east Norfolk. The North of Norfolk Railway of 1845, which was never built, had a proposed capital of £170,000, many times the sums that had been spent on the provision of roads and canals in the area in the previous century.

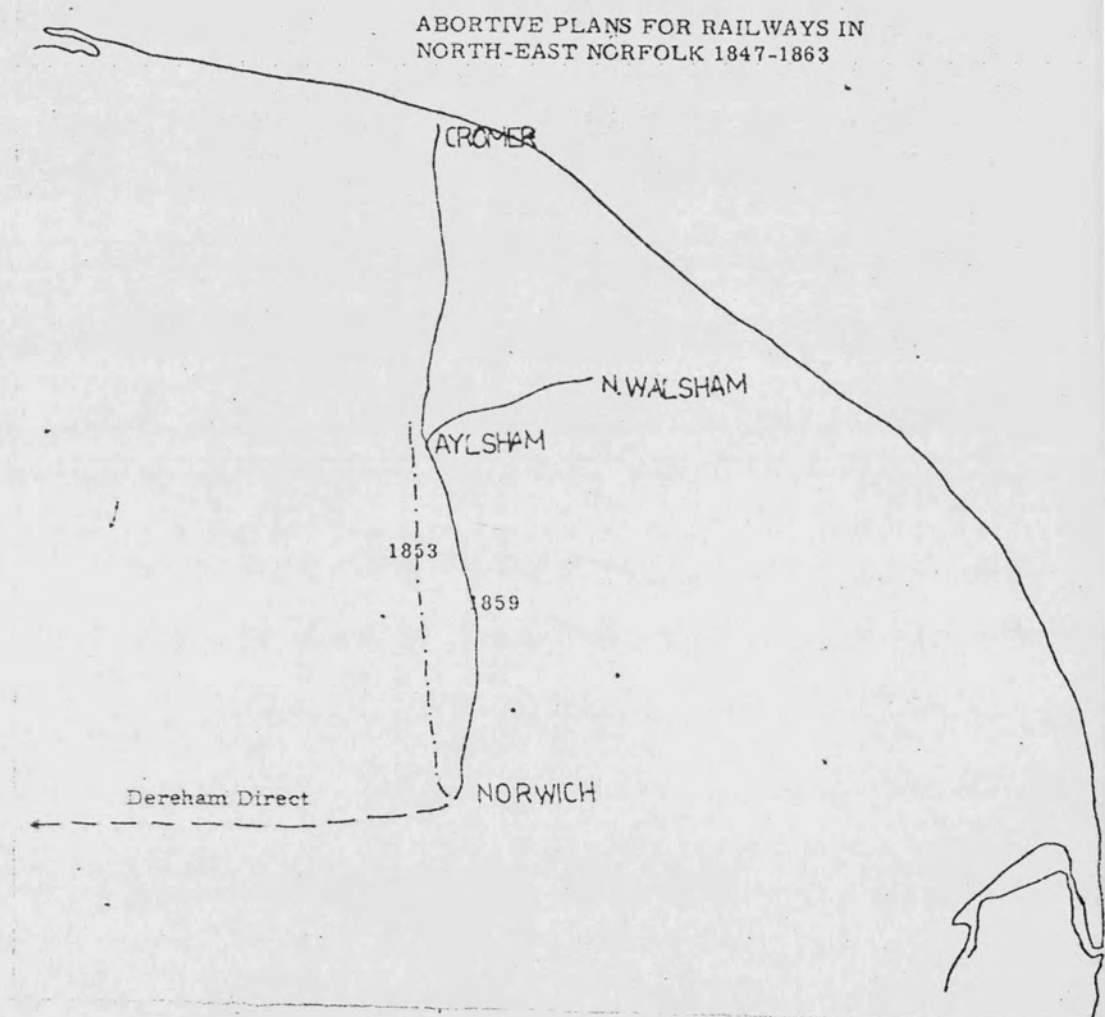
In the following decade, meetings were held to promote railways in 1853 and 1859.⁴ They failed to produce sufficient subscriptions to approach Parliament with a railway bill.^{Fig.10} There was a lack of a coherent goal or even a majority of potential subscribers with a clear idea of where a railway should be built and why, nor was there any proposal for the economic expansion that might make the area attractive to railway investors outside the district. This impasse was not broken until after the formation of the Great Eastern Railway in 1862, an amalgamation of existing railways in East Anglia which almost immediately promised to help any new and viable local railways. The following year there were two proposals for railways from Norwich to towns in north east Norfolk. The East Norfolk Railway from Norwich to North Walsham and Cromer was promoted by Lord Suffield of Gunton Hall,⁵ whose estates would be served well by such a line.⁶ He also owned land on the eastern side of Cromer which offered great potential for resort development. A complementary scheme called the Wensum Valley Railway was promoted simultaneously, also with the blessing of the Great

4. Mackie, H. *Norfolk Annals*, Norwich, 1901.

5. Gordon, D.I. *op. cit.*, p.32.

6. See figs 9 & 11

Fig.10



Source: County Record Office, Deposited Plans.

Eastern Railway.⁷ Although there was Great Eastern Railway support for both systems, only the East Norfolk Railway was eventually built, requiring nearly two decades from conception to completion.

The Early Promotion and Building of Railways in Norfolk

The first railway that was promoted on the fringe of north east Norfolk was the Norwich to Yarmouth section of the Grand Eastern Counties Railway which issued a prospectus after having a detailed survey made of a proposed railway from London to Norwich to Yarmouth. The lack of good communication from Norfolk to London had troubled local citizens. Existing goods conveyances were condemned as being "dilatatory, expensive and troublesome". The route of the proposed railway was similar to that eventually built from London to Ipswich, but thereafter took a more direct line from Ipswich to Norwich via Debenham and Eye and thence in almost a straight line from Norwich to Yarmouth. The lines eventually built diverged considerably from the original route in order to serve larger settlements previously avoided.⁸ Shorn of the "Grand" in its title, the Eastern Counties Railway received parliamentary sanction in 1836, but seven years later it had only been built as far as

7. Wensum Valley Railway, Deposited Plans, C.R.O. Norwich.

8. Prospectus, Grand Eastern Counties Railway, Colman & Rye Library, Norwich.

Colchester, having exhausted its capital on dear land and having made the expensive mistake of building to a non-standard gauge of 5'0".⁹

A rival route from London to Norwich was promoted in 1835 by Sir Jacob Astley, ancestor of the later Lord Hastings.¹⁰ This was the Northern & Eastern Railway which was to be built via Cambridge. It reached Newport in Essex, unable to continue construction for want of further capital.¹¹ The remainder of the route from Colchester to Norwich was constructed by the Eastern Union Railway, based on Ipswich, opening in 1849.

Much of the capital for the Eastern Counties Railway appears to have come from Lancashire. The merchants of Norwich were condemned by their local paper for their "apathy and inertness to their own salvation", contrasting them with the "Lancastrians who held some £700,000 in Eastern Counties Railway shares, while subscriptions from Norwich lagged".¹² However, the later performance of Eastern Counties shares was poor, so it would seem ^{in retrospect} that it was the northerners who were unwise.

By 1841 it was evident that the Eastern Counties Railway would not reach Norwich in the near future. There was thus the opportunity for George and Robert Stephenson to help promote the Yarmouth & Norwich Railway, conceived as part of an east-west trunk line from Yarmouth to Peterborough.

9. Gordon, D.I. op.cit. p.41.

10. See Section II

11. Gordon, D.I. op. cit. p.104.

12. Norwich Mercury, 14 April 1840.

At Peterborough the line was to join several other railways that were to converge to form a major junction.¹³ Robert Stephenson surveyed alternative routes, a valley route via Reedham and a straight line route across the marshes. He chose the former route along the Yare valley as it offered the possibility of building a branch to Lowestoft from a junction at Reedham. The capital of £200,000 proved difficult to raise, but the contractors, Messrs. Grissell & Peto, were willing to accept a large portion of their payment in stock.¹⁴ They quickly built the line and had it ready for opening on 30 April 1844. Peto started his long association with East Anglia during this contract. His next work was the the Eastern Counties Railway, linking that line with Norwich.

While the Yarmouth & Norwich Railway was being completed, an associated railway, the Norwich & Brandon Railway was being constructed south westwards from Norwich towards Cambridge. The two railways were amalgamated in 1845 to form the Norfolk Railway, which later built further branches to Fakenham and to Lowestoft. Meanwhile the Eastern Counties Railway had leased the Northern & Eastern Railway in 1844, deciding to build a line from Newport to Brandon in order to obtain access to Norwich, rather than try to extend northwards from Colchester as originally intended. A further Eastern Counties line was from Ely to Peterborough, also built by Peto. The completion of these lines gave Norwich a rail link to London in

13. Prospectus, Yarmouth & Norwich Railway, 1842, Colman & Rye Library.

14. Gordon, D.I. op. cit. p.168

1845 and to Peterborough in 1847. This was remarkably quick progress after the initial delays. Much of the credit was due to Peto who had discovered how to build railways well, cheaply and very fast indeed.

The Eastern Counties Railway had by 1852 achieved a dominating position in East Anglian railways since it commanded the railway gateways to other systems, being the only route to other systems that traffic from the Norfolk Railway, based on Norwich, the Eastern Union Railway, based on Ipswich, and the East Anglian Railway from King's Lynn to Ely could take. Meanwhile the Railway Mania promotions seemed at last to promise some railway building to the north of Norwich. The very large gaps in the network built up to 1845 gave a great deal of scope for new railways, few however were actually built.

The North of Norfolk Railway was promoted in 1845. It was to have linked Norwich with Cromer and Holt. Its capital was set at £170,000 in £25 shares, the initial deposit to be paid was £2. 15s. There were fifteen directors of whom five were Londoners, one was from the Midlands and the remaining nine were from Norwich. Not one director came from the area to be served. Of the Norwich directors Messrs. Steward & Patterson were well known Norwich brewers and Robert Chamberlin was a Norwich draper, who two decades later became a director of the East Norfolk Railway. The engineer to the line was George Parker Bidder, a distinguished consulting

engineer who invented railway swing bridges and was later to serve the East Norfolk Railway. The Eastern Counties Railway appointed a director to the North of Norfolk Railway Board, John Bagshaw, whose importance was emphasised by the offer of the Norfolk Railway to lease the line if built, thus providing a direct line to London. There was support for the proposed line from the merchants and traders of Norwich, yet despite all the favourable omens, the Board of Trade would not consent to allow the Bill to proceed.¹⁵

The Norfolk Railway itself wished to build a line from Wymondham Junction to Wells-next-the-Sea on the north Norfolk coast, continuing from there to Blakeney. This proposal was opposed by Norwich merchants who preferred instead a direct line westwards to East Dereham. The Norfolk Railway was prepared to have either line, should an Act be obtained. There was certainly much local support for a direct railway from Norwich to East Dereham, as at a shareholders' meeting half the shares were represented, but the Board of Trade would not allow this project to proceed. Inter-company rivalry was evident when shareholders in the direct line were given the opportunity to transfer their subscriptions to the Ipswich & Bury Railway (later the Eastern Union Railway) which wanted to build a railway into Norwich.¹⁶ The Norfolk Railway then went ahead with its plans to build its own line from Wymondham Junction northwards. The line was opened to East Dereham in 1846 and eventually

15. Prospectus, North of Norfolk Railway, 1845. Colman & Rye Library, Norwich.

16. Railway News, 14 September 1845.

reached Fakenham in 1849. The extension to Wells waited a further eight years and the branch to Blakeney was never started.

The Norfolk Railway's next attempt to build a line into north east Norfolk came in 1847. A shortened version of the North of Norfolk Railway was submitted to the Board of Trade for approval, with lines from Norwich to Aylsham and North Walsham. A counter-proposal was made by the Ipswich, Bury & Norwich Railway (later the Eastern Union Railway) which announced that it wishes to promote a line from Norwich to Dereham and Wells within a branch of Aylsham. This appears to have been little more than a ploy to ensure that there was a bargaining counter for the opposition to its line into Norwich from the south. The northern extensions were dropped immediately after the presentation of the Bill to Parliament.¹⁷ Likewise another proposal, the Aylsham & North Walsham Railway was dropped and there appears to have been agreement amongst the Norfolk Railway, the Eastern Union Railway and the Eastern Counties Railway not to put forward further proposals for lines to Aylsham. Co-operation was further extended as the Eastern Counties Railway took over the working of the Norfolk Railway in 1848. In 1852 a lease was taken by the Eastern Counties Railway on the East Anglian Railway and two years later the Eastern Union Railway was leased by the Eastern Counties Railways, thus establishing a territorial monopoly to the east of King's Lynn and Cambridge. The four companies were collectively known as the United Companies, with

17. Act to amend the Ipswich & Bury St. Edmunds Railway Act, House of Lords, 1846, Vol. XXV.

the Eastern Counties Railway as the dominant partner. The railways of East Anglia meanwhile acquired a reputation for slow main line trains, poor profitability and a lack of desire to build new lines within their territory.¹⁸ Despite the attitude of the Eastern Counties Railway to new construction, proposals for new lines continued to be pressed from time to time but usually got no further than public meetings and the preparation of maps. In the aftermath of the Railway Mania there was little enough capital available for the completion of main lines already sanctioned, let alone the building of highly speculative lines in areas of little immediate economic promise such as north east Norfolk.

Railway Promotion in North East Norfolk 1847-1862

Only one railway line was built north of Norwich between the collapse of the Railway Mania and the incorporation of the Great Eastern Railway in 1862. That line was the Wells & Fakenham Railway, a natural extension of the Norfolk Railway that had been abandoned in 1849. The Earl of Leicester and Samuel Morton Peto revived the scheme and opened the line in 1857.

Interest continued into the possibility of making a line westwards from Norwich via East Dereham. In 1851 the Eastern Union & Great Northern

18. The Eastern Counties Railway, Why It Does Not Pay, anon. pamphlet 1857, University of Leicester Library.

Joint Railway proposed a line across Norfolk.— The following year the Norwich & Spalding Railway was promoted to build a similar line, obtaining its Act in 1853 and eventually building a line from Spalding to Sutton Bridge on the border of Lincolnshire and Norfolk.¹⁹ This line was eventually linked to Norwich in 1882 as part of the Eastern & Midlands Railway.²⁰ Yet another such line was promoted in 1860, entitled the Midland, Eastern & Great Northern Junction Railway. No construction was undertaken for this line.²¹ The persistent reintroduction of plans for an east-west line across Norfolk was an indication of the unsatisfactory nature of the route actually built by the Norfolk Railway.

Plans for an Aylsham Railway in 1853 followed the general route of the lines proposed during the Railway Mania and met with a similar fate. The choice of Aylsham rather than North Walsham as the terminus for the railway is an indication of the parity of the two towns in the middle of the nineteenth century. Its distance from Norwich was four miles less than that of North Walsham, hence there was a likely lower construction cost for any line built.²²

The first time that local landowners showed any marked interest in railway promotion was in 1859 when a group of landowners met in Norwich under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Stracey Bart, then Member of Parliament for Yarmouth. He owned land to the west of Yarmouth and also near

19. Deposited plans, Norfolk County Record Office, No. 361.

20. Bradshaw's Railway Manual, Manchester 1869, p.265.

21. Deposited plans, Norfolk County Record Office, No. 50.

22. Deposited plans, County Record Office, No. 296.

Coltishall, a village on the River Bure midway between Norwich and North Walsham. The landowners deposited plans for a group of railways to be built from Norwich to Aylsham, Cromer and North Walsham.²³ Such a project was ambitious both in terms of size and of the capital required for completion. The Eastern Counties Railway was unwilling to help and there was no real prospect of another railway providing capital, as the project foundered, but at least it had shown that there was active support for such a scheme if only a means of raising the capital could be found and the main line company would render assistance.

Meanwhile reorganisation of the United Companies had started. The object was to bring all the railways of East Anglia under a single management and to merge the share-holdings of the Norfolk Railway, the East Anglian Railway, the Eastern Union Railway, the Newmarket Railway and the Eastern Counties Railway, together with smaller lines such as the Waveney Valley Railway and the East Suffolk Railway. The Great Eastern Railway, as the new company was known, came into being on 7 August 1862. The management took a new and more hopeful approach to its monopoly position. They made themselves responsible for helping local interests to build lines of local importance, providing that nothing was done to upset the monopoly situation.²⁴ Several new railways were promoted, the Mellis & Eye Railway in Suffolk, the Ely, Haddenham & Sutton Railway in the Isle of Ely and the

23. Deposited Plans, Norfolk County Record Office, No. 286.

24. Gordon, D.I. op. cit., p.32.

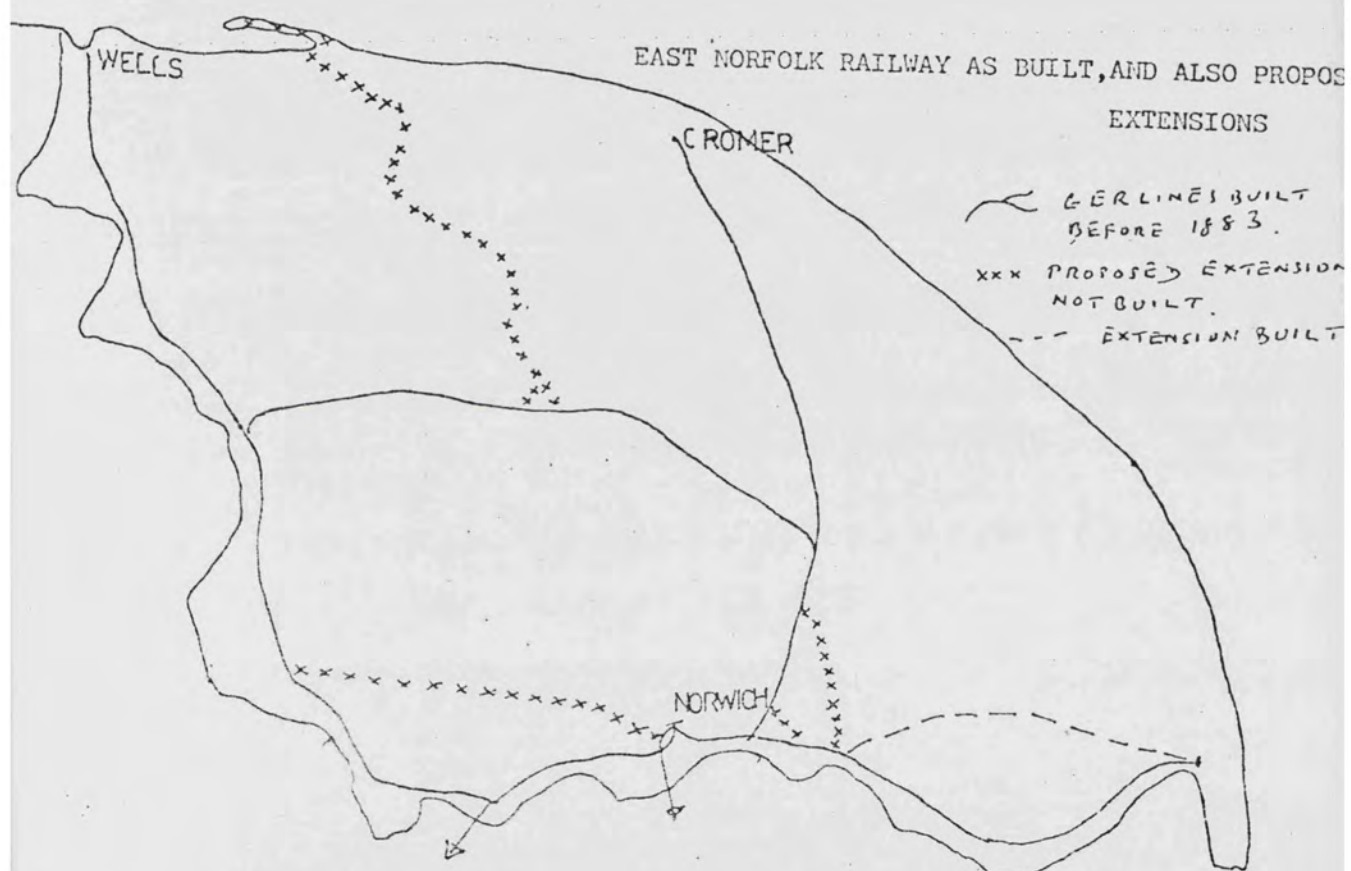
East Norfolk Railway.^{Frg.11} All had promises of help from the Great Eastern Railway and of a working agreement once constructed. It was now possible for the landowners and commercial interests in rural areas to plan with a genuine likelihood of a railway being built.

Railway Promotion and Construction in North East Norfolk 1863-82 The Wensum Valley Railway Proposals

There were several proposals for new railways in north east Norfolk in the 1860s. Of these, two were pursued to the stage of obtaining an Act of Parliament, the East Norfolk Railway and the Wensum Valley Railway. Both lines were supported by the Great Eastern Railway as they were to connect complementary areas of north east Norfolk with the Great Eastern Railway at Norwich.

From the start of its corporate life in 1862 the Great Eastern Railway gave every encouragement to the construction of nominally independent branch railways in East Anglia, with which it would operate working agreements. There were many advantages for such an arrangement to both parties. Local interests could promote railways in the sure knowledge that the day to day running of the proposed line would be in experienced hands. The approval of the major regional railway would ensure passage of the Bill through

Fig. 11



Source: County Record Office, Deposited Plans.

Parliament. Local investors would be encouraged to subscribe if the main line company were seen to be investing in the line itself. The Great Eastern Railway itself was in favour of such arrangements as it relieved that company of the obligation of raise all the capital itself. The local company would be tied to the main line company, thereby giving the Great Eastern Railway control over the routing of traffic, which it could use to its own advantage. The instances where local railway companies bought their own locomotives and rolling stock were not usually happy. The Waveney Valley Railway had purchased its own locomotive, but had no reserve in case of breakdown.²⁵ The Thetford & Watton Railway had not merely tried to run a branch line but sought to run long distance services from King's Lynn to Bury St. Edmunds in direct competition with the Great Eastern Railway. Its subsequent financial and mechanical problems served as a warning to any other small company that might try to do likewise.²⁶

The Wensum Valley provided a natural routeway to the north west of Norwich.²⁷ Further more it was lined with small factories and mills which could be developed if railway connections were made with Norwich. The paper mill at Taverham supplied much of the newsprint for The Times of London.²⁸ The nearby Costessey brickworks was developing a national trade in decorative bricks and chimneys.²⁹ The route from Norwich to

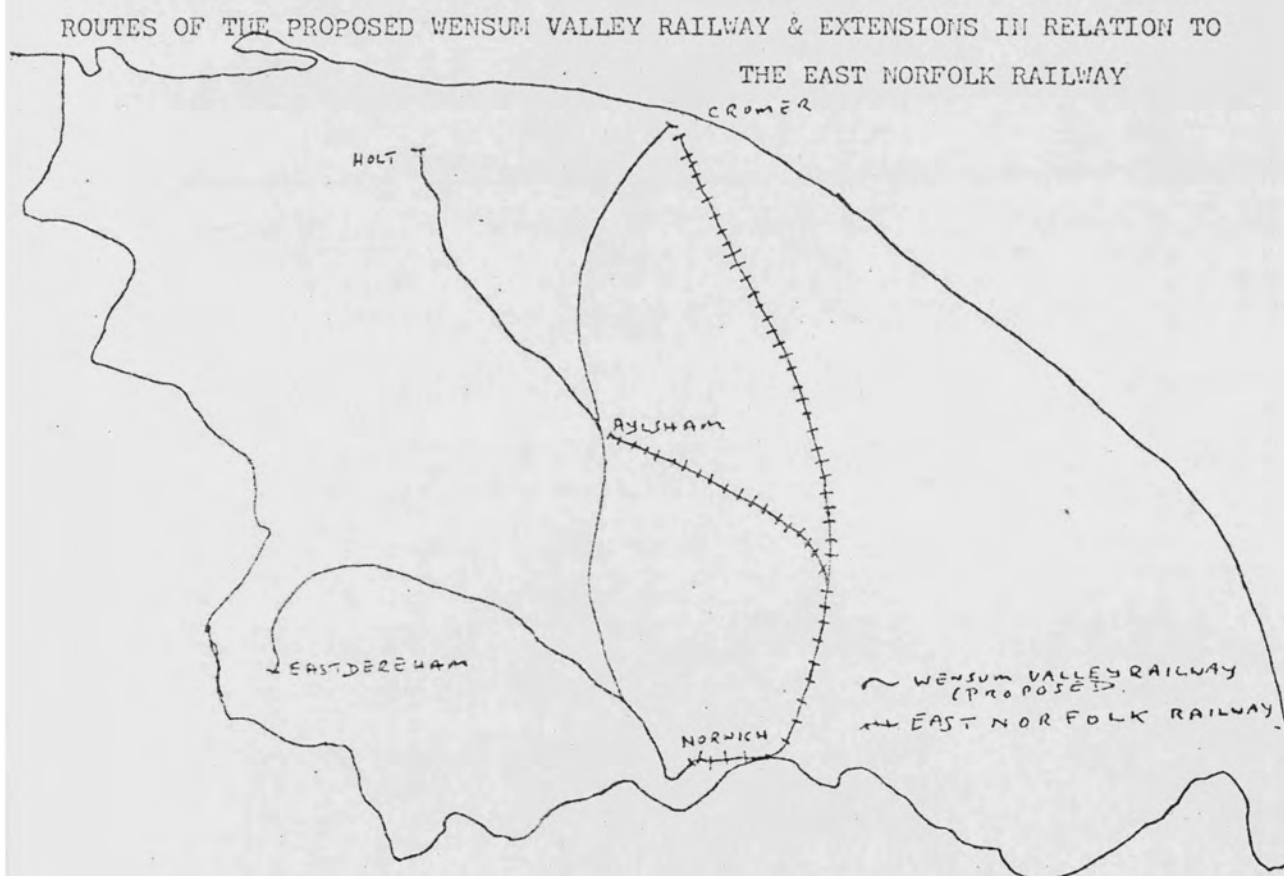
25. Great Eastern Railway Journal, 3, 1978.

26. Minutes of the Board of Directors, Thetford & Watton Railway, 1869-79.

27. Norgate, T.B. Taverham Paper Mill, Norfolk Fair, 1972, pp. 36-39.

28. Ibid, The History of Costessey, Taverham, 1972, p.34.

Fig 12



Source: County Record Office, Deposited Plans.

East Dereham via the Wensum Valley was no shorter than the existing one via Wymondham, but it did have greater prospects for the development of goods traffic in the 1860s.

The Wensum Valley Railway was promoted in 1863, when plans and maps were deposited with Parliament and the local authorities.²⁹ An agreement was reached with the Great Eastern Railway to work the line for 50% of gross revenue, which could be increased to 55% of gross revenue if receipts proved too low. None of the landlords in the vicinity, who stood to benefit from the line, were listed as major subscribers, but they did insist that the Act include several clauses beneficial to themselves. An instance of this was the Reverend Mickleton's insistence on stopping trains at Taverham for his own benefit. Another landowner, Henry Lombe, wished to stop any train at Elsing between 8.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m.³⁰

In the following year the Wensum Valley Railway returned to Parliament with a set of proposals for further extensions, although it had made no start on the original line. J. Tolme and J.S. Pierce were appointed engineers to the Wensum Valley Extension Railways. These were extensive and competed directly with the routes already granted to the East Norfolk Railway, then at a similar formative stage.³¹ No further progress was made with the Wensum Valley Railway after survey and the passing of its Act. Fig. 12.

29. Deposited Plans, Norfolk County Record Office, No. 207.

30. Act, Wensum Valley Railway, 27/28 Vic.c.X XVII.

31. Deposited Plans, Norfolk County Record Office, No. 110.

The proposed capital was much greater than that of the East Norfolk Railway, while it lacked the local backing which was essential for successful completion of such a line. Another problem that affected both the railway promotions in north east Norfolk in the mid 1860s was the financial embarrassment of the Great Eastern Railway in the wake of the failure of Overend, Gurney & Company. Less help was available then, than was forthcoming when the main line was restored to financial health in the 1870s. The Wensum Valley Railway was finally withdrawn as a project by the Great Eastern Railway in 1879.³²

In the 1860s, the mill owners of the Wensum Valley lacked adequate transport facilities and had no realistic expectation of a railway. They turned instead to a project for a roadside tramway as a cheap alternative to the canal and railway. Plans for the Wensum Valley & East Norfolk Tramway were deposited in 1870, with Leslie Jeyes appointed engineer. In the following year he produced a much more ambitious scheme, the Norwich & Taverham Tramway, with an extended branch to be known as the Norwich, Aylsham & Cromer Tramway.³³ Horse haulage on the system was envisaged. Although born out of frustration with the lack of railway construction, none of these projects made any further progress.

It was evident from the large number of abortive railway promotions in north east Norfolk that only a railway which had significant local support

32. Great Eastern Railway, Further Powers Act, 1879.

33. Deposited Plans, Norfolk County Record Office, Nos. 316, 377.

as well as support from the Great Eastern Railway could have any great chance of actually being constructed. The Wensum Valley Railway was a very expensive line in terms of capital, some £220,000 of capital was needed for its initial line from Norwich to East Dereham. The main subscribers to the Wensum Valley Railway had London addresses, yet they were supporting an indirect line between two points which were already in rail communication.³⁴ On the other hand, the East Norfolk Railway had a much more modest capital of £88,000 and was to be built across a district hitherto lacking rail communications.^{Fig. 11.} It also had the local support as well as the backing of the Great Eastern Railway.

The East Norfolk Railway 1864-75: Norwich to North Walsham

The Great Eastern Railway had offered to work any line built north of Norwich. This offer was made shortly after the Great Eastern Railway was formed in 1862.³⁵ In the following year a public meeting was called in Norwich under the chairmanship of Lord Suffield to promote such a line.³⁶ The change in railway management was significant, when it is remembered that the Eastern Counties Railway had turned down a similar proposal only

34. Act, Wensum Valley Railway, 27/28 Vic.c. XXVII

35. Gordon, D.I. op.cit. p.185.

36. Norfolk Chronicle, 23 November, 1863.

three years before.³⁷ Lord Suffield's chairmanship ensured a good response. He was the greatest landowner in the Cromer and North Walsham district. He had spent several years refurbishing and improving his estate after the death of his neglectful half-brother and was now ready to render wider services to the local community.³⁸

Other prominent local landowners who subscribed to the East Norfolk Railway were Lord Wodehouse, Sir Jacob Preston, Robert Blake Humfrey and Edward Leathes. The presence of their names on the subscription list bore out Lord Wodehouse's contention that "the feeling was unanimous in that part of Norfolk" that a railway should be built.³⁹ Support for the railway came also from Norwich City Council and also from others of the local landed interest.⁴⁰ Further arguments in favour of the East Norfolk Railway were the inadequacy of the local waterways and the importance of the malting industry in the villages of Coltishall and Horstead.⁴¹ Objections to the East Norfolk Railway came chiefly from existing navigations. The Great Yarmouth Port & Haven Commissioners thought that the new line would be very prejudicial to navigation. On the original plans there were to be three bridges across the navigable waterway.⁴² It was suggested and later accepted that a single crossing of the River Bure at Wroxham on a viaduct with a forty foot clear span and fifteen feet of headroom would overcome this objection. Traffic of 100 wherries a week

37. See Section II, Chap. 2.

38. Suffield, Lord, *My Memories*, London 1913, p. 63.

39. House of Lords Record Library, Minutes of Evidence. ENR Bill 28 April 1864, p. 11.

40. *Ibid*, p. 79.

41. *Ibid*, p. 99.

42. C.R.O. Book of Reference, East Norfolk Railway.

along the river was quoted as good reason for the need for easy navigation.⁴³ The North Walsham & Dilham Canal did not want to stop the railway but thought that they should be compensated for the loss of traffic.⁴⁴ Should their best paying traffic be taken away, the canal company was still obliged to keep a head of water for the mills and to keep its locks in good repair. Mr. Wells, a miller and a member of the canal management committee fore-cast ruin if the railway were built.⁴⁵ Despite recent increases in traffic the canal at that time was barely subsisting and hardly maintaining itself in good order. Only two dividends had been paid in the previous twenty years; there was a debt of £1,400 and little or no net income.⁴⁶ The aim of the canal company was to obtain compensation, but it had to be satisfied with a clause in the Act permitting the railway to purchase the canal.⁴⁷ There were no significant objections from landowners,⁴⁸ most of whom were pleased at the prospect of cheaper and faster transport.

Amendments were made to the Bill to accommodate the objections put forward to the parliamentary committee, after which the preamble for Railway

43. *Ibid*, p. 190.

44. *Ibid*, p. 136.

45. *Ibid*, p. 132.

46. *Ibid*, p. 137.

47. *Ibid*, pp. 137-8.

48. Mr. Burroughes who farmed land north of Wroxham objected to the railway running diagonally right across his square fields and dividing the Hall from the farmland. He did not however object to the proposal of having a railway. There was only one gentleman who was against having any railway. A Mr. Postle declared that he considered the rivers adequate and cheaper. He did not arouse other support for this point of view. *Ibid*, p. 190.

No. 1 of the East Norfolk Railway from Whitlingham Junction near Norwich to North Walsham was proved. The proposed branch to Horstead was not proved, even after alterations had been made to the proposed route. The capital was thereby reduced from a proposed £100,000 to £88,000.⁴⁹

The engineer to the new line was George Parker Bidder, who had been appointed originally to the North of Norfolk Railway in 1845. He laid out the new line in a smooth arc to North Walsham, also providing for extension later to Cromer. The Horstead branch that was not approved had originally been Railway No. 2 on the plans, intended to terminate at Aylsham, but it was stopped at Horstead "for lack of support."⁵⁰ Cromer was also seen as "a rising watering place"⁵¹ and therefore worthy of an extension at a later date.

During the passage of the East Norfolk Railway Bill, arrangements for construction had been made with the contracting firm of Peto & Betts, also referred to in correspondence as Peto, Betts & Lucas. The firm was the second largest railway contractor in the world at the time and had been in business for two decades. The firm offered to build the East Norfolk Railway taking one third of the shares, providing that the other two-thirds was satisfactorily

49. *Ibid*, P. 149.

50. *Ibid*, P. 90.

51. *Ibid*, p. 17.

subscribed.⁵² From every point of view the construction and opening of the East Norfolk Railway should have been straightforward. Subscriptions and support were forthcoming, both engineer and contractor were amongst the best available in the 1860s and there was full support from the Great Eastern Railway, yet the opening date of the first section was more than a decade away.

The preparations for the construction of the East Norfolk Railway seemed sound. Sir Samuel Morton Peto had signed to build the first section of the East Norfolk Railway in October 1863 and had also signed on behalf of his partner Edward Ladd Betts. The terms were that £18,000 should be raised in the locality and the contractors would raise £36,000. The contractors were willing to accept one third of the shares of the company, which on the original capital had a face value of £40,000, a small discount typical of such an arrangement.⁵³ The contract was finally signed for Peto, Betts & Lucas on 30 May 1865, but works do not appear to have been started as the contract was let again in October 1865 to William Smith Simpson. Simpson had a career of twenty years or railway contracting behind him when he took on the East Norfolk Railway contract, commencing with the East Anglian Railway in 1845.⁵⁴ At the same time the engineer to the line was changed. Robert Sinclair of The Great Eastern Railway replaced George Bidder. The Minute Books of the East Norfolk Railway for the period 1864-1869 do not appear to have survived to explain these changes, but Peto was

52. HLRO, Correspondence re ENR Bill 1864, 2 June 1864.

53. Ibid.

54. Body, G. & Eastleigh, R. The East Anglian Railway, Walthamstow, 1967.

certainly preoccupied at the time with his work on the London, Chatham & Dover Railway⁵⁵ and had very large American commitments, while Charles Lucas was very busy with contracts in London and had to refuse an invitation to build the Mellis & Eye Railway in 1865.⁵⁶

William Smith Simpson started construction at Whitlingham Junction early in 1866. He prepared for the work by assembling plant and equipment at the railside before commencing the massive job of making a deep cutting up through the edge of the loam plateau on a 1 in 80 gradient. Ballast and engineering plant were purchased in considerable quantities, so that by the following year a total of £6,060 in shares had been paid for work completed. Early in 1867 work slowed down and in May 1867 it ceased altogether. Non-payment of calls on shares was given as the official reason for the cessation of work, but Simpson's death in October 1868 would indicate that he was in failing health. The national financial crisis which beset the whole nation in May 1866 delayed payment of calls on railway shares in many other parts of the country.

When the situation was reviewed in the half-yearly report of the East Norfolk Railway in February 1869 it was stated that effectively little of lasting value had been achieved by Simpson. His work had ceased in 1867, and what work had been undertaken had deteriorated in the following two years.⁵⁷

55. Pollins, H., *Railway Contractors and the Finance of Railway Development* in Reed, M. ed., *Railways in the Victorian Economy*, Newton Abbot, 1969, p.226.

56. *Diss Express*, 14 September 1865.

57. Public Record Office, RAC 1/1 09B, ENR, 12 February 1869.

The company was also in contention with the engineer Robert Sinclair who claimed for work done, which the East Norfolk Railway contested.⁵⁸

To make matters worse, Simpson's estate was put under the administration of the Court of Chancery, thus effectively freezing the block of shares which his executors held for work already done. Claims were made for the payment in cash of the money owed to Simpson. The East Norfolk Railway refused. The impasse remained unresolved for nearly two years, during which time no further work was done on the line.⁵⁹

Although limited construction activity was resumed in 1870, there was little incoming money to support much progress. Share purchases had ceased when building operations stopped. It was reported in 1871 that "no local subscription whatever can be obtained, but if the line to North Walsham is completed they have no doubt that the principal landowners between North Walsham and Cromer would not only dispose of their land at moderate terms but would be prepared to subscribe liberally for the completion of the entire line to Cromer, as soon as the necessary Parliamentary Powers can be obtained."⁶⁰

Meanwhile a new engineer had been appointed to replace Robert Sinclair on the recommendation of the Great Eastern Railway. He was Edward Wilson, then engaged on the construction of Liverpool Street Station.⁶¹ Royal Assent had to be obtained to extend the building time of the first section

58. PRO, ENR 1/1, Minutes of the Proprietors and Directors, ENR, 2 February 1871, p.57.

59. ENR 1/1 15 August 1872, p.101.

60. Ibid, 20 June 1871, p.61.

61. PRO RAC 1/1 09B, Half-yearly report, ENR, 5 August 1870.

until 1872, then the company solicitor was able to commence land conveyancing work. To date £5.10s. of the £10 Ordinary Shares had been called. This could largely be regarded as money wasted. A further call of £2.10s. was made in 1870 and part of the money was used to pay W. S. Simpson's executors a negotiated sum of £3,750. Debentures held in lieu of cash were sold off in order to pay the new engineer to make his survey.⁶²

Edward Wilson's survey yielded an estimate of £85,655 for completion of the line to North Walsham. Little land had been bought up to that date and even less track had been laid. While the Great Eastern Railway was still willing to meet its share of the capital in full and also to provide generous technical assistance, it would not offer extra inducements to the existing shareholders of the East Norfolk Railway. This meant that the existing shareholders and their friends would have to raise the extra capital and loans, otherwise they would have to use alternative and usually more expensive ways of raising capital.⁶³ The uncalled portion of existing issued shares, unissued shares and the shares held by the contractor together with money from debentures that could be raised under powers granted just covered Wilson's estimated cost of building the East Norfolk Railway. In order to pay any new contractor, all calls on shares would have to be paid in full immediately, and all remaining East Norfolk shares sold, preferably at their full face value. Loans would have to be raised to finance the running debts of the company during building. Thus it was essential that the East Norfolk Railway remain credit-worthy.

62. ENR 1/1 22 February, 1870, p. 18.

63. Ibid, 5 August 1870, pp. 32-38.

Progress was slow in 1871 with little capital becoming available, despite Lord Suffield's promise to render efficient aid in making the line to Cromer if it once reached North Walsham.⁶⁴ The other directors lacked the interest that Lord Suffield always had in the railway; the April meeting was adjourned with no other director present. The August meeting of 1871 was likewise adjourned when only two directors came to the gathering.⁶⁵ Eight years had elapsed since the first meeting in Norwich. There were only a few earth-works, much expenditure and litigation to show for the time, energy and money spent up to that point. This appears to have been the nadir of the scheme.

Shortly after the August 1871 adjournment Charles Parkes started to take an interest in the affairs of the East Norfolk Railway. At that time he was merely described as a 'gentleman' in the shareholders' register, but he became General Manager of the Great Eastern Railway in 1872 and later became deputy chairman of the East Norfolk Railway. ^{He bought} Ordinary shares in 1871, at a time when their price had dropped below par. In 1872 he proposed that construction should be funded by the issue of £95,000 of 6% Preference Stock, giving the Great Eastern Railway powers to subscribe to the whole or any portion of that stock in return for 60% of the gross receipts when the line reached North Walsham. The Great Eastern Railway was also to hold 60% of the Ordinary Shares. Such massive backing was what was needed to get

64. Ibid, 20 June 1871, p.61.

65. Ibid, 26 August 1871, p.67.

building restarted on a scale sufficient to complete the line.⁶⁶ Parkes also gave the other side of the story when he issued a circular in August 1872 which put a price of £20,000 on abandonment of the East Norfolk Railway.⁶⁷

Not only had the Great Eastern Railway been restored to financial health by 1872, but it was also pursuing an active policy of promoting traffic wherever it could be increased. Parkes spoke of the success of the Lynn & Hunstanton Railway in west Norfolk which by 1872 was yielding a dividend of 10% per annum. The main strength of the Lynn & Hunstanton Railway was the rapid development of Hunstanton as a seaside resort. Parkes likewise foresaw large building operations at Cromer, and it was hoped that this would encourage the progressive and probably rapid development of traffic to the resort. He assumed traffic to yield £1,000 per mile per year. On this basis the East Norfolk Railway would be able to pay a 12½% dividend on the reduced Ordinary capital of £20,000. Local interests would become subordinated to Great Eastern Railway interests, however, ^{and} since no further local money was likely to be forthcoming until North Walsham was reached, the main line company's support was essential to the completion of the first vital section.⁶⁸

The proposed changes in the financial structure of the East Norfolk Railway necessitated an application for a new Bill. First money had to

66. PRO RAC 1/1 09B 27 June 1872.

67. PRO ENR 1/6 Secretary's volume of miscellaneous papers, Circular, dated 3 August 1872.

68. Ibid.

be borrowed from the company's bankers, Messrs. Gurney of Norwich, in order to pay the parliamentary expenses and deposit amounting to £3,500. Meanwhile working plans were drawn up in advance of letting the new contract. There was first the new Preference capital to be raised before a contract could be made. The total sum authorised was £105,290, of which £33,060 was raised initially. Lord Suffield and Sir Jacob Preston were the only really large local subscribers. Most of the remaining new capital was applied for by directors of the Great Eastern Railway, including Charles Parkes and Lord Claud Hamilton, while Edward Wilson was also a subscriber.⁶⁹ Sufficient capital had been raised to permit serious planning,⁶⁹ but Charles Parkes had had second thoughts about his optimistic circular of 3 August 1872. A fortnight later he cautiously stated that "it is difficult to give any estimate of probable traffic or to find an existing line comparable in all its features to the proposed railway,"⁷⁰ since the cost of abandonment had risen further to £20,295 by this time, he pressed on with the project.

An experienced contractor was found to build the line. Lucas Brothers, associates of John Aird, sent in an estimate of £70,000 for building the line which was accepted, though only after some discussion.⁷¹ The firm had built much of the Metropolitan District Railway in London, the Thames Embankment, Liverpool Street Station and Norwich Waterworks and was thus of sound reputation.⁷² The East Norfolk Railway directors negotiated, at first offering

69. PRO ENR 1/1, Share application lists 1872.

70. PRO ENR 1/6, Misc. Papers, Circular 15 August 1872.

71. PRO ENR 1/1, Minutes, p. 122.

72. Middlemass, R.K. The Master Builders, London 1973, Section 2.

£48,000 in cash, raising their offer eventually to £56,000, of which £10,000 was to be in new Preference shares and £6,000 in Debentures, the remainder being in cash.⁷³ Single track with light 72 lb. per yard flat-bottomed rails were specified in order to keep down costs.⁷⁴

A new Bill for an extension to Cromer had been deposited at the same time as the reorganisation of capital.⁷⁵ Completion to North Walsham was scheduled for July 1874, while the Great Eastern Railway simultaneously doubled the line from Norwich to Whitlingham Junction to increase the capacity.

By early August in 1873 the contractors were busy opening out the first cutting, an indication of how little progress there had been under Simpson and Sinclair. Almost as soon as operations started labour problems were encountered. There was a dearth of unemployed young men in the villages in the wake of emigration urged by the farmworkers' union.⁷⁶ More particularly, the annual hiatus of harvest time retarded operations. The farmers hired all available hands at greatly enhanced wages to which were added time honoured perquisites. Given the choice, work in the fields was preferable to work on a construction site. In addition the harvest was customary activity, with opportunities for enhanced earnings, whereas contracting work on the scale started in 1873 was quite new to north east Norfolk.

73. PRO ENR 1/1 8 February 1873, p.134.

74. Ibid, p.145.

75. PRO ENR RAC 1/1 09B 6 August 1873.

76. Edwards, G. op. cit. p.37.

Work was also started further up the line at Wroxham whence "a quantity of dobbin carts" were despatched for use on the site. A waggon road was built in the cutting there, culverts and bridges were commenced and fencing was installed along the surveyed route for three miles. Also started was the Wroxham viaduct across the River Bure, a long piled timber structure which was the major engineering feature of the line.⁷⁷ In late autumn, when the harvest ended, there was a speeding up of construction work, so that by February a start was made on the line to the north of Wroxham. A moderate winter permitted bricklaying to continue unimpeded allowing ironwork to be emplaced in the spring. The earthworks were said to be in an advanced state and no difficulties were foreseen in completing construction between Wroxham and North Walsham. Yet despite these promising reports, the original deadline of July 1874 appears to have been over-optimistic. By the middle of August 1874 the permanent way was but half laid and the stations and level crossings were only "proceeding rapidly" some two months after the expected date of completion. The telegraph posts and wires were still being erected, while the goods sheds and cottages were a long way behind schedule.⁷⁸ Much work had to be done in the following two months.

While the East Norfolk Railway was being made ready for Board of Trade inspection prior to opening of the line, the worst accident in the history of the Great Eastern Railway took place at Thorpe on the single track between

77. PRO RAC 1/1 09B 6 August 1873.

78. PRO RAC 1/1 09B 26 February 1874.

Norwich and Whitlingham Junction. Twenty one passengers and four railwaymen lost their lives in a head-on collision which could not have occurred had the second track to Whitlingham Junction been opened as originally planned. As a result, several Board of Trade inspectors came to Norfolk to investigate the accident and remained to give the East Norfolk Railway a very lengthy and thorough inspection from the 16 to the 19 October 1874.⁷⁹

The Board of Trade inspection of the new line revealed several deficiencies. The up platform at Wroxham had inadequate shelter for passengers; lamp irons were needed at level crossings, while much needed to be done to complete the intermediate station buildings. The sidings at North Walsham were inadequate for the expected traffic, resulting in the start of goods traffic being delayed by nearly a month at North Walsham.⁸⁰ Other adjustments were needed to the line. In a number of places the post and rail fencing was deficient at bridges and level crossings. Ballast of gravel and sand was lighter than was desirable, but was apparently the best obtainable locally.⁸¹

The inspectors noted some improvements on the original specification. The track was of 80 lb. per yard double-headed rails fixed to cast iron chairs, similar to those used on the Great Eastern Railway. In respect of signalling, particular attention was paid to it in the wake of the recent

79. PRO MT6 R 7307, 19 October 1874, Board of Trade Railway Inspector's Report on the East Norfolk Railway.

80. PRO ENR 1/1 10 November 1874.

81. PRO MT6 R 7307 op.cit.

disaster. It was observed that the signal cabins were all fully interlocked and these together with the telegraph used for working the line by the block system were passed by the inspectors.⁸² Maintenance of the track was to be carried out by the permanent-way staff of the Great Eastern Railway who were easily able to right any deficiencies which came to light in the early days of operation.⁸³

Lucas Brothers did not fare well in the recriminations which followed the delayed opening. Clause 7 of the contract was enforced against them as they had exceeded the engineer's estimate by £526.12s., as well as the time limit. When all the deficiencies had been righted, Lucas Brothers presented a final bill of £65,000 well in excess of the original estimate. They then offered to complete the line to Cromer for a further £44,000 in cash or for £47,135 in Construction Bonds. This offer was not taken up, despite the fact that the East Norfolk Railway had provided £75,000 for this section of the railway.⁸⁴ The building of the first fourteen miles of the East Norfolk Railway had taken over a decade; £28,000 had been expended by 1872 to no good purpose and work had virtually to be started again. The East Norfolk Railway was said to "be eaten up with interest and lawyers' costs."⁸⁵

After such an unhappy start, the board determined to have the construction of the extension under much tighter control. For a firm like Lucas

82. PRO MT6/123/14 Board of Trade Inspector's Report on Signalling, ENR.

83. PRO ENR 1/1 17 October 1874, p. 49.

84. PRO ENR 1/1 10 November 1874.

85. PRO ENR 1/1 09B ENR 11 February 1875.

Brothers, the East Norfolk Railway had been a small contract far from their main scene of operations, London, and they had not perhaps given the new line their full attention.

The East Norfolk Railway 1875-82: Extensions North and West

Rather than employ Lucas Brothers or any other firm of contractors, the directors of the East Norfolk Railway decided to appoint a Company Agent to supervise the construction of the Cromer extension under the direct control of the company and engineers, Edward Wilson & Co. The Company Agent was John Cook, who had just completed a similar assignment on the nearby Watton & Swaffham Railway.⁸⁶ The original contractor of that railway had been dismissed, but despite the problems of taking over unfinished work, Cook had made up for lost time and completed the work to the satisfaction of the Board of Trade. After the experiences that the East Norfolk Railway had had with contractors, it seemed worthwhile to try a new system of construction. Accordingly John Wilson, nephew of Edward Wilson, took up residence in Wroxham for the duration of the construction in his role as Resident Engineer. The object was to make the line as quickly and cheaply as possible.⁸⁷

86. PRO WSR 1/1 Minutes of the Board of Directors, Watton & Swaffham Railway.

87. PRO RAC1/1 09B ENR 27 January 1875.

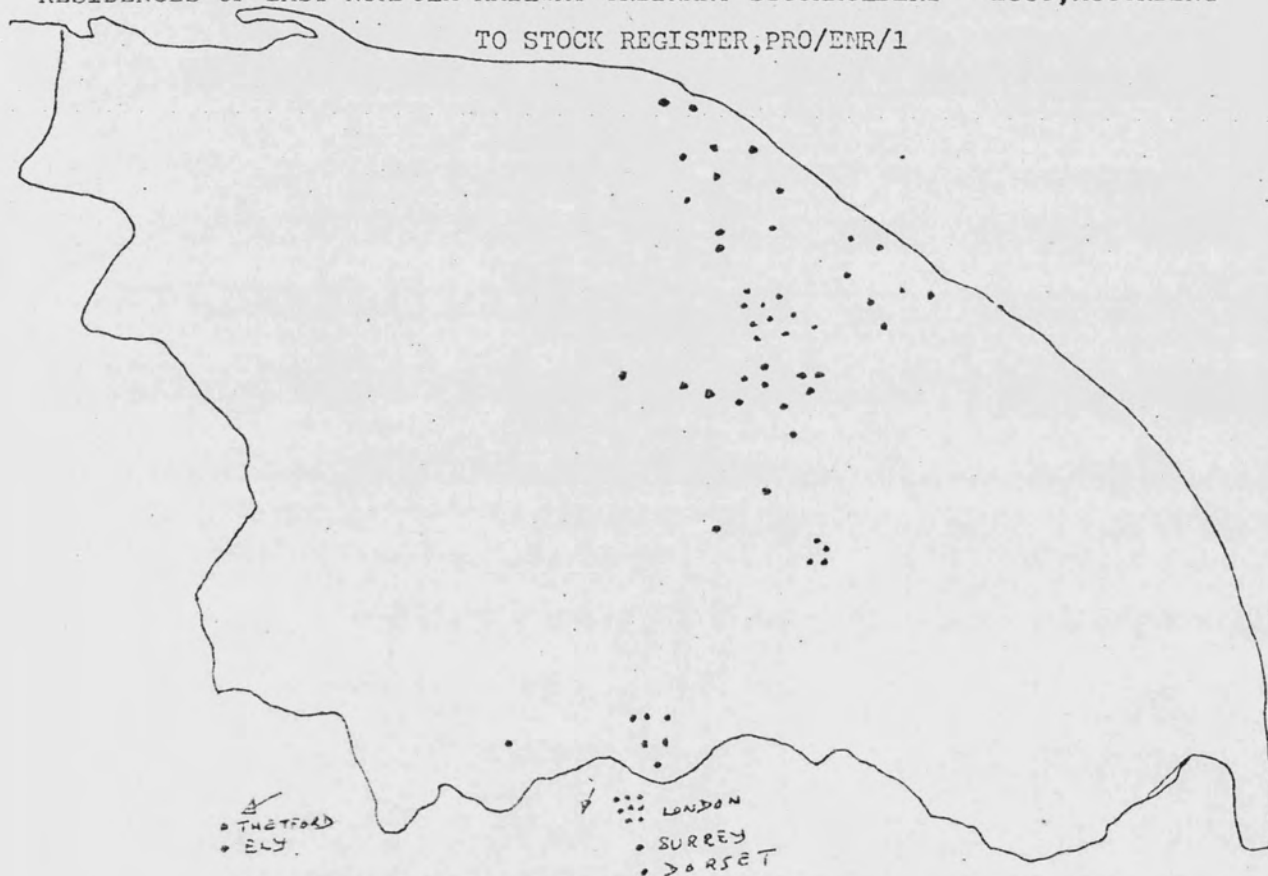
Though there were many local shareholders^{Fig. 13}

the route to Cromer crossed the land of only five owners, two of whom were directors of the company, Lord Suffield and J.H. Gurney of the banking family. Two others were substantial shareholders, Mr. Birkbeck was related to the Gurneys, while Mr. Bond Cabbell of Cromer Hall owned the parts of Cromer not owned by Lord Suffield, and was therefore a very important figure in the development of that resort. The other landowner was the Paston School whose land in North Walsham was the first to be required. This was purchased in September 1875 together with twenty houses which had to be demolished to secure the route out of North Walsham. The remaining land had been bought by the end of 1875. The landowners extended full co-operation, allowing ballast to be taken from their land and brickearth on their estates to be used for brickmaking alongside the railway, where three brick kilns were erected. The land appears to have been sold cheaply to the railway company. J.H. Gurney was paid £25 per acre for his land.⁸⁸

The delay of nearly a year between the opening of the first section of the East Norfolk Railway to North Walsham and the start of building on the Cromer Extension meant that operations again commenced during the harvest season, when labour was in short supply and continued in winter, when delays could be expected, unless the weather proved exceptionally mild. The country to be crossed was largely composed of heavy clay glacial deposits which were very difficult to work with hand tools in wet weather. In addition to these problems, John Cook also had to cope with a very slow

88. PRO ENR 1/3 Executive Committee Minutes, ENR pp. 1-3.

RESIDENCES OF EAST NORFOLK RAILWAY ORDINARY STOCKHOLDERS *1869, ACCORDING
TO STOCK REGISTER, PRO/ENR/1



cash flow from the Cromer Extension Executive Committee. In the first four months of construction, only £4,554 was spent. This included £1,240 which he had used to obtain second hand plant from the Watton & Swaffham Railway. He scoured the existing section of the East Norfolk Railway for surplus materials and had 120,000 bricks made.⁸⁹ Not only were many bricks made alongside the railway, but John Cook obtained all the bricks that the neighbourhood could produce. George Edwards, a contemporary trade union official, found that there was a great call for brickmakers in the district at the time.⁹⁰ During the progress of the works about a dozen bricklayers were employed at any one time, mainly on bridges and culvert work. Where possible the locally produced Norfolk Red bricks were used, but because they had a low structural strength and a tendency to spoil in wet weather, it was necessary to obtain hard bricks from outside the district for arch construction.⁹¹

There had been a major wave of emigration from the district by farm labour in the wake of the strike of 1874.⁹² John Cook had great problems in raising and keeping a labour force. During the first winter of construction the labour force averaged only 150 men at any one time. This labour force

89. *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

90. Edwards, G. *op.cit.* p. 48

91. Where local bricks were originally used for external faces of structures they have subsequently been covered with engineers' blue bricks which are much more resistant to weathering. (Personal observation of bridge-work during demolition.)

92. Springall, L.M. *op.cit.* p. 88.

was split between six sites from North Walsham to Gunton, about five miles distant. With such limited and dispersed labour, working largely unaided by machinery, the time limit of eleven months for the completion of nine miles of track was hardly realistic.

Labour difficulties were not the only problems which delayed Cook's attempts at completing to schedule. There was no bridge at North Walsham to link the construction sites with the existing railway, so all materials had to be transferred to carts before reaching the workforce. The only mechanical aid in the first half year of construction was a saw bench. A locomotive arrived in February 1876, allowing more rapid disposal of earth. By the spring of 1876 it was evident that completion by August 1876 was out of the question as only a third of the bridges were either completed or under construction and no earthworks had been started north of Gunton, only halfway to Cromer. In order to speed up construction Cook was authorised to tour Norfolk and further afield to obtain the plant, horses and materials needed for the work. He made regular visits to the construction sites and he also had to report fortnightly in person to the Executive Committee which usually met in London. As a result, Cook was often absent from the site, resulting in lack of continuity in direction.

As there was no hope of completing the line to Cromer in the summer of 1876, the Executive Committee and the East Norfolk Railway Board decided

to open the line as far as Gunton, the only intermediate station, where a temporary railhead was to be established.⁹³ The opening of the railway to Gunton was on 29 July 1876, halfway through the summer season. A horse-bus which had previously connected North Walsham to Cromer was immediately transferred to Gunton, whence four vehicles a day were run in connection with the train.⁹⁴

Despite the apparent urgency and concern of the directors, they were deeply involved in greater matters. The Executive Committee was composed of East Norfolk Railway directors who were mostly also Great Eastern Railway directors and belonged to several committees of that railway. In addition they usually had many outside interests including parliament, estates and other directorships. It was therefore not surprising that they should give a low priority to an obscure extension of a railway at the further reaches of the system. A change in attitude occurred in the summer of 1876.

The Executive Committee now started to act somewhat more urgently in providing the wherewithal to complete the line to Cromer. Cook was authorised to purchase more plant, extra horses and further materials. He journeyed to Lambeth to obtain twenty carthorses. In Aberdare he bought wagons, rails and more horses. His furthest buying journey was to the

93. PRO ENR 1/1 8 August 1876.

94. Norfolk Chronicle, July-August 1876. Advertisements of the Great Eastern.

Settle & Carlisle Railway in the Pennines, from which he obtained plant and wagons. The scale of operations was much greater than hitherto and indicative of the Executive Committee's new sense of purpose was their requirement of more detailed and frequent reports. He had to give the number of men employed weekly, together with an itemised account of spending, rather than global totals.⁹⁵ Cook was also closely questioned at committee meetings.

By later summer progress was said at last to be "fairly satisfactory". No further bricks were required after late October. Track was delivered in substantial quantities, together with signals, points, the turntable for Cromer Station and other necessities. When items ordered did not arrive on schedule, the Great Eastern Railway loaned materials so that progress would not be hampered. In a last great effort to complete the extension some 400 men were employed after the harvest, a sure indication of how inadequate the previous workforce had been.

The inspection of the new line from Gunton to Cromer took place on 24 March 1877. Although sanction was given to open the line, the Cromer goods shed was still incomplete, while a month later John Cook said that he needed £7,123 to complete all works. He was paid a further £30 to complete all works, dispose of plant and unused materials. The estimate for building the line had been increased by £15,000⁹⁶ and it was necessary

95. PRO ENR 1/3 p.40.

96. PRO RAC 1/1 09B 11 August 1877.

for the East Norfolk Railway to borrow £3,000 from Charles Parkes in order to pay immediate bills.⁹⁷ Even this was not the end of expenditure. Cottages were needed at Cromer for guards and porters and the development of the cattle trade at North Walsham necessitated the provision of watering facilities.

The construction of the Cromer Extension was marred by unrealistic targets in terms of completion and of cost.⁹⁸ Local directors played little part in the day to day control of building operations, while control exercised from London by directors busy with many other matters appears to have been unsatisfactory. An appointment of a Company Agent to oversee direct labour was not repeated with the later extensions of the East Norfolk Railway.⁹⁹

While the extension to Cromer was being built, the extension to Aylsham was being actively planned. The original route for a branch line from Salhouse to Horstead had been abandoned, so Edward Wilson & Co. had the route surveyed from a new junction at Wroxham on the north bank of the River Bure in 1876. A Bill for the extension was promoted and granted in the same year.¹⁰⁰

Capital for the new extension was separated from the main capital of the East Norfolk Railway. The Aylsham Extension Fund had a capital of

97. PRO/ENR 1/3 11 April 1877.

98. PRO/ENR 1/3 April 1875. 'Cromer within a year'.

99. Waddell appointed to Aylsham and Western Extensions.

100. East Norfolk Railway Act (Aylsham Extension) 1876. 39/40 Vic.c.CXL.

£70,000 and powers to borrow a further £23,000. In order to encourage local subscription to the new line an offer of 5% interest to Aylsham shareholders who applied early for shares and paid their subscriptions promptly was made.¹⁰¹ Separation of capital was probably necessary in view of the poor financial state of the main company. A further benefit of capital separation was that should the new line be a greater financial success than the company as a whole, then the shareholders of the extension would reap the benefits for themselves.

The setbacks which had resulted from the use of major contractors and then a Company Agent were not wasted on the board of the East Norfolk Railway. When tenders for the new works were called, they paid greater attention to those submitted by contractors of a more modest size. Henry Lovatt of Wolverhampton submitted a tender for £50,000 and a further contractor, Mr. Relf, a tender of £45,721 1s 8d. The tender finally accepted was that of John Waddell of Edinburgh for £43,971 18s. 3d. Even this estimate was pared further by having the railway supply its own permanent way, thus reducing the estimate by £1,127.¹⁰²

An Executive Committee for the Aylsham Extension was set up in the spring of 1878. It considered entirely of Great Eastern Railway directors and officers. Charles Parkes and Lightly Simpson were established figures

101. HLRO, L & F Bill, 1880, p115.

102. PRO/ENR/EMC 18 June 1878 p.73.

on the board. W.C. Quilter was a politician stockbroker who had interests also in the development of seaside resorts, notably Felixstowe. Lord Claud Hamilton came to some of the meetings in an ex-officio capacity. The officers who came regularly were John Wilson, the engineer, and C.F. Adams, the land agent. No local interest was represented at all.

Work on the Aylsham Extension started in August 1878. Four and a half miles of trackbed were purchased, sufficiently wide for double track. Bridges were also built to allow a second track to be built. The company later paid dearly for not having built the original sections to these specifications when the line was doubled from Norwich to North Walsham. The price of the land was a relatively modest £5,076. The committee did not appear to have learned that a late summer start was sure to be dogged with problems. Labour was again short during the harvest season so that by October the Executive Committee was expressing its dissatisfaction with progress and hoped that the works would be carried out more rapidly. Only 100 men were at work at the time. This seems surprising in view of several members of the committee having observed the same problems during the construction to Cromer.

By December Waddell had increased his workforce to 187 men, together with 22 horses and 47 wagons. Earth moving was brought to a standstill during part of the winter and severe frosts stopped bricklaying on several occasions. By the end of December Waddell had 200 men, 28 horses

and 54 wagons, permitting faster work when the weather allowed. Some mechanism was also achieved when two stationary steam engines were acquired.

The contract deadline that Waddell had first to meet was to construct the line to Coltishall, the first station, by June 1879. Bricklaying was possible on only two days in January as frosts were almost continuous. Earthmoving proceeded faster when a traction engine was acquired and a plank road was used to support it. The station sites at Coltishall and Buxton were excavated to make the sites ready for the bricklayers. After that, track was laid for the first two miles out of Wroxham Junction, enabling Waddell to request two locomotives to speed up the disposal of spoil. By early spring he had increased his labour force to 350 men. More plant was brought in, including a saw mill and two mortar mills. In April work was proceeding almost throughout the entire length of the line. The only major problems encountered was the Bure bridge at Buxton where pumps were needed to drain the saturated and peaty soil before the foundations of the bridge could be laid. Despite the delays caused by frost and wet weather, the line from Wroxham Junction to Buxton was ready for inspection on 3 July 1879. Major-General Hutchinson for the Board of Trade found only minor faults, permitting the line to be opened five days later. William Waddell had built well beyond his original target of Coltishall and at last proved that schedules could be maintained, and even improved upon.

Meanwhile Waddell had been pressing on with construction between Buxton and Aylsham. Progress was satisfactory throughout that summer, despite its being abnormally wet and cool. In September a combination of unsettled weather and seasonal labour shortage interfered briefly with the work schedule. Even so the Executive Committee reported the work to be on the whole satisfactory. A forecast of opening to Aylsham early in 1880 was made. This was followed shortly thereafter by Waddell announcing New Year's Day as the opening day to Aylsham. He was able to give ten days' notice of inspection to the Board of Trade on 22 December 1879 and keep to his forecast. Other work in hand included the installation of a telegraph by Messrs. Sach and the completion of stations and outbuildings. These included a granary at Aylsham, part of a network of railway granaries, others of which were at North Walsham and Cromer. Stables were erected at Coltishall for the railway cart-horses needed to bring malt to the station. At Buxton a large shed was erected at the expense of Mr. Gambling, a local entrepreneur.¹⁰³

While Waddell was building the Aylsham Extension, two lines threatening the East Norfolk Railway's monopoly of north east Norfolk had been commenced. The Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway had won approval for extensions from its original terminal Stalham onwards to North Walsham. In West Norfolk the Lynn & Fakenham Railway was

103. PRO ENR 1/5 Minutes of the Aylsham Extension Executive Committee, 1878-1880.

being built by the same contractors as the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway and it was evident that eventually an attempt would be made to join the two lines, thus invading territory served by the East Norfolk Railway.¹⁰⁴

The Great Eastern Railway board replied to this incursion by depositing a Bill for a Western Extension of the East Norfolk Railway in 1878. The aim of the extension was to continue the branch from Aylsham westwards to link all the small market towns and large villages between Aylsham and East Dereham, thus effectively occupying most of the places which any rival line could serve. The Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway applied for a line from North Walsham to Fakenham in the same session, a proposal strongly opposed by the East Norfolk Railway and eventually defeated. The East Norfolk Railway obtained its Act to build the Western Extension before the Aylsham Extension was opened so that it was in a position to continue construction westwards without the expensive break that had occurred between previous contracts.

Charles Parkes and his friends raised £20,000 in late 1879 in order to keep Waddell at work. There was little support for the new extension in the district and there appear to have been no local subscribers. The Great Eastern Railway wished to complete the scheme, as much for strategic as for traffic reasons. The majority of the Western Extension shares were taken up by Lightly Simpson and by the Parkes family, thus providing the means to carry out a survey of the proposed line in

104. See Section II Chap. 3.

September 1879. Land purchases were made as quickly as possible so that the contractor could press on with construction. The first contract was for the line from Aylsham to Cawston. Waddell quoted a price of £20,309 for the contract exclusive of permanent way, land, signals and accommodation works. No other tenders were called. Waddell was performing his work satisfactorily, he was on site, had no starting up costs and already had a body of experienced workmen, so the quotation was accepted and building continued.¹⁰⁵

The Western Extension took two and a half years to complete. It was opened in three short sections, each contract in turn being let to Waddell. There was only one major delay. Colonel Bulwer had protracted negotiations with the East Norfolk Railway over the sale of land on his Heydon Estate near Reepham. He was in favour of an alternative scheme for the provision of railways in the district put forward by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway. In the meantime he seemed determined to obtain what he thought to be just compensation for his land from the East Norfolk Railway.¹⁰⁶

Major General Hutchinson of the Board of Trade inspected the line as it progressed. He noted that the line was "well-finished" between Aylsham and Cawston; 80 lb. per yard steel double-headed rails were laid on sleepers embedded in deep ballast. There were signal boxes at each

105. PRO ENR 1/5 Western Extension Committee Minute Book, p. 16.

106. Ibid, p. 18.

station and at Reepham there was a turntable, placed there at the General's insistence before Reepham became a through station. The very solid brick stations were far superior to the wooden structures on the original line. All this was achieved despite Waddell agreeing to take a 10% reduction on his original quotations. All the reports on this line were favourable to the contractor,¹⁰⁷ who in a five year period maintained schedules for the East Norfolk Railway and had overcome the problems which had dogged previous railway construction.^{Fig.11} He was subsequently awarded two other Norfolk contracts for the Great Eastern Railway.¹⁰⁸

The east west orientation of the Western Extension made the distances from the towns and villages served to Norwich considerably longer than the direct distances. To counterbalance this, the East Norfolk Railway granted 'crow-flight' or 'geographical' mileage charges to the stations concerned.¹⁰⁹ This concession was also made advisable by the final withdrawal of the Wensum Valley Railway project in 1879, which would have provided more direct communication had it been built.

Although the Yarmouth and North Norfolk Railway had been prevented from constructing a line across the East Norfolk Railway's territory in 1879, its west Norfolk partner, the Lynn & Fakenham Railway deposited plans for railways from Fakenham to Norwich and a branch from that line to Blakeney, a small port on the coast between Wells and Cromer. The East Norfolk

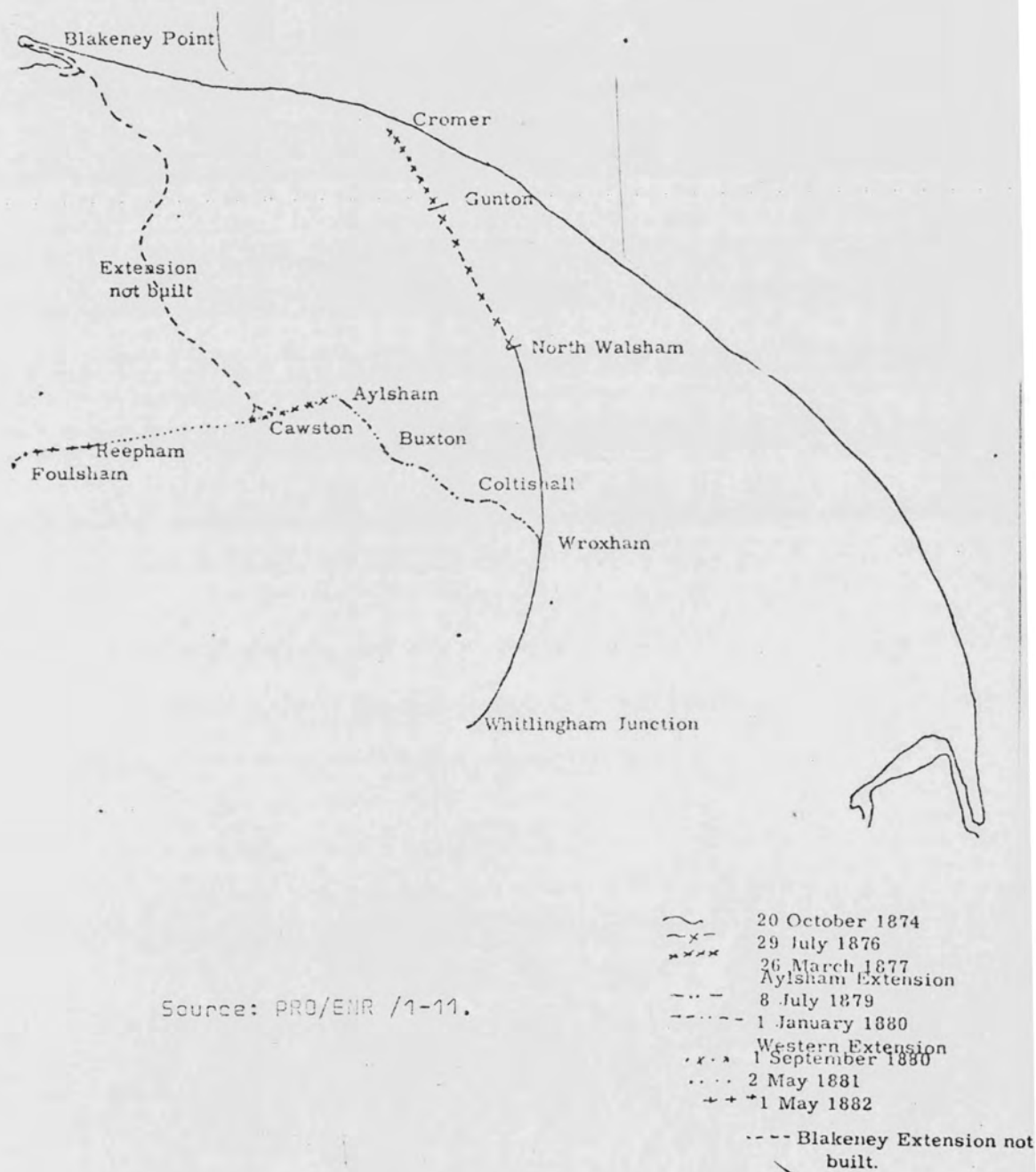
107. PRO MT6 R3417, Board of Trade Inspector's Report, 1 April 1882.

108. The two lines were the Direct Yarmouth line via Acle and the Wymondham to Forncett line, linking the Ipswich-Norwich line to the Dereham line.

109. HLRO Minutes of Evidence, Central Norfolk Railway Bill, 12 May 1881, p.216.

Fig. 14.

SECTIONS OF THE EAST NORFOLK RAILWAY WITH OPENING DATES



Railway produced a counter proposal for a line from Cawston to Blakeney via Holt, to cost an estimated £300,000.^{109a}

The parliamentary battle between the East Norfolk Railway and the Lynn & Fakenham Railway over the building of extensions to Blakeney revolved around two main arguments. The first was whether the East Norfolk Railway, now to all intents and purposes the Great Eastern Railway, would build its line if given an Act and secondly, whether the route was the best one for the district. The failure of the Wensum Valley Railway project still rankled with many landowners.¹¹⁰ The very high cost of the line and the lack of support for the Western Extension indicated that the Great Eastern Railway would have to raise all the capital for the Blakeney Extension itself, yet Charles Parkes in opposing the rival project had argued that there was a lack of traffic in the district, thus calling the good faith of the Great Eastern Railway further into question.¹¹¹ The route itself was indirect, especially when the approach via Wroxham and Cawston was taken into account. It did not appear to be likely to serve Holt very well as the station was to be some distance from the town at the foot of a hill. The destination of Blakeney Point would necessitate the building of the railway along a shingle spit subject to violent storms. Finally the proposed line did not provide an easier route to the West,

109a. HLRO Minutes of Evidence, Central Norfolk Railway Bill, 12 May 1882, p.216.

110. PRO PYB 1/834, Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill 1880, p.134.

111. Ibid, p.70.

which many landowners would have liked as an alternative to the Great Eastern Railway's monopoly. The Great Eastern Railway had built its Western Extension as a blocking line to keep others out,¹¹² now it was to be excluded and an interloper admitted. The Lynn & Fakenham Railway gained its Act to build a Norwich to Blakeney Extension in 1880.

The failure of the East Norfolk Railway's Blakeney Extension and the invasion of the remaining territory in north east Norfolk by a rival company left the East Norfolk Railway in a position where it had lost its role as a vehicle for promoting further lines in the district. The original local directors had largely retired, to be replaced by Great Eastern Railway nominees. All new capital would have to be subscribed by the parent company, so there was little further point in retaining the East Norfolk Railway as an autonomous entity. Accordingly the directors of both companies sought an Act to amalgamate the two railways in 1881. There were no objections to the amalgamation, so the Act was duly obtained. The prospect of obtaining more marketable Great Eastern Railway shares must have been very pleasing to shareholders, some of whom had received nothing on their investment for eighteen years.

The six Acts of the East Norfolk Railway had authorised the raising of £560,000 in capital between 1863 and 1879. Loans of £139,000 had been authorised and in addition there had been borrowing from Gurney's the

112. *Ibid*, p.5.

company bankers, various directors and from the Great Eastern Railway company. Much of the ordinary share capital had been issued at discounts ranging from 3% in 1872 to 40% in the period 1875-1877. For this very large expenditure there were 46 miles of single track. Much of the money had been wasted in the earlier years of the company, but the terms of the amalgamation took some of the sting out of past misfortunes. The Ordinary shares of the East Norfolk Railway were bought for 75% of their face value in Great Eastern Railway Deferred Ordinary Stock. Much of the remaining capital was taken over at par. (See Appendix). Through such terms, shareholders of the East Norfolk Railway fared much better than shareholders in the other railway companies of the region, the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway.

The East Norfolk Railway, now absorbed by the Great Eastern Railway, had routes from Norwich to Cromer and from Wroxham to Dereham. The Cromer route was the one which appeared to have the greater potential, as the resort was developing strongly in the 1880s and subsequently. The cross-country route from Wroxham to Dereham linked a chain of minor market towns, Aylsham, Reepham and Foulsham. It was however a roundabout route and had been built by the East Norfolk Railway to counter competition. It was not developed as a through route, thus having to rely on the inadequate local traffic for its sustenance. At both Reepham and Aylsham there were stations both of the Great Eastern line and later of the Eastern & Midlands Railway, which robbed the former of much of its

potential long distance traffic. Thus while the main line of the East Norfolk Railway had further capital expended on it to cope with increasing coastal traffic, the cross-country element in the system stagnated as a rural byway.

PART II

CHAPTER 3

THE ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM

Introduction.

The Contractors.

The landowners and the railways.

The railway from Yarouth to North Walsham.

The Lynn & Fakenham Railway.

Operation and expansion 1877-1883.

Amalgamation and receivership 1883-1893.

Introduction

The building of the first section of the East Norfolk Railway was barely completed when a new group of nominally independent companies were promoted in the district. Each promotion ostensibly stemmed from the desire of local land-owners and entrepreneurs to make a local rail where none had hitherto existed. However, the simultaneous promotion of three lines was not coincidental. The engineers and contractors named for each of the three lines were the same company, Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis of Westminster. The lines with which they were connected, those from Norwich to Blakeney, from King's Lynn to Fakenham and from Yarmouth to Stalham were in essence the main constituents of an alternative system of railway communication in north Norfolk that was to be completed, apart from the extension to Blakeney, within a decade of the original promotion meetings.

The Eastern Counties Railway and its successor the Great Eastern Railway, had largely succeeded in excluding competition from their core of territory, East Anglia to the east of a line from King's Lynn to London. The only independent lines within East Anglia were small and of local importance only. The Colne Valley Railway in Essex and the Southwold Railway in Suffolk were the only truly independent railways in 1874, so that the promotion of new lines deep in the monopoly territory of the Great Eastern Railway was guaranteed to arouse opposition from that quarter.

Furthermore, since a director of the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway admitted at an official enquiry in 1881 that the line from Yarmouth to Stalham was built with "the ulterior object of going to Fakenham and Lynn"¹ where there was potentially junction with the Great Northern and the Midland Railways, there was not merely a very serious challenge to the monopoly of the Great Eastern Railway, but also the possibility of not even the compensation of traffic from the new lines having to run over the Great Eastern tracks.

Support for the new railways came from the local landowners and industrialists, who had expressed dissatisfaction with the monopoly held by the Great Eastern Railway. The propositions put to them by Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis were for the painless raising of capital by methods long familiar to contractors in the building of railways in which main line companies played no major role. Shares in the new railway companies were offered to the landowners in exchange for land, while contractors would take shares in the new companies, recouping their expenditure by the sale of shares. Thus from the start, the alternative system to the East Norfolk Railway was based on an entirely different method of financing. The abnormally lengthy gestation period of the East Norfolk Railway and the failure to build the Wensum Valley Railway had given rise to grave dissatisfaction with the Great Eastern Railway, which was translated into support for an alternative system. Between 1875 and 1895, enthusiastic

1. HLRO Minutes of Evidence, CNR Bill 10 May 1881, p.98.

local support for a new system and the determined opposition from the East Norfolk Railway and its parent, the Great Eastern Railway, were major influences in the development of the railway system of north east Norfolk and adjacent areas.

The Contractors

There was one common thread in the group of proposals for three independent railways in north Norfolk in 1875. This link was the engineering and contracting firm of Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis. The firm was introduced to north east Norfolk when advising the promoters of a line that it proposed should be built from Norwich to Blakeney, an isolated line between the existing lines of the Great Eastern Railway to Wells and the East Norfolk Railway to North Walsham. It was intended that the new line, the Central Norfolk Light Railway, should serve the towns of Aylsham and Holt, as yet unserved by existing railways.

The main features of the proposed scheme for a Central Norfolk Light Railway were that the shares in the company were to be given in exchange for land, and that the railway company was to be entirely local in its subscription. This was purely an initial suggestion, in the nature of a trial balloon. Although it was originally intended that the sale of shares to

investors outside the district was to be avoided, later proposals included the sale of shares to outside interests. Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis were to build the line at cost price plus a commission on the capital. The original plans showed no connection with the Great Eastern Railway at Norwich, nor was there any other line with which the proposed railway could connect. No mention was made in the prospectus of working arrangements with any other railway company.²

The Provisional Committee for the Central Norfolk Light Railway included the Earl of Orford, Mr. F. Walpole M.P., Lord Hastings of Melton Constable Hall, Colonel Bulwer of Heydon Hall and Mr. B. Sapwell of Aylsham who each represented major landholdings along the proposed route of the railway. There were also many other small landowners on the original subscription list, thus indicating widespread support for the scheme.

As most of the estates on the proposed line were unlikely to be served by the existing plans of the East Norfolk Railway, there was particular interest in the new promotion. In addition, Lord Hastings owned coal mines at Seaton Delaval in Northumberland, whence he shipped coal into Blakeney Harbour for distribution by horse and cart. A railway serving Blakeney with connections to Norwich and the industries of the Wensum valley would clearly promote business.³

2. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill, 16 June 1880, Prospectus of CNLR affixed.
3. Thompson, F.M.L. English Landed Society in the 19th Century, London 1963, p.201.

The proposed capital for the railway was £140,000 in £10 shares, £2 of which was required as a deposit. On this basis, the cost per mile was a very low £4,500. Estimates of earnings were £10 per mile per week, thereby permitting a dividend of $5\frac{3}{4}\%$ per annum to be paid after all other charges had been taken into account.⁴

The co-ordinator of the Central Norfolk Light Railway promotion was George Wilkinson, a Holt solicitor. He introduced one of the partners in the contracting firm, Mr. J.J. Wilkinson,^(no relative) to the Yarmouth solicitor, Mr. C. Diver, who in turn referred the project to the attention of Sir Edmund Lacon M.P., the banker and brewer of Yarmouth. Later that year (1875), Sir Edmund Lacon became the main promoter of a line in which he had a great interest, the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway, one of two new lines that were actually built. Despite the superficial attractions of the Central Norfolk Light Railway, this line was not built in its original proposed form.

The contractors had come to Norfolk seeking work. They had proposed three new lines to local landowners, arousing a great deal of interest amongst the local gentry. The ingenious financing of the lines by means of giving shares in exchange for land and of the contractor taking shares rather than calling for subscriptions was a powerful argument in convincing the most powerful and the richest men in Norfolk that this was a good way in which to

4. HLRO, op. cit. Prospectus of CNLR.

obtain rail communications for their estates. No large calls for cash were envisaged, while had they been made might have stretched the limited liquid financial resources of the landowners.⁵ The Great Eastern Railway and its subsidiary, the East Norfolk Railway, had not pointed to a better way of providing railway communication during the construction of the railway from Norwich to North Walsham. It thus seemed to be the time to give others the opportunity to do better, hence the widespread support for the lines proposed by Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis.^{Fig 15}

The Landowners and the Railways

Railways were of great benefit to landowners in a variety of ways. James Caird, the noted agricultural writer of the mid-nineteenth century saw that "in addition to the railways affording cheaper and faster transport they had exercised a very beneficial effect on the rates of the parishes through which they passed. Poor rates and highway rates are, from this cause, extremely moderate",⁶ while F.M.L. Thompson over a century later was of the opinion that "practically all landowners' railways, the great symbol of the age, had been more efficacious in increasing farm rents than had improvement outlays themselves".⁷

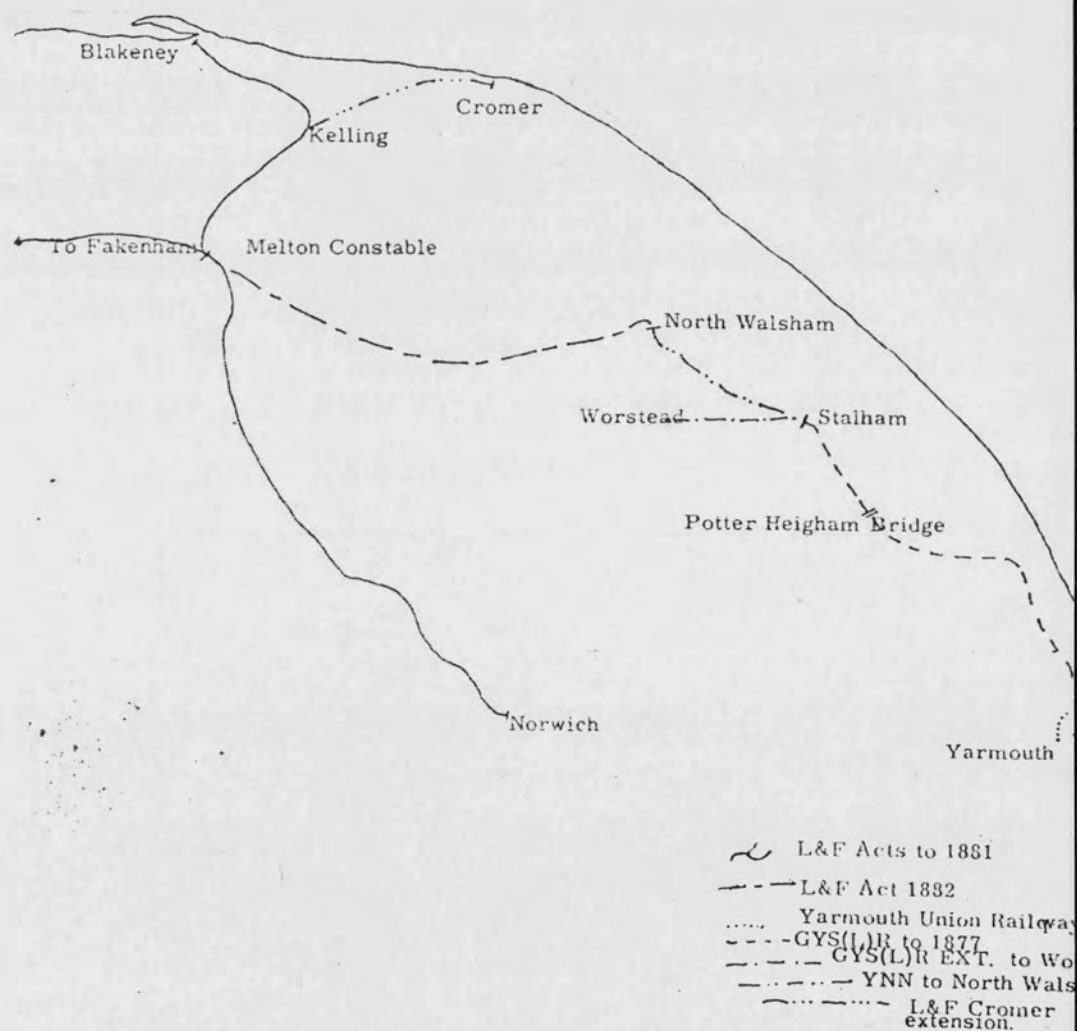
5. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, ENR-YNR Bill 1879, 2 May 1879, p.7.

6. Caird, J. *English Agriculture in 1850-51*, London 1852, p.125.

7. Thompson, F.M.L. *op.cit.* p.256.

fig.15.

RELATIONSHIP OF WILKINSON & JARVIS LINES TO EACH OTHER



SOURCE: County Record Office, Deposited Plans

The owners of arable estates received a poor return on their investments in relation to the large sums of capital that they had expended on drainage, building and enclosure.⁸ In such a situation the financial benefits to be gained from the construction of a railway were particularly attractive. Railways could improve the landowners' returns in a number of ways.

Since the return on crops and animals to tenant farmers would be increased with the lowering of transport costs, rents of tenant farmers could be raised to bring in a higher cash income to landlords. In turn, the larger rent roll could then be used as collateral for loans to the land-owners based on the rent charge. Timber and his own farm products gave higher returns to the landowner once a railway was operating in the vicinity. Lower carriage charges for timber added at least 3d. per foot to the value of the cash received if shipped from a nearby railway station, while produce that was formerly unable to bear the cost of long distance cartage could now be sent to distant markets.⁹

Land could be sold to the railway company to realise either cash or be exchanged for company shares. In either case capital would be provided for further improvement of the estate or be ploughed into other investments. Where coastal or spa development was possible, investment capital thus made available could be recycled immediately into the development of leisure facilities.

8. Orwin, C.S. & Whetham, E.H. History of British Agriculture, 1846-1914, Newton Abbot, 1971, p.35.

9. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill 1876, 16 March 1876, pp. 12-20.

Other landowners had industrial or service enterprises that would benefit from the construction of a railway. Lord Stafford of Costessey, near Norwich, leased out a very successful brickworks on his Norfolk estate, while also benefitting from large industrial holdings in Staffordshire.¹⁰ Colonel Bulwer had large chalk quarries and lime-works at Bluestone, near his Heydon Hall residence. Lord Hastings's coal interests in Northumberland looked to a railway from Blakeney as a means of serving inland customers in Norfolk.

Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis gilded the lily in describing the advantages of railway construction in north Norfolk by offering plans to the landowners in which they could have a very large say in the routing of the lines to be built. In this way they could maximise the advantage of station location to the benefit of their estates, while minimising the inconvenience to field boundaries, copses or rights of way that railway building might incur.¹¹

In the event, despite all the manifest advantages portrayed to the local landowners, the first of the new propositions, the Central Norfolk Light Railway was not built in its original form. Indeed no records of the line appear to exist beyond the prospectus and the mentions of the plan in the minutes of evidence of the allied railways built by Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis. What the Central Norfolk Line did serve to do, however, was to

10. Richards, E. *The Industrial Face of a Great Estate*, ECH, 1974, p.415.

11. PRO/PYB1/834 Minutes of Evidence Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill 1880, 14 June 1880, p.11.

sow the idea of cheaply built, independent railways in the minds of the landowners. The landowners of north Norfolk were apprised of the likely costs and benefits of having railways built in an area as yet unserved by them. They were also introduced to Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis who built two other lines at the extremities of north Norfolk and later went on to build a railway from Norwich to Cromer largely along the proposed route of the abortive Central Norfolk Light Railway.

The Railway from Yarmouth to North Walsham

At the same time as Wilkinson & Jarvis were fostering the idea of the Central Norfolk Light Railway, they were also promoting other railways in Norfolk. In the east of the county they promoted a line from Yarmouth to Stalham.

The East Norfolk Railway had no plans to serve the country to the east of its line from Norwich to North Walsham and Cromer. The marshy area known as the Broads was already served by a network of rivers, lakes and the North Walsham & Dilham Canal. It contained no large settlements, though market gardening undertaken by many small owner-occupiers was of some importance, while the Broads district was already beginning to be used as a pleasure area.¹² There were few large landowners in that district, but

12. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, GYS(L)R Bill 1876, pp.30-42 and p.113.

the contractors made contact with the largest of them, Sir Edmund Lacon M.P., who had an estate at Ormesby and also had extensive business interests in Yarmouth, where he owned a bank and the main brewery.

Thus although Wilkinson & Jarvis had entered Norfolk by interesting the large landowners in their plans, their proposals to build from Yarmouth brought them into contact with a considerable number of small holders who had little to gain from railway construction. Unlike the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and the abortive Central Norfolk Light Railway, where the lines were generally supported by the landowners, the proposed line from Yarmouth, to be called the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway, was largely supported by Yarmouth commercial interests, whom the contractors had sought to influence. They gained the support of the Mayor of Yarmouth, who together with Sir Edmund Lacon, were the most active parties in promoting the new railway locally. It seemed to be a case of a town securing its rural hinterland rather than landowners securing cheaper transport for their district.

The initial meeting to promote the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway was convened at short notice, so that plans could be laid before parliament in the following session. There was some opposition from minor rural interests, but this lacked real weight. However, local subscription was not evident either, for as Sir Edmund Lacon later graphically described the end of that meeting, "when the hat was carried around, everybody

went away".¹³ There were thus few bona fide subscribers to the proposed capital of £98,000 with borrowing powers for a further £36,000.¹⁴

This did not daunt either Sir Edmund Lacon or Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis, who went ahead with their Bill for the 1876 session, and obtained an Act to build the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light Railway).

Construction of the first section of the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway was from Yarmouth to Ormesby. The building of the line proved to be as easy and speedy as Wilkinson had foreseen. The line was opened to traffic on 7 August 1877, only 15 months after obtaining its Act. Sufficient of the holiday season remained for large crowds to use the new railway in order to visit nearby villages.¹⁵

Thenceforth delays in construction occurred. At Hemsby the vicar objected to the siting of the line and the station in relation to his church. This necessitated the realignment of the track, the removal of the newly built station and the building of a fresh permanent station, as well as a temporary station in the interim.¹⁶ The spanning of the River Thurne at Potter Heigham presented even greater problems. The banks of the river were composed of peat, so that when the piles were sunk, they disappeared,

13. *Ibid*, 9 May 1876. p.58.

14. A meeting was called of landowners along the proposed route. None of the opposing landowners attended the meeting. It was said that they had been to the Great Eastern Railway's solicitors first. Of the 165 landowners along the proposed railway, some 64 were opposed to the line so that some nine months were spent in negotiating to buy the land at a cost of £22,000, about double the original estimate. This contrasted strongly with the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, where full agreement had been obtained with the landowners even before the Bill was examined. One compensation was that the contractor said that it was "the easiest district in England to construct a line in".

15. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, GYS(L)R Bill 1878, p.10.

16. DCO/MTS/24990/4115. 4 June 1878.

necessitating much greater expenditure than anticipated. Eighteen months elapsed in 1878-79 before the line was extended north of the Thurne to Catfield.¹⁷ It reached Stalham a few months later on 3 July 1880.

Despite the early setbacks in construction and also the lack of goods traffic, a dividend was paid on the Preference shares two years after the Act was obtained.¹⁸ Counsel for the Great Eastern Railway suspected that the dividend was paid out of capital in order to encourage the sale of shares by Wilkinson & Jarvis. Since £31,302 of the capital was still unissued, this may well have been the case.

In 1877 the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway changed its name to the Yarmouth & North Norfolk (Light) Railway. It sought to promote a Bill to extend the line from Stalham to Worstead which suggested an ultimate aim of access to the Midlands, far more ambitious than its original stated purpose.¹⁹ Fig. 16.

The proposed new extension met with almost universal opposition from the local landowners in the Worstead district, whose holdings it would cut, while bringing little additional benefit, since they already had a railway. In addition the East Norfolk Railway refused to grant junction to the proposed line, thus making Worstead untenable as a terminus.¹⁹ After being rebuffed

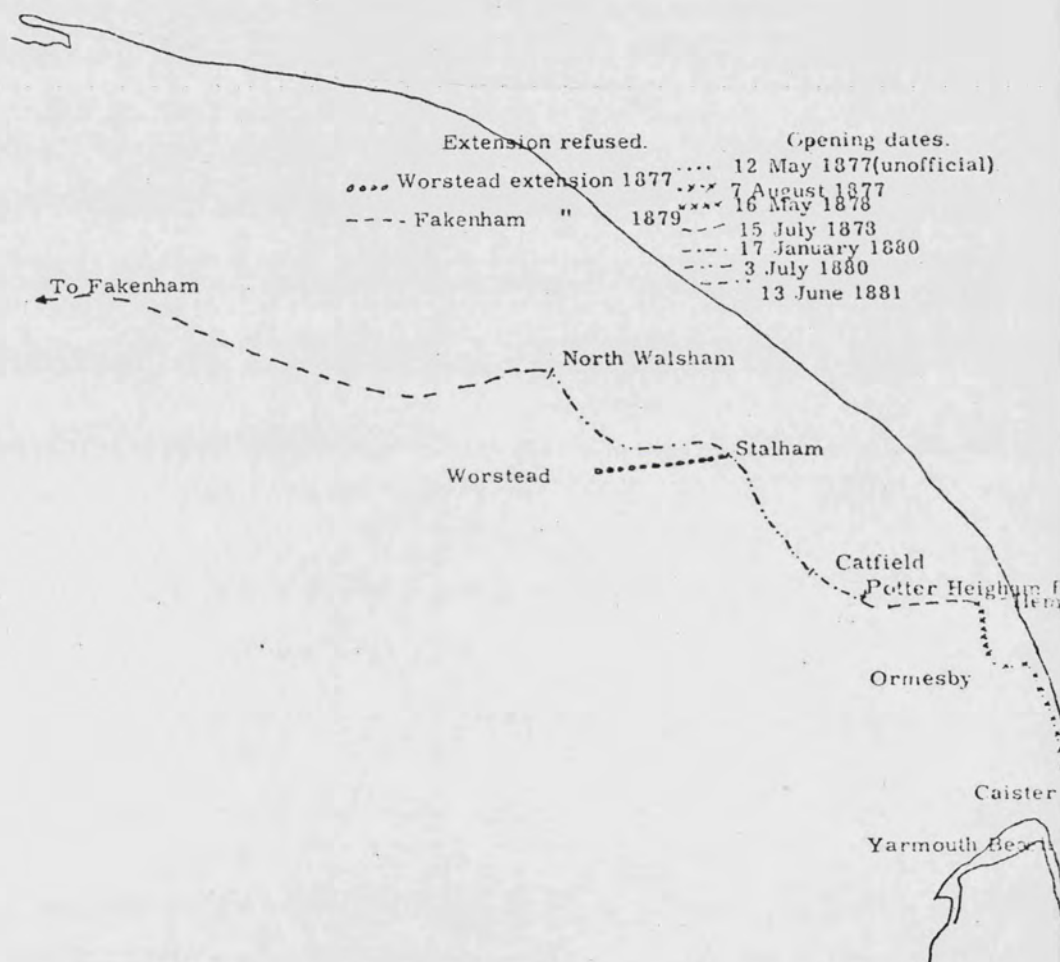
17. PRO/MT6/R730 3 July 1880.

18. HLRO Minutes of Evidence, GYS(L)R Bill 1878, pp. 168-181.

19. Ibid, p. 5.

Fig.16

SECTIONS OF THE YARMOUTH & NORTH NORFOLK RAILWAY WITH OPENING DATES
AND SECTIONS PLANNED BUT NOT BUILT.



Source: County Record Office, Depoited Plans and Books of
Reference.

in its attempt to build a line to join the East Norfolk Railway, the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway²⁰ deposited a Bill for the 1878 parliamentary session for an extension from Stalham to North Walsham.²¹ There was however no proposal to make a junction with the East Norfolk Railway there. The traders of North Walsham were in favour of the new extension and several travelled to London to give evidence for the proposed railway. They hoped to gain custom for their wares in the Broads district, thus expanding the trading hinterland of North Walsham.²²

The Great Eastern Railway was the main objector to the revised extension, acting on behalf of the East Norfolk Railway as well. Charles Parkes insisted that the new line, if built, must not abstract traffic from the East Norfolk Railway. He also wished to make sure that the new line would be at a distance from the existing station in North Walsham, to allow for the expansion of the East Norfolk Railway there.²³ In addition, the Great Eastern Railway refused junction to the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway in Yarmouth, thus effectively insulating the new railway from the national railway system. This attitude was later condemned by the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway as being "very much like a dog in the manger. They (the Great Eastern Railway) cannot supply the country themselves and will not let us supply it."²⁴

20. There was a proposed increase in capital for the new extension of £60,000 plus loan facilities for a further £20,000. This appears to be a very high figure for six miles of railway across an almost featureless plain. Even more so, as a light railway, construction costs would have been low.

21. There was a further change in name during 1878 when the Y & NN (L) R became the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway. The heavier rails and better signalling installed indicated that the "Light" appellation was a misnomer.

22. *Ibid*, pp.61-100.

23. *Ibid*, p.222.

24. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Central Norfolk Railway Bill 1881, 9 May, p.81.

Despite the opposition of the Great Eastern Railway, the Bill for the extension to North Walsham was passed, although the construction of the bridge across the Thurne was not yet finished.

Meanwhile Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis were making progress with the other railway that they were constructing, the Lynn & Fakenham Railway in west Norfolk. The gap between North Walsham and Fakenham was to be filled by the construction of a line proposed in the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway Bill of 1879, which also included lines to connect the extension to the Cromer line of the East Norfolk Railway and another line at the Yarmouth end to link the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway to the quayside tramways of the Great Eastern Railway and thus to the main line to Norwich. These proposals were very strongly opposed by the Great Eastern Railway, which had its own Western Extension Bill in parliament, in direct opposition. The two lines proposed were almost parallel and only a few miles apart. The Western Extension was passed and the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway's proposals were rejected.²⁵ This left the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway in the unenviable position of being completely isolated from through goods traffic, thereby having to rely on seasonal passenger traffic for its revenue, since goods traffic was negligible.²⁶

25. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, ENR-YNR Bill 1879, 1 May 1879.

26. HLRO, CNR Bill 1881, 10 May 1881, p.132.

After the rejection of its plans to link with the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway continued to build towards North Walsham. The methods used by Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis in building the northern section of the line were to have company employees do the earthwork, while letting the bridgework to local bricklayers. One local sub-contractor, William Wilson, did bridge-work at 4/- to 5/- per cubic yard, the main contractors supplying the bricks and lime. William Marriott, when an employee of the contractors, reported driving "half over Norfolk to buy bricks from local yards".²⁷ This was an indication of the small capacity of the local brick-making industry, which was faced with massive orders not only from the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway, but also from the East Norfolk Railway and the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, which were all being built simultaneously.

The Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway was eventually completed to North Walsham in June 1881. It was still an isolated line at both ends, although its North Walsham station was a mere fifty yards from the East Norfolk Railway Station. Goods traffic on the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway remained "next to nothing". Any goods sent by rail from local stations to the Yarmouth Beach Station of the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway had to be transferred to the Great Eastern Railway by horse and

27. Marriott, W. Forty Years on a Norfolk Railway, Sheringham, 1974, pp. 1-5.

cart at a cost of 1/- per ton, thus making it a less attractive way of sending goods than to sending them ^{by road} from villages to the north of Yarmouth direct to the Great Eastern Railway stations by carrier.

The eventual solution adopted by the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway in order to obtain the vital connection to the Great Eastern Railway at Yarmouth was to create a separate company to build the short line from Yarmouth Beach Station to the quay. This was called the Yarmouth Union Railway. Its directors were the contractors J.J. Wilkinson & J.T. Jarvis and also the Clerk of the Urban, Sanitary and Road Authorities in Yarmouth, A.S. Pinn. The latter gentleman was in charge of the highway to be used by the proposed railway. The Bill for the Yarmouth Union Railway was passed in 1880, authorising a capital of £20,000 for a horse tramway. The line was opened in May 1882, thus breaking five years of isolated operation.²⁸

The Lynn & Fakenham Railway

Both Lynn & Fakenham were already served by the Great Eastern Railway, but the routes between the two were very indirect. The land on the direct

28. The Board of Trade stipulated that passengers were not to be carried on the new line, but reserved the power to permit steamengines to be used over the line at a later date. By the summer of 1882 the line from Yarmouth to North Walsham was complete and the extension eastwards of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway was under way. The Lynn & Fakenham Railway was used as the main vehicle for completing the line across north Norfolk from King's Lynn to Yarmouth after the failure of the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway to obtain its line to Fakenham in 1879.

route proposed by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, ~~a~~ mixture of light arable land and extensive heaths, was sparsely populated with only some 11,000 persons living within seven miles of the line. Thus in this district of large estates and few people the chief motivations for building a direct line were those of landowner interest and Wilkinson & Jarvis's desire to build a link eastward towards Yarmouth. Sir William Browne-Folkes M.P. of Hillington Hall was the most active promoter of the line. He owned six route miles of the proposed line. A further five miles were to run through the Raynham Park estates of Marquis Townshend. One and a half miles of the route were through the much smaller estate of William Walker, who farmed 1500 acres at Little Massingham and had a steam mill which supplied feed for his cattle herds. The only other landowners along the route were Lord Cholmondley, who was favourable to the scheme, but dropped out of the promotion. Finally there was Lord Leicester of Holkham Hall who declined to be a promoter until a Bill was obtained, but was again in favour of the scheme. He circulated his tenants, pointing out the higher value of the land that the arrival of the railway brought, though not mentioning that higher values usually brought higher rents.

The landowners who promoted the line were willing to sell their land at agricultural values. Figures as low as £3 per acre and even in one exceptional case 2/6d. per acre were mentioned in the minutes of evidence,

thus materially aiding the cheap construction of the new line. The promoters hoped to raise agricultural rents on land served by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and also hoped to create rent charges on which money could be borrowed to invest in shares in the railway company.²⁹

The strip of land bought by the railway company was sufficiently wide for the eventual construction of a double line. Initially the line was built with a single track at an estimated cost of between £4,000 and £5,000 per mile, with an estimated total cost for the line from King's Lynn to Fakenham of £113,000. Traffic was expected to bring in £10,000 per year, while there was the future expectation that traffic from as far away as Cromer would be brought to Fakenham once the new line was established. A further incentive to investment was the success of the nearby Lynn & Hunstanton Railway on which a 9% dividend had recently been declared.³⁰ What was not said was that the Lynn & Hunstanton Railway owed much of its success to its holiday traffic, which was not likely to develop on the Lynn & Fakenham Railway as planned.

When the Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill 1876 was examined by parliament, the Great Eastern Railway was naturally an objector. Charles Parkes, managing director of the Great Eastern Railway, was called to give evidence. He

29. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill 1876, 16 March, pp. 13-17: page 12.

30. Ibid, 20 May 1876, p. 30.

complained that the promoters of the line had not approached him to make the line. He voiced his fears that the new railway was a ploy to get the Midland Railway or the Great Northern Railway into the district. This was not at that point a valid objection, as other railways were excluded from the Bill being examined,^{31A} but of course there was always the possibility of a later amalgamation with another railway. Edward Wilson, engineer to the Great Eastern Railway, suggested that a working agreement with the Great Eastern Railway, as in the case of the East Norfolk Railway, would be a suitable arrangement. A figure of 65-70% of gross receipts for the operation of the new line by the Great Eastern Railway was suggested. These terms were much harsher than those agreed with the East Norfolk Railway and the offer was not taken up. Despite the objections, the Act for the Lynn & Fakenham Railway was passed on 13 July 1876. Wilkinson & Jarvis were named as the civil engineers for the line, although they were also contractors and the major shareholders. Fig. 15.

The new line commenced at Bawsey, where there was a junction with the Lynn & Hunstanton Railway. Running powers into King's Lynn Station of the Great Eastern Railway were sought and obtained at an agreed rent of £39 per week for use of the station and £40 per week for the use of the lines from the station to Gaywood Road Junction at Bawsey.³¹ The rent of £4,103 per year on an estimated income of £10,000 was a crippling imposition.

31A. Ibid, pp. 37-39.

31. PRO/WNJ 1/Minute Book, WNJR, 23 August 1884.

The Lynn & Fakenham Railway was built in two stages. The first stage was from Bawsey to Massingham, which was opened on 16 August 1879. The section from Massingham to Fakenham was completed on 6 August 1880. The construction of the line was supervised by J.J. Wilkinson, who had his partner Jarvis build the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway from Yarmouth.³² The terminus at Fakenham was unconnected with the Great Eastern Railway and never has been subsequently. A small repair shop was built at Fakenham to carry out running repairs to the locomotives and rolling stock.

Extension eastwards of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway was a live issue by the time that its first section was opened to traffic. Despite the stress laid on its independence at hearings of earlier parliamentary committees a joint office for a company secretary serving the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway and the Lynn & Fakenham Railway had been established at Yarmouth in 1877.³³ The first attempt to link the two railways had been defeated by the East Norfolk Railway in 1879.³⁴ In the following year the Lynn & Fakenham Railway deposited plans and a Bill to extend its line eastwards from Fakenham to Melton Constable, where there was to be a junction for lines to Norwich, Blakeney and Sheringham.³⁵ The planned lines from Melton Constable were revised versions of the original Central

32. Marriott, W. *op.cit.* p.1.

33. Bradshaw's Manual, Shareholders' Guide & Directory, Manchester 1878.

34. PRO/PYB 1/823. See page 124 of this chapter.

35. Lynn & Fakenham Railway Act 1880.

Norfolk Light Railway. An additional Bill was also promoted by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway for a Fakenham & Melton Railway, following the same route as the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, but terminating at Melton Constable.

The East Norfolk Railway opposed both Bills by putting forward its own Bill for the Blakeney Extension, which was to have left its existing Western Extension at Cawston.³⁶ Since the East Norfolk Railway, the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and the Fakenham & Melton Railway Bills all competed with each other, evidence for and against each of the three schemes was heard simultaneously in June 1880.

Two of the schemes had Melton Constable as their local point. The crossroads at which either the junction or the terminus were to be sited was only a mile from Melton Constable Hall, home of Lord Hastings. He was the principal landowner of the district and had been a promoter of the Central Norfolk Light Railway. He offered land to the Lynn & Fakenham Railway for the construction of a works and necessary housing in addition to that needed for a junction.³⁶ He, like other landowners served by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, was prepared to sell land on very favourable terms. Where landowners could not afford to pay for additional shares in cash, Messrs. Wilkinson obligingly made arrangements for advances to be made, as they had done to the extent of £10,000 for Marquis Townshend.³⁷

36. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill 1880, 11 June, p.2.

37. Ibid, p.8.

The additional capital needed for the extensions of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway was £480,000. It was admitted that these extensions would make the new lines of much more than local interest, although Sir James Allport of the Midland Railway had assured Charles Parkes of the Great Eastern Railway, that his railway was not going to help the Lynn & Fakenham Railway.³⁸ Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis continued to build the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway, with a view to eventually joining it to the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, thus forming a continuous line from Yarmouth to King's Lynn.³⁹

The examination of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill of 1880 were lengthy and called into question the ability of the contractors to complete the project, as well as the amount of local support that they claimed. The local landowners gave their support to the Lynn & Fakenham Railway against the plans of the Great Eastern Railway/East Norfolk Railway for their Blakeney Extension. The Lynn & Fakenham Railway had already proved its ability to have a railway built and was actively running it. So despite the statement that "both boards (Great Eastern Railway and East Norfolk Railway) being desirous of constructing a line up in the direction of Holt",⁴⁰ it was the intruding Lynn & Fakenham Railway that was given authority to build its line, with the exception of the branch to Sheringham. The owner of Sheringham parish, Mr. Upcher of Sheringham Hall, strongly opposed the new line. He had no wish to see excursionists

38. *Ibid*, 23 June 1880, p. 122.

39. *Ibid*, 22 June 1880, p. 115.

40. *Ibid*, p. 116.

brought to his village. His other objections were that the railway would sever his fields and block his view of the sea from Sheringham Hall. These were accepted as valid objections to allowing the line to be built. However the Lynn & Fakenham Railway obtained its two longer lines.⁴¹

The Lynn & Fakenham Act of 1880 was passed on 12 August.

Construction of the extension to Norwich commenced almost immediately for the line into Fakenham had only been opened the previous week, and with the navvy gangs still intact, and contractors' plant still at Fakenham, there was no "starting up" delay. The work was pushed ahead with great speed. Within 17 months of starting, the line was opened to Guestwick a distance of $14\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Fakenham. The remaining $16\frac{3}{4}$ miles to Norwich were built in just over 10 months, ready for the opening of the line throughout from King's Lynn to Norwich on 2 December 1882. The progress was indeed remarkable when compared with the fumbling comedy of errors that was the construction phase of the East Norfolk Railway. In addition to the line to Norwich, the Lynn & Fakenham Railway also started to build the new works and attendant settlement at Melton Constable.

The construction of the Norwich extension was on a scale larger than anything yet seen in north east Norfolk. There were up to ten active sites being worked simultaneously. A thousand men and four locomotives were noted to be at work early in June 1881, while a fortnight later the number

41. Ibid, 18 June 1880, p.60.

of men had risen from 1,400.⁴² The ability of Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis to construct railways a good deal faster than the main line company could not now be doubted, so they continued their parliamentary activity to obtain an Act to complete the system.

The Lynn & Fakenham Railway deposited plans and a Bill for a line from Melton Constable to North Walsham, where it would join the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway. It also requested authority for a branch line to Sheringham, as in the previous year, and an extension onwards to Cromer.

There was also an identical Bill for a Central Norfolk Railway, which was to absorb the existing Lynn & Fakenham and the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railways to form a complete system of railways in north Norfolk. The Great Eastern Railway again opposed the construction of the lines under either railway. The parliamentary battle lasted some six weeks in May and June of 1881, resulting in the proving of the preamble of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill, but the failure of the Central Norfolk Railway Bill, with its amalgamation clauses. The weak finances of the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway were cited as reasons for this refusal.⁴³ The Lynn & Fakenham Railway Act received Royal Assent on 11 August 1881 and construction on the line started shortly afterwards. The 17 mile line to North Walsham was built in 17 months, which indicates a very high level of activity for Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis who were at work on the Norwich extension as well as for most of that period.

42. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Central Norfolk Railway, 1881, 16 May, p.22.

43. Ibid, p.278.

Operation and Expansion 1877-1883

The Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway and the Lynn & Fakenham Railway were both single track railways, built rather faster than most of the neighbouring lines in Norfolk. Although major structures and earthworks passed inspection by the Board of Trade, the subsequent maintenance of the track left much to be desired as William Marriott, contractor's apprentice, and later engineer to the railway, found that "the ballast was more or less sand, degenerating into mud, and the fencing was composed of pit props and wire".⁴⁴ Brick sheds had been constructed at Yarmouth and at Fakenham where running repairs to locomotives and rolling stock were carried out in buildings that became goods sheds after 1881. Each line had only four locomotives at first, together with a set of new carriages, so that the small scale of the facilities and the lack of equipment or space to undertake major overhauls was unimportant. Mr. Curson, a former employee of the Great Eastern Railway at King's Lynn was put in charge of rolling stock maintenance at Fakenham, where he had to recruit and where necessary train suitable labour.⁴⁵ In 1881 construction of new workshops at Melton Constable to serve both railways and their extensions was commenced.

Senior staff for the new railways were recruited from other railways or were brought in by the contractors. The staff records indicate that the more junior positions were filled by recruits from local farms and estates.

44. Marriott, W. *op. cit.* p.2.

45. Wrottesley, A.J. The Midland & Great Northern Railway, Newton Abbot, 1970, p.44.

They were men who frequently stated that they wished to better themselves and came with the references of landowners who backed the new lines.⁴⁶

In a rapidly expanding system, those who had proved satisfactory were promoted as new posts were created, while new juniors were brought in to fill the vacancies. The most notable recruit from the contractors' staff was William Marriott, a draughtsman who had served his time with Ransome & Rapier of Ipswich and had then joined Wilkinson & Jarvis unpaid to gain railway experience in 1881. He stayed on to become Engineer for the whole of the enlarged system in 1883.⁴⁷

The earliest services on the Lynn & Fakenham Railway when it opened in 1879 were from King's Lynn to Massingham, a distance of twelve miles, which had a service of four return trips a day, with an additional market train to King's Lynn on Tuesdays. Only one engine in steam was required for the services, supplied by Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis, together with the rolling stock under an agreement to run the services. At first the contractors used the same locomotives that they used for construction, these being gradually superseded by small tank locomotives built by Hudswell Clarke for both the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway. When services commenced to Fakenham in 1880, the service was increased to five trains daily, one of which was mixed, in order to cope with increasing freight traffic.⁴⁸

46. PRO/RAIL 1066, M & GNJR Staff Records Register.

47. Marriott, *op. cit.* p.6.

48. Timetable appended. See Appendix D

A crossing loop was opened at Massingham, so that block signalling had to be introduced together with permission to use more than one locomotive at a time. This was very necessary in view of the construction traffic to the new extension to Norwich.^D

The services of the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway reflect its slower and more piecemeal construction. The original service of six trains each way per day from Yarmouth to Ormesby in 1877 was extended northwards as new railheads were successively opened. Unlike the rural Lynn & Fakenham Railway, the Yarmouth line ran Sunday services all the year round with additional trains during the summer season as it served the seaside and fishing communities. The railway was itself responsible for the rolling stock, purchasing carriages from the Birmingham Carriage & Wagon Company on time payment.⁴⁹ A crossing loop was built at Martham once the line had opened north of the River Thurne.

There was a strong contrast in the amount of goods traffic between the two railways in the early years. The Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway had no connection to other railways before 1882, so that few used its services, resulting in goods receipts of only between £8 and £18 per week.⁵⁰ On the other hand the Lynn & Fakenham Railway achieved over £300 per week in busy periods, despite allegations that the Great Eastern Railway was routing traffic destined for Lynn & Fakenham Railway stations to its own nearby stations.⁵¹

49. M & GN Circle *Bulletin*, April 1976.

50. HLRO, *Minutes of Evidence*, CNR Bill 1881, pp.45/224.

51. *Ibid*, p.121.

Both lines had been constructed and then operated as cheaply as conditions permitted. Although the eventual object was to form an important cross-country line across Norfolk, the early operation was more typical of the rural branch line, so that much further work was required to make the lines suitable for an enhanced role.

Within six years of constructing starting on the first stages of the new system, Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis had built a greater mileage of track in north Norfolk than the main line company had in the sixteen years between W.S. Simpson starting to build the East Norfolk Railway and William Waddell finishing it. The antagonism between the two systems ensured that each was entirely separate from the other, resulting in much duplication, but at least north east Norfolk was by 1883 very well served by railways.

Amalgamation and Receivership 1883-1893

The management of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and the Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway had been informally amalgamated from 1877 onwards, when the secretary's office of both lines had been set up in Yarmouth. Two years later, the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Light Railway (formerly the GY & S (L) R had attempted to build a line

from North Walsham to Fakenham to link itself to the Lynn & Fakenham Railway, but had been rebuffed.⁵² In 1880 lines were sanctioned for the Lynn & Fakenham Railway to build lines from Norwich to Blakeney, covering much of the route of the abortive Central Norfolk Light Railway. The final and ultimately successful attempt to link the two railways came in 1881 when the Lynn & Fakenham Railway was authorised to build a line from Melton Constable to North Walsham. The railway was also promised sanction for an amalgamation with the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway and the Yarmouth Union Railway^H when the line was completed to North Walsham.⁵³

The act for the line from Melton Constable to North Walsham had been granted in 1881, but the merger which took place in 1883 was to be on a larger scale. In addition to the lines already mentioned, it was proposed that the Midlands & Eastern Railway⁵⁴ from King's Lynn to Bourne (Lincolnshire) and the Peterborough, Wisbeach (sic) & Sutton Railway should all amalgamate to form the new Eastern & Midlands Railway Company,

52. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, CNR Bill, 13 May 1881, p.278.

53. The East Norfolk Railway from Themelthorpe, near Foulsham, to Aylsham was one of the routes sought by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and its use would have avoided having to construct a line from Melton Constable to Aylsham, but the Great Eastern Railway would not hear of it despite the promise of rental and consequent greater use of the largely rural Western Extension of the East Norfolk Railway.

54. The Midland & Eastern Railway had been constructed by the contractors Messrs. Waring Brothers, who remained directors until 1883, together with another interested contractor, William Eckersley.

with effect from 1 July 1883.⁵⁵ This created an extensive alternative system in competition with the Great Eastern Railway at several points across north Norfolk. The enlarged form of the merger stemmed in part from the failure of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway to obtain running powers over the Great Eastern Railway and East Norfolk Railway lines except at King's Lynn, where a very high rental was charged.

The 1882 Act for the merger of four railways to form the Eastern & Midlands Railway led to their being grouped in two sub-sections. The railways to the east of King's Lynn formed the Lynn, Yarmouth & Norwich section while the other lines formed the Western Section. The working of the two sections was separate as were the annual financial reports. The amalgamation however encouraged the through running of traffic from the Midlands to Norfolk and to further such traffic, it was proposed to link the two sections of the newly amalgamated railway by a line to be known as the Lynn Loop, which avoided the need to use the King's Lynn station of the Great Eastern Railway at great inconvenience and expense. In addition there was still great interest in reaching Blakeney

55. Waring Brothers were deeply involved with another cross-country line, the Somerset & Dorset Railway from Bath to Bournemouth, which gave the Midland Railway access to the south coast. The General Manager of this ramshackle system became the General Manager successively of the Midland & Eastern Railway and of the Eastern & Midlands Railway. He was Robert Read, a master of financial juggling, who took over as Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis withdrew from everyday management of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway in 1883.

so to that end the Eastern & Midlands Railway acquired the Blakeney Harbour Company, and was granted authority to construct additional facilities on Blakeney Quay and was also permitted to construct an extension to Stiffkey, three miles to the west, where there were extensive shellfisheries.

In the months before completion of the through route to Yarmouth and the promised amalgamation of the railways composing that route, the Lynn & Fakenham Railway prepared the way for the expected increase in traffic. Between 1881 and 1883 the company took over all operations previously carried out by the contractor. Orders for larger and faster locomotives were placed with Messrs. Beyer, Peacock of Manchester. These were express-type 4-4-0 locomotives, capable of hauling fast passenger and goods trains. Servicing of locomotives and rolling stock was transferred from Fakenham and Yarmouth to Melton Constable, this operation being completed by the middle of 1883.⁵⁶

The management of the system was entirely reorganised when the Eastern & Midlands Railway took over the functions of the smaller participating companies. The head office was located at Austin Street, King's Lynn, the central point of the new system. During 1883 the local landowners who had been board members of the railways in Norfolk resigned, with the exception of Charles Aldred of Yarmouth. Robert Read

56. Marriott, W. *op.cit.* p.6.

and Mr. Slade of the Midland & Eastern Railway, the lawyers Mr. W.M. Wilkinson and J.T. Otway of London formed a much more professional team as the directors who had to face the challenge of making a group of small, largely local railways into a cross-country main line from the Midlands to the Norfolk resorts.⁵⁷ The challenge was considerable. The track was there but much of it was light. Again there were numerous points in the system at which reversal was necessary, King's Lynn, Spalding and Essendine on the route to Leicester alone. Furthermore, higher speeds, heavier trains and more powerful locomotives as well as more rolling stock were all badly needed. In effect several systems had to be standardised into a single railway. To provide for these needs, capital on a grand scale had to be raised and expertise in management was essential together with efficiency.

Two men bore the brunt of the reorganisation, William Marriott as a newly appointed and very youthful engineer was responsible for the multiple posts of mechanical, civil and signalling engineer. The even more difficult managerial and financial part of the operation was entrusted to Robert Read of the Somerset & Dorset Railway, who from his office in Westminster was nursing two modest and financially unsound railway systems. Now he took on the extension of one of them, the

57. Bradshaw's Railway Manual & Shareholders' Guide, Manchester,

Lynn, Norwich & Yarmouth section of the Eastern & Midlands Railway. His mature experience at the age of 53 and the youthful enthusiasm of William Marriott made the system work against the dire predictions of the railway journals.⁵⁸

One of the early tasks of the new management of the Eastern & Midlands Railway in 1883 was to complete the line from Melton Constable to Holt, part of the authorised line from Melton Constable to Blakeney. Messrs. Wilkinson & Jarvis had abandoned the line in the middle of 1883 when they withdrew their services, leaving the site in a state of dereliction on the outskirts of Holt. Even the section built was unballasted, its earthworks in part incomplete and no station of even a temporary nature had been built.⁵⁹ Nothing at all had been done to start work on the Lynn Loop line, which would speed up traffic destined for the systems of the Midland Railway and the Great Northern Railway.

The Eastern & Midlands Railway Board decided to open the line from Melton Constable to Holt as a short branch line as soon as possible. William Marriott used company employees to finish the earthworks and other incomplete structures so as to have the line ready for inspection by the Board of Trade. The old wooden station from Yarmouth Beach was brought to Holt to make a temporary terminal. The platform was built of

58. *Herapath's Railway Journal*, 1887, p. 1043.

59. Marriott, W. *op.cit.* p.6.

old wooden sleepers. This work enabled the opening of the line to take place on 1 October 1884. The contribution of further traffic to the line was welcomed.⁶⁰

The next new construction to be started was the Lynn Loop. The cost was estimated to be £100,000. The line was re-authorised under the Eastern & Midlands Railway Act of 1884 for this amount to be raised in stock bearing interest at 5% per year. The £5,000 interest was guaranteed by the Lynn, Norwich & Yarmouth section of the Eastern & Midlands Railway, which hoped to save the £4,108 annual rental that it paid to the Great Eastern Railway for the use of its track and station at King's Lynn.⁶¹

Further savings were expected from the line now being shorter. Work on the Lynn Loop commenced at the end of January 1885. The work was again largely done by the company employees. The brickwork was sub-contracted to the firm of Messrs. Bardells of King's Lynn. In addition to eight miles of double track, a major station at South Lynn, a goods yard and locomotive depot were constructed. Work was "pushed on with the utmost speed", so that the line was opened to goods traffic on 1 November 1885 and to passenger traffic two months later.⁶²

The Lynn Loop having now been completed, attention was now directed to the lines sanctioned to be built north of the temporary terminus at Holt.

60. *Ibid*, p.7.

61. Marriott, W. *op.cit.* p.7.

62. Wrottesley, A.J. *op.cit.* pp. 58-9.

In July 1885 it was decided that the line to Cromer would be a better line to build than the line to Blakeney. A separate Cromer Undertaking was authorised, with a capital of £240,000 Guaranteed Preference Stock at 5%. It had to be kept separate from the other capital stocks and shares of the Eastern & Midlands Railway for the good reason that receipts from the Lynn, Norwich and Yarmouth section were "not at present sufficient for dividends on the ordinary, preference, guaranteed or debenture capital".⁶³ Yet despite such an appalling admission of financial difficulties, the Cromer Undertaking went ahead.⁶⁴

William Marriott was put in charge of the construction of the line from Holt to Cromer. He commenced operations immediately after he had completed the Lynn Loop early in 1886. Bricks and other materials were brought by the company and then passed to sub-contractors who built the bridges and stations on a labour-only basis.⁶⁵ The total cost of the line was approximately £10,000 per mile. The route abounded in heavy earth-works, steep gradients and bridges, so that this was a relatively modest figure. Much of the permanent way and signalling for the new line was fabricated at Melton Constable works, indicating the great versatility in production that the workmen there had acquired in its three years of production. The Cromer Undertaking was completed in good time for the

63. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Eastern & Midlands Bill 1883, 23 March, pp. 53-56.

64. A sum of £38. 6s. 10d. was to be paid into a separate account for the benefit of stockholders in the Cromer Undertaking. Stockholders in the Lynn Loop got even more preferential treatment from traffic proceeds, ranking ahead of the Cromer Undertaking when payment was made.

65. Marriott, W. *op.cit.* p.11.

summer season opening to traffic on 16 June 1887.

The Cromer Undertaking was the last line built by the Eastern & Midlands Railway, although they proposed many more, mostly in north east Norfolk.^E Apart from the Blakeney Extension, which had been superseded by the Cromer Undertaking, the system was complete in its essential outline. Other suggestions, some little more than bargaining ploys used against the Great Eastern Railway, had been for a branch from Lenwade to Dereham in 1883, then for a line from Norwich to Martham, together with extensions into the city of Norwich. Capital of some £473,000 was involved, far more than the impoverished company could have raised for realistic projects. All of these merely duplicated existing services of the Great Eastern Railway. One later proposal, that of 1888 for a branch line from North Walsham to Mundesley, did reach fruition a decade later, but under new management and in conjunction with the Great Eastern Railway.

However investment and renewals had to continue. The through connections to the Midlands, inadequate as they were, stimulated traffic considerably. Gross receipts from all sources on the Lynn, Yarmouth & Norwich section rose from £30,000 in 1882 to over £50,000 in 1883 and continued to rise to over £80,000 by 1888.^O Such growth called for additional carriages, wagons and locomotives and the track, much of which was originally laid with iron rails, had to be relaid with steel rails

to cope with the heavier traffic. Further shed and siding facilities were installed at Norwich from 1885. The opening of the line to Cromer required three new locomotives as well as 85 goods and coal wagons, thus imposing further strain on financial resources that were inadequate in 1883.⁶⁶

In order to pay for all the necessary debts incurred by the railway, Robert Read used three ploys; the sale of stock by economising in the running of the railways, and by resort to finance companies. The sale of stock was complicated by the amount being liquidated by holders of existing stocks. In 1887 he offered £45,000 of 5% First Preference Stock for sale at a discount of 45%, but Hera path's Railway Journal doubted whether any would be taken, given that there had been no dividends from the company.⁶⁷ Some £105,595 nominal of unissued capital was held by banks and finance companies as collateral for loans. The parlous state of the company's finances was reflected by the Stock Exchange quotation for the 4½% Debenture Stock 1879-81, issued by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and taken over by the Eastern & Midlands Railway in 1883. Its price by 1887 was 79-81. This compared badly with 137-9 for Great Eastern Railway 4½% Debenture Stock, yet both coupons had been paid regularly.⁶⁸ The price of Ordinary shares, which had little hope of ever receiving a dividend, was very low indeed. Charles Parkes bought £1,035 nominal value in ordinary shares of the Eastern & Midlands Railway for a mere £32.10s.⁶⁹

66. PRO/RAIL 1066, Prospectus, Eastern & Midlands Railway, 29 July 1887.

67. Hera path's Railway Journal, 1887, p. 1043.

68. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, E & MR Extension Bill 1888, p. 59 and Economist, 1887, SE pp. 895-7

69. Ibid, p. 105.

He was thereby entitled to be a candidate for a directorship.

Despite the encouraging performance of the company stocks and shares on the Stock Exchange, Robert Read still continued to offer blocks on the market. He described the 5% First Preference Stock of 1887 as a "sound and cheap investment" when the prospectus was sent to the shareholders of the Great Northern Railway. He anticipated paying the 5% coupon on the stock within four years on this and the remainder of the company's Preference Stock.⁷⁰ Two years later, however, the Eastern & Midlands Railway was in receivership, with no interest being paid even on the Debenture Stock.

The poor financial position of the newly founded Eastern & Midlands Railway soon became evident to the staff. Robert Read started to make economies shortly after the opening of the line from Melton Constable to North Walsham. The officers of the company had to serve in more than one capacity. William Marriott became locomotive superintendent as well as engineer to the company. The accountant, Mr. Aslett, added the resident managership of the railway at King's Lynn to his existing financial duties.

70. PRO/RAIL 1056, Prospectus, E & MR, 29 July 1887.

There were also cutbacks which affected the railwaymen.

The housing accommodation at Melton Constable was limited and no new workshops were constructed. Repairs were sometimes carried out in the open air.^{70a} Expansion was dictated by increasing traffic.

Notwithstanding these courageous efforts a hand-to-mouth existence followed. Robert Read had to acquire stock and materials with the aid of finance companies who made loans at high rates of interest. The railway was unable to repay these loans. The only disaster avoided in the troubled decade before aid came from the Midland and the Great Northern Railways in 1893 was that bailiffs never took possession of the engines and the rolling stock.^{70b}

During the early months of 1889, Robert Read exhausted most of the lines of credit open to a company whose financial condition was known to be bad through the railway press. Receivership was precipitated by the Eastern & Midlands Railway defaulting on a debt of £144 to a creditor who had hired carriages to the railway. In July 1889 Robert Read was appointed Receiver & Manager to the system. He was responsible for the Lynn, Yarmouth & Norwich section of the line only, as the Midland and the Great Northern

70a. Personal Reminiscence of Grandfather's Memories from Jack Plummer.

70b. Marriott, W. p. 16

Railways took back the management of the lines west of King's Lynn.

Read's instructions were to keep the system working for the benefit of the creditors.⁷¹

Read's problem was not that of lack of business. Traffic on the Eastern & Midlands Railway continued to increase as did gross receipts, but outgoings were so heavy that net receipts of approximately £12,000 per year just did not begin to service the capital adequately. Clearly the Eastern & Midlands Railway could not continue to carry on as a separate entity and would have to be incorporated into a larger system. William Marriott summed up the position - "how were we to carry on until the line could be sold."⁷²

There were only three large companies who had a logical interest in the position and future of the Eastern & Midlands Railway, namely the Midland Railway, the Great Northern Railway and the Great Eastern Railway. Two of these, the Midland and the Great Northern Railways, were already involved with the Eastern & Midlands Railway, although having no direct financial involvement. They had been receiving traffic from the Eastern & Midlands Railway and were running connecting passenger and goods traffic.^{1 & J.}

71. Herapath's Railway Journal, 1889 p.767.

72. Marriott, W. op.cit. p.16.

The third large company, the Great Eastern Railway, had no such links with the Eastern & Midlands Railway. Together with its former East Norfolk Railway lines, the Great Eastern Railway was committed to serving the towns of north east Norfolk through its own system. The Great Eastern Railway's position threw the onus of revival onto the other two main line railways, the Great Northern and the Midland. Of the two, the Great Northern Railway was more directly involved.⁷³ It had an East Anglian traffic which it wished to safeguard. It was in co-operation with the Midland Railway,^{see n} as a better option than partnership with the Great Eastern Railway, whose main efforts were directed towards putting traffic on its own local lines.⁷⁴

The Midland Railway for its part had shown its interest in gaining easier access to the Norfolk coast when it obtained an Act in 1839 for a direct link from Leicester to the Eastern & Midlands Railways system at Bourne. Robert Read was already familiar with the directors of the Midland Railway as he had a major part to play in negotiations for the sale of the Somerset & Dorset Railway to the Midland Railway in 1876, when the joint owner was the London & South Western Railway. The Great Eastern Railway received notice early in 1891 that there was an

73. The London & North Western Railway was within a mile of the E & MR at Peterborough but was committed to traffic exchange with the GER and had shown no interest in extending its system further in East Anglia.

74. PRO/GN/Board Minutes, GNR, 3 June 1892, p. 57, and PRO/GE/B125, 1891.

understanding between the Midland Railway and the Eastern & Midlands Railway. By November 1891, Mr. Beale, solicitor of the Midland Railway, was continuing negotiations with Robert Read to "ascertain whether any terms could be arranged which he could recommend for acceptance of this Board".⁷⁵

Negotiations between Robert Read and the two main line companies continued until the autumn of 1892. Read wanted the best terms that he could obtain from the two purchasers. The final terms involved a massive write-down of the capital of the Eastern & Midlands Railway from a nominal £2,214,585 that it had reached in 1892 to £1,200,000 of the new Midland & Great Northern Railways^{RR} rent charge stock. The main beneficiaries of the new arrangements were the holders of Lynn Loop and Cromer Undertaking 5% Guaranteed Stock. They received respectively 100% and 85% of its face value in new M & GNJR "A" Stock, bearing interest at 1½% in the first year and 3% per year thereafter. The other Preference and Ordinary shareholders were to receive 32% and 16% respectively of the face value of their stocks and shares in deferred "B" stock, but only after all debts had been met. From the residue after debts were met, new stock was to be distributed 2 : 1 in favour of the Preference holders.⁷⁶

75. PRO/MR/Min. Board of Directors, 6 November 1891, 5342.

76. PRO/MR/Financial Minutes, 10 December 1891, 35269.

Despite Robert Read's best efforts, it appears that the main line companies had struck a hard bargain. Charles Grinling summed up the situation thus: "It will be seen that the two companies acquired these 113 miles of agricultural railway at a decidedly low price, and when the seaside traffic between London and Cromer, Sheringham etc. is more fully developed, the bargain is likely to prove to have been a very good one for the Great Northern".⁷⁷

The Eastern & Midlands Railway in its decade of existence, despite its many problems, had succeeded in maintaining itself as a working if threadbare entity. It brought cheaper transport to north east Norfolk both by its own services and by providing competition to the slothful giant Great Eastern Railway that had taken more than three decades to build railways into this remote area. The investors in the Eastern & Midlands Railway and its predecessors had lost a good deal of their capital, but for those who were resident locally, there was the compensation of better and cheaper transport services. Robert Read and William Marriott had made a series of small lines into a system and then sold it to two companies who were able and willing to bring the railway up to a high standard of operation. In its new form as the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways, the network that was once the Eastern & Midlands Railway continued to serve Norfolk as an entity for over six more decades.

77. Grinling C., *History of the Great Northern Railway*.
London, 1898. p. 418.

PART II

CHAPTER 4

THE COMPLETION OF THE NETWORK

Introduction.

The Extension of the Midlands & Great Northern Joint Railways System.

Traffic on the Midlands & Great Northern Joint Railways.

Expansion of the Great Eastern Railway System in North East Norfolk
1882-1914.

Co-operation of the Great Eastern Railway and Midlands & Great
Northern Joint Railways after 1893, resulting in the formation of
the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways Committee in 1898 to build
new lines.

Introduction

Despite its very uncertain start, the challenge of the old Eastern & Midlands Railway to the Great Eastern Railway's dominance of East Anglia was successful. In the twenty years before the First World War, north east Norfolk was well provided for by the two systems whose origins were so disparate.

From 1893 onwards the railway systems of north east Norfolk were under the influence of major railway companies, the Great Eastern, the Midland Railway and the Great Northern Railway, which all had interests in many other parts of England. Both systems continued to expand separately, but also co-operated in the joint development of their Norfolk holiday traffic. A remarkable feature of this period was the joint ventures by the Great Eastern Railway and the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway (successor to the Eastern & Midlands Railway) to continue railway building in the area in the form of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railway. In part this was because, when the Eastern & Midlands Railway was taken over, its successors were both companies with which the Great Eastern Railway already ran several joint ventures. The Great Northern & Great Eastern Joint Railway from St. Ives in Cambridgeshire to Doncaster had been in operation since 1882. The Great Eastern Railway and the Midland Railway jointly owned the Tottenham & Hampstead Joint Railway in north London, while the Great Eastern Railway used St. Pancras Station as its West End terminal in London for its own and Royal trains. Added to such precedents for partnership, the Norfolk coast was by the late 1890s starting to prosper as a resort area, indicating that

there was room for both systems and perhaps also the possibility of further expansion of rail facilities. The period after 1893 was thus a time when the attitude of the Great Eastern Railway towards its rival underwent a metamorphosis. The hostility of the past was replaced by cautious co-operation in areas of mutual benefit and cost saving, especially in the construction of new railways. In addition, both systems were themselves partly rebuilt to cope with the great increase in summer traffic that came to them in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

The Extension of the Midlands & Great Northern Joint Railways System

The western section of the Eastern & Midlands Railway reverted to the Great Northern & the Midland Railway in 1889. It was reunited with the rest of the former Eastern & Midlands Railway in 1893 when the whole of that railway was put under the control of a joint committee which was to run the system as a semi-independent unit from its offices in King's Lynn. Additionally, the running of the lines west of King's Lynn was to be on the same basis as for the lines to the east.

The financial problems of the Eastern & Midlands Railway had prevented it from improving its lines as it wished. The period of receivership had been one of great austerity, when only the most essential repairs

were done and neither rolling stock nor new locomotives were added. One of the first needs that the new committee faced was to supply new locomotives and rolling stock, first to augment the inadequate amount available east of King's Lynn and then to build it up sufficiently to take over the running of trains west of King's Lynn.

The two stalwarts who had taken the Eastern & Midlands Railway through its decade of financially troubled existence were parted in 1893. Robert Read retired, having reached the age of 63 years. William Marriott was reappointed to his post as Engineer in 1894, but only after the solicitor of the Midland Railway, Mr. Beale who had negotiated the change in ownership, had interceded on his behalf.¹ All other staff came under review, but most were re-appointed.² Also reviewed and thoroughly inspected were the permanent way, rolling stock and almost every other aspect of the system. After the review, every effort was made to improve the new acquisition by means of capital investment. In order to maximise the benefits to themselves of their investment, much new traffic was forwarded from the parent railways.

Even before the formal inauguration of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways, the parent companies had been busy preparing the way for a smooth flow of traffic from their lines to the newly acquired lines. A loop line at Spalding, between King's Lynn and Bourne, avoided the need to enter Spalding station and reverse trains there. This loop was opened for

1. Marriott, W. *op.cit.* p. 19.

2. PRO/RAIL 1066, M & GNJR Register of Staff, 1894.

traffic on 15 May 1893. The Midland Railway extension from Bourne to Saxby was started in 1893 by the contractor William Mousley, who later built the Mundesley branch. It was opened to goods traffic later that year and to passengers on 1 May 1894. There was thus a greatly improved connection to the east Midlands available in the first full season of Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway operation. Only the branch line to Mundesley was postponed, yet again, extra time being sought and allowed for its completion in 1894.³

The next period of construction started in 1896, when a spate of new railway Bills was presented to Parliament. The Midland Railway obtained an Act in 1896 to extend the already authorised branch to Mundesley onwards to Cromer, keeping as near to the sea as possible.⁴ In the autumn of the same year the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways and the Great Eastern Railway each proposed separate direct coastal lines from their respective Yarmouth stations to Lowestoft, again with a view to developing more of the coastline. In addition, the Great Eastern Railway sought powers to construct a branch line from Mundesley to Happisburgh, together with running powers over the branch from North Walsham to Mundesley when built. A parliamentary clash of the kind staged between the Great Eastern Railway and the Eastern & Midlands Railway was avoided by a compromise under which the Great Eastern Railway was allowed to proceed with its Bill for

3. PRO/MR Minutes of the Board of Directors, Midland Railway, 17 March 1893, Minute 5744.

4. Midland Railway Act, 7 August 1896.

the direct line from Yarmouth South Town to Lowestoft, while permitting the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway to build a connection from its Yarmouth Beach station to the new line and giving it running powers into Lowestoft.⁵ The Great Eastern Railway was authorised to construct a connection at North Walsham to the Mundesley branch and was not opposed in its application for a branch line to Happisburgh.

The building of the Mundesley branch was eventually started in September 1896 by William Mousley, whose work for the Midland Railway on the new line from Saxby to Bourne had been very satisfactory.⁶ A large four platform station was built at Mundesley by John Gomer, a North Walsham contractor best known for his church restoration. He had warmly supported the entry of the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway into the district two decades earlier, when his partner Cornish was called to give evidence before the parliamentary select committee.⁷ The line was built with few delays and was opened on 1 July 1898, in time for the main summer season.

Meanwhile the spirit of compromise between the two systems developed into outright co-operation. A joint committee was formally constituted on 25 July 1898 to work and maintain the Mundesley branch and the other lines that were to be built to develop the coastal areas.^K The Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways Committee, as the new body was known, assumed control over the Mundesley branch from its inception.

5. Great Eastern Rly Act, 3 June 1897.

6. M & GN Circle Bulletin, no. 219.

7. HLRO Minutes of Evidence, GY & S (L) R Bill 11 March 1878, pp. 61-74.

The Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways System had two contrasting sections when it was formed in 1893. The former Eastern & Midlands Railway's Lynn, Yarmouth & Norwich section had suffered from four years of extreme austerity under receivership and had been unable to equip itself fully even before that. In contrast, the Western section had had improvements made to it by the main line companies which ran it. The expected increase in traffic following reorganisation in 1893 demanded that the single track lines from South Lynn to Yarmouth, Cromer and Norwich should be improved to permit a heavier load of traffic at increased speeds.

The lines from Corpusty to Raynham Park, centred on Melton Constable, were doubled, as was part of the western section from Sutton Bridge to South Lynn. The total cost of this operation was £70,078. New signalling was introduced, using the Great Northern Railway pattern of somersault signals. William Marriott was involved with the improvements. "We started to relay the old line with 85lb. rails, pulling up the old flat-bottomed rails. This continued until the whole of the Eastern & Midland System was relaid."⁸

The greatly increased size of the railway system to be serviced meant that Melton Constable had to have its facilities enlarged and improved along with the rest of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways system. The threadbare community in the "wilds of Norfolk" as Marriott expressed it, underwent a metamorphosis.⁸

8. Marriott, W. Norfolk Chronicle, 8 April 1921.

Locomotive and carriage stock was also greatly increased in size, as was the selection of goods vehicles available. Locomotive numbers were increased from 39 in 1893 to 77 in 1900. By January 1895 the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways had replaced the parent companies in operating trains over the western section of the system.⁹

In order to facilitate higher speeds and an increase in traffic density, new passing loops were constructed at Horning, Potter Heigham and Ormesby on the line from North Walsham to Yarmouth. A further increase in speed was obtained after 1906 when the use of the Whitaker Tablet Exchanger was adopted. Each section of the line between passing loops could only take one train at a time. In order to achieve safe working, the driver of a train could only proceed onto the single line section if in possession of a leather pouch containing a tablet that the signalman had given him, so that either the driver of a train entering a section non-stop had to slow down to take the tablet, or risk missing it or injuring the signalman if the speed were excessive. The Whitaker Tablet Exchanger largely eliminated the problems of this hazardous procedure by automatically catching the tablet from the previous section and a similar apparatus on the locomotive caught the tablet for the section to be entered. Speeds of 50 miles per hour through stations were safe once the Whitaker apparatus was installed, allowing high average speeds for expresses over long single line sections, thus permitting their times effectively to compete with those achieved over double track.¹⁰

9. *M & GN Circle Bulletin*, September, 1970.

10. Wrottesley, A.J. *op.cit.* p.113.

Traffic on the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railways

New lines after 1898 and the improvement of existing services, together with increasing economic activity in the area resulted in a great growth of traffic, both passenger and freight. The former showed the more dramatic advance with the growth of new resorts.

Passenger traffic of other than a purely local nature at first came mainly from the Great Northern Railway, which had pioneered an alternative route from London to Cromer when the Cromer Undertaking was opened in 1887. Trains left King's Cross and ran along the main line to Peterborough, then reached Cromer via King's Lynn and Melton Constable. Through services from the Midland Railway commenced in 1894 when trains ran from Leicester and Nottingham to Cromer, Norwich and Yarmouth. The opening of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways between 1898 and 1906 added a plethora of additional destinations for both express trains and the very popular week-end excursions.¹⁰

On existing lines there was a great increase of train services after 1893. The number of services between Melton Constable and Yarmouth increased from three each way per day in 1887 to six each way in 1898. Services on the line from Melton Constable to Cromer increased from seven to eleven each way per day in the same period, although the Norwich line suffered a reduction of one train per day in its services. The train services increased again up to 1903, and thereafter were maintained at a high level down to 1914. There were fourteen trains a day from Melton Constable to Cromer and

ten each way from Melton Constable to both Norwich and Yarmouth, as well as further trains running over only part of the line. The surfeit of trains on the Mundesley branch has already been mentioned, while in addition to this there were twelve trains each way between Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Everywhere on the Midland & Great Northern and the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways the traffic increased for two decades after 1893, except on the coastal line from Yarmouth to Lowestoft where traffic at intermediate stations was most disappointing. Not one of the intermediate stations paid its running costs, let alone making a contribution to the costs of running the trains.¹¹

Much of the increased traffic came from the express trains and excursions that became an increasingly important part of the traffic of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways after 1893. Five express trains connected Norwich and the resort areas to London, the Midlands and the North of England via the lines of the parent companies. The through coach was an important part of this service. A coach was attached and detached to a series of connecting trains, enabling services to be run from Cromer to Birmingham or from Mundesley to Leeds without the need to change trains.¹² The complexity of the routes served can be appreciated from the map of connections provided.¹³ In addition to regular services, additional trains and duplicate trains were run when necessary.

11. PRO/RAIL 1066, M & GNJR Traffic & Expenses Book, 1894-1922.

12. Bradshaw's Guide, Manchester, 1900-1914.

13. Maps L&M thesis Appendix.

The full day excursion became an important part of the summer services in the 1890s. Most trains of this nature ran at weekends and were chartered by works for their outings, by friendly societies and tour organisers or were run by the railway companies themselves. Trains ran overnight or in the early hours of the morning from usually an industrial area, arriving at about breakfast time in the resort, then returning in the evening. Yarmouth and Lowestoft were the favoured resorts for this traffic. They also had the best facilities for receiving numerous trains. Overcrowding of the most popular resorts was one reason why further resorts were developed, but the latter did not have the facilities to cope with the vast numbers of people wanting entertainment and public houses. Cromer and Overstrand quite definitely did not like this kind of traffic.¹⁴

Another source of special passenger trains was the fishing industry, which followed the holiday season very conveniently. Scottish crews and the girls employed in gutting and packing herring at Yarmouth and Lowestoft were brought south in special trains early in the autumn and returned up to two months later. There were few passengers at other seasons, so the overall passenger traffic pattern was marked by violent swings. At the busiest season, locomotives and rolling stock had to be borrowed from the parent companies.¹⁵

14. Suffield, Lord, *My Memories*, London 1913.

15. Wrottesley, A.J. *op.cit.* p.117.

Goods traffic formed an important but variable part of the traffic of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways. Coal traffic provided a good index of economic activity on the system. It was heavy into Norwich, Yarmouth, Gorleston (where it was used by the coal-fired fishing fleet), Lowestoft and Cromer. The resorts increased their coal consumption up to the First World War, whereas the villages and market towns had a decreasing coal consumption through their station yards.¹⁶ Yarmouth and Lowestoft generated sufficient regular fish traffic for there to be two scheduled trains by 1903. In addition, there were many special fish trains during the autumn herring season. Fruit and cattle specials were seasonal additions to the goods pattern. Other traffic was catered for by pick-up goods trains, of which there were up to three per day on the lines of north east Norfolk.¹⁷

The Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways became a viable railway system for the first decade of the twentieth century thanks to the vigorous improvement of the railway facilities by the parent companies and by the addition of traffic that was not forthcoming when the lines were run by the Eastern & Midlands Railway.

16. See graphs and maps in thesis. Appendix R.

17. M & GNJR Working Timetables, Jack Simmons Collection, Leicester University.

Expansion of the Great Eastern Railway System in North East Norfolk 1882-1914

The completion of the East Norfolk Railway system in 1882 did not entirely end the expansion of the Great Eastern Railway in north east Norfolk. A further development was a direct line from Norwich to Yarmouth to supplement the single track from Whitlingham Junction eastwards. In 1879 the Norwich & Yarmouth Direct line was authorised. John Wilson, engineer to the Great Eastern Railway, was instructed to prepare working plans and an estimate of the cost in 1880. During the autumn and winter of that year the land was acquired and tenders for the construction were called in February 1881. The contractor selected was John Waddell of Edinburgh, whose work on the Western Extension of the East Norfolk Railway had given so much satisfaction. He was requested to accept a reduction of 5% on his estimate, presumably since he was already working in the county, and was asked to complete the line as soon as possible. There were no problems in the construction of the Norwich & Yarmouth Direct Line. It was opened from Yarmouth to Acle on 12 March 1883 and completed to Brundall on 1 June 1883. The Board of Trade found that the line was well laid and well ballasted, so no speed restrictions were imposed. The construction of this line by an experienced contractor appeared almost effortless after the *previous problems in* raising capital, since the Great Eastern Railway was by the 1880s able to fund its own new construction, without recourse to local capital, with all the delays that that entailed.

The proposals of the Eastern & Midlands Railway to build lines to Dereham and Martham^E that would have competed directly with Great Eastern Railway services were themselves challenged by proposals for a triangular junction at Whitlingham,¹⁸ which would have given the East Norfolk Railway direct access to the new district line to Yarmouth then being constructed in 1881. Later that year, the Great Eastern Railway proposed a much longer connecting line from Brundall to Wroxham that would have enabled trains to be run directly from Yarmouth to Dereham without coming into Norwich. Neither plan got beyond the boardroom at Liverpool Street, but it indicated that the Great Eastern Railway board took the challenge of the new railways seriously.¹⁹

The Great Eastern Railway built no more new lines on its own account after the Norwich & Yarmouth Direct Line, apart from connecting spurs and junctions. It did improve its main line from Norwich to Cromer. Large building operations in Cromer started in the late 1880s, resulting in increased traffic from London especially. Through carriages from Liverpool Street to Cromer were scheduled in the summer of 1892 as express trains stopping only at Wroxham and North Walsham. Between 1890 and 1897 the line from Whitlingham Junction to North Walsham was doubled.^{Fig.17} The main stations were improved, the platforms at Wroxham, North Walsham and Cromer were lengthened so that express trains could use them without having to pull forward. In addition, further sidings accommodation was constructed at stations en route.²⁰

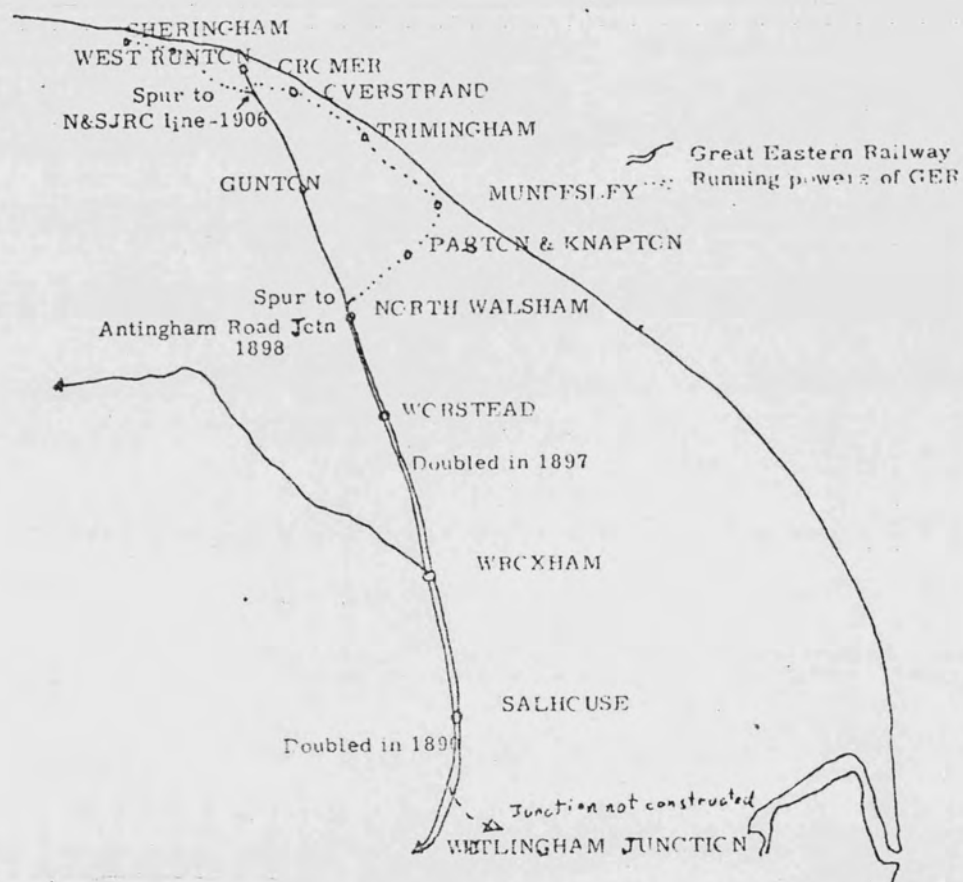
18. See map Fig.17.

19. PRO/GE/1 Minutes of the Great Eastern Railway L & C 67 and 119.

20. Ibid, 1897 W 597 and T 1163.

Fig.17

CHANGES TO THE EAST NORFOLK LINE, GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY 1890-1907.



Source: County Record Office, Deposited Plans.

Apart from the improvements mentioned, the major new construction activities of the Great Eastern Railway in this period were undertaken in conjunction with the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways. The connections that the Great Eastern Railway made were those at North Walsham to gain access to the Mundesley branch and another at Cromer Junction to take trains onto the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways line to Cromer Beach station and the line to Sheringham, where the Great Eastern Railway had facilities after 1906.^L

Co-operation of the Great Eastern Railway and the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways after 1893, Resulting in the Formation of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways Committee in 1898 to Build New Lines^K

Both systems presented separate Bills in Parliament to build coastal lines in Poppyland and along the coast between Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Such was the element of duplication in the proposals put forward by the two systems that the benefits of building and operating the lines jointly were explored and formed the basis of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways. The committee was established in 1898. In the same year, the Midland & Great Northern Railway completed the branch line from North Walsham to Mundesley. This new line was also included in the group of lines to be run by the new committee.

The three main line companies which controlled the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways Committee raised no capital from the public for their new railways.²⁵ Instead the capital was wholly subscribed by the Great Eastern Railway with a 50% contribution, and the Midland and the Great Northern Railways each contributing 25% of the capital. Four Great Eastern Railway directors and two directors from each of the other companies were nominated to serve on the committee. They included such luminaries from the parent boards as Lord Claud Hamilton of the Great Eastern Railway, Sir Henry Oakley of the Great Northern Railway and Sir Ernest Paget of the Midland Railway. All were leading members of their respective railway boards. The officers of the parent companies also held regular meetings, together with the officers of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways. The committees of officers had supervision over such matters as staffing, operation and design and expenditure.²¹

The Committee's early work concerned the newly opened Mundesley line. The lack of staff accommodation at Mundesley was met by the construction of eleven houses, the one for the station-master to be of superior quality. The total cost of the houses was £2,650. Goods facilities were developed jointly. The Great Eastern Railway appointed the carter, while the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway provided him with a horse and dray.²²

21. PRO/NAS/1/1-2

22. PRO/NAS1/1-2.

At first, each company worked its own service from its own North Walsham station, jointly providing up to 17 trains each way per day. Expenses of the operation in the first half-year of operation were thus high at £1,345, but receipts, notwithstanding that the summer season was part of the period, totalled only £911. The first half of 1899 was even worse, covering as it did the winter and spring months. Operating expenses amounted to £1,238 against receipts of a mere £570.²³ The resort of Mundesley had not developed as hoped, but work continued on the other planned extensions.

Land purchases for the Yarmouth to Lowestoft line of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways started late in 1899. Tenders for the construction were invited in May 1900. A double line was to be built from Yarmouth South Town to Lowestoft. There was also to be a connection from Yarmouth Beach station to be built by the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways, which was to be known as the Lowestoft Junction Railway. This short connection included a long and expensive swing bridge across Breydon Water as well as a smaller viaduct across the River Bure. They had to be sufficiently high to allow navigation on the waterways, thus requiring massive earthworks on the approaches to the bridges. Thus a total of £159,758 was spent on building a connection only 2 miles, 11 chains long. The section from Yarmouth to Lowestoft was let to Thomas Oliver & Sons of Rugby for £178,140. Land cost a further £45,000. The building of the Mundesley to Cromer section and the Happisburgh branch were delayed meanwhile.²⁴

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, 6 November 1900.

The lines from Yarmouth to Lowestoft were opened on 13 July 1903.

The summer quarter of that year yielded a surplus of receipts over operating costs for the two sections of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways opened of £805. This went some way to counteract the loss of £1,654 in the following nine months. Great possibilities were seen for the development of Gorleston a resort on the other side of the River Yare, opposite Yarmouth.²⁵ There were two other villages along the route of the new line which had potential as resorts, Corton and Hopton. Little new construction took place in these villages before the First World War, but they have since become best known for their holiday camps.

Land purchases for the extension of the Mundesley branch towards Cromer were started in 1902, ahead of an official agreement between the railway companies to construct the line. The landowners made what were regarded as excessive claims for compensation on the land to be used. Benjamin Bond Cabbell of Cromer Hall received £16,610 for 28 acres of poor land. The Gurney Trustees claimed £30,000 for land valued by the committee at £8,579. Lord Suffield was unable to come to terms with the committee for the sale of his land at Overstrand, but after arbitration accepted £5,000. Land purchases were completed by the end of 1902 and agreement was reached to call tenders for construction of the line in February 1902. Robert Finnigan of Northampton accepted the contract for £81,560 in November 1903. Station contracts were let separately to a local builder, Mr. Sadler of Sheringham.²⁶

25. Ibid, Half Yearly Report, 16 January 1905.

26. Ibid, Minutes of the N & SJRC, 29 June 1905.

The line from Mundesley to Cromer was the most difficult of the three to build. It was through hilly country, largely composed of glacial terminal moraine and outwash. No less than 27 bridges, 24 cuttings and a tunnel under the Great Eastern Railway had to be constructed. Finnigan was scheduled to complete the line by April 1906. He had up to 320 men working for him at one time and in addition had much more mechanical equipment than earlier contractors in north east Norfolk. A traction engine, two concrete mixers, two steam navvies and two locomotives were at work. There were delays in construction despite the apparent modernity. The harvest of 1904 reduced the workforce during the best weather for construction. The contractor was condemned as "unmethodical" and had pressure brought to bear on him to adhere to his timetable. Consequently he increased his labour force to 450 by the summer of 1905. Even so he missed his deadline of April 1906. The new railway was not opened to passengers until 3 August 1906, while goods facilities were not ready for use until March 1907. Even then the stations at Overstrand and Trimingham lacked passing loops, thus effectively making these large island-platform stations ones with single platforms only.²⁷

The opening of the Cromer to Mundesley section of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways marked the end of railway construction in north east Norfolk apart from improvements and short connections made between existing lines. The scale on which the lines were built indicated that the

27. PRO/NAS 1/1-2 Minutes of the N&SJRC, 8 February 1906-22 April 1907.

boards of the railway companies genuinely expected that there would be a huge increase in the number of people visiting the seaside, to the extent that not only were facilities increased at existing resorts, but every effort was made to provide railways to potential seaside resorts. The stations at Mundesley, Gorleston, Trimingham and Overstrand were all of such a size that they were able to handle full length express trains every few minutes if required. The line between Yarmouth and Lowestoft was double tracked throughout. An intensive train service was provided by the operating companies, which connected with trains to most major population centres in the country. But the new resorts failed to develop and the number of passenger carried was disappointingly low.²⁸

The Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways never were truly profitable. In only three years of their existence did gross receipts exceed expenditure for this highly capitalised joint system. Their most signal failure was in goods traffic, where only Mundesley and Gorleston ever managed to deal with sufficient traffic to justify the expense of sidings and signalling.

While not paying on the basis of net receipts the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways did however facilitate the operations of the owning companies. In particular the Great Eastern Railway made use of the new line to serve Sheringham. The Great Eastern Railway had its own

²⁸. PRO/RAIL 1056 M & GNLR Traffic & Expenses Book 1894-1922.

accommodation in Sheringham station from 1907. In that year, the Norfolk Coast Express from Liverpool Street to Cromer, Sheringham and Overstrand was started, the train being non-stop from London to North Walsham. There the train divided into the three sections noted. It was the premier express of the Great Eastern Railway, being composed of new bogie coaches three of which were formed into a restaurant car set. Additional coaches were added at the busiest periods and the train was run in separate sections if necessary. At the peak of the summer service, there were five express trains from London to Cromer daily. A service which was used by the businessmen and politicians who had their families in Cromer for the summer was the 8.00 a.m. Breakfast-car service from Cromer to London, which returned as a supper-car train that night. The Great Eastern Railway provided five of the seven expresses from London to Cromer. Its trains were generally heavier than those of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways. Since some 80% of the visitors staying in the Cromer district came from London and the South East,^{28a} it would appear that the Great Eastern Railway had the larger share of the passenger traffic.

Excursion traffic was important to the Great Eastern Railway. In addition to the seaside, steamer trips on the Broads from Wroxham were popular. Each town in East Anglia had an annual excursion to the seaside, several of which were to the resorts of north east Norfolk.²⁹

28a. *Cromer & North Walsham Post*, 1906. Visitors' Supplement.

29. *Norfolk Chronicle*, 1881 onwards, advertisements.

The other major event in the Great Eastern Railway's efforts to stimulate passenger traffic in Norfolk was the introduction of a bus service from Norwich to Loddon in 1903,³⁰ the first of a whole network of bus routes that soon demonstrated that it was unnecessary to continue building rural railways. The Great Eastern Railway had itself abandoned plans to build a branch line from Mundesley to Happisburgh in 1902, but continued with its joint construction of the line from Mundesley to Cromer. There were several advantages in completing the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways. The system could be served from existing motive power depots and by the extension of existing train services. Day trippers had more lines to use. The number of people using Mundesley station trebled after the opening of the line to Cromer. Since there was no increase of accommodation that could account for such an increase, it would appear likely that short excursions were the cause of this.³¹ The new lines were also useful in coping with traffic overflows from the main lines. Mundesley's large station and sidings were especially useful in this respect. Probably the most important gain made by the Great Eastern Railway was getting access to Sheringham, which had grown from a fishing village to a resort comparable in size to Cromer in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Thus, although the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways did not pay on the basis of net receipts, which were usually negative, they gave many other useful services to the Great Eastern Railway.

30. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1903.

31. PRO/RAIL 1056, M & GNJR Traffic & Expenses Book 1894-1922.

PART II

CHAPTER 5

THE RELEVANCE OF THE RAILWAYS OF NORTH EAST
NORFOLK TO THE NATIONAL RAILWAY SYSTEM

The Relevance of the Railways in North East Norfolk to the National Railway System

Until 1874, north east Norfolk had subsisted without railway services at all. Yet at the completion of railway construction in 1906, the region had an above average density of railway lines. There were 27 miles of line open for every square mile. This compared with 18.9 miles of line per square mile for the United Kingdom as a whole and 22.7 miles of line per square mile for Great Britain alone.^T The reasons for this high density appear mainly to have been the competitive building of two separate systems in the first place, and then, under the spur of seaside development, the overbuilding of lines to serve new resorts.

The former East Norfolk Railway system was largely developed to connect with the rest of the Great Eastern Railway system. The train services on its main line were mostly from London to Cromer and Sheringham, while in addition there were connections and through coaches from the Great Central Railway System, a railway that was expanding aggressively from the 1890s onwards. Goods traffic was largely agricultural, apart from coal, which came on to the Great Eastern Railway from connections at Doncaster, Lincoln and Peterborough, thence to Norwich for shunting, before being forwarded to the stations of north east Norfolk. The Great Eastern Railway largely served a rural area, but also had important London suburban services and a coal haulage function on its main line into eastern London. It always tried to develop its

rural traffic to best advantage, giving fair rates for produce destined for market.¹

The Midland & Great Northern Railways system was derived from the amalgamation of six smaller railways into a cross-country system. It was one of several joint lines in which the Midland Railway was a partner, others being the Somerset & Dorset Railway, in which it partnered the London & South Western Railway, the Cheshire Lines Committee, in which the Great Northern Railway and the Great Central Railway were partners, ^{and the Portpatrick & Wigtownshire Joint} where the Caledonian Railway and the Glasgow & South Western Railway were the other partners. The joint ownership system had several advantages. The cost of penetrating a new region was cut to a half or a third of sole ownership, while it enabled the Midland Railway to help struggling companies and prevent them falling into the hands of rivals for traffic. The result was that the Midland Railway became known as "the Octopus", a soubriquet that can be appreciated by a glance at a map of the system.²

The advantage of part ownership of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways for the Great Northern Railway was that it extended greatly the number of resorts served by that railway, whose own lines only served the Lincolnshire coast. In addition, it provided further destinations for the coal traffic which was the mainstay of the Great Northern Railway minerals traffic. It was much more profitable to keep coal traffic on the same railway or its joint lines throughout, than to hand over traffic to the Great Eastern Railway at March or Peterborough.

1. See Section III, p.190

2. See Map of Midlands & Great Northern Joint Railways in relation to the Midland Railway. I

Thus, although there was considerable duplication of routes in north east Norfolk, the vigorous expansion of train services and traffic in the 1890s was so great that there was room for considerable further investment in the main lines of both the systems constructed.^{Q, R & S.} The railways provided the transport infrastructure which allowed the resorts to expand quite dramatically from 1887 onwards. Not only was the coast developed, but also the inland waterways became fashionable for sailing holidays. Much outside capital was invested in building both a new transport system and in developing the resorts which the railways fed with passengers. North east Norfolk became part of the national market, both in sending its own products elsewhere and also in receiving visitors in large numbers from much of industrial Britain. The national increase in leisure activities of the late nineteenth century transferred a measure of the prosperity of industrial areas to a seaside rural area in a way that was impossible before railways made mass transportation a reality. The results of the railway investment on the rest of the economy of north east Norfolk form the subject of the next section.

PART III

THE RESULTS OF RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION FOR THE ECONOMY OF

NORTH EAST NORFOLK

PART III

The Results of Railway Construction for the Economy of
North East Norfolk

- Chapter 1 Introduction.
- Chapter 2 Railways and the Traditional Rural Economy.
- Chapter 3 Railways and the Resorts.
- Chapter 4 The Pattern of Growth - Population and Labour.
- Chapter 5 The Pattern of Growth - Settlement and Investment.
- Chapter 6 Summary - The Overall Impact.

PART III
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The economic stagnation of north east Norfolk lasted from the 1820s until the 1870s. It was eventually broken by the rapid construction of two separate networks of railways opened between 1874 and 1883. They were built largely with capital subscribed from outside the district, despite initial attempts to raise it within the locality. In the succeeding decades there were massive changes to all parts of the local economy, many as a direct result of the initial investment in the railways. Others were only indirectly ascribable to the railways and might have occurred in any case. Some changes were peculiar to the locality, others part of current national and international trends.

The formerly agricultural economy of north east Norfolk was transformed into one that catered for the leisure pursuits of an increasingly urbanised country. The agricultural sector of the local economy in contrast to the strong growth of the leisure sector, was gravely weakened by the agricultural depression of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It did, however, find wider markets for its produce, and was not as badly hit as the arable agriculture of the neighbouring East Midlands.

The transport and economic changes resulted in a redistribution of wealth, population and non-agricultural activity within north east Norfolk. These changes were strongly related to the growth of resorts and economic centres well served by the new railways. The pattern which emerged was different in several respects from that which was seen in other parts of Norfolk; there was sufficient expansion of the economy of north east Norfolk for the population to rise, whereas it fell elsewhere in rural Norfolk. The local landowners benefitted greatly from the changes resulting from the railways that they had promoted. They diversified their sources of income where possible in the wake of railway construction. Yet the growth areas were in marked contrast to parishes where it was not possible to diversify the economy or where opportunities were not grasped or where there was no nearby station from which to take advantage of transport developments.

PART III

CHAPTER 2

RAILWAYS AND THE TRADITIONAL RURAL ECONOMY

Introduction.

The Great Agricultural Depression.

Railways and the Marketing of Produce.

Changes in Transport, and the Impact of Railways on
Previous Systems of Transport.

Landowners and the Search for New Sources of Income.

Introduction

The agricultural depression which started in the mid 1870s was severely felt in north east Norfolk, but the ameliorating effects of railway building, which was at its peak between 1873 and 1883, made the depression more tolerable in the early stages. Large amounts of new capital were invested in the district, which had suffered from half a century of economic stagnation prior to 1873. A prime beneficiary of the investment was the local building industry^V and the allied industries that supplied it. The local landowners were also major beneficiaries. They were able to sell their land to the railway companies and later to property developers if their land were located near to the coast or at railway junctions. Active local entrepreneurs opened new businesses such as pleasure boatyards and hiring companies,^{HH} apartment letting, hotels, shops of many kinds, and there was also scope for expanding existing businesses.^W For the first time in many decades local youth had an opportunity to obtain work close to home in considerable numbers. In contrast the agricultural sector was badly affected by the lower priced imported foodstuffs which railways brought cheaply to all parts of the country. The lower prices received for grain and later meat forced the farmers to try to lower wages, obtain rent reductions and economise. Rates were lowered in most rural parishes as a result, thus in turn reducing the income and spending power of the large landowners, unless they were favourably placed to compensate their income elsewhere by judicious investment. For the tenant

farmer or labourer who wished to improve his position there was little alternative to changing jobs or to migrate. A few who had some capital were able to go into business.

Capital investment provided local attractions to encourage visitors from other parts of the Country. An increasing flow of holidaymakers and excursionists came from London, the Midlands and other parts of Britain, thereby creating a large seasonal demand for servants, entertainment, boats and local produce. Provision of these from within the district enabled jobs to be created, thereby helping to reverse the outward migration of rural labour of earlier years.

The Great Agricultural Depression

British agriculture was exposed to a common series of trends from 1873 onwards. Increased imports of grain and later frozen meat and dairy produce from overseas led to falling prices, especially in the arable sector of the farming economy. For the next two decades there was a constant decline in farming profitability, pictured near its lowest point by Sir Henry Rider Haggard at the turn of the century.¹ East Anglia was the region of Britain most dependent on the price of grain,

1. Haggard, Sir H.R. Rural England, London, 1902.

both for direct sales and for animal feed. It was also the most poorly endowed of the well-populated regions in respect of minerals and industry, so that the depression of farm prices was likely to hit such a region particularly badly.

Within the confines of East Anglia, north east Norfolk was one of the most backward parts of a backward region in 1873. This was especially so in respect of transport and industry of the type developed in the middle of the nineteenth century, being largely dependent on agriculture for its prosperity. Its overdependence on grain, root crops and beef cattle was only leavened by some market gardening in the vicinity of Norwich and Yarmouth and by a very small seaside development. The rural crafts, millers and workshops served an almost entirely local clientele.

The most basic fact of life for arable farmers in the period of the Great Depression was that if they continued to produce their traditional crops in the traditional way, they would go bankrupt. The system of High Farming, *and operating a four-course rotation of crops* was an early casualty of harder times. The diminishing prospects of profitability in arable farming resulted in lower acreages of grain being sown and of lower yields for the crops sown as the intensive cultivation and manuring of them was ended. There was a decrease in the number of farm labourers and wages fell persistently from their high point in 1874 until 1891.

Permanent grassland, on the other hand, expanded in area in every parish studied,² despite north east Norfolk being one of the driest areas in Britain. Notwithstanding this expansion of grassland, there was a tendency for the number of cattle to fall^{LL}, as did the farm labour force.

A less depressed sector of agriculture was market gardening.^{KK} As early as 1830, a farmer in the Briston district saw the expansion of market gardening in his area as a strong possibility.³ The opportunity to expand in that sector had already been seized strongly in the Fens of west Norfolk.^{NN} Within north east Norfolk, the only areas where there was a considerable increase in the acreage of market gardening was in the Flegg district to the north of Yarmouth and also on the northern fringes of Norwich. The remainder of north east Norfolk was however little affected by market gardening.⁴ No great concerted effort was made to change and intensify agricultural land use in or near seaside resorts in order to supply the seasonal demand. The Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways served the main areas of market gardening and was presumably able to transport the produce to seaside resorts as required.

In consequence of the ~~problems in~~ agriculture, the population of the agricultural villages continued to decline from 1871 to 1891, as did the number of cottages in agricultural villages.⁵ Few new cottages were built.

2. Agricultural Returns, Parish Summaries, Norfolk 1874, 1894.

3. HLRO, Minutes of evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill, 11 June 1880, p.42.

4. See maps based on Agricultural Returns^{NN}.

5. Census Reports, Occupation Tables, Norfolk 1881, 1891.

The workers who remained on the land suffered falling money wages. However, many basic foodstuffs, especially bread, fell in price, so despite falling wages, there was some improvement in living standards. In addition the new railways brought in manufactured goods at a much lower cost than previously. Before 1874, all non-local goods had to bear the high cost of carriage by cart from Norwich⁶ or from the nearest waterway. Railways broke local monopolies in beer, flour milling and building materials. Household heating and cooking became cheaper as the delivered price of coal fell in most villages.⁷

The lot of the farmer, whether tenant or owner occupier, deteriorated from that which he had experienced during the period of High Farming. The tenant was able to plead with his landlord for a lower rental, but only on evidence of real hardship. The owner-occupier was faced with the need to make economies in order to alleviate the effects of lower prices. For both types of farmer and for landlords, the returns on investment became derisory in relation to the capital involved. When land did change hands, often a thrifty Scot moved in, aided by the Bank of Scotland or the British Linen Bank. The whole Scots family worked on the farm, often from dawn till dusk, to the surprise of the somewhat gentrified resident farmers.⁸ Some local farm workers and rural tradesmen took land at the lower prices and rentals prevailing in the 1880s. They were prepared to work hard and to carry on with a trade or other business and they appeared to make a greater success of farming than did many whose sole occupation had been

6. Rates varied from 6d to 1/2d per ton per mile.

7. Springall, L.M. op. cit. Appendix R.

8. Personal comment from the Millar family of Lessingham, whose ancestors migrated south in the 1890s.

farming.⁹

Despite difficulties experienced in common with other parts of East Anglia, agricultural failure was less intense in north east Norfolk than in many other parts of eastern England. The factors behind agricultural failure were many and diverse, but they seem to have been especially severe in areas of the east Midlands, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and inland areas of Norfolk where diversification of crops, animals or the acquisition of alternative sources of income would appear to have been very difficult. Even within the relatively small district of north east Norfolk there were variations in the time and place where bankruptcies occurred. The worst years for bankruptcy in north east Norfolk in P.J. Perry's samples were those from 1881 to 1883. Most of the failures then occurred on the boulder clay lands to the north west of Norwich which at that time were furthest from any railway or waterway. The few local industries, concentrated in the Wensum valley, were simultaneously undergoing a very difficult time. Failures in the period 1891 to 1893 were few and scattered. At no time in the three periods sampled by Perry was the coast of Poppyland affected by farm failures, indicating the beneficial effects of the new markets for land and produce.¹⁰ The easily tilled loams around North Walsham and in the Flegg area had a lower incidence of failure than the wet and difficult boulder clay lands even in the early 1880s.¹⁰

9. Haggard, H.R. *op.cit.* p.461

10. Perry, P.J. *Where was the Great Depression*, AHR 1972.

The near elimination of farm failure in the boulder clay district after the provision of a railway from Norwich to Melton Constable would appear to be more than merely coincidental. The lower transport costs allied to the other economies must certainly have strengthened the resistance of the surviving farmers to economic failure.

The blanket title of the years 1873-1896, characterised as the Great Depression, in north east Norfolk as in the rest of the country, covered a multitude of events and responses of those events in a period of great economic change. The depression affected the traditional economy of the landlord,¹¹ farmer, farmworker and village craftsmen, and many others beside. Some suffered, others benefitted, as did the places in which they lived. New opportunities arose,¹² which were capable of alleviating some of the suffering caused by economic change.

11. There was some movement towards mechanisation during the Great Depression in Norfolk. Numbers of agricultural machine attendants doubled between 1881 and 1901 but this factor was only marginally important in the total reduction in farm labour since there were only 423 of them in the whole country even in 1901. (Census Report, Occupational Tables, 1881-1901).

12. Urban areas in north east Norfolk varied in their response to agricultural failure and depression. North Walsham achieved a steady growth in population while its industrial structure underwent a metamorphosis. ^X Resort towns ^Y and villages grew in size mostly from the 1880s onwards, while at Melton Constable a completely new industrial centre emerged. Norwich and Yarmouth, on the southern fringes of north east Norfolk, continued to adjust their industrial structure to changing economic conditions.^{PP} The other market towns, Aylsham, Reepham, Holt and Stalham stagnated or declined in importance. These were all merely intermediate stations on the new railways, a point which will be developed later. (Also see map).

Railways and the Marketing of Produce

Until 1874 north east Norfolk was doubly disadvantaged, in that it was at least 100 miles from the nearest major concentration of population^{FF} in need of its surplus and also until then without its own rail connections to those markets. It was a disadvantage shared by only one other region in England, the south west peninsula. Thus it was necessary for such remote areas to be granted preferential railway terms if they were to compete directly in terms of price with areas closer to London and the Midland urban markets. The availability of rail transport after 1874 provided opportunities for sending agricultural products, bricks, and fish to London where none had existed before, an opportunity which counterbalanced to some extent the effects of the agricultural depression.

The Great Eastern Railway built Stratford Market, some three miles east of London, to accept and sell produce consigned by rail to London. Wholesalers and retailers there would receive truckloads of fruit and vegetables from any station in East Anglia and forward the money to the farmer. The railway was exceptional in this matter, drawing praise from Sir Henry Rider Haggard for the encouragement that it gave to East Anglian growers large and small.¹³ Sir William Acworth reported one of the Great Eastern Railway representatives as saying "we will reduce our rates and do what we can to lighten the burdens on our customers, the farmers."¹⁴ A somewhat less helpful function of Stratford

13. Haggard, *op.cit.* p.450.

14. Acworth, Sir W. *The Railways and the Traders*, London 1891, p.366.

Market was that it also acted as the main receiving market in London for the produce of the Netherlands and Denmark which had been landed at Harwich. Rider Haggard observed the process at Manningtree where he saw "wooden cases that looked like large, rough coffins. These were en route for Harwich to be shipped to Holland, whence they would return in a day or two full of foreign meat." The Great Eastern Railway charged lower rates for the large continental consignments from Rotterdam or Antwerp than they charged for rail consignments from north of Norwich.¹⁵ There was also a widespread feeling that the railways actually favoured the large train-load consignments of foreign produce by granting lower rates than they did for truckloads of English produce.¹⁶

Fresh produce from north east Norfolk however could compete on grounds of being got to market quicker than continental produce, so the special rates for 20lb. railway boxes which were charged 4d. by the Great Eastern Railway was a great help, while there were even lower rates for such bulky, low value items as potatoes and turnips, typically charged 5/- per ton from Norfolk to London.¹⁷

A wider market also was available to the fishermen of north east Norfolk. Fish, crabs and shellfish were regularly consigned from Cromer once the railway opened in 1877.¹⁸ Fishermen from both Sheringham and

15. Haggard, *op. cit.* p. 456.

16. Royal Commission on Agriculture, *Final Report*, pp. 324-5.

17. GER Rates Book 1895.

Cromer as well as nearby villages brought boxed fish to Cromer station for consignment to London. Landing of large quantities of fish was always difficult on the coast of north east Norfolk, but formerly it had been necessary for Sheringham boats to land their catches at Grimsby or other ports served by the railways.¹⁸ The arrival of the Eastern & Midlands Railway further extended the opportunities available to fishermen and market gardeners. Special fruit and fish trains were developed to take goods from Norfolk in the evening for delivery the following morning to points west of Peterborough.¹⁹ The area that the new railway concentrated on was the Flegg district in which it held a monopoly of rail transport. It was less successful in obtaining a large share of the fish traffic from Yarmouth, but Sheringham and Cromer both used its services together with those of the Great Eastern Railway.²⁰

Changes in Transport and the Impact of Railways on Previous Systems of Transport

The older forms of transport changed a great deal in the four decades between the opening of the first railway in north east Norfolk and the start of the First World War. The roads changed from being the only means of land transport to being an adjunct of the railways, their goods and passenger

18. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, L & FR Bill, 16 June 1880, p. 139.

19. Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways Working Timetables, 1894 onwards.

20. See graph S, Appendix

services were focussed on the large number of new railway stations in the district rather than on the former railheads of Norwich, Yarmouth and Dereham. The inland waterways maintained their traffic until the last decade of the nineteenth century and indeed added to it with the start of pleasure boating on the Broads, but thereafter traffic fell away, being ended altogether on the Aylsham Navigation after the flood of 1912 had damaged the locks. The small sailing vessels which formed the chief means of coastal transport, trading from beaches and the creeks of Blakeney Harbour, ceased to trade, while traffic through Yarmouth fell away^{BB} and also changed its nature as small sailing vessels were replaced by fewer and larger steamships.^{DD}

Inland waterways in north east Norfolk remained intact for over two decades after the opening of the East Norfolk Railway. There are few statistics available to show traffic trends, as these isolated waterways were largely ignored by the authorities in London, but such figures as we have indicate that traffic was largely maintained for at least a decade after the first railway was opened.^{DD}

Railways served almost all places formerly served by the waterways in 1883. Strong fears had been expressed as to the likely effects of railway competition on the existing waterways. Despite gloomy prognostications, the North Walsham & Dilham Canal collected £525 in tolls during 1888, nearly as much as it had annually in the decade before

the East Norfolk Railway was built²¹ Thereafter traffic appears to have fallen away. No returns appear to have been made after 1888, none appears either in the Board of Trade Returns or in Bradshaw's Canals & Navigable Rivers of 1904²², but Bradshaw's noted that there was not much traffic done on the canal. The upper mile and three furlongs of the canal had been abandoned in 1893 and the rest was closed in 1935. The Aylsham Navigation and the associated River Bure down to Yarmouth fared somewhat better as they carried increasing pleasure traffic from the 1880s onwards.²³ The toll income of the navigation fell from £476 in 1873 to £345 in 1888²⁴, but then remained at about that level until closure through flood damage in 1912.

Further evidence of the relative and absolute decline of the waterways as transport arteries comes from the Census Occupation Tables for Norfolk. There were 603 bargemen in Norfolk in 1871²⁵. This figure had declined to 496 in 1891 despite the lowering of the age recorded from 20 years to 10 years.²⁶ By 1911 the number had sunk still further to only 362.²⁷ There was thus a delayed decline in the waterway system. Their tied customers, especially the Press family, who owned the North Walsham

21. The tonnage using the North Walsham & Dilham Canal is not known as the owner did not act as carrier, but even after he had deducted all expenditure on works and maintenance, there was still a net revenue of £167. The owner, Edward Press, had two water mills on the canal and owned five trading wherries, some of which were converted at his North Walsham boatyard into pleasure wherries.

22. de Salis, H., Bradshaw's Canals & Rivers, Manchester, 1904.

23. GYPHC Register, County Record Office, Norwich.

24. Expenditure on the Aylsham Navigation was as low as £132 per year, so that in 1888 there was a surplus of £213. (CRO/Report of the Norfolk Commissioners with Respect to the River Bure, 1888). A typical trading entry for 1888 was for the wherry 'Mayflower' which in the course of the year made 42 laden trips, carrying in all about 500 tons. (GYPHC Register, CRO, Norwich).

25. Occupational Tables, Census, Norfolk, 1871.

26. do. 1891.

27. do. 1911.

& Dilham Canal continued to use the canals for many years since they were still cheap at 2d. per ton per mile. For customers who had facilities alongside the waterways they offered a cheaper service than could be obtained by hauling goods to the nearest station and despatching them with a further cart journey at the other end. The mills at Aylsham and North Walsham were a case in point. Their imported grain, used when local grain was unavailable, came upriver from Yarmouth, from ship to wherry and straight into the mill. As old customers slowly declined in number without new replacements, so the traffic on the waterways gradually faded away. Some of the wherries were converted to pleasure use and they and the purpose built pleasure boats helped maintain summer traffic at least on the waterways almost up to the First World War.²⁸

The coastal trade which involved the beaching of vessels on exposed beaches disappeared in the late nineteenth century. In the 1870s three such ships were registered at Cromer, but the last of these ceased trading in 1887.²⁹ Attempts to make a new and deeper port at Blakeney, proposed by both the East Norfolk Railway and the Eastern & Midlands Railway, failed to mature, leaving that port unable to cope with the newer steamers, bereft of its traditional coastal trade, and with only a residual function of serving a dwindling number of older vessels. The number of Master Mariners recorded at Blakeney and the neighbouring Cley fell from 26 to 12 between 1875 and 1892.³⁰

28. Savin, A. *op.cit.* p.46. 29. *ibid.* p.49.

30. Kelly's Directories, Norfolk, 1875, 1892.

Road traffic experienced a changing pattern as a result of the building of railways in north east Norfolk. Only the Fakenham turnpike which had long suffered a measure of railway competition had been in deficit at the time of its extinction in 1880. The North Walsham and the Aylsham and Cromer turnpikes had a surplus of about £100 a year before the arrival of the railway. However, surpluses of this magnitude though sufficient for routine maintenance were totally inadequate for any heavy new capital expenditure, which would have required the raising of a loan.^{31-32.}

A significant impact of the railway on the roads was that carriers rapidly changed their routes from the long distance ones based on Norwich and Yarmouth to a pattern of fewer routes with shorter mileages, which by 1881 linked points not served by the railway to some of the newly opened stations. Later the railways themselves developed their own carting services based on their more important stations. The number of carriers and carters in rural Norfolk (excluding Norwich and Yarmouth) rose from 729 in 1871 to 1527 in 1891.³³ This rise, together with a reduction in long distance carting journeys in a considerable part

31. Traffic on the turnpikes in 1874 appears to have been very thin. If the annual toll receipts from the North Walsham turnpike is divided by the number of days in the year and then divided by the average toll of 6d. it would appear that less than 40 tolls a day were paid on this turnpike. There were some 50 to 60 a day on the much longer Fakenham turnpike and about 100 a day on the Norwich to Aylsham and Cromer turnpike.

32. All the forms of transport which pre-dated the railways in north east Norfolk were low capital and locally controlled ventures, with the services operated at the whim of private carriers. They had few reserves to combat poor trading or damage by fire and weather. Inland waterways and coastal shipping disappeared, but road transport increased on the roads now controlled by the county road boards.

33. Census Reports, Occupation Tables, Norfolk 1871, 1891.

of the county would indicate a marked increase in the density of local road traffic after the winding up of the turnpike trusts.³⁴

The railways greatly increased the flow of both passenger and goods traffic into and out of north east Norfolk.^{O & P} Despite the near ubiquity of access to railway stations by 1887,^{EE} when almost nowhere in the district was more than five miles from a station, horse traction was needed on an increasing scale to haul goods locally and to pull the horse buses, hackneys and other conveyances that appeared more frequently in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Road transport became cheaper to some extent shortly after the opening of railways in north east Norfolk when the turnpike trusts were wound up in 1875-6. Road maintenance was transferred to county road boards, which started to improve parish roads as well as turnpikes.

The railways tended to attract new traffic and their natural ally in distributing and collecting both passenger and goods traffic was road transport. There was a considerable increase in road transport in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but it would seem that the average road journey in north east Norfolk became shorter.³⁵ Established traffic on the

34. A traffic survey carried out by the GER in 1880 (HLRO, Min. of Evid. Yarmouth Union Railway Bill 1880) counted 150 vehicles in winter and 400 in summer entering Yarmouth from the north, including traffic from the GER railway station.

35. Other indicators of road traffic changes were the number of craftsmen who depended on road transport for their livelihood. There were 76 wheelwrights listed in the Norfolk directory of 1875 for the north east Norfolk area. By 1896 the number had risen to 103. Coach and carriage builders on the other hand fell from 11 in 1875 to 10 in 1896, but there was considerable relocation. New businesses started in Cromer (2) and Catton (1), (where there were large numbers of wealthy people)

inland waterways remained with that mode of transport for a considerable period after the coming of the railways, but the canalside industries declined or the waterway ceased to function at a later date, thus increasing the importance of the railways as a means of transport. Coastal shipping transferred to steamships in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and lost other traffic to the railways, so that there was no renewal of sailing ships that were lost or scrapped from the 1880s onwards, resulting in the cessation of the traffic on Norfolk's beaches.

Landowners and the Search for New Sources of Income

The great landed estates of north east Norfolk remained largely intact in the last quarter of the nineteenth century despite the economic pressures. No important name listed in the 1878 "Domesday" list of John Bateman had disappeared in a list of 1912.³⁶ Some new sources of income for landowners have already been noted, such as the sale of small parcels of land to railways and housing developers. These yielded good capital returns and sometimes substantial rents for very little loss of land. Miniature estates of a few acres each were carved out of Lord Suffield's land at Cromer and Overstrand for his prestigious banking clients. Gunton Hall itself was hired by a nouveau riche sportsman as a base for pheasant shoots in 1887. Men with new money were

36. Bateman, J., *The Great Landowners of Great Britain & Ireland*, London, 1878.

generally unwilling to take over arable land on a large scale, recognising the poor returns on farming investment, but they desired the social prestige of indulging in country pastimes, renting grouse shoots or joining hunts with the aid of needy or greedy landowners unable to support their estates from their farming income.^{JJ}

The new farming tenants of the landowners, Scots or local tradesmen, were able to rent their land at about half the rate charged before 1875. Their economic methods of cultivation yielded less, but were cheaper to use, even if they did little to improve the land. The landlord for his part had to find further income where he could, but at least *as yet* There were no Death Duties to force the breakup of the estates.

Long before the continuous fall in farm produce prices that started about 1875, landowners had sought alternative means of earning a higher income to pay for their elevated standard of living and their often very large standing commitments to charities and retainers in the district. Rent returns to landlords were low. Even during the prosperous year of 1873, estimated rental on the land of J. Buxton, Esq. in the Cromer district was 47p. per acre, while for the intensively cultivated market gardening land near Ormesby, Sir Edmund Lacon received an average rental of £1. 91p per acre.³⁷ Indication of the real value of land is difficult to obtain owing to the fewness of estate sales, but an idea of the probable value of land on sale can be gauged from the following formula: Asking prices were customarily based on the annual rent

37. HLRO, Return of Owners of Land, Vol.72, 1874.

multiplied by 30, which would give a range of values of from £15 to £60 an acre in north east Norfolk although on the sandy heathland of west Norfolk, the asking price to the Lynn & Fakenham Railway was as low as £3 an acre.³⁸ At the other extreme, Sir Henry Stracey received £176. 75p per acre from the East Norfolk Railway in 1878.³⁹

The landlord had a gross return of a little over 3% from his rents if one uses the 30 years' purchase formula. Had the land been valued more highly, then the yield would have been proportionately lower. This was a return that was below that obtainable on government and good class railway stocks at the time.⁴⁰ Neither involved any real risk to the holder, nor any effort or supervision. Yet the meagre returns the landowners obtained had in part to be disbursed in subscriptions to local good causes, churches, hospitals and to faithful retainers. In addition, supervision of large estates by good agents was necessary and expensive if the tenants were to be persuaded to keep the land in good heart.

For traditional landowners, a solution to their economic problems lay not in the disposal of their estates, which were regarded as something of a sacred trust, but in investment in alternative sources of income from their existing resources.

38. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill, 1878.

39. PRO/ENR 2, Minutes of the Aylsham Extension Executive Committee, ENR, 8 April 1879.

40. Economist, Stock Exchange Prices, 1855-75.

Some landowners of north east Norfolk had industrial interests elsewhere, such as Lord Hastings who owned coal mines at Seaton Delaval in Northumberland.⁴¹ Those who had to depend solely on their Norfolk holdings tried to diversify. Mr. Upcher of Sheringham had a coal distribution business in the locality of his compact and owned a coffee house in the village, possibly as a philanthropic reply to demon drink.⁴² Mr. Scott Chad of Thursford and Barney was a brickmaker as well as landowner.⁴³ Lord Suffield had owned a hotel in Cromer before his second and much larger essay into resort development which involved the laying out of a golf course, estates and a larger hotel. The Gurneys of Northrepps had banking interests. The railways were built at a time when the rewards of landowning were declining, but they in turn threw up opportunities which the landowners by and large grasped in their search for compensatory income.

The benefits to the landowner of resort development are exemplified by Lord Suffield's conversion of a sheep pasture at Overstrand into a golf course, thereby increasing his income from a "sandhill used for pasture, and not very good for that, bringing in only £80 per annum. I turned it into a links.... now it brings in £400 a year. I helped also to build the Links Hotel, an expensive affair, for there was nothing but

41. Thompson, F.M.L. *English Landed Society in the 19th Century*, London 1969, p. 254-5.

42. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, L & FR Bill 16 June 1830, pp. 137-9. See next page.

43. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, L & FR Bill 11 June 1830, p. 23.

a sandhill to build on and very deep excavations had to be made. Besides this, new houses in both Cromer and Overstrand, while adding ultimately to the value of the property, swallowed a great deal of capital."⁴⁴

The other major landowner in Cromer, the younger Benjamin Bond-Cabbell of Cromer Hall had inherited the estate from his father who bought it for £65,000 in 1852.⁴⁵ Bond-Cabbell collaborated in the building of the west side of Cromer with a Mr. Ingram, a property developer who had built Westgate-on-Sea.⁴⁶ His Cromer brickfield was using over 300 tons of coal a year by 1880 and was the precursor of a chain of coastal brickworks to supply the needs of the resorts for building materials.⁴⁷

Bond-Cabbell also had interests in the gasworks at Cromer which yielded 5% on investments, much higher than agriculture could be expected to yield.⁴⁸

The Upchers of Sheringham Hall, who had originally opposed the extension of the Eastern & Midlands Railway, eventually reconciled themselves to the railway crossing their parish, Younger members of the family were sufficiently interested in development to invest in the improvements. One became a director of the largest hotel in town, the Grand Hotel.⁴⁹ The opportunity both to control development on the coast and to profit handsomely thereby was seized by resident landowners.

44. Suffield, Lord, *op.cit.* p.84.

45. Savin, A. *Cromer*, Holt 1937, p.51.

46. HLRO Minutes of Evidence, CNR Bill 3 May 1881, p.58.

47. Kelly's Directory, Norfolk 1893.

48. Annual Reports Cromer Gas & Coke Co., Colman & Rye Library, Norwich.

49. Prospectus, Grand Hotel, Sheringham.

The inland landlords who had no leisure facilities to develop also made the best of their opportunities by developing what they had; Lord Stafford's brickworks at Costessey produced a variety of decorated bricks which were widely used. The railways helped by offering lower rates for consignments of bricks to London. The limeworks at Bluestone, on the estate of Colonel Bulwer continued to produce its premium line.⁵⁰ Lord Hastings benefitted by selling further land in Melton Constable for works and housing extensions to the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways after 1894 and also developed an estate of terraced houses and shops on the north side of Briston Road between 1889 and 1912.⁵¹

The building of the bulk of railways in north east Norfolk had been on the basis of the landlord receiving agricultural value for the land, often in shares. One farmer in Felmingham who opposed the railway from Melton Constable to North Walsham was able to wring £250 per acre from the company as his price for not blocking the chosen route, but this was exceptional.⁵²

The building of the later Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways were a much more rewarding venture for the landlords, as they extracted a high price for their agreement to plans that were essentially those of

50. Kelly's, *op. cit.*

51. Watt, H.D. *op.cit.*

52. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, L & FR Bill 5 April 1882.

the railways concerned. Despite the heavy fall in prices for agricultural land, the prices paid after prolonged wrangling were between £340 and £600 per acre, the latter being for land to the south of Cromer which had little agricultural value.⁵³ The landlords also insisted on a plethora of bridges and underpasses being built on the new lines, so that there were no level crossings. The later transactions between the railways and the landlords were for cash, as previous experience in accepting payment in shares had proved costly. Now at a later stage the landowners were justifiably cautious in their dealings with the railways.

The landowners of north east Norfolk were flexible enough to accommodate the charges brought by the railways and make them a source of new income. The image of the aristocrat refusing to soil his hands by indulging in trade was certainly not true of landowners in north east Norfolk.

The land use of north east Norfolk changed radically in the two decades after the first railway was opened in 1874. There was more permanent grassland, less grain,^{LL} and that grain was more likely to be barley, since this yielded more grain per acre than the soft wheat which itself could not match ⁵⁴ imported hard wheat. Traffic was also altered by the new routes that

53. PRO/NSJ/1 Committee Minutes, 23 October 1902.

54. *Economist*, 1887, grain prices.

the railways offered. Marquis Townshend was able to send his barley direct to Burton from Raynham Park by the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and its Midland Railway connections.⁵⁵ Within Norfolk, grain sales tended to concentrate on Norwich, to the detriment of the other five local markets, indeed Norwich had more grain sold through its markets in 1888 than it had two decades before.⁵⁶ The farming villages shrank in size as old cottages collapsed and were not replaced, less attention was given to hedgerows, drainage and fertilising leading to neglected air. Some farmers swallowed their pride and took in paying guests, delivered by courtesy of the railways.⁵⁷ Urban man had rediscovered the countryside and was willing to pay for the privilege.

55. *Ibid*, 11 June 1880, p.8.

56. Corn Market Returns, Board of Trade, 1888.

57. See III Chap. 3.

PART III

CHAPTER 3

RAILWAYS AND THE GROWTH OF RESORTS

The Growth of Coastal Resorts.

Distribution of Holidaymakers in Poppyland in 1906.

Other Forms of Holiday in North East Norfolk.

Developments in Neighbouring Districts.

The Growth of Coastal Resorts

Until the 1880s the only resorts with accommodation to offer on the whole of the coastline from Yarmouth to Wells were Cromer and Mundesley. The coastline had the natural attributes for resorts, an often sandy beach and a shallow foreshore, but was lacking in rail accessibility, accommodation and leisure facilities. Once railways were provided, problems mounted as "lodgings and everything else are outrageously dear in the season ... and long may they remain so, keeping out of the place the cockney hailing from London and elsewhere". There are no amusements except those provided by nature.¹ The local writer Walter Rye expressed a commonly held opinion amongst those who favoured keeping north east Norfolk as a backwater, but as he himself later wrote popular guide books to the district, he must have swallowed at least some of his opinions in the wider cause of Mammon. Cromer had a subsided coach from North Walsham and then from Gunton before its own station opened in 1877, but the building developments that

1. Rye, W. A History of Norfolk, London 1885, p.261.

it was hoped would occur once the railway came failed to materialise immediately. The house building plans made by Lord Suffield with the railway contractors, Lucas Brothers in 1872 had been shelved.² The water supply in Cromer was both inadequate and suspect, according to the prospectus of the Cromer Water Works Company, a matter not remedied until 1882.³ The pier, esplanade and large hotels were also lacking in 1877. Thus the features regarded as essential for a rising watering place of the period were missing. There was little more than a picturesque huddle of fishermen's cottages around the cathedralesque church and the original Hotel de Paris was a mile from the station, which was sited at the top of a steep hill. Again, the East Norfolk Railway's financial position compared poorly with that of the Lynn & Hunstanton Railway, despite the much more populous and potentially richer area served by the East Norfolk Railway.

Rapid development of the eastern side of Cromer started in 1832 after the water pipes had been cleaned of sand, thus concurring with Charles Lucas' dictum that "no large operations are possible until there is a good supply of really good water".⁴ He was a partner in the largest firm of water works contractors in the world, so may well have hoped for a further contract. Lord Suffield continued to plan the development of the eastern part of the town and nearby Overstrand, investing in the

2 . PRO/ENR 1, Minutes of the Board, 3 August 1872, Circular appended.

3 . HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, CNR Bill, 9 May 1881, p.57.

4 . HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, CNR Bill, 9 May 1881, p.57.

golf course, Royal Links Hotel and the Suffield Park development.⁵

Sales of development land in the western part of the town were delayed until 1888, when the Eastern & Midlands Railway had opened its station in that part of the town. Benjamin Bond-Cabbell, who owned much of the land there "spent a considerable sum planning it out as a seaside place". Plans were circulated by the Cromer Land & Building Company on 25 April 1887 prior to the first sale and the Cromer Hall Estate had its plans ready on 1 June 1891.⁶

Cromer lacked both unified planning and the kind of drive needed to make it a leading resort in the early 1880s. A visitor in 1880 commented that "had the same spirit of speculation in building existed here as elsewhere, or the same encouragement at least, been given to it, it is probable that long ere this Cromer would have risen to considerable importance as a bathing resort. The rents are high and consequently, that of lodgings is the same, and may range from one guinea and a half to three and a half, entire houses from four to six guineas a week."⁷ The two landlords showed none of the willingness of Hamon Le Strange in Hunstanton to forego high rents in order to build up the resort quickly. There were stipulations as to the value of houses that were to be erected which made it unlikely that even terraced houses would cost less than £600.⁸

⁵. Suffield, Lord, *op. cit.* p.84.

⁶. Prospectuses deposited with Cromer Urban District Council.

⁷. Savin, A., *op. cit.* p.33.

⁸. Stipulations as to Buildings, Sale Notice, Cromer Hall Estate, 1 June 1891.

This gave Cromer an exclusiveness that was appreciated by some at least of its visitors, making it a resort for the rich few rather than the poorer masses.

A Local Board, forerunner of the Urban District Council, was formed in 1884 to administer the affairs of Cromer. The formation of this Local Board was at the start of the period of building development in Cromer that lasted for two decades. The erection of large hotels came in the period from 1890 to 1895 when the Grand and the Metropole were opened in addition to Lord Suffield's Royal Links Hotel. The Hotel de Paris and the Cliftonville Hotels were rebuilt to conform to the needs of the 1890s. Royal patronage of the golf course⁹ and considerably improved railway services from London by both the Great Eastern Railway from 1896 and the newly formed Midland & Great Northern Railway brought in the desired clientele.^{U+II}

The other trend which emerged in the Cromer district was the erection of luxury summer residences, coyly named 'cottages', where the banking establishment of London came for the season. The south of France only attracted the English in the winter, so until the First World War the seasonal round of pleasure and dissipation included such highlights as Cowes Week, Henley and some time spent at Cromer. Other wealthy people built

⁹ . Suffield, Lord, op. cit. pp. 83-84.

residences at Cromer also. The American Locker-Lampsons and the publisher Daniel MacMillan were amongst them.¹⁰ The Gurney, Birkbeck, Buxton and Hoare families had long had residences in the district for their summer season. They were followed by Lord Hillingdon of the Glyn, Mills banking firm who had Overstrand Hall designed for him by Sir Edward Lutyens, probably the most fashionable architect of the period. The same architect also designed 'The Pleasaunce' at Overstrand for Lord Battersea, who had married into the Rothchild family. The Baring family were even more intimately associated with Cromer. Cecilia Baring became Lord Suffield's wife and the head of the Baring family bore the title Lord Cromer when ennobled. Visitors to the great houses or those who merely came for a holiday in the 1890s included Oscar Wilde, Lord Tennyson and the Churchills as well as the Prince of Wales, Princess Alexandra and members of the German and Austrian royal families. Cromer thus became a very fashionable resort once it obtained the necessary facilities. It had no need to pander to the masses and indeed showed little desire to entertain them.¹¹

In due course a promenade and a pier were built, but the chief attractions purveyed to readers of Clement Scott's columns in the Daily Telegraph and of his numerous books on the Cromer district were of the quiet charm, the unspoilt rural nature of its environs and hints of royal and

¹⁰. Pile, E. Norfolk & Suffolk in East Anglia, London 1911.

¹¹. Suffield, Lord, op. cit. p. 85.

noble connections rather than the artificial entertainments on which he reported in his other regular column in the Illustrated London News, where he was theatre critic. He christened the district 'Poppyland',¹² a name which the publishers Jarrolds used to promote a stream of books on the district.

The physical growth of Cromer continued until 1903, when growth was checked by hotel failures and the backlog of unsold houses in the district.¹³ The rates receipts reached their peak in the following year, after which there was a decline, again indicating a slump after two decades of growth.¹⁴ Resorts on either side of Cromer appear to have been less expensive and retained their closeness to nature to a great extent. The genuine searcher for rural peace could find it in the new village resorts at Mundesley, Overstrand or Weybourne which all had good hotels, golf and little else.

Sheringham was the other resort which changed from being a village to being a modest town with its own Urban District Council. The parish had two settlements, the fishing village of Lower Sheringham, by the sea, and the farming village of Upper Sheringham a mile away, wherein resided the family which owned most of the parish, the Upchers. The leader of the fishing community appears to have been one Joseph

12. Scott, C. Blossom Land & Fallen Leaves, London 1890.

13. Annual Report, Cromer Gas & Coke Co. 1903, Colman & Rye Library, Norwich.

14. See Graph No. 29, details from Savin, A. op. cit.

Nightingale, who acted as spokesman for the fishing community during the examination of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill of 1880. The fishing community landed about 1,000 tons of fish a year which was carted to Cromer for despatch by East Norfolk Railway after 1877. Ten vessel loads of beach flints were despatched each year to the Staffordshire potteries coastwise; apart from this, the only other source of revenue was a few visitors who arrived by carriage from Cromer.¹⁵ Accommodation in 1880 was limited to four very small public houses, calling themselves hotels, but in reality "of a low description, used by fishermen". The one better class establishment had been bought by Mr. Upcher and was used as a coffee house.¹⁶

The fishing community and the elder Mr. Upcher were fundamentally at odds in the matter of whether or not Sheringham should develop as a resort. Mr. Upcher "did not wish Sheringham turned out a watering place", whereas Joseph Nightingale tried to persuade Mr. Upcher to withdraw his opposition to the railway passing through the parish so that the cost of sending fish by rail would be lower and Sheringham should have "an influx of visitors". That was apparently what Mr. Upcher objected to most of all.¹⁷ The financial problems of the railway saved Mr. Upcher from seeing the dreaded transformation before his death; his successors took a more favourable view of seaside development.

15. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, L & FR Bill, 17 June 1880, pp. 136-7.

16. Ibid, 22 June 1880, p. 58.

17. Ibid, 18 June 1880, p. 186.

Even before the completion of the Cromer Undertaking in 1887, a trickle of visitors was accommodated; four families offered rooms in 1883. The main development took place when the railway arrived. The engineer for the town to be was William Marriott of the Eastern & Midlands Railway. He was in charge of the Sheringham Development Company, himself investing in two of the new houses.¹⁸ Water, gas and drainage were installed between 1889 and 1892, and a golf course was laid out in the latter year. By 1896 some 117 houses offered accommodation, the new Sheringham Hotel was open, having cost £10,000 to build. A brickworks had been opened to supply the growing demand for building materials, as at Cromer a decade before.¹⁹

The younger Henry Upcher became the founder and President of the Sheringham Improvement and Recreation Committee and a relative became a director of the larger Grand Hotel of 1898. This hotel had a capital of £30,000 and had all modern conveniences, including a winter garden so that the season could be extended. Its architecture was flamboyant, for such a small resort.²⁰

Sea protection walls were constructed to protect the expensive investments from marine encroachment and a promenade capped the top of the sea walls. Country walks were provided with the permission of the owner, Mr. Cremer, beyond the promenade to Beeston Hills.²¹ Sporting facilities,

¹⁸. Marriott, W. op. cit. p. 13.

¹⁹. Kelly's Directory, Norfolk 1896.

²⁰. Prospectus, Grand Hotel, Sheringham; also Erroll, A.C. A History of Sheringham & Beeston Regis, Holt, 1972.

²¹. Report of the Sheringham Improvement & Recreation Committee, Norwich 1898.

bathing huts and bathing rafts were made available. In addition a further 135 houses were built up to the year 1901. The new Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways and the parent companies which all advertised the resort strongly in their literature, ran through trains from London, Birmingham, Nottingham, Derby, Liverpool and Manchester to Sheringham and Cromer and offered cheap fares.

Sheringham and Cromer had been the largest coastal settlements before the arrival of the railways and were the first to be developed. Other settlements along the coast had similar beaches. The clifftop between Cromer and Mundesley was one of the most picturesque parts of the district and was already familiar to those who took the horse bus excursion from Cromer to Mundesley. Clement Scott had extolled the beauties and rural nature of the area to his readers. In the estate agent's phrase, by the 1890s it was "ripe for development".

Mundesley had been promised a railway from North Walsham in the Eastern & Midlands Railway Act of 1888. Mundesley started to develop when 121 plots of building land to the west of the village were auctioned in 1889 on a site hopefully named Cliftonville,²² presumably imitating a pre-decessor at Margate. The large Hotel Continental at Mundesley was built in 1892, in anticipation of the railway. Three terraces of apartment

22. Particulars of Sale, Cliftonville Estate, 31 May 1889.

houses were also built, together with three more hotels to supplement the existing small amount of accommodation in inns and cottages. A large mock-Tudor sanatorium was built in 1899, a common feature in several seaside resorts such as Skegness and Hunstanton, but otherwise lacking in Poppyland. Public utilities were constructed by the Erpingham Rural District Council after most of the resort had been built and the railway had been opened. A waterworks was built in 1899, followed by drainage and sewage in 1903. In addition, a small gasworks was opened in the same year.²³

Despite the large scale of operations at Mundesley, where there was a greater initial provision of new accommodation than at Sheringham, it failed to grow as fast as either Cromer or Sheringham. Most of the housing plots at Cliftonville remained empty as late as 1970 when they were bought for the building of modern bungalows, incongruous amid the scatter of late Victorian villas dotted along a grid of unmade roads. Although the population of Mundesley increased from 411 in 1891 to 680 in 1901, it had reached only 770 in 1911 despite all the new buildings and another railway line. Mundesley was neither fashionable nor did it have the shopping and leisure facilities of Sheringham or Cromer. Its final surge of development came at a time when the growth of the whole district had largely ceased. The proposed branch line to Happisburgh was not built,

²³. Fisher, B. *Mundesley Past and Present*, Norwich 1972, p.8.

so that much of Mundesley's large station was redundant while a hotel project at nearby Bacton got no further than its foundations. There were no detailed plans for resorts to be developed at either Bacton or Happisburgh as far as can be traced.

There were four other villages served by the railways where an attempt was made to develop resorts. Between Mundesley and Cromer large stations were built at Trimingham and Overstrand. Trimingham in 1901 was a hamlet of 185 souls, perched high on a clifftop and therefore having a difficult descent to the beach. It did not develop. Overstrand was much nearer Cromer, so it was supplied with gas, water and after 1903 by electricity from works at Cromer. It developed mainly as a resort for the wealthy as noted above, lacking hotels and popular amenities, doubtless to the relief of its distinguished summer visitors.

West Runton and Weybourne, on either side of Sheringham, each had hotels built near to the station. West Runton offered a golf course and Weybourne had springs in the hills, while both offered good walking country. There was little else in the villages to amuse the visitors and there was no further development in either settlement.

The other part of the district which had some holiday traffic increase was on the fringes of Yarmouth. Caister to the north and Gorleston to the

south both had railway stations, the latter opening in 1903. Small planned resorts were built, mere outposts of the great resort which despite the publicity given to Poppyland was still the premier resort of Norfolk.

Distribution of Holidaymakers in Poppyland in 1906

Poppyland had its own local paper, the Cromer & North Walsham Post, which in summer published a supplement, the East Coast Visitor & Norfolk & Suffolk Fashionable Gazette, which listed all visitors to the Poppyland resorts in alphabetical order under resort heading, giving their holiday addresses and place of origin. The supplement mainly appeared to be a vehicle for advertising local services and events, but was also a means of ensuring that large numbers of visitors would buy the publication as a souvenir. It could also serve as a contact journal in resorts that had already grown too big for everybody to know everybody else in the manner of the earlier, smaller and more exclusive resorts.²⁴ To the historian, the Gazette serves as a valuable source for the study of Edwardian resorts.

Cromer was by far the most important resort in 1906, followed by Sheringham. The other resorts were all much smaller. In an August week Cromer had 1740 visitors, there were 626 in Sheringham, 310 in Mundesley,

²⁴. Perkin, H. The Age of the Railway, London 1970, p.224.

117 in Happisburgh and 52 in Overstrand. The count only included those staying in accommodation owned by hoteliers and landlords. The owners of the Overstrand cottages thus do not appear in the count, hence the small numbers there. Servants were also mentioned in connection with some family groups staying in apartments, but they were not counted as holidaymakers, although contributing to the local economy as consumers of food and small necessities. The Cromer figure is double that given by Charles Parkes in 1880, before the major growth of Cromer had commenced.²⁵

The growth of visitors elsewhere was from a negligible base. There were thus probably over 3000 resident guests in Poppyland if one adds those who owned property or were staying with friends, and servants would probably have raised the total by up to 1000 more.

The range of accommodation offered varied from suites in the best hotels at 20 guineas a week, suitable for royalty British and foreign,²⁶ while at the other end of the scale, cottagers offered beds at 2/- per night in order to supplement their incomes from fishing, farming or trade.²⁷

The holidaymakers came from many parts of Britain and some from abroad, but there was a very pronounced reliance on traffic from London and the south east. In the week commencing 4 August 1906 the boarding houses of Cromer had a total of 539 guests, the remainder being in flats

25. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, L & FR Bill, 23 June 1880, p. 135.

26. Savin, A. *op.cit.* p. 131.

27. Ward Lock's Red Guide, London 1909.

apartments or in lodging houses without meal service. Of these 539, no less than 309 were from the London postal area, while a further 59 came from the Home Counties. Despite the extensive cross-country train services of through coaches offered by both railways only 20 came from Leicester, 10 from Manchester, 9 from Birmingham and 6 from Nottingham. Many of the London addresses were from fashionable areas such as Hyde Park, South Kensington and Hampstead. There were also seven foreign visitors.²⁸

Other resorts in Poppyland had an even higher proportion of Londoners. Mundesley had two visitors from Birmingham, further couples from Cambridge and Essex, otherwise London was the sole source. In Overstrand all the guests were Londoners except for a party from Glasgow and another from Minehead. A surprising number of visitors came from distant resorts, which at the height of the season might suggest that they had let their own residences to holiday visitors.

The numbers who came on a seaside holiday were mostly from a small stratum of British society who had both the leisure and the money to spend a week or more in a resort. A recent writer estimated that only some 300,000 families in Britain at that time were able to take such a holiday.²⁹ Making assumptions that the average stay was $1\frac{1}{2}$ weeks and that the average

²⁸ Cromer & North Walsham Post, supplement, op. cit.

²⁹ Kumar, *The New Salariat*, *New Society*, 1976, vol. 38 p. 129.

family was five strong, then about 5000 of these families came to Poppyland, a high proportion for a new resort area in competition with much larger and longer established resorts such as Brighton, Scarborough and Southport.

Other Forms of Holiday in North East Norfolk

The coast was not the only area to benefit from the arrival of rail-borne holidaymakers. The rivers and shallow lakes of Broadland became the scene of a different and increasingly popular type of holiday from the 1880s onwards. Before the Broads became easily accessible by rail, the area had acquired a reputation as an area for angling and wild-fowling. A few pioneer tours in temporarily converted wherries had been made in the 1870s. The first book specifically about Broads cruising was published in 1871, followed by numerous books and articles at the same time that the first railways were being built. By 1882 the market was wide enough for Jarrolds to publish Handbook of the Rivers & Broads of Norfolk & Suffolk, the first of over 40 editions. A regular period boat hiring service started in Wroxham in 1881. The Great Eastern Railway started to run steamers from Yarmouth to Wroxham and Norwich in the 1890s, offering combined rail and steamer tickets to attract custom.³⁰ The Midland &

³⁰. GER Timetable, 1889.

Great Northern Joint Railways started similar cruises for those not wishing to hire their own boats about 1900.³¹

By the 1890s the Great Eastern Railway was able to advertise five pages of boats and yachts for hire, together with seven pages of furnished accommodation in the neighbourhood of the Broads. The Midland Railway likewise published a booklet of available rural accommodation in both the Broads and the coastal area.³² Whereas only two or three public houses had offered simple accommodation to anglers in 1880, good bedrooms and dainty teas were on offer a decade later. The lack of eatable food and drinkable drink was lamented in 1885 in the area between Wroxham and Yarmouth; by 1895 all such needs could be met by Roy's of Wroxham and provisions no longer had to be brought in by the visitors themselves.³³

The popularisation of the Broads was carried out by local Norwich writers, whose reports in magazines and books of their adventures encouraged others to emulate them. By 1908 there were 71 pleasure wherries and over 200 yachts of various types registered, together with numerous smaller boats lacking sleeping accommodation. At that time there were fewer than 300 trading wherries.³⁴

31. Clark, R. *op. cit.* p. 148.

32. GER List of Accommodation, Stratford, 1899.

33. Midland Railway, List of Farmhouse Lodgings in Farmhouses & Country Villages, Derby, 1894.

34. Gt. Yarmouth Port & Haven Commissioners, Yacht Ledger, 1908, CRO, Norwich.

Aristocratic patronage and landowner investment was largely absent from the Broads holiday industry. Indeed, several Broads were made private or sealed off to protect them from the vulgar invasion. The entrepreneurs were boat builders, millers, boat owners, innkeepers, shopkeepers and the railways. Most of the entrepreneurs appear to have been of local origin. Press of North Walsham and Loynes of Wroxham were the largest in the business in the 1890s. The villages in the area all benefitted by having their inns used by visitors but more so by their spare rooms being used in the season. Of the early days of the holiday traffic it was written that "farmers in the Cromer area still laughed at the notion of hiring out their front room to strangers".³⁵ In the later years of the Great Depression they no longer laughed, they joined the rush to advertise those front rooms.

There were over 250 boats for hire with accommodation for between four and ten people each. A week seems to have been the normal hire period, so over 10,000 people could have taken such a holiday in a year during the early twentieth century. The number of rooms advertised in the Broads district was about 400, so a similar number could have been accommodated in the holiday season, thus the total numbers partaking of this kind of holiday was not far short of the numbers staying in Poppyland.

³⁵. Mottram, R. The Broads, London 1952, p.7.

Although much thought was given to making Poppyland as exclusive as possible, a writer in 1909 bewailed the fact that "the Cromer coast alas is not what is used to be. Mundesley, Trimingham, and Overstrand are no longer remote and primitive; they have their railway stations, during the 'season', their daily contingent of trippers."³⁶ Many of these trippers were those in one resort visiting another often with the aid of cheap tickets. This type of movement created much daily traffic for the Broads.

Developments in Neighbouring Districts

Poppyland was but one of several areas in the county which developed as a resort district in the latter half of the nineteenth century.^{FF} The only other new resort in Norfolk was Hunstanton, while across the Wash Skegness developed as a major tripper resort. Both were much nearer to the industrial Midlands, both had railways before the East Norfolk Railway reached Cromer, so a study of their development provides some interesting points of reference and contrast in the subsequent development of the East Coast holiday resorts.

Both Skegness and Hunstanton owed much of their development as resorts to their rail connections. Prior to the opening of branch lines to these villages, they were very small, lacking both amenities and large patronage.

³⁶. Dutt, W. The Norfolk & Suffolk Coast, London 1909.

Skegness is situated just north of Gibraltar Point, the first location on the Lincolnshire coast where the mud-flats of the Wash give way to sandy beaches, which stretch northwards to Cleethorpes. This stretch of coast between the Wash and Humber is the nearest physically to the industrial East Midlands. An inland rail link parallel with the coast was built in 1848, the East Lincolnshire Railway, later taken over by the Great Northern Railway. Rail communication improved in 1871 with the opening of the Wainfleet & Firsby Railway.³⁷ Wainfleet was only five miles from Skegness and at the time was a small market town in an area lacking a large settlement between Boston and Grimsby. The extension to Skegness was built two years later, into what was still only a seaside village with a population of 349, two inns, a few houses taking guests and little else.³⁸

The land at Skegness was owned by the Earl of Scarborough, whose agent, Vivian Tippet, suggested and planned a new model seaside resort in 1878. It had wide avenues, gardens, gas and water supplies built within the town. Leases were at a low annual rent.³⁹ The population reached 1332 by 1881. The Skegness branch railway was made more approachable from the south by the construction of a triangular junction from the East Lincolnshire main line in the same year, enabling trains from the East Midlands to run on to the branch without reversing.

³⁷. Bradshaw's Railway Manual, 1872.

³⁸. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Lincolnshire & Skegness Railway, 1884, 31 March 1884.

³⁹. Ibid, pp. 1-9.

The rapid growth of the resort attracted a second railway proposal for a direct railway in 1884, the Lincoln & Skegness Railway, the route to pass through Scremby & Orby, thus giving access to the Midland Railway, the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway as well as the Great Eastern Railway via the newly opened joint line from March. However, although the preamble was proved, the scheme was defeated in the House of Lords.⁴⁰

The evidence presented at the Lincoln & Skegness Railway examination indicated that the resort had quickly established itself as a major day excursion centre since 1878. August Bank Holiday 1883 had seen the arrival of 35 special trains over the single track from Firsby to Skegness, bringing an estimated 30,000 excursionists and ~~stranding~~ about half of them.⁴¹ This was an increase of 50% on the previous year when the system had been strained to capacity and some trains had had to be cancelled owing to lack of carriages. In addition to the Bank Holiday traffic, there was a regular flow of excursions throughout the summer, probably over-estimated at half a million by the promoters of the Lincoln & Skegness Bill. The figure given by Dutton for 1910 was 356,409 and only by 1913 was this greatly exceeded, when an estimated 760,000 persons were brought to Skegness by Great Northern Railway trains.⁴² Every effort was made to cater for this type of excursion traffic from the start, the station being built to accommodate 6000 people at a time. Line doubling and the rebuilding of Skegness station to house seven long platforms indicated the importance that the Great Northern Railway attached to this resort at the turn of the century.⁴³

⁴⁰. Grinling, C. The History of the Great Northern Railway, London 1898, p.369.

⁴¹. Grinling, C. *op. cit.* p.359.

⁴². Dutton, W. *Skegness, Skegness*, 1922.

⁴³. Grinling, C. *op. cit.* p.446.

The popularity of Skegness with day excursionists limited hotel development. There were five hotels as well as boarding houses and apartments. A local farmer, builder and contractor, George Dunkley, led the way in building on Lord Scarbrough's model site. By 1884 he had 25 houses in the town for rental.⁴⁴ The planned build up of the area, based on Lord Scarbrough's £60,000 infrastructure of water, sewage and gas, roads and designated plots was not filled in the nineteenth century, nor were the planned winter gardens and aquarium.⁴⁵ Thus the enormous popularity with East Midlands trippers was not matched by a comparable development of long-stay accommodation in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁶ The two types of catering and the two classes of persons would have found such a small resort incompatible with their differing needs, there being none of the alternative rural rambles or excursions to smaller, quieter neighbouring villages that the Norfolk resorts offered.

The amenities of Skegness matched the clientele. A cavernous station with facilities geared to the mass markets; a fairground, simple mass-catering on the front. By the turn of the century, cheap hotels and boarding houses increased in number to 150, catering for the holidays of the skilled workers who by then had both the time and money to enjoy Wakes Week or an annual leave entitlement away from home.⁴⁷

Skegness remained a Great Northern Railway resort. The monopoly was only once seriously challenged, by the Lincoln & Skegness Railway, only to be defeated in the House of Lords.⁴⁸ It failed to build to Skegness,

⁴⁴. HLRO, Minutes of Evidence, Lincoln & Skegness Railway 1884, pp. 12-15.

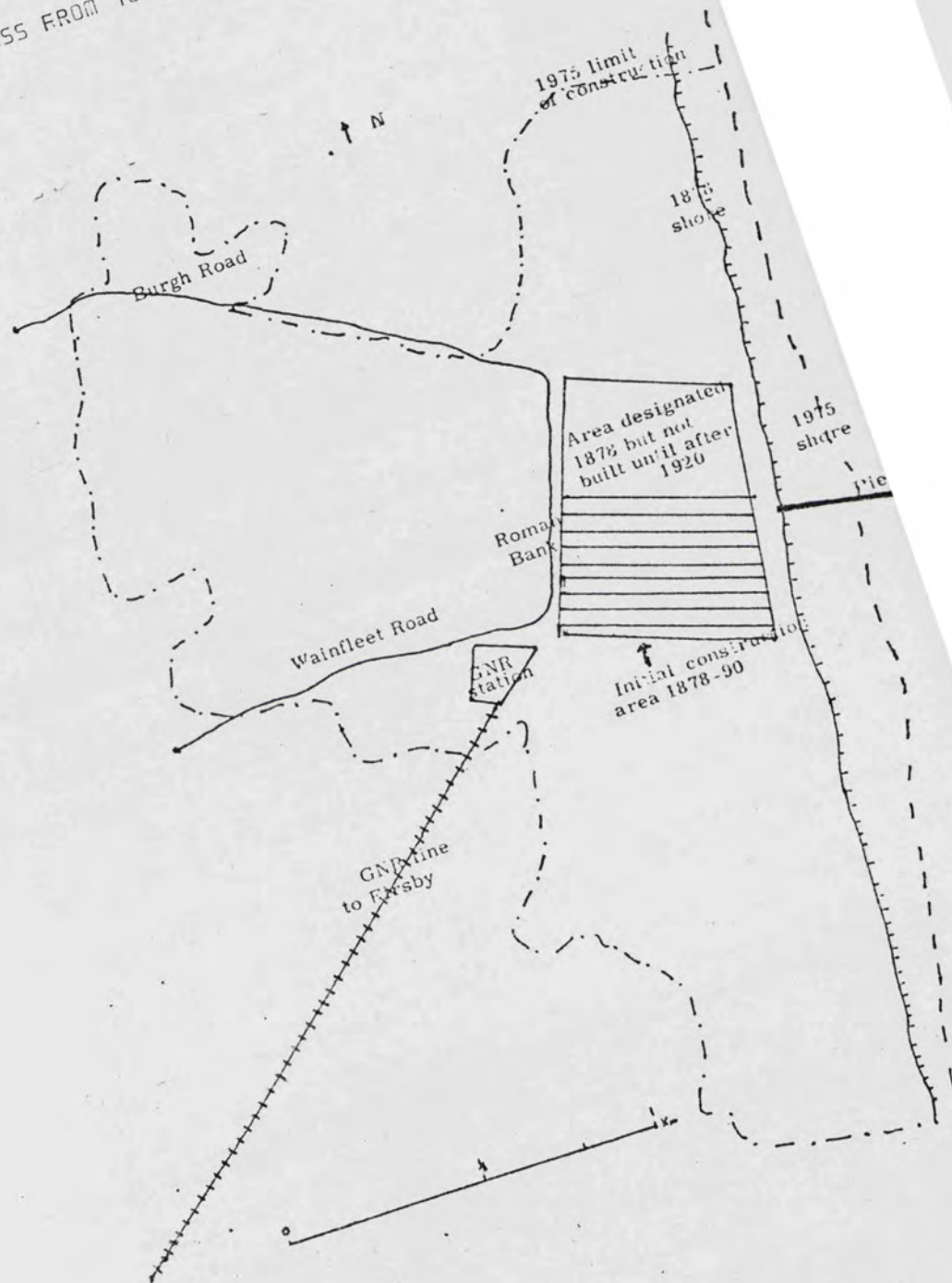
⁴⁵. See map, Fig 18.

⁴⁶. Population 2,140 in 1901.

⁴⁷. Pinnott, J. *The Englishman's Holiday*, London 1976, pp. 154-7.
and Walton, J.K., *The Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England*, *EcHR* Vol. xxxiv, no. 2, 1981, pp. 244-265.

228
Fig.18.

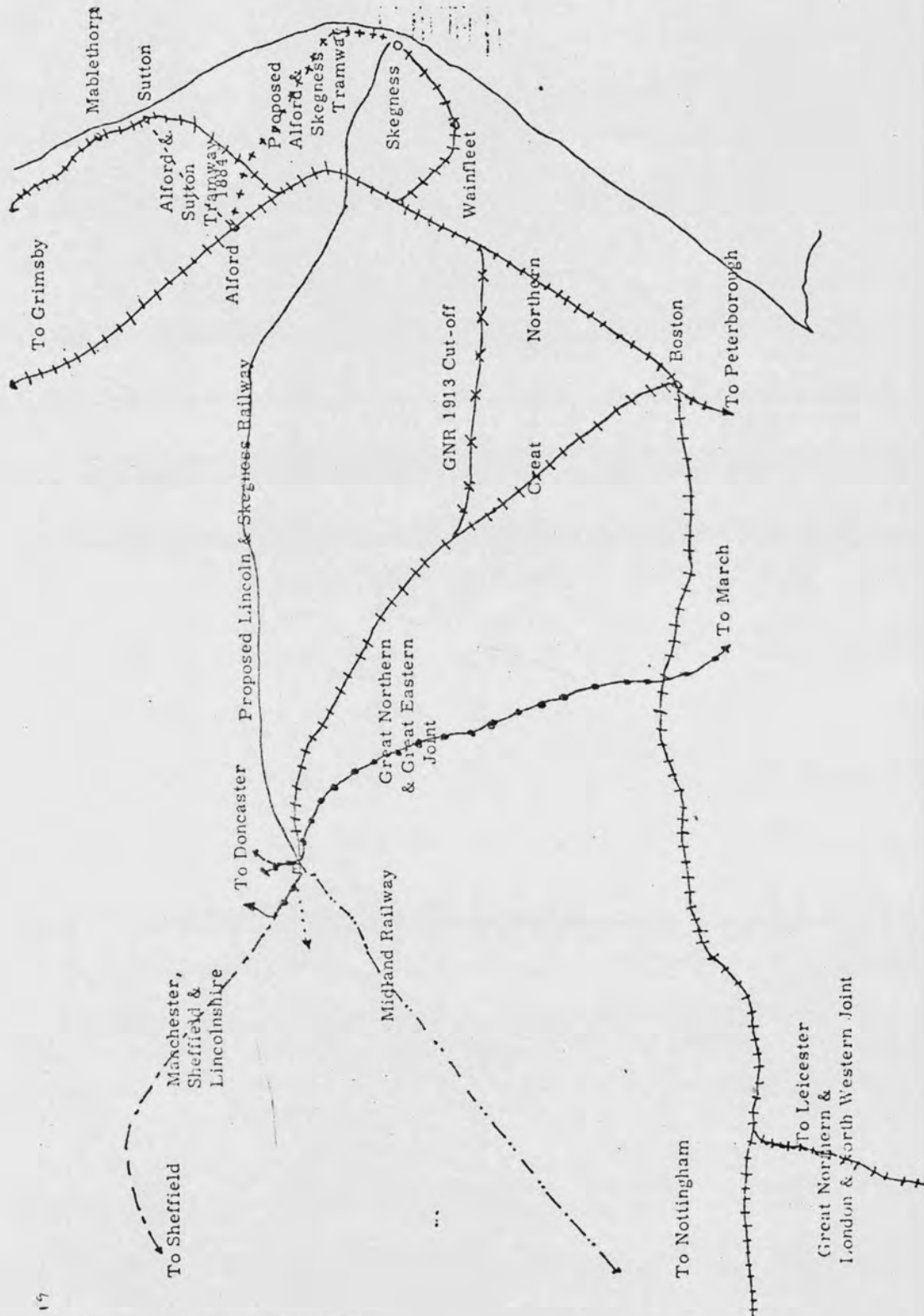
THE EXPANSION OF SKEGNESS FROM 1878



Sources: Dutton, G., Skegness & District, Skegness, 1924.
Ordnance Survey maps, 1st to 7th Editions.

Fig. 19

DEVELOPMENT OF RAILWAYS TO THE LINCOLNSHIRE COAST



while a tramway to Sutton operated only until 1891, having to compete with a parallel branch line, the Sutton & Willoughby Railway from 1886.⁴⁸ Links to Skegness via the Great Northern were improved. The start of regular Great Northern passenger services from their Belgrave Road station in Leicester in 1883 brought in an additional large hinterland for Skegness under direct company control. The new junctions and Victoria Station at Nottingham in 1899 increased capacity from that direction, while the opening of the Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Railway from Chesterfield to Lincoln in 1898 extended connections into the rapidly expanding coalfield towns of Edwinstowe and Clipstone.⁴⁹ Traffic from the Lincoln direction had to reverse at Boston, so to avoid this time-consuming and roundabout route, a new cut-off was constructed from Woodhall Junction on the Boston-Lincoln line to Bellwater Junction on the East Lincolnshire line, opening in 1913.⁵⁰ Thus in a piecemeal fashion, the Great Northern catered for the expansion of its premier resort, immortalised by John Hassall's "Skegness is So Bracing" poster of 1908.⁵¹

Hunstanton is sited on the opposite side of the Wash on a short stretch of cliffed coast between the mudflats of the Wash and the very wide sandy beaches of the north-west Norfolk coast, where the sea has retreated up to five miles in three centuries. The entire north-west corner of the county has been in the possession of the Le Strange family since before the Conquest.

48. Dow, G., *The Alford & Sutton Tramway*, Lingwood 1937.

49. Dow, G. *The Great Central Railway*, Vol. III, London 1963.

50. Grinling, C. *op. cit.* p.463.

51. Grinling, C. *Ibid.*

Prior to its development, New Hunstanton had only two buildings.⁵²

It is less than a mile from the village of Old Hunstanton, an estate and farming village. Hunstanton is the only suitable site for a seaside resort between Skegness and Poppyland, as there are extensive mudflats to the south and very wide beaches to the west. Its potential was realised as early as 1860 by Hamon Le Strange, the landowner.⁵³

The East Anglian Railway at King's Lynn was the nearest railhead to Hunstanton in 1860. That railway was itself unwilling to extend speculative lines of any sort from its existing system but wished to have the traffic of any such lines built. The Eastern Counties Railway operated the lines into Lynn on behalf of the East Anglian Railway, which agreed to contribute one third of the capital for the proposed line from Lynn to Hunstanton. A working agreement was made with both the Eastern Counties Railway and the East Anglian Railway. Lightly Simpson, an Eastern Counties Railway director, was Chairman of the new company.⁵⁴

The line proposed was 15 miles in length, yet a very low capital of £60,000 was all that was requested, together with the usual one third loan facility. The Act for the Lynn & Hunstanton passed easily through parliament on 1st August 1861, all landowners being in agreement.⁵⁵ The route was a very easy one, being built just above high-tide level along the shores of the Wash to a terminal at the foot of Hunstanton cliffs.^{Fig. 20}

⁵². Cobb, J.S. *The History of the Manor of Hunstanton*, London 1868, p.3.

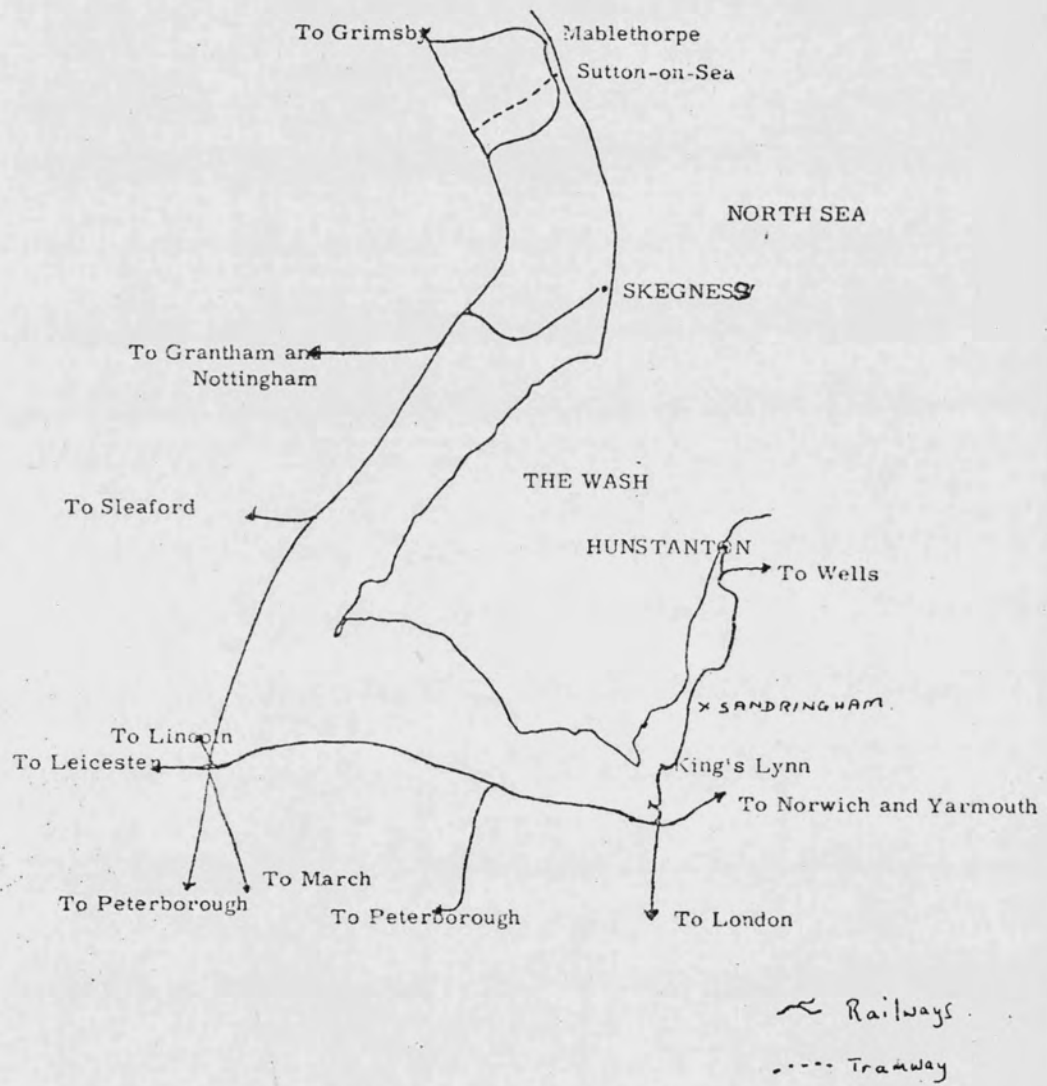
⁵³. Conversation with H. Le Strange, grandson of founder.

⁵⁴. PRO/LNRL Minute Book, Lynn & Hunstanton Railway, 1 February, 1862.

⁵⁵. Ibid.

Fig. 20

RAILWAY CONNECTIONS TO SKEGNESS AND HUNSTANTON



Work commenced only three months after the Royal Assent under the engineer J. S. Valentine. He pressed ahead with the work so fast that the line was completed in 11 months. Unlike most other lines in East Anglia, there was a balance of £379. 18s. 5d. left from the capital plus loan after all construction debts had been paid.

A further advantage that the Lynn & Hunstanton Railway had at the time was that local interest as well as national interest was heightened by the purchase of the Sandringham Estate by the Prince of Wales while the line was being constructed.⁵⁶

The model used for seaside development at Hunstanton was that of Llandudno, which "showed how rapidly accommodation can be provided and how such places are frequented when the necessary facilities are provided".⁵⁷ The railway interests made arrangements with Le Strange for building at Hunstanton to be uniform and in the local carstone, a ginger-coloured sandstone. Le Strange undertook the roads, sewerage and laying out of public walks and recreation grounds. In order to secure "vigorous commencement of building operations", the ground rents were set at the low figure of 1d. per square yard annually, with small rates.⁵⁸ It was acknowledged at the time that the line without the new town would have been superfluous.⁵⁹ The link between the railway and the town

⁵⁶. PRO/LHRI Report, L&HR 28 March 1862.

⁵⁷. Ibid, 24 January 1861.

⁵⁸. Ibid, 28 March 1862.

⁵⁹. Ibid, 28 March 1862.

became even more marked in 1862 when the directors formed a limited company with powers to build and also to assist builders.⁶⁰ Within a year and a half of this company's formation, only one house remained unsold and plans were well advanced to construct a new first class hotel at the terminal station, which shareholders were enjoined to support.⁶¹ Further sites for construction were let subsequently, accommodation for visitors being far short of demand. In addition the excursion traffic was "more than equal to anticipations", so a refreshment room at Hunstanton Station was constructed in 1864.⁶²

The Lynn & Hunstanton Railway and its associated resort were an outstanding success from the beginning. A 5% dividend was declared after the first full year of operation, rising to 11% by 1874. An associated railway, the West Norfolk Junction Railway, was constructed from Heachem to Wells across Le Strange's and the Earl of Leicester's land, opening in 1866.⁶³ This brought additional agricultural traffic onto the existing line, although the new railway was not itself as financially successful as its partner. The Lynn & Hunstanton Railway was paying an 11% dividend by 1866. The two railways were amalgamated in 1874 as the Hunstanton & West Norfolk Railway, but dividends for the two sets of shares were related to the original lines, 'A' capital being the

60. Ibid.

61. PRO/LHRI Minute Book L&HR, 15 August 1863.

62. Ibid.

63. PRO/WNJI Proprietors' Minute Book WNJR.

Lynn & Hunstanton Railway, while 'B' capital related to the West Norfolk Junction Railway. Both continued to prosper until bought by the Great Eastern in 1890 for £160,000 cash for the Ordinary shares, a premium of £25,000 over the face value of the shares. The associated hotel interests in the Sandringham Hotel and the Hunstanton Hotel, built in 1876, were also incorporated in the purchase. ⁶⁴

Hunstanton itself continued to grow. Houses were divided into three types, first second and third class, part of the rent of which was raised by £1. 10s. and 5s. respectively in order to build the church. A pier was built in 1870, to which the railway company subscribed. A sanatorium opened by the Prince of Wales, a golf course and improved water supplies followed. ⁶⁵ Thus Hunstanton catered readily for both the middle-classes who stayed for varying periods, as well as for a growing stream of day trippers. It did not appear to be overwhelmed by the latter in the way that Skegness or Cleethorpes were, nor did it openly practise the exclusiveness of Cromer.

Control was exercised over the facilities at Hunstanton, as well as over the builders and architecture. The discreet sea front which emerged, devoid of the more vulgar manifestations of Blackpool, Yarmouth or Southend, was backed by a small town. The town itself was less accessible by rail than

⁶⁴. PRO/RAC/1 Annual Reports, HWNR, 1867.

⁶⁵. Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1886.

were many resorts. This must have exercised its own controlling influence on the type of tripper who arrived. The rowdy element would be unlikely to return to a resort with too prim an aspect. The well-advertised connections with Sandringham and royalty played an important part in establishing Hunstanton with the visitors from the other end of the social spectrum. Improved train services from London started in the 1880s. By the late 1890s there were 14 trains per day each way in summer. The congestion was eased by the doubling of the tracks between Lynn and Wolferton in 1899, enabling larger numbers of excursion trains to be handled at the four long platforms in Hunstanton. Restaurant cars and improved stock were introduced on the main London expresses from 1905, further enhancing the status of the resort.⁶⁶ The line also benefitted from royal traffic directly. Wolferton, the station for Sandringham, was an architectural showpiece, to be admired en route.

The secret of success both for the railway and the resort appears to have been the low demands made by Hamon Le Strange both on the railway and on the incoming tenants. The cost of the railway at £5,333 per mile was exceptionally low, while the unified approach to planning exercised by Le Strange prevented any wasteful speculative excesses. There was thus less capital to be serviced than in the case of Cromer, no debt burden and no other competitive railway or nearby resort to siphon off the profits so

⁶⁶. Bradshaw's Railway Guide, July 1905.

early established. Charles Parkes used Hunstanton as a model for the development of railway and urban facilities in Cromer for his circular of 1872, but he was unable to reproduce the ideal conditions under which Hunstanton had succeeded.

PART III

CHAPTER 4

THE PATTERN OF GROWTH - POPULATION AND LABOUR

Introduction.

Population and occupations/changes 1871 - 1901, Areas of Growth and Decline Related to the Railways.

The Foundation and Building of Melton Constable.

Railway Employment in the Region.

Introduction

The economic changes undergone by North East Norfolk in the three decades following the introduction of railways resulted in a number of conflicting trends which redistributed the population and wealth of the district quite markedly. Underlying such shifts there was a redistribution of labour towards the largest towns, the growing resorts and places of railway importance and away from purely agricultural villages and market towns, with no special functions in the new means of transport. One of the most significant indications of the movement of wealth was the change in rateable values, which showed a close link to population trends, but was exaggerated in resort and industrial areas.

This chapter looks first at changes in distribution of population and at shifts in employment patterns. A case study of Melton Constable is included and consideration is given to the railway as a direct source of employment.

Population and Occupational Changes 1871-1901; Areas of Growth and Decline Related to the Railways

The population of Norfolk as a whole fell only in the decade 1851 - 1861, the first complete decade after the earliest railways in Norfolk were built. Thereafter the population of the county as a whole rose in successive decades by .9% to 1871, 1.4% to 1881, 2.2% in 1891, and 1.2% to 1901. However, as the county's decennial gains in population were below the national average there would appear to have been continuous migration from the county over the period. The growth of Norwich itself was considerably greater than for the county as a whole, some 29% in the 40 years 1871 - 1901. Yarmouth expanded at rates of up to 10% per decade. Thus the largest settlements increased in size while the rest of the county declined in total population. This again masks great local variations both in time and space. GG

If north east Norfolk is considered in isolation from the rest of rural Norfolk, it was a population growth area from 1881 until 1904, the period when the initial effect of the railways was likely to be greatest in its economic life. The remainder of rural Norfolk simultaneously went through a period of even greater population decline than hitherto. Within north east Norfolk there were a number of growth points where population increased very quickly. The coastal resorts, Melton Constable and Briston, parts of the Broads and the fringes of Norwich and Yarmouth

and North Walsham had a greater growth than north East Norfolk as a whole.

The railway appears to have been instrumental in creating the economic improvement which allowed the population to grow in these areas. The progress of the coastal resorts beyond their original limited functions would have been impossible without rail travel. The capacity to deliver up to 250,000 holidaymakers in a short season to Poppyland, some returning the same day, others after stays of greater length, was beyond the capacity of any other form of transport, since there was no harbour and the minimum of three hours by road from Norwich would have been intolerable after 1880. The existence of two main rail routes to Poppyland encouraged traffic from many parts of the country, thus increasing the demand for services and the consequent population increase.

Rail access to and railway publicity of Broadland encouraged the development of holidays there of a unique type. This counteracted the decline in waterway traffic which threatened both bargemen and the trades dependent upon their custom. Wroxham/Hoveton established itself as the main boat hiring and building centre outside Yarmouth and Norwich and also became a provisioning centre for the holiday traffic.¹ Its location on the East Norfolk main line and on the River Bure gave it a pre-eminence not shared with other centres, whose population developed more modestly.

1. Roys of Wroxham, established 1896 to provide hampers of provisions for wherry hirers. Expanded to become major shopping centre.

Melton Constable and Briston owed their expansion entirely to the decision to build the main railway works and junction of a fast-growing system at that point. Any other of the alternative schemes mentioned in Part II, Chapter 4 would have reduced either village to intermediate stations on secondary routes, sites which almost always atrophied.

North Walsham was the only major junction in north east Norfolk apart from Melton Constable until 1906, thanks to the earlier lack of co-operation between the two systems. As such it was the node for routes from four and after 1898 five, directions. It developed as a service centre for Poppyland and for its own rural hinterland. Its two grammar schools served a radius of 15 miles, its market was the most important north of Norwich while its steam laundry served the whole coast between Weybourne and Happisburgh.² Aylsham by contrast was in decline, although it had two railway services. Both were services to separate intermediate stations and the Great Eastern Railway Station was on a minor line. There was no junction and the two stations were consequently treated as of less consequence. No new industries or services were attracted to Aylsham and the total number of businesses declines though the range of services increased. On the periphery of north east Norfolk, a similar situation was seen where the main junction at East Dereham grew steadily, while Fakenham, which had both Midland & Great Northern and Great Eastern stations but no junction, was less successful.

2. Contemporary advertisements, Norfolk Chronicle, and Kelly's, op. cit.

Of the Norwich fringe parishes, Thorpe, Brundall and Lingwood all had railway stations, the first-named had a large mental hospital adjacent to the Whitlingham Junction station, thereby greatly increasing its population. Brundall and Lingwood had a small but growing clientele of businessmen who commuted to Norwich. On the north west of the city, Hellesdon developed the other great mental hospital, also served by rail, while its golf course was adjacent to the station and much used by golfers resident in the city.³ There was little residential development here in the nineteenth century, although Low Road near the station was laid out in plots for this purpose before 1900; William Marriott lived at No. 72; plot 79 was also built on. The Bullard family of brewing fame lived by the river, but this was all, apart from the mental hospital and the original hamlet and its mill.⁴ Catton and Sprowston, between the two railways, were relatively fast-growing residential villages. The former continued to serve as a residential village for bankers, insurance men and store owners, although its best known resident in the late nineteenth century was Anna Sewell, the authoress.⁵ Sprowston developed mainly as a market gardening parish.

The former island of Flegg, north of Yarmouth, expanded its market gardening activities and was peripherally affected by Broads development. The northwards spread of Yarmouth's holiday activities also affected its growth, day trips to the area having been popular since the late 1870s.⁶

3. Kelly's, *op. cit.*

4. Gresham School Register, Holt, 1969.

5. Kelly's, *op. cit.*

6. GYS(L)R advertisements in Norfolk Chronicle, 1876 onwards.

Elsewhere, where there were few new opportunities for workers, decline was general. The number of available jobs, houses and active male workers fell continuously in most of the parishes apart from those noted above. These were however places where the railways offered new jobs in intermediate stations and at level crossings^{Fig. 21} but they were fewer in number than the old agricultural and craft jobs liquidated. They did provide better paid employment for the men fortunate enough to obtain these positions.

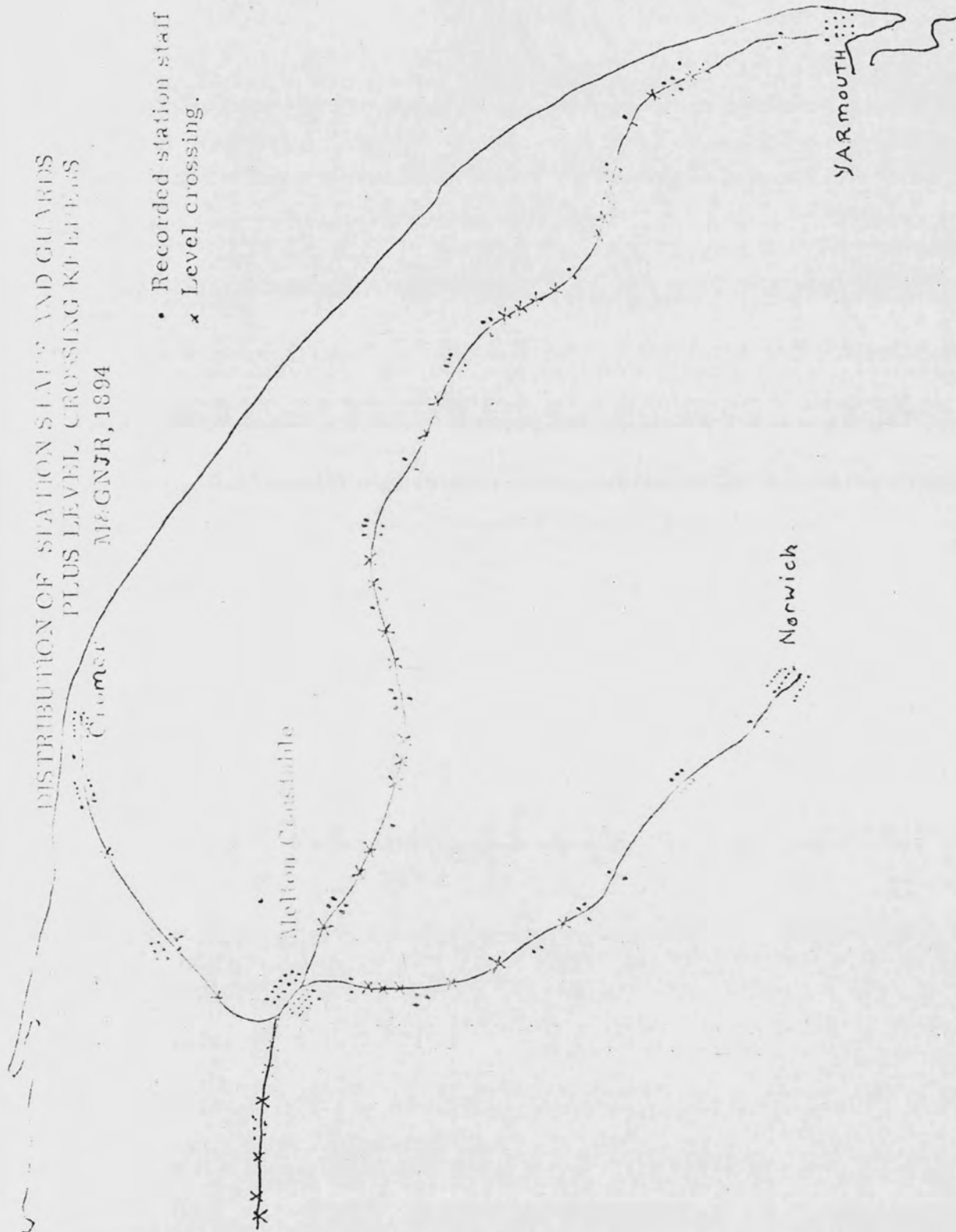
The most striking form of settlement associated with railway development was the railway town, a settlement almost exclusively composed of railway employees and their dependants. The only one of these in north east Norfolk was Melton Constable, the key point on the railway system which developed into the Eastern & Midlands Railway.

The Foundation and Building of Melton Constable

Melton Constable became the major junction as well as the site of the workshops of the Eastern & Midlands Railway from 1832 onwards. Negotiations and meetings in 1879 decided the future plans of the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway and the Lynn & Fakenham Railway.

DISTRIBUTION OF STATION STAFF AND GUARDS
PLUS LEVEL CROSSING KE-EFFERS
MAGNJR, 1894

- Recorded station staff
- x Level crossing.



As a result of these negotiations, Lord Hastings made land available to the Lynn & Fakenham Railway for a junction, station and workshops in the northern part of Melton Constable parish, known as Burgh Parva, a mile from Melton Constable Hall.⁶ There was a suggestion that the site for the workshops and junction might be at Briston Common, some two miles further east, but Lord Hastings' offer was the one accepted.⁷

Building operations commenced at Melton Constable in May 1881. By the summer of that year, when William Marriott made a visit there in the company of the contractor Jarvis, he found that a start had been made in constructing the works, part of the walls were up, as well as the framework of the houses in the terraces of Melton Street, built to accommodate the running and workshop staff of the new settlement.⁸ The new housing and works were completed for the joining of the two sections of the new system in 1883, when the line from North Walsham was opened. The works had full charge of the locomotives and rolling stock for the whole system, which included 33 locomotives. There was also signalling equipment to maintain and manufacture, as well as make materials for the construction in progress up to 1886.

There were several precedents for the choice of an isolated junction site for a railway works and associated settlement. Crewe was the

6. H. D. Watts, Melton Constable, Northern Universities Geography Journal, 1963, p.23.

7. He subsequently became a director of the Lynn & Fakenham Railway and later, very briefly, of the Eastern & Midlands Railway.

8. Marriott, W. op.cit. p.3.

archetypal "greenfield" railway works town, built by the Grand Junction Railway in the 1840s when it moved there from Edge Hill, Liverpool.⁹

New Swindon was similar in concept, although much nearer to an existing and substantial rural settlement.¹⁰ The advantages of a central position on the system and the possibilities of planning with no other buildings to take into consideration were offset to some extent by the lack of an indigenous workforce and the lack of any local accommodation or facilities for that workforce once recruited.

The expansion of the Eastern & Midlands Railway was matched by the expansion of Melton Constable's railway community. The population of the parish trebled between 1881 and 1891, while the population of the surrounding villages within walking distance also rose. Empty houses, a marked feature in the 1881 census in the villages around Melton Constable, practically disappeared. There had been 25 empty houses in Briston in 1881. In 1891 there was but a single empty house. New houses were also built in Briston, some 97 being constructed up to 1901, which was most unusual in a rural village in Norfolk at that time.¹¹ A further terrace of houses was constructed in Melton Constable itself in the 1880s. The Astley Terrace, named after the family of Lord Hastings, was erected by a speculative builder who was persuaded to build there by the guarantee of the weekly rent by the company.¹²

9. Chaloner, W.H. The Social & Economic Development of Crewe 1780-1922, London 1950.

10. Turton, B.J. Railway Towns of Southern England, Transport History, 1969.

11. Census Reports, Norfolk 1871-1901.

12. Marriott, W. *op. cit.* p.9.

The settlement itself was isolated from market towns, but traffic through Melton Constable continued to increase. Staffing of the railway presented many problems, but was solved by William Marriott who said of the early years there that the "chief obstacle to Melton was the fact that the place was so isolated, the housing accommodation so limited and the attractions so few, that men could not be induced to come, and if they came, to stay. We set out to alter these conditions."¹³

Marriott largely succeeded in gathering a staff, few of them with previous railway experience and mostly of rural origin.¹⁴ His view of length of service was pessimistic, as the staff register of 1893 showed an average length of service of seven years per man with the Eastern & Midlands Railway.¹⁵ The entertainment provided included a billiard room located in a temporary station building. A reading room was provided, in which a "School of Arts" was started. Briston, over a mile away, provided the public house and the elementary school in the early years.

There was at first a period of uncertainty in Melton Constable in 1893 when ownership of the railway changed. The Yarmouth Town Council wrote to the Great Northern Railway offering as much land as was required for a railway works near the Yarmouth Beach Station.¹⁶ Only a low rent would have been required if the chief depot of the system were to be

13. Ibid.

14. PRO/RAIL 1066, M & GNJR Staff Register 1893.

15. Ibid.

16. PRO/GN1/GNR Board Minutes, 8 November 1892, p. 180.

built there. The Corporation of King's Lynn also offered accommodation in their town for the engineering and other works.¹⁷ The King's Lynn site had the advantage that the committee offices were already in the town. It was also a more central point on the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways system than was Melton Constable. As much capital had already been invested in establishing Melton Constable, neither of these offers was taken up. Instead, an ambitious programme of construction and installation of new facilities was started at Melton Constable.

New housing was the greatest need in Melton Constable. J. W. Rowe, a builder from Peterborough received his first house building contract there in July 1890. He built 16 houses for his first contract, one of a series that lasted for six years. They were constructed under the supervision of William Marriott, and completed in eight months. The cost per unit of between £181 to £262 was very high for working class dwellings of that period and was due to the high quality of the materials written into the specifications. Fletton bricks rather than the local Thursford bricks were specified as their better weathering qualities were already appreciated. Slate damp courses were installed. The concrete used for trench filling was to be made of blue lias clay with good sharp ballast.¹⁸ Railway structures started to be built in blue engineer's brick at that time.

17. Ibid, 6 January 1893, p. 211.

18. PRO/RAIL 1066, M & GNJR Misc. Documents, contract with J. W. Rowe.

In almost all cases, the materials had to be brought in by rail, being used at the expense of locally produced materials.

J. W. Rowe received two further housing contracts in 1896-97. He erected 24 more cottages at a total cost of £4,835. The last phase of building in which he was engaged was for the erection of 20 houses for £4,540.¹⁹ The additional land for housing was met partly from land already held by the railway committee, but land costing £1,500 was also purchased from Lord Hastings.²⁰

Facilities for the workforce were greatly improved in Melton Constable after 1893. An elementary school was constructed in 1896 for £782, the cost being divided between the railway and Lord Hastings. An extension to the school had to be made in 1899 at a cost of £1,283, with yet another extension early in the present century. The gasworks were extended in 1902, using the Pintsch system, while the waterworks were enlarged in the following year. The first shop to open in Melton Constable was Colman's, built in 1894. The Railway Institute was erected in 1896, to replace the original hut, used since the spartan pioneer days of the community.²¹

19. Ibid.

20. PRO/MGNJ4/15-16, Register of Capital Expenditure, p.233.

21. Ibid.

Expansion of the railway works commenced in 1897. A new boiler shop was built, the signal shop was extended, then the erecting shop and messroom in 1898 and finally the paint shop in 1902. Much capital was also spent on new machinery. In 1899 £2,174 was spent on machine tools alone. The expansion of the works and the re-equipment permitted Melton Constable to build its own locomotives from 1897 onwards and to take adequate care of its greatly increased manifest of rolling stock.

The population depended almost entirely on the engineering works and related railway facilities. The junction and running shed were the most important on the system. Since all trains stopped at Melton Constable, the station attracted much more passenger traffic than other settlements of similar size.^P The number of passengers booked there nearly doubled between 1894 and 1914, although goods and mineral traffic did not show such strong growth.²²

The main traffic function at Melton Constable was not in servicing originating traffic, but in providing engine power and shunting facilities for through traffic. The excursions and seaside expresses of the summer season, the fruit and fish specials and the seasonal agricultural traffic from the lines radiating from Melton Constable had their trucks re-marshalled there for onward routing.

22. See traffic statistics graph for Melton Constable station, Appendix.^P

Melton Constable reached its peak of population in the first decade of the twentieth century. Its population was over 1000, to which must be added the greatly increased population of Briston, where there were over 500 more people than in 1881.

The community of terraced houses was provided with piped water, sewage disposal and gas, which were very rare in other isolated settlements in north Norfolk at that period. The wages were higher than those of the rural workers and there was regular pay for established workers. Melton Constable was the hub of the Eastern & Midlands Railway's Lynn, Yarmouth and Norwich Section, which brought a modest prosperity to an otherwise remote and backward rural area.

Railway Employment in the Region

The nineteenth century railway company became a major employer in rural parishes with stations or other railway installations. Staffing was lavish in relation to subsequent numbers employed by the railways. North east Norfolk had, in addition to an above average density of railways, the works settlement at Melton Constable and a very large number of manned level-crossings. Moreover, from 1872 until 1883 there was almost continuous employment of manual and building labour by railway contractors,

which continued spasmodically until 1907, not only on constructing new lines but also on line doubling, station rebuilding and extensions to goods yards on existing lines detailed in Part II. The maximum number of construction jobs at any one time was about 1,500 in 1882 when the Norwich to Melton Constable line and the Western Extension of the E. N. R. were being built.

It was the running of the railways that provided real long term employment opportunities. The most complete record of staffing density is the staffing inventory taken by the Midland & Great Northern Railway in 1894. This was taken after a period of financial stringency, so that it reflects minimal staffing; numbers of staff may have increased at many points in later years. For instance, Sheringham is given as having 9 staff members in 1894; a photograph taken in 1911 shows the staff had by then risen to 24. In 1894 there were 164 men employed as station staff, guards and signalmen on the Midland & Great Northern system east of Fakenham. There were 30 manned level crossings. The number of platelayers, their foremen and inspectors can be deduced from the manning levels of the nearby Watton & Swaffham Railway which had 3 maintenance staff to the mile.²³ On this basis, the 98 miles of single track illustrated would have had manning levels of around 296 men.

23. PRO/WSR1/Minute Book, p. 16.

Separate figures for the East Norfolk line are not distinguished in the Great Eastern Railway statistics. The locomotives and rolling stock used were based in Norwich, apart from small sub-sheds at Cromer and Mundesley. Basing estimates on the size of the station, train services and goods provisions, there would appear to have been, about the year 1894, 63 station staff plus guards and signalling staff, 143 track staff, 17 level-crossing keepers. Approximately 20 additional running staff would have been required for the contemporary train service. Heavy repairs were carried out at Stratford, so had no influence on the former East Norfolk Railway staff total. The other contemporary railway in north east Norfolk was the cut-off line to Yarmouth via Acle, which on the above formula would have required 70 local staff. Thus the new lines operated by the Great Eastern would have employed approximately 313 staff directly in the middle 1890s.

There was also employment in refreshment rooms, let under contract at Norwich, Yarmouth, Melton Constable, North Walsham, Cromer and Sheringham stations. The book-stalls of W.H. Smith were located in the same places and at Wroxham as well. The bookstalls operated not only for travellers but also as distributors of papers and magazines in the locality. Many of the staff on bookstalls and in the refreshment rooms were part-time but at least 20 full-time jobs had to be created. Again, coal, manure, and other distributors set up their stores in the station yards,

but for some this was merely a convenient re-location to take account of changing transport patterns, although the increased throughput of coal would indicate that additional staff would have been necessary in Cromer, Sheringham, Melton Constable and Norwich city.

The building of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways between 1898 and 1907 added about 100 further railway jobs to the district, while the expansion of train services, locomotive fleets, key stations, junctions and line doubling, to North Walsham on the Great Eastern Railway in 1897 and from Raynham Park to Corpusty on the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway between 1898 and 1901, all required additional staff. An approximation for the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway staff east of Fakenham in 1913 would be 1,150. Great Eastern Railway staff on the East Norfolk lines, together with the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint staff totalled approximately 600 at the peak. Railway jobs were widely disseminated at stations, junctions and level-crossings in over 100 parishes, but there were also considerable concentrations of railwaymen, especially at Melton Constable/Briston, where they were absolutely dominant, and in Norwich, Yarmouth, North Walsham, Cromer, Sheringham and after 1898, in Mundesley.

Railways thus added to employment opportunities; an increasing number of workers gained jobs directly associated with the new means of transport. Such developments however were only a part of a much wider pattern.

PART III

CHAPTER 5

THE PATTERN OF GROWTH SETTLEMENT AND INVESTMENT

Introduction.

Central Places.

Rateable Values.

The Location of Building Investment.

Introduction

There are a number of ways in which the changes in the distribution of population and economic activity can be measured against the distribution of railways. The relationship of the two can be seen by looking at the changes over time in settlement patterns and noting the changes in the hierarchy of those settlements. Changes in economic importance can be measured by looking at changes in Rateable Values on a parish by parish basis. Further measures of relevance are seen by looking at the number of buildings erected or demolished in parishes over time and relating this to the presence of absence of railway connections. The changing numbers of non-farming businesses in parishes also appear to be related to the quality of rail transport in the half century before the First World War. Each approach has its own focus, each representing within itself a number of economic variables which overlap each other to some extent.

The settlement pattern of north east Norfolk was one which had last been drastically changed at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the concurrent construction of waterways and turnpikes at a time when many local Enclosure Acts were being enforced. This change in transport patterns had reinforced and re-emphasised the importance of Norwich, Great Yarmouth, North Walsham and Aylsham. Subsequently no major improvements to

transport had been made until the opening of the East Norfolk Railway in 1874. During the following half century major changes took place in the size of many settlements, in their rateable values, in the number of buildings contained within their parish boundaries and in the number and importance of their non-farming businesses. The most important settlements, which tended to dominate their surrounding districts economically, can be called 'central places'.

These central places have been classified hierarchically by Walter Christaller¹ to indicate the role that they played in the economic life of the district.

The changes that occurred in north east Norfolk between 1874 and 1914 were such as to alter the position in this hierarchy of several central places. The relationship of these changes to the railways is crucial to an understanding of the role that the railways played.

Central Places

Central places are settlements which provide services for their own inhabitants and for the people living in the surrounding areas or hinterland. The range in the size of settlements is from villages containing a shop and one or more rural craftsmen, through market towns with numerous shops and a wide range of services, up to a metropolis with such a panoply of services that it

1. Baskin, C., A Critique & Translation of W. Christaller's 'Die Zentralen Orte in Suddeutschland', Ann Arbor, 1957.

is able to draw custom from a complete major region or indeed a whole nation.

The size range of central places in a generally rural area was classified by Christaller into a number of orders. In the hierarchy, the smallest Central Place, a marketort or neighbourhood centre had a population of about 500 but below 1000. Such a place had a small number of shops and services, and only served the immediate locality. The Amtsort had a population of up to 3000, serving as the district centre for several marketort settlements and their dependent villages. The Kreisstadt, with over 3000 population, served a much larger community, having several administrative functions and a wide range of shops and services. The Gauort was the Central Place for a whole county. Norwich served this function in Norfolk. In the remainder of East Anglia only Ipswich, Cambridge and Colchester reached this status before the First World War.

In the pre-railway period the market towns of north east Norfolk provided most of the services demanded by the local population. They were located at distances of between seven and ten miles from each other, thus serving area with radii of up to five miles. This represented a maximum walking time of about two hours for the most distant customer. The only strata of the population whose wants were not fully served by these towns were the gentry and nobility. They had the time, money and desire to go further for their services. For north east Norfolk the major regional centre for the wider

range of services that the top strata of society demanded was Norwich, which dominated an area with a radius of some 30 miles. Only London, some 120 miles distant, was able to provide superior services for East Anglian customers.

The settlements providing services and facilities were in competition for customers with each other in attempting to widen their spheres of influence. This came out clearly in the evidence for the ~~the~~ Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway Bill when several North Walsham witnesses, including the agricultural implement maker Randell, saw the railway from Stalham to North Walsham as a means of expanding his interest into Broadland.² The railway was the corridor of cheaper transport which enabled customers to come to more easily accessible market centres and for those same centres to despatch goods to their rural customers at prices which were competitive with those of closer rivals. The larger market allowed economies of scale to develop in firms which developed in centres well-placed for railway transport in several directions.

The development of Central Places in north east Norfolk after the coming of the railways was relatively dramatic. The core of north east Norfolk had but three ~~Ant~~port settlements in 1871, Holt, Aylsham and North Walsham. By 1901 North Walsham had grown to the extent of being a Kreisstadt, along with Cromer. It was joined by Sheringham, Melton Constable/Briston, Colfishall/Horstead and Caister, while the hitherto insignificant village of Mundesley

2. HLRO/495(L)R Bill/Min. of Evidence pp 72-100.





reached the status of Market town. This pattern of change is clearly displayed on the map of Development of Central Places in north east Norfolk and the graph (fig.22) depicting changes in the Rank-Order of Central Places in Terms of Population.

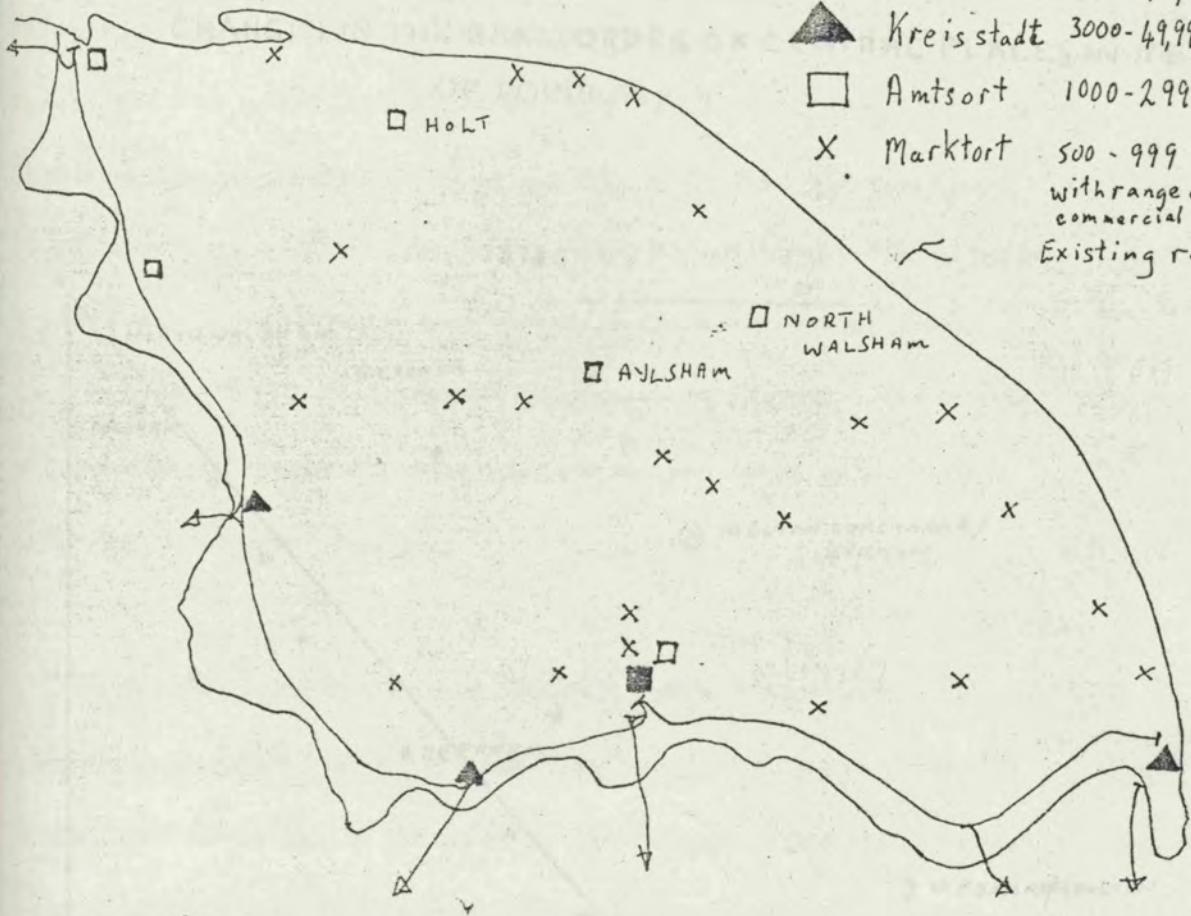
The graph (fig.23) attempts to show the effect of railway construction on the importance of settlements in relation to their population. The census data for 1871 was taken before any railways were constructed in north east Norfolk. By 1891 most railways ever constructed were active and sufficient time had elapsed for changes to appear in the population totals. The two axes are divided equally, each position being a single point in the rank order of population. Thus North Walsham, a rail junction town was the largest population centre in both 1871 and 1891. The two other junctions, Melton Constable/Briston and Wroxham/Hoveton both improved their rank order positions markedly and appear well above the median line. Possession of two stations only benefitted Cromer, which had rapidly developed as a resort in the 1880s. The market towns of Aylsham and Reepham marginally lost position in Rank Order. Places with a single station had mixed experiences, depending on the degree of development or lack of it in the area. The Central Places lacking railways all lost Rank Order positions without exception.

Fig 22

DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL PLACES
IN NORTH EAST NORFOLK

1871

-  Gravort > 50,000 population
 Kreisstadt 3000-49,999 pop.
 Amtsort 1000-2999 pop.
 Markort 500-999 pop.
 with range of commercial services
 Existing railways



1901

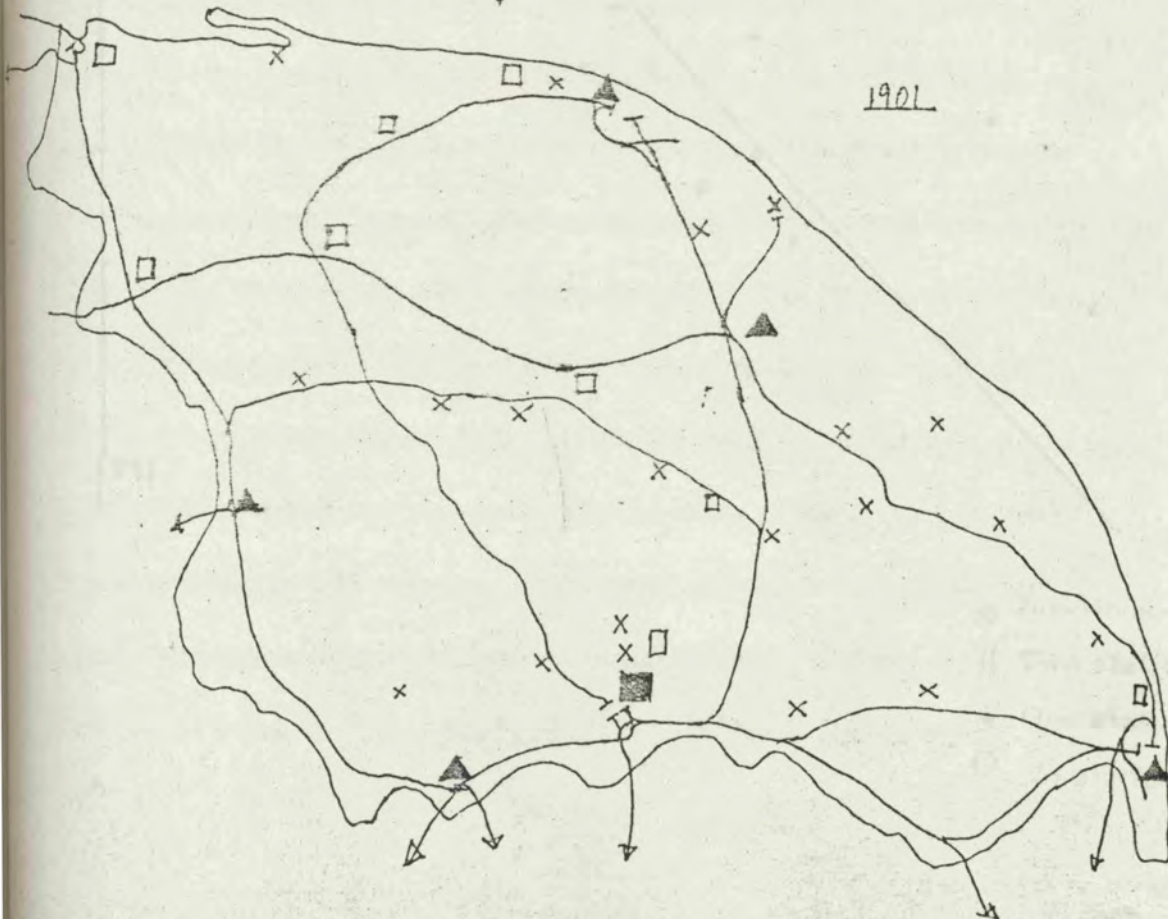
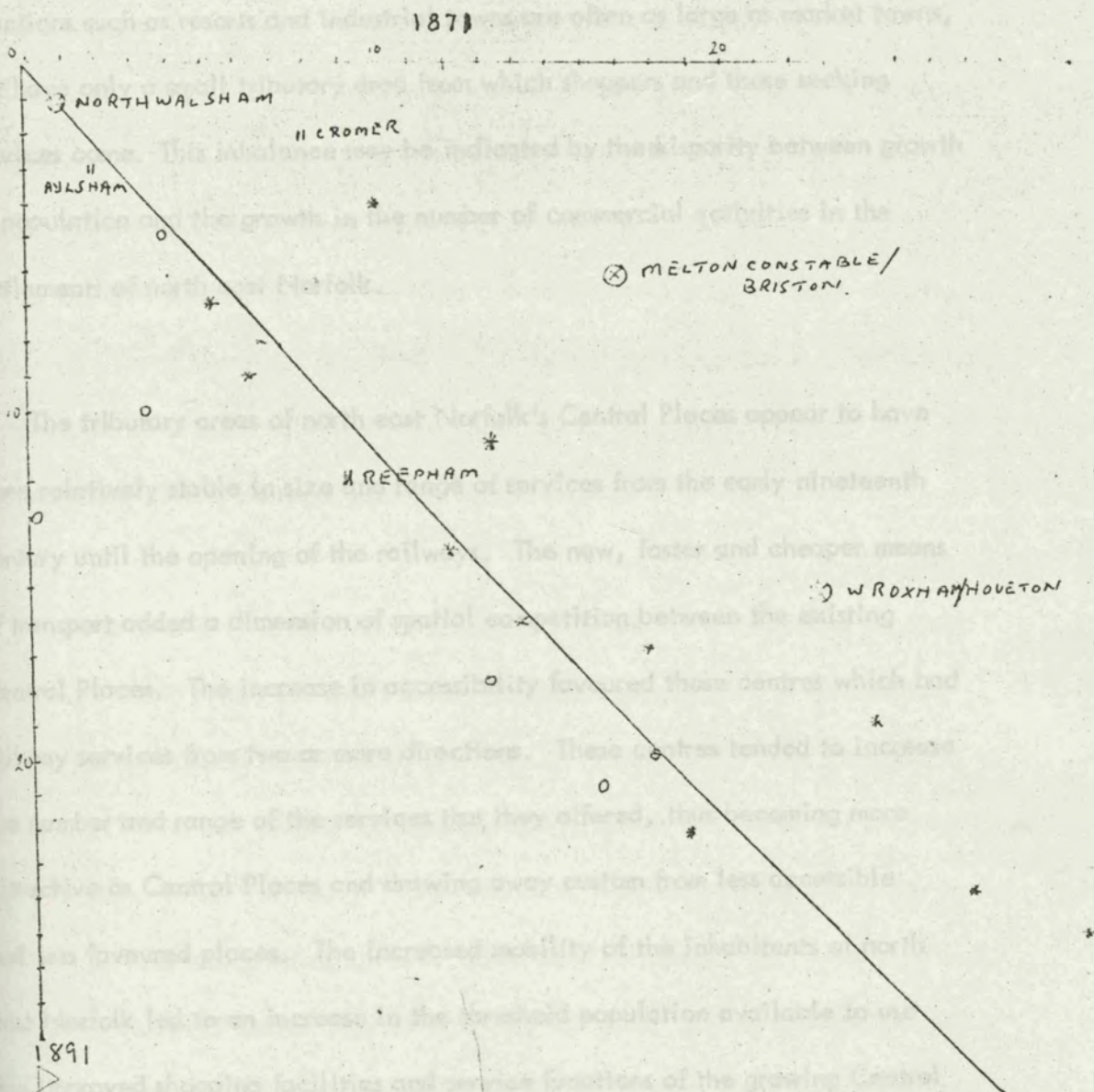


Fig. 23

CHANGES IN THE RANK ORDER OF CENTRAL PLACES IN TERMS OF POPULATION



- ⊗ Junctions
- || Two stations
- * One station
- No station.

On the basis of population growth alone there is a clear relationship between the opening of railway lines in several directions and the increase in importance of certain settlements. However by itself the central importance of a market town cannot be measured solely by population. Settlements with specialised functions such as resorts and industrial towns are often as large as market towns, yet have only a small tributary area from which shoppers and those seeking services come. This imbalance may be indicated by the disparity between growth in population and the growth in the number of commercial activities in the settlements of north east Norfolk.

The tributary areas of north east Norfolk's Central Places appear to have been relatively stable in size and range of services from the early nineteenth century until the opening of the railways. The new, faster and cheaper means of transport added a dimension of spatial competition between the existing Central Places. The increase in accessibility favoured those centres which had railway services from two or more directions. These centres tended to increase the number and range of the services that they offered, thus becoming more attractive as Central Places and drawing away custom from less accessible and less favoured places. The increased mobility of the inhabitants of north east Norfolk led to an increase in the threshold population available to use the improved shopping facilities and service functions of the growing Central Places served by the new railways. The concept of the threshold population is that a minimum number of customers is required before a business can function profitably in a new location. North Walsham by 1898 was able to attract

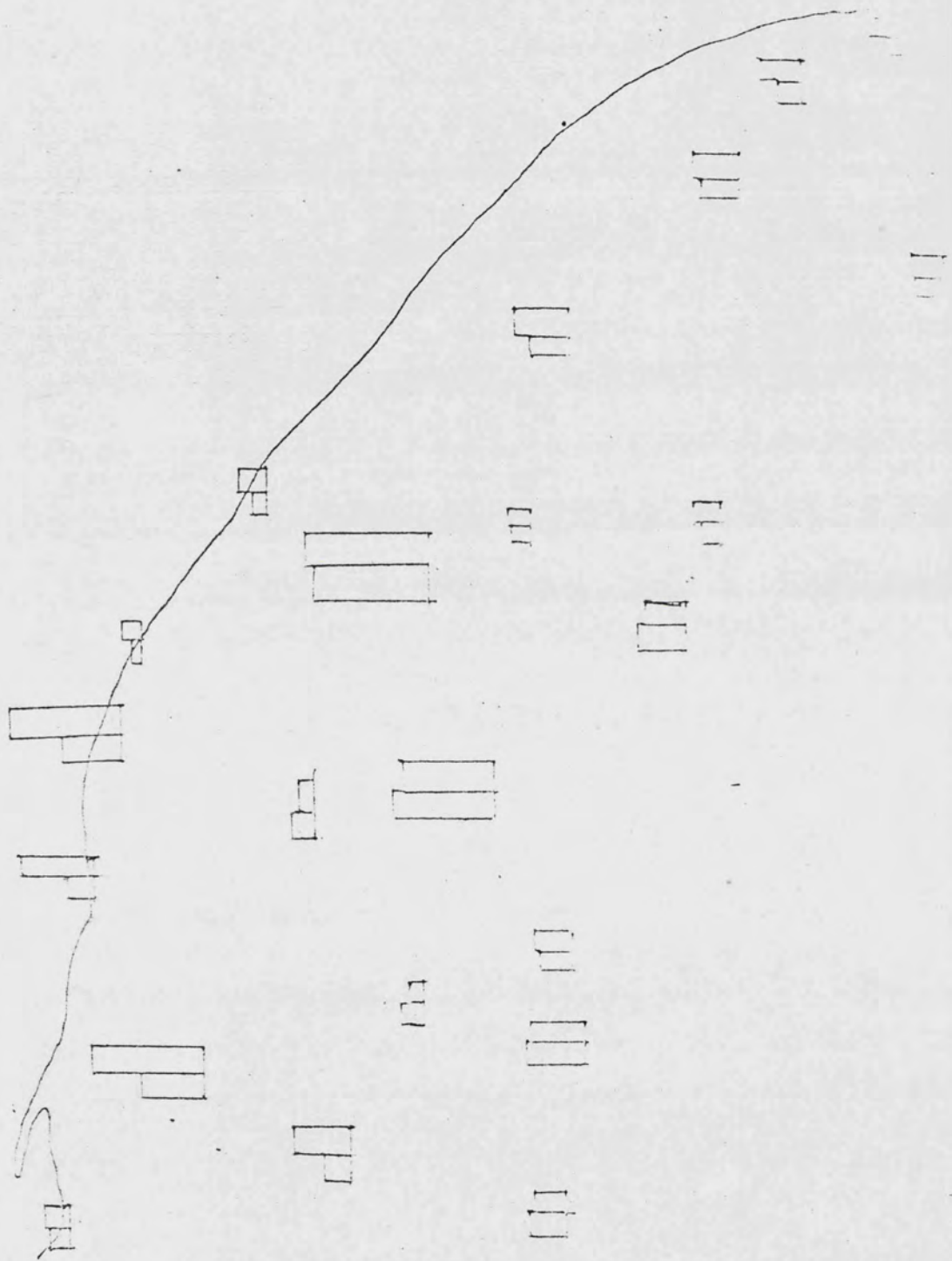
customers from five different directions as a major junction point. It thus increased its potential threshold population and became the most likely location for new trading enterprises. In the case of the coastal towns, their threshold populations were greatly swollen during the summer season and moderately increased, thanks to winter rail services during the remainder of the year, thus attracting a range of shops and services of a rather different variety from those of existing market centres. ^{Fig. 24} Norwich and Yarmouth became much more accessible to large numbers of inhabitants of north east Norfolk, both as providers of goods and services and as markets for the produce of the district. The differential growth of the towns and their businesses which resulted appears to be strongly related to their position on the railway system. This relationship clearly emerges from the map and graph³.

In the generally level area of north east Norfolk with only minor physical barriers, mostly rivers and small lakes, the model spacing size of distribution of settlements should theoretically prevail. However, the main transport routes in the form of canals, navigations and turnpikes had led to the predominance of Norwich, Great Yarmouth, North Walsham, Aylsham and Cromer in the period before railway construction started. After 1874 settlements that were very well served by railways started to grow at a very fast rate. Buying and marketing practices were radically altered as it became possible for merchants in market towns and resorts to buy in manufactured goods for sale from factories outside

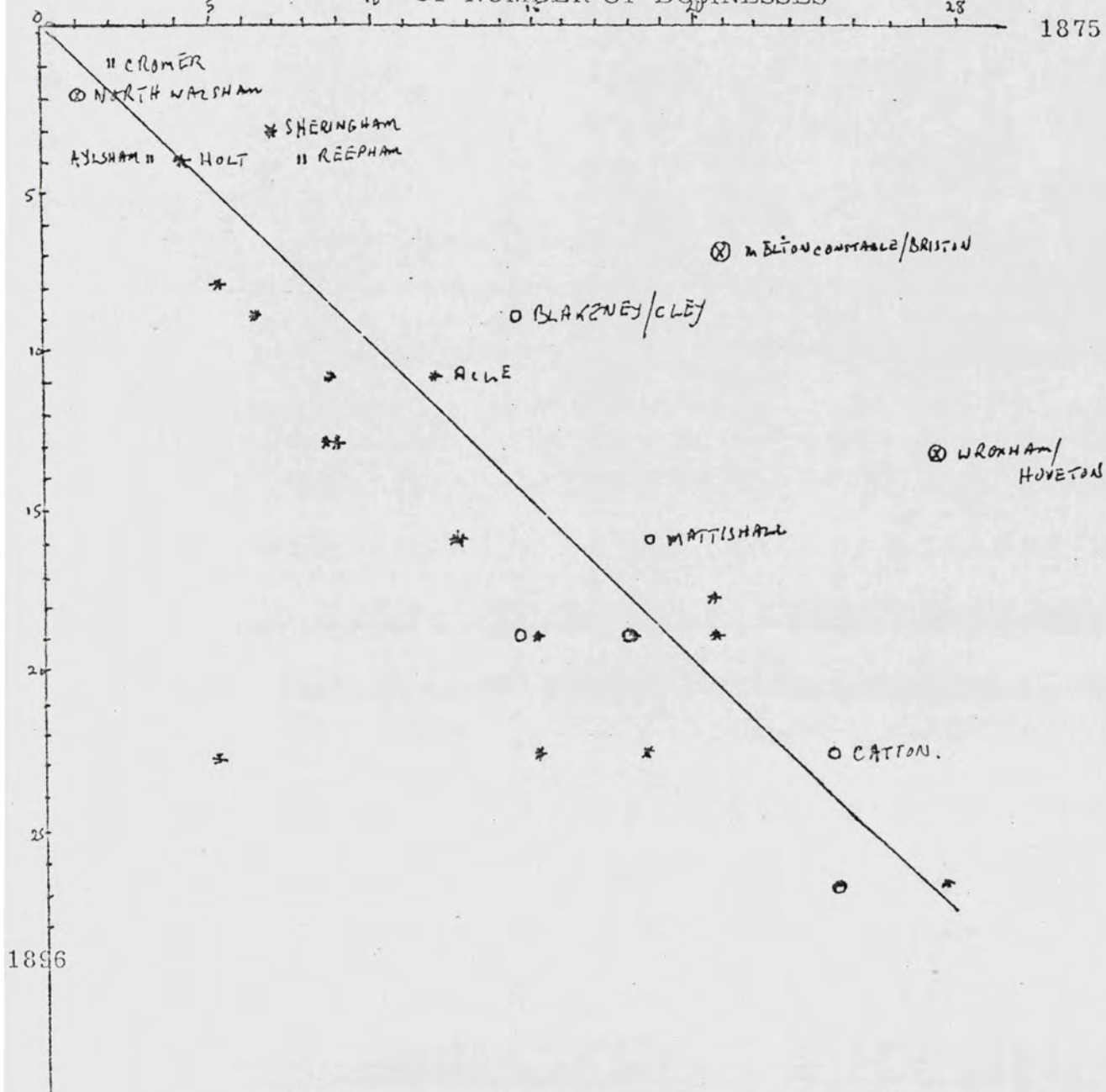
3. Map Fig. 22, Graphs Fig. 23 & 25

THE NUMBER OF NON-FARMING, NON-HOTEL BUSINESSES IN NORTH-EAST
 NORFOLK 1873/1896, ILLUSTRATING CHANGES IN CENTRAL PLACE FUNCTION.

SCALE: 1 mm = 10 businesses.



CHANGES IN THE RANK-ORDER OF CENTRAL PLACES IN TERMS OF NUMBER OF BUSINESSES



their immediate locality at lower prices than those of local craftsmen. Coal distribution became concentrated in railway goods yards to the detriment of wherry owners and beach landings.

Those settlements which were well placed on the railway system or which were located at points on the coast and could attract business and visitors were enabled to advance their position in the hierarchy of Central Places.

Rateable Values

The most widely available indicator of economic progress or decline on a parish basis is the valuation made for rating purposes. This is an expression of the estimated annual rental on land or buildings and is the basis of local taxation. The valuations are changed periodically to reflect changes in the estimates of the rental that the property will attract, thus giving a moving picture of the changing value of parishes and highlighting where the greatest increases and decreases in value were located. As rating changes occurred at least every decade, they provide a clear indication of changing economic circumstances, far better than evidence gained from sales of land, which is often limited and fragmentary. Tenant farmers re-negotiated their tenancy

terms on the basis of their profits and rate adjustments followed relatively quickly, so that rateable values reflect the economic depression starting in the mid-1870s.

Many parishes in north east Norfolk suffered serious declines in their rateable values between 1875 and 1896. Drops of up to half the 1875 value were seen in parishes where cottages were being allowed to rot, the land was tumbling down or being turned into poor permanent pasture.⁴ After 1893 there was a tendency for valuations to rise up to 1916 even in the worst affected parishes in a period when agriculture partially recovered from its most depressed state.

The total parish rateable value figure also summarised the rise or decline of a central place, including industry, services, occupied houses and peripheral farming in a single figure. Sales, new leasings and changes in tenancy take place more frequently in urban than in rural areas. Urban areas were also the places where new businesses and new housing were most frequently being added. Rates would seem to be a reflection of urban economic change, despite reservations about the consistency of valuations.

The percentage increases and decreases in rateable value derived from Kelly's Directories of Norfolk (See Table, pp. 270-1) show a pattern in the period 1875 - 96 that reflected considerable change. The first three towns showing

4. Haggard, H.R. *op. cit.* p. 449.

dramatic increases, Cromer, Sheringham and Yarmouth, were all resorts, as were the fifth or sixth places, Hunstanton and Runton. Norwich and its suburb Catton both benefitted from the growth of the regional metropolis (Gauort). The three junction settlements other than Cromer all showed more modest increases in their rateable values up to 1896, but in the subsequent two decades there was considerable further growth in the rateables values of Melton Constable/ Briston and North Walsham thanks to the improved condition of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways and their development as distribution centres.

% INCREASES IN RATEABLE VALUES 1875 - 96

Cromer + 231%	Caister + 16.21%
Sheringham + 129.77%	Ormesby + 12.77%
Yarmouth + 106.69%	⊗ North Walsham + 12.72%
Norwich + 62.8%	⊗ Wroxham/Hoveton + 5.83%
Hunstanton + 56.77%	Stalham + 2.81%
Runton + 32.7%	⊗ Briston/Melton Constable + 1.85%
* Catton + 21.09%	

Sources: Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1875
Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1896

* No railway station.

+ ENR Western Extension.

⊗ Junctions.

% DECREASES IN RATEABLE VALUES 1875 - 96

* Sprowston - 1.06%	* St Faith's - 23.67%
Martham - 3.69%	* Hickling - 23.92%
Holt - 4.89%	+ Buxton/Lammas - 24.88%
+ Coltishall - 5.08%	+ Cawston - 25.18%
Acle - 7.65%	* Blakeney/Cley - 25.41%
+ Aylsham - 16.79%	+ Reepham/Whitwell/Hackford - 27.54%
* Costessey - 16.39%	+ Foulsham - 28.09%
* Blofield - 20.04%	* Southrepps - 28.52%
* Ludham - 21.61%	* Matishall - 35.85%

Sources: Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1875.
Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1896.

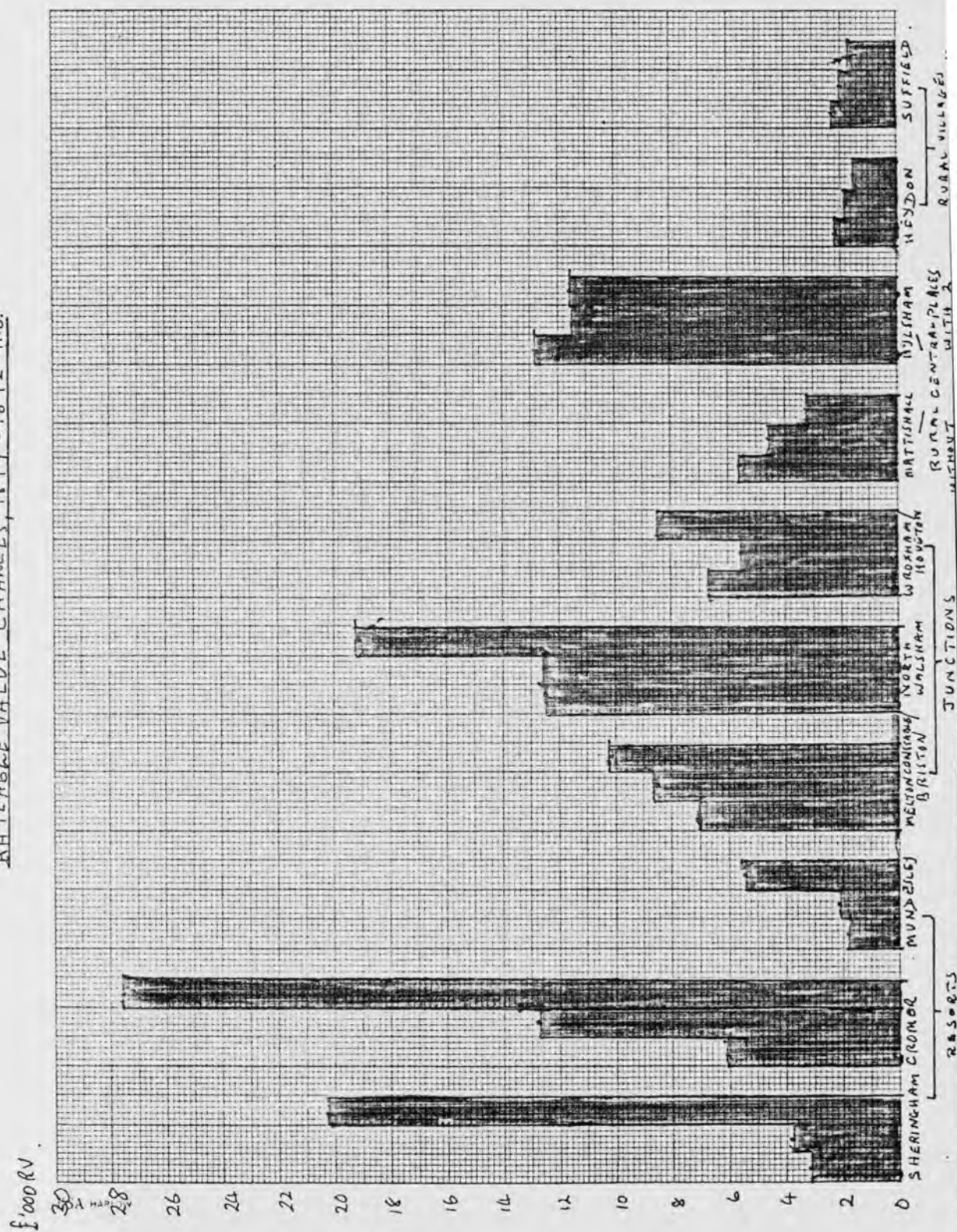
- * No railway station.
- + ENR Western Extension.

Of the parishes showing decreases in their rateable values, nine were without stations. Places served by stations which nevertheless showed decreases in their rateable values were almost all to be found on the Aylsham & Western Extensions of the ENR which was a cross-country line and not a through route.

The graph showing rateable values in 1879, 1892 and 1916 ^{Fig 26} points to the explosive growth of the three resort towns of Sheringham, Cromer and

Fig. 26

RATEABLE VALUE CHANGES, 1879-1892-1916.



Mundesley,⁵ especially in the latter part of the period (see graph).

The market town of Aylsham, served by two railways, but not a junction had a largely stagnant rateable value in contrast to the junction town of North Walsham. Purely rural parishes such as Mattishall, Heydon and Suffield lost much of their value, neither having a railway station nor attracting new industry to compensate for their loss of agricultural labour.

The effects of access to railway routes in several directions, preferably with express services, can thus be clearly seen in the pre-eminence of those places favoured by the railway. In the tables and diagrams of rateable values, it is the junctions and points well served by one or two railways that increased their populations, numbers of buildings and businesses. Where there was the additional attraction of resort development or large industrial development, the upward movement of most indicators was spectacular, for instance Sheringham's valuation increased from £3187 in 1875 to £21,124 in 1916, Overstrand from £728 to £5,521 in the same period. Melton Constable, with its industrial development, only doubled its rateable value from £2,400 to £5,355, an indication that resort development was a more lucrative investment for the fortunate landowners. Even the most marginal seaside developments such as Weybourne and Bacton had increased rateable valuation, the benefits of which must have reduced the incubus of unprofitable agricultural land in the parishes.⁶

5. Though the great growth of rates in seaside resorts in part reflects the high rents charged for holiday accommodation. Moreover in the resorts there was little agricultural land, whose rateable value was declining.

6. Kelly's Directory, Norfolk 1875, 1896, 1916.

The other holiday area, The Broads, in general showed a decline in rateable values apart from the twin parishes of Wroxham and Hoveton where there was a strong increase after 1896 when these parishes became the provisioning and boat hiring centre of the new holiday area. Elsewhere in The Broads the decline in rateable value up to 1896 was less steep than in areas entirely dependent on farming and local crafts. From the turn of the century there was a recovery rather better than that of farming districts during the following two decades.

New construction evidenced by the data on rateable values in north east Norfolk between 1871 and 1901 largely took place in existing central places or in those which arose as a result of opportunities created by improved transport, chiefly rail transport.

Most central places recorded gains, 20 of the 28 recorded increases in the number of inhabited houses. Most notable were the holiday resort towns of Cromer and Sheringham, the junction stations too feature. Strongly in the top part of the list of % increases in the number of inhabited houses 1871 - 1901. The growth of Catton and Sprowston was independent of the railway thanks to their proximity to Norwich.

% INCREASES IN THE NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES, 1871 - 1901

Cromer + 131%	Holt + 14%
Sheringham + 100%	Martham + 12.75%
Catton + 89%	Ormesby + 9.15%
Runton + 75.5%	Aylsham + 6.5%
Briston/Melton Constable + 45.75%	Yarmouth + 6.19%
North Walsham + 34.02%	Southrepps + 5%
Sprowston + 33.7%	Cawston + 3.24%
Wroxham/Hoveton + 32.16%	Foulsham + 3.13%
Stalham + 26.97%	Buxton/Lammas + 2%
Caister + 17%	Acle + 1%
Coltishall/Horstead + 16%	

% DECREASES IN THE NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES, 1871 - 1901

Blofield - 1.1%	Reepham - 10.53%
* Hickling - 1.5%	* Blakeney - 12.5%
Costessey - 5.24%	* Ludham - 13.13%
+ St. Faith's - 8%	* Mattishall - 20.1%

Five of the eight central places which recorded falls in the number of inhabited houses were without railway stations*. The decline in population and the decay of cottages in these settlements continued for the three decades, as old functions diminished and were not replaced.

Rateable values thus summarise a wide array of investment and dis-investment factors as well as the decline in the value of agricultural property. All this was strongly related to the building of railways in an area previously devoid of them. Even the value of agricultural property was sustained to some extent. The low number of agricultural bankruptcies and the continuity of all the larger agricultural estates in the district (compared with heavy casualties in other rural areas) indicates that the railways had a beneficial effect on farming in north east Norfolk. Yet even within a relatively small area such as this "for those whose estates were fortunately placed the benefits were very considerable."⁷ The unequal distribution of well placed landed estates meant that Lord Suffield and Lord Hastings drew much more from their choice locations than those less well placed.

The advantages of proximity to a railway is only too apparent. Resorts grew once they were well served by rail, provided that the landowner was willing to allow the land to be developed. Railway junctions attracted many new buildings and functions, thereby increasing their rateable value, thanks to the good services in several directions provided by the railways. In contrast only short distances from the railway, three miles or more, there was a rapid falling away of both rateable values and investment in new construction of businesses because of the dependence that the new economy had on rail transport.

7. Thompson, F.M.L. *op. cit.* p.268.

The Location of Building Investment

Building investment is one of the best indicators of economic growth in north east Norfolk. The greatest amount of building relative to previous structures was in the resort areas and in Melton Constable/Briston, but there was also considerable construction in the railway junction towns and villages and even in places where the population declined. Much of building was residential in nature, but Melton Constable and North Walsham had industrial buildings erected, boatyards were also built in several places in the Broads area and the station yards in many places had granaries, coal offices and additional goods accommodation constructed.

Construction well beyond residential need took place in many of the resorts, the houses being bought speculatively for summer letting. The number of uninhabited houses in the resorts was much greater than in even the most decayed urban centres. Cromer in 1901 had 135 uninhabited houses, over 15% of its stock against a 5% average for the county. Yarmouth had 1,001 uninhabited houses in the same year, some 8% of its total stock. Yet in both centres there was an active building programme at the time and reports in the summer indicated that resorts were full at their peak.⁸

Industrial construction was largely restricted to North Walsham, Melton Constable, Yarmouth, Norwich and their environs. In the first named, the successful firms, which had occupied cramped premises around the market

8. Ward Lock Guide, Cromer, London 1908.

place, moved to more spacious sites on the outskirts of the town. Randall's the manufacturing ironmongers, moved to a five-acre site on Bacton Road. Cornish & Gaymer achieved such success with their church renovation and contracting business that they built up a new site at Millfield, near the Great Eastern Railway Station, where they employed 200 men on site and many more on contract work all over the country. They were able to open a London office at the Adelphi.⁹ Press Brothers' joinery works in New Road, their boatyard at Ebridge and the North Walsham Steam Laundry on Cromer Road, all indicate the success of a few rapidly expanding firms in the most successful market town north of Norwich. Melton Constable railway works and town have been noticed above, but in addition there were in this station yard the buildings for distributing Bullard's beer from Yarmouth and Thomas May's coal to the neighbourhood.¹⁰ The East Norfolk Railway built large granaries as an adjunct to its stations at North Walsham, Cromer, Aylsham and Reepham. The main areas for factory construction were in Norwich and Yarmouth. Both in Norwich and Yarmouth, new industries built factories to replace the semi-domestic system of the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹ Colmans, Boulton & Paul, Barnard, Bishop & Company and the breweries continued to expand, as did Jarrold's printing works. Boatyard construction throughout the Broads area was of some local importance.

9. Minutes of Evidence, YNNR, 1879.

10. Kelly's, *op. cit.*

11. Hawkins, C.B. *op. cit.* p. 23.

This constructional work was accompanied by a locational shift of brickworks, builders and tile-makers to the coast and the Norwich fringe, where the best sales opportunities lay.¹² Sheringham, Cromer, Mundesley, Catton and Sprowston were especially prominent in the building boom.

Costessey brickworks were leased by the Gunton Brothers from Lord Stafford. They benefitted from many local orders both for new construction and for rebuilding. Their decorative moulded bricks, tiles and chimneys are common in structures of this period. Orders for internal and metal fittings benefitted the Northrepps foundry run by Goldens. They received contracts for the casting of decorative fireplaces, railings and other ironworks in the hotels and houses.¹³

The railways themselves required much new construction in the urban centres and the effect that they had in concentrating investment in fewer, larger places was part of the urbanisation of north east Norfolk.¹⁴ The improved transport resulted in a demand for new resort accommodation and for the expansion of the most successful of the local industries, some of which built up a national and even international markets.

12. The constructional boom brought three prominent architects into the district. Two Norwich architects were active in hotel design, Herbert Green and Charles Skipper. The latter has achieved an eminence which makes preservation of his better pieces *de rigueur* in Norwich today. Sir Edward Lutyens was the London architect who designed much of Overstrand, including its chapel.

13. Personal Communication, John Golden of Northrepps.

14. The benefits to a landowner can be judged in the case of Lord Hastings for Melton Constable. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century rents from agricultural land fell by about one third, thus hitting his income substantially. In Melton Constable rents increased by £2,955 over the same period. If one

assumes that the agricultural rents in the parish declined by a third, this would suggest that Lord Hastings' increase in income from railways and allied investments in the parish were in the order of £3,400 per annum. Such fresh income helped offset the decline in rents from agricultural land elsewhere.

PART III

CHAPTER 6

THE OVERALL IMPACT

Introduction.

Direct Railway Investment.

Non-Railway Investment.

CHAPTER 6

THE OVERALL IMPACT

Introduction

The changes in the various components of the economy of north east Norfolk, population, employment, housing, farming, industry and commerce all point to the varied experiences of different areas within the region during the period of railway construction and its immediate aftermath. There was a continued decline in all aspects of the economy of rural villages and towns whose sole hinterland was rural parishes.

The railway junctions were the only inland places where considerable growth took place in population, employment, housing, industry and commerce. The coastal resorts experienced rapid and exaggerated growth in population, employment, housing and in commerce. In all, some 1500 new houses were added to the stock of north east Norfolk, excluding Norwich and Great Yarmouth and some 12 new hotels were constructed. Many new businesses were opened, especially in resorts and at the inland junction towns and there was the development of industry, albeit on a modest scale. The Broads boating centre was the new location of the boat building industry. Cromer, Sheringham, Mundesley and Melton Constable all had gas and waterworks installed, the resorts in response to the demands of visitors, the latter provided by the railway company. The market towns already had gas supplies, their waterworks were only built in the 20th century.

Direct Railway Investment

What emerges very plainly from the analysis of the previous chapters is a clear link between railway investment and the subsequent patchy economic growth of north east Norfolk. The railways spent some £3,500,000 in constructing the two competing networks and later adding the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways, in doubling parts of their mileage and other improvements. ^{Appendix K + Fig. 17} Much of the capital went to pay local labour and suppliers such as brickmakers, quarries and builders.

The pattern of share ownership indicated that much of the original capital came from outside the area served by the railways, ^{F&G} some from private shareholders, the remainder in the case of the East Norfolk Railway from the parent company. The Eastern & Midlands Railway obtained capital by unorthodox means such as Lloyds Bonds, stock flotations and ^{finance company} agreements which it was unable to honour. Later expansion of both systems came as a result of direct investment by the Great Eastern, Great Northern and Midlands Railways, who did not rely on local capital at all.

The railway investment provided the district with a wide variety of new jobs in engineering, ^Z trackwork, at stations and in goods yards, level crossings ^R and signal boxes. Few jobs appear to have been lost, at least initially, in previous forms of transport. There was thus a large and widely scattered net gain in employment directly attributable and railway investment in north east Norfolk.

The large investment of railway capital, mainly from outside Norfolk was crucial in triggering off further investment from local and national sources in a wide variety of new ventures, many of which would not have been made unless railway travel had been made available.

NON-RAILWAY INVESTMENT

Estimates of non-railway investment based on the known prices indicate that it was not as great as that made by the railways. Houses on the Cromer Hall Estates on the west side of the town were to have a value of "at least £500".¹ There were much more expensive houses built in Suffield Park and at Overstrand, but also cheaper ones at Melton Constable and in the towns, so an average of £500 per house would produce an investment of £750,000 with many of the houses being bought by people from outside the district as investments or summer homes. The new hotels cost up to £80,000 each,² and many existing inns and hotels were refurbished, so that a sum in excess of £500,000 can be estimated. The 200 pleasure boats and their attendant boatyards were local investments representing a capital of over £100,000. In addition, if new business premises, public utilities, brickworks, contracting and attendant public works are added, some £2,000,000 of non-railway, non-farming investment was made, largely by private individuals, such as Lord Suffield investing in a hotel and a golf course,³ and local companies. Some of this might have occurred had railways not been built, but since most of the facilities

1 Cromer Hall Estates Prospectus; North Norfolk District Council collection.

2 Sheringham, Grand Hotel Prospectus, 1898.

3 Suffield, Lord, op. cit. p. 84.

anticipated or were in response to new business brought in by the railways this would appear unlikely. Thus the railway emerges as the chief impetus in the economic change and progress of the area.

PART IV

CONCLUSION

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The economic development of north east Norfolk in the latter half of the nineteenth century was bound to the basic facts of its having no railway services until 1874 and then receiving a surfeit of them thanks to two separate railway systems building separate networks within the district.

The period before railway construction was one in which there was very little economic development. No improvements were made to the transport infrastructure, the output of farming and industry tended to remain at roughly the same level and the sole resort of Cromer was unable to expand from its 700 to 800 visitors at a time,¹ as the means of bringing visitors to it had not improved since the construction of the turnpike. There were no major economic attractions to investment in north east Norfolk until the 1860s, by which time the success of resorts served by railways in other parts of the country focused attention on the most likely source of revenue on the harbourless coast of Norfolk.

Early attempts to construct railways in north east Norfolk foundered on the twin rocks of lack of capital and a diversity of possible plans, none

1. Minutes of Evidence, Lynn & Fakenham Railway Bill 1880, 23 June 1880, 135.

of which promised to be economically sound. The combination of Lord Suffield, the expansion-minded and newly formed Great Eastern Railway, and the prospects of expansion at Cromer at last got matters moving in 1863. However, more than a decade passed before the first section of the East Norfolk Railway opened. Thereafter competition from an alternative railway system drove the East Norfolk Railway to expand its network in north east Norfolk to an extent that was probably unwise. The contractor's alternative system became the Eastern & Midlands Railway, a sickly cross-country line that nevertheless succeeded in breaking the Great Eastern Railway's (parent of the East Norfolk Railway) monopoly in Norfolk and surviving until taken over jointly by two major railways serving the Midlands.

Both railway systems in north east Norfolk were operating in an environment of agricultural depression, only partially alleviated by their presence. This made them reliant on holiday traffic. Despite the seasonal character of such business, resort traffic was significant enough to encourage the railway companies to make very large investments in doubling their lines to seaside towns and improving their services as well as building the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways almost solely to serve embryo holiday resorts. The main line railways were able to incorporate holiday traffic into their other business quite effectively as the holiday peak occurred at a time when their coal carrying was at its lowest, thus freeing train paths and

locomotives for the seasonal business. Old stock was frequently used on excursions, thus creating little or no demand for new capital.

The stimulus administered to the economy of north east Norfolk by the railways was very great. For over 30 years there was constant demand for constructional materials and labour. The railways themselves employed a permanent labour force throughout the district, attending to the railway and its traffic. This in turn increased the demand for road transport as the economic tempo of the district increased. The construction industry increased its workload by building new resorts, which in their turn created new demands for labour there and at the junctions inland. Simultaneously less intensive farming methods and the decline of coastal maritime traffic in the district meant that there was an emerging contrast between the growth areas of resorts and junctions and the areas of decline in purely rural parishes and the non-resort coastal villages.

The creation and expansion of resorts in north east Norfolk in the four decades before the First World War was part of a national process which brought the industrialised and urbanised masses within reach of the seaside and other leisure areas. The railway companies encouraged the growth of resorts and responded to such expansion by improving access to the resorts from their own systems. By offering cheap fares and by nationwide publicity they encouraged customers to come to particular resorts, which each

developed their own character. Resort development provided opportunities for the expansion of contracting work, railway maintenance, gas, water and laundry services for the resorts and a transport network which allowed a few industries to develop a clientele beyond the immediate hinterland. Boat building, milling and agricultural engineering were the only important industries to emerge, but these partially helped compensate for the destruction of jobs in the farming and craft sectors of the local economy occurring at the time.

Farming changed from arable High Farming to mixed farming, with only a small horticultural sector. There was a change in the tenantry, but not in landownership, while the agricultural labour force shrank considerably. Local markets for produce improved and the national market was opened up by the railways. The end result was that although north east Norfolk suffered during the depressed agricultural conditions of the late nineteenth century, it suffered less than many other parts of eastern England. The only agricultural beneficiaries of the economic changes were the landowners who had developable land and who used it for resort or industrial development and those country people who were able to let accommodation to visitors.

The net result of over £5,000,000 of investment by the railways and other investors in north east Norfolk was that it fared better in the last quarter of the nineteenth century than other rural districts of Norfolk

which had long since absorbed the benefits of railway construction and which had little more to offer investors. In a period when railways were the prime movers of people and goods over distances of more than a very few miles, it was essential to have a dense network of railways in order to exploit the possibilities of a remote rural area. When those possibilities included resort development, it was also essential that those railways should be well connected to the national network.

The potential of making a railway and later several railways to the coast of north east Norfolk became evident from the 1860s. Fitful construction against a changing economic background eventually produced systems that served three resorts to excess and provided sufficient capacity to allow Cromer, Sheringham and Mundesley to develop a holiday clientele great in relation to the size of the settlements in an area collectively known as Poppyland. The remainder of north east Norfolk benefitted to a greater or lesser degree by being everywhere in close proximity to railway stations which being in competition with others nearby, kept carriage rates low. The great density of railways allowed railway jobs to be spread across north east Norfolk. Railways tended to concentrate development in a few coastal resorts and inland junctions, while less favoured areas continued a decline that had started before the railways were opened. That decline was however ameliorated to some extent by the presence nearby of those railways.

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	<u>Code</u>
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Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Railways	NAS
Great Eastern Railway	GE
Midland Railway	MR
Great Northern Railway	GN
West Norfolk Joint Railways	WNJ
Midland & Great Northern Railways (and predecessors)	MGN
Parliamentary records	PYB
Board of Trade Plans and Correspondence	MT6
Miscellaneous Financial Material	Rail 1066

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<u>Title</u>	<u>Commons or Lords</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Vol.</u>
<u>GER AREA</u>			
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Norwich & Dereham Direct Railway	"	1845	25
Lynn & Dereham Railway	"	1845	60
East Dereham & Norwich Railway Bill	"	1846	43
North of Norfolk Railway Bill	"	1846	43
Norfolk Railway Bill	H of L	1847	3
East Norfolk Railway Bill	H of C	1864	122
" " " Extension to Cromer	"	1872	54
" " " Extension to Aylsham	"	1876	224
" " " Western Extension	"	1880	136
" " " Sale to Great Eastern Railway	"	1881	37
<u>M & GNJR AREA</u>			
Great Yarmouth & Stalham (Light) Railway	H of C	1876	82
Further Powers	"	1878	40
Change of name to Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway	"	1879	75
Further Powers	"	1881	199
Lynn & Fakenham Railway	"	1876	146
" " " Extensions to Blakeney & Norwich	"	1880	165
" " " Purchase of Blakeney Harbour	"	1881	199
" " " " " "	"	1882	179
Amalgamation to form Eastern & Midlands Railway	"	1882	221
Yarmouth Union Railway	"	1880	195
" " "	"	1881	199
" " "	"	1882	227

<u>Title</u>	<u>Commons or Lords</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Vol.</u>
<u>HLRO 2</u>			
Vesting of Eastern & Midlands Railway to form Joint Committee		1893	57
Construction of Railway at Great Yarmouth by Joint Committee		1897	182
Agreement with Great Eastern Railway		1898	120
Extension of time for Mundesley Branch		1891	135

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1810 - 26.

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Norwich - North Walsham	1797	147
Norwich - Fakenham	1823	80
Great Yarmouth - Acle	1830	39

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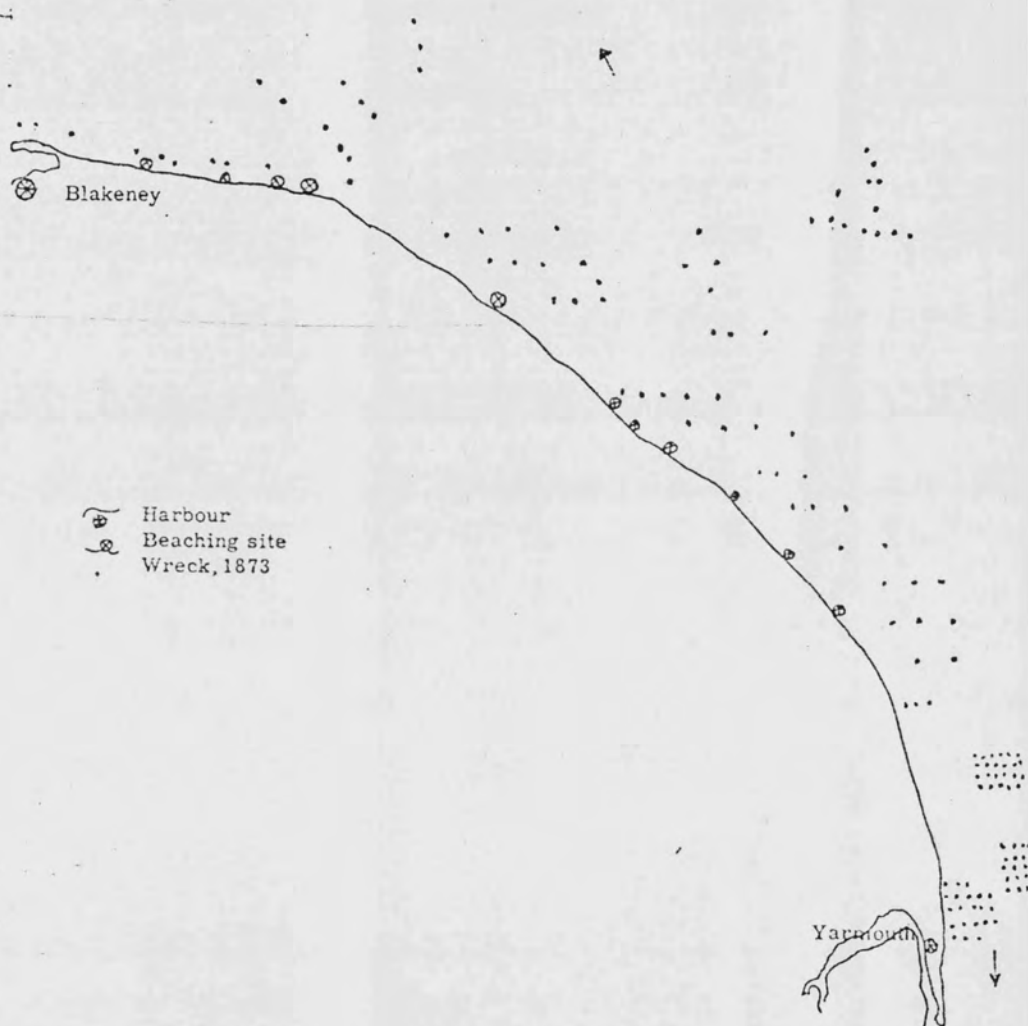
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Abbreviations Used

ECHR	Economic History Review
AHR	Agricultural History Review
BH	Business History
JTH	Journal of Transport History
NA	Norfolk Archaeology
NUGT	Northern Universities Geographical Journal
RM	Railway Magazine
TH	Transport History
VS	Victorian Studies

APPENDICES

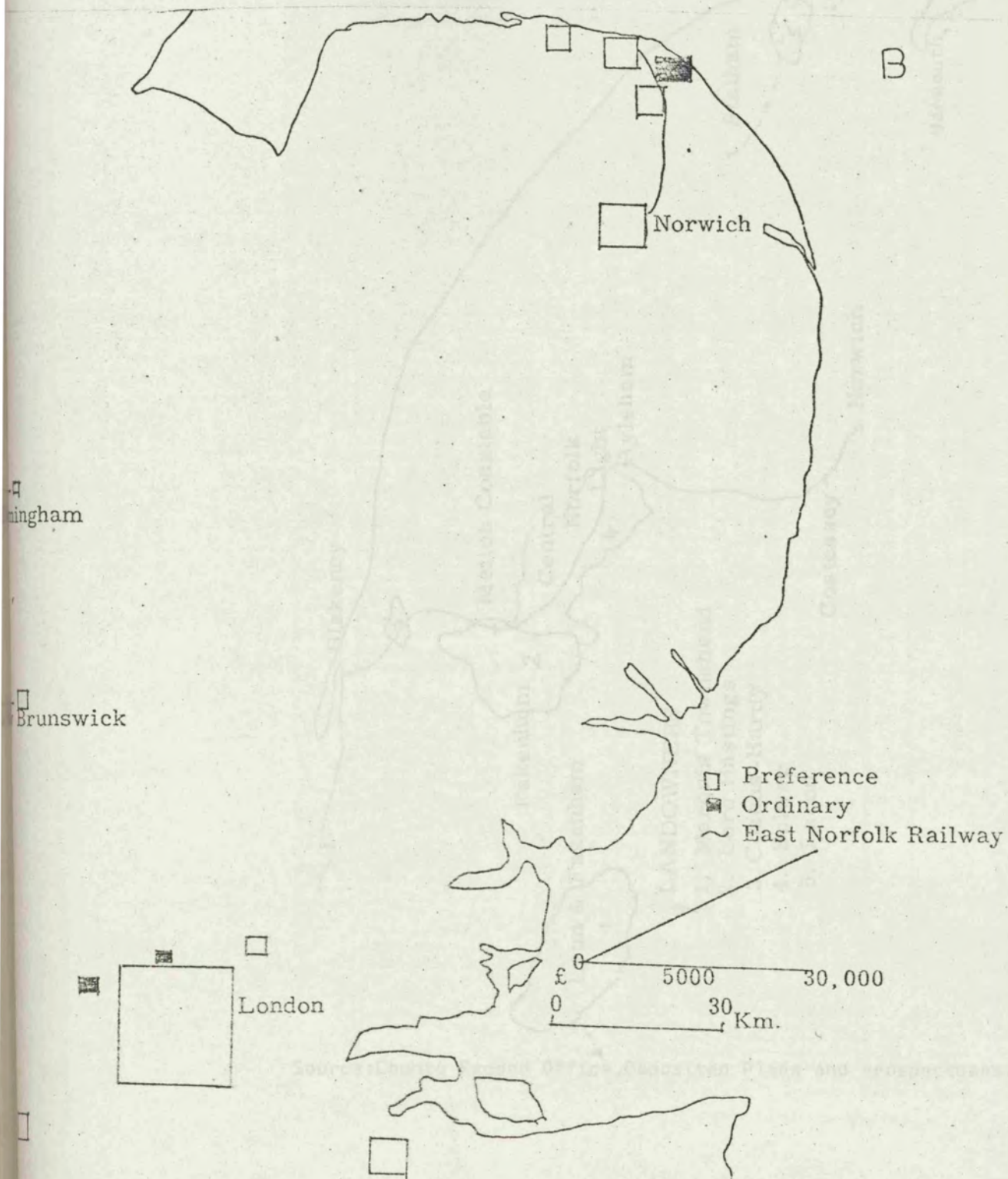
SITES OF WRECKS IN RELATION TO
HARBOURS AND BEACHING SITES,
NORTH-EAST NORFOLK 1873.



Source: Hedges, A.A.H., East Coast Shipping, Tring, 1974.

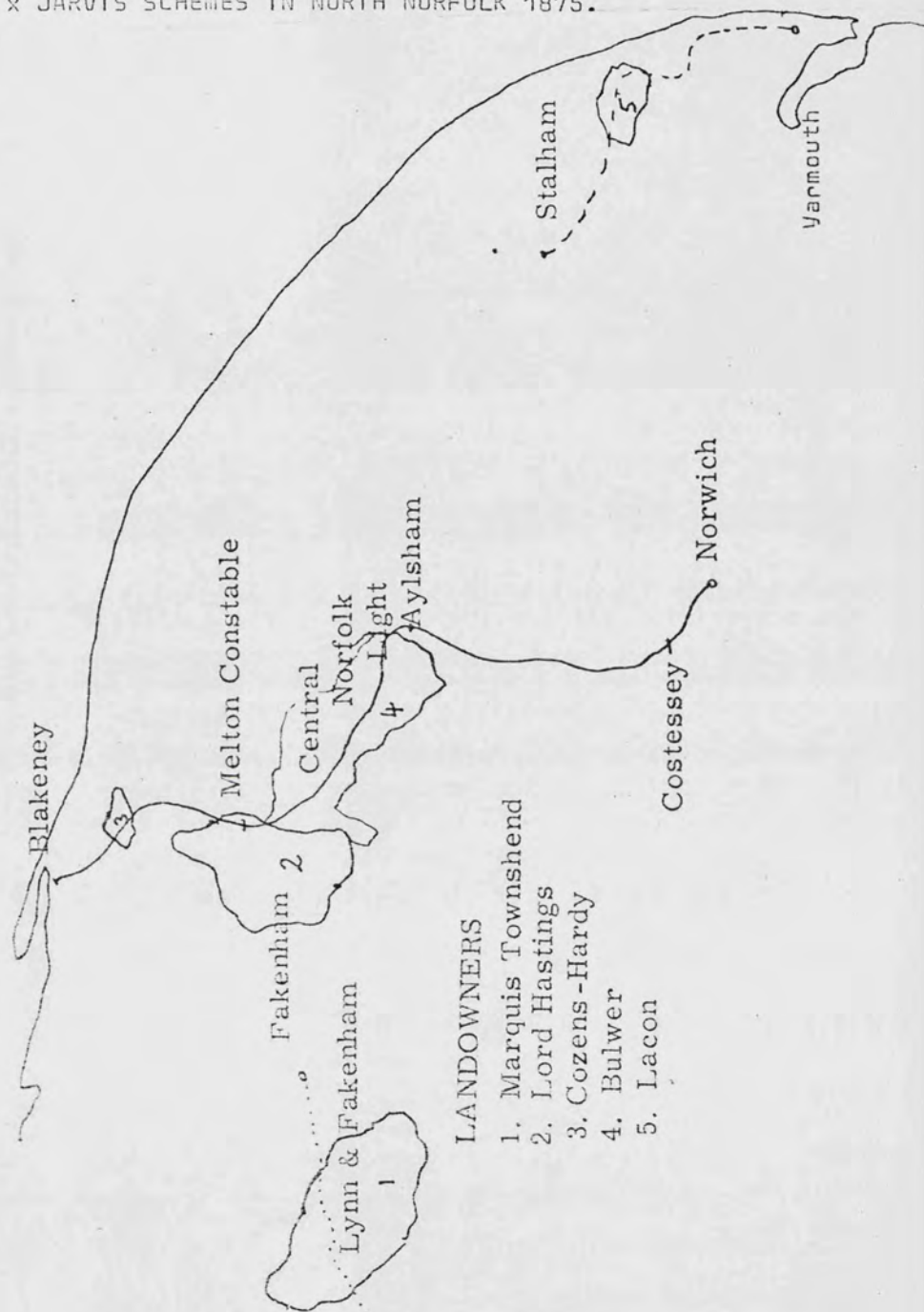
SOURCES OF EAST NORFOLK RAILWAY ORDINARY & PREFERENCE

SHARE CAPITAL, 1875.



Source: PRO/ENR 1 List Of Shareholders.

WILKINSON & JARVIS SCHEMES IN NORTH NORFOLK 1875.



Source: County Record Office, Deposited Plans and Prospectuses.

KENHAM RAILWAY

FEBRUARY, 1881, AND UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
 Only 1st class and parliamentary passengers only

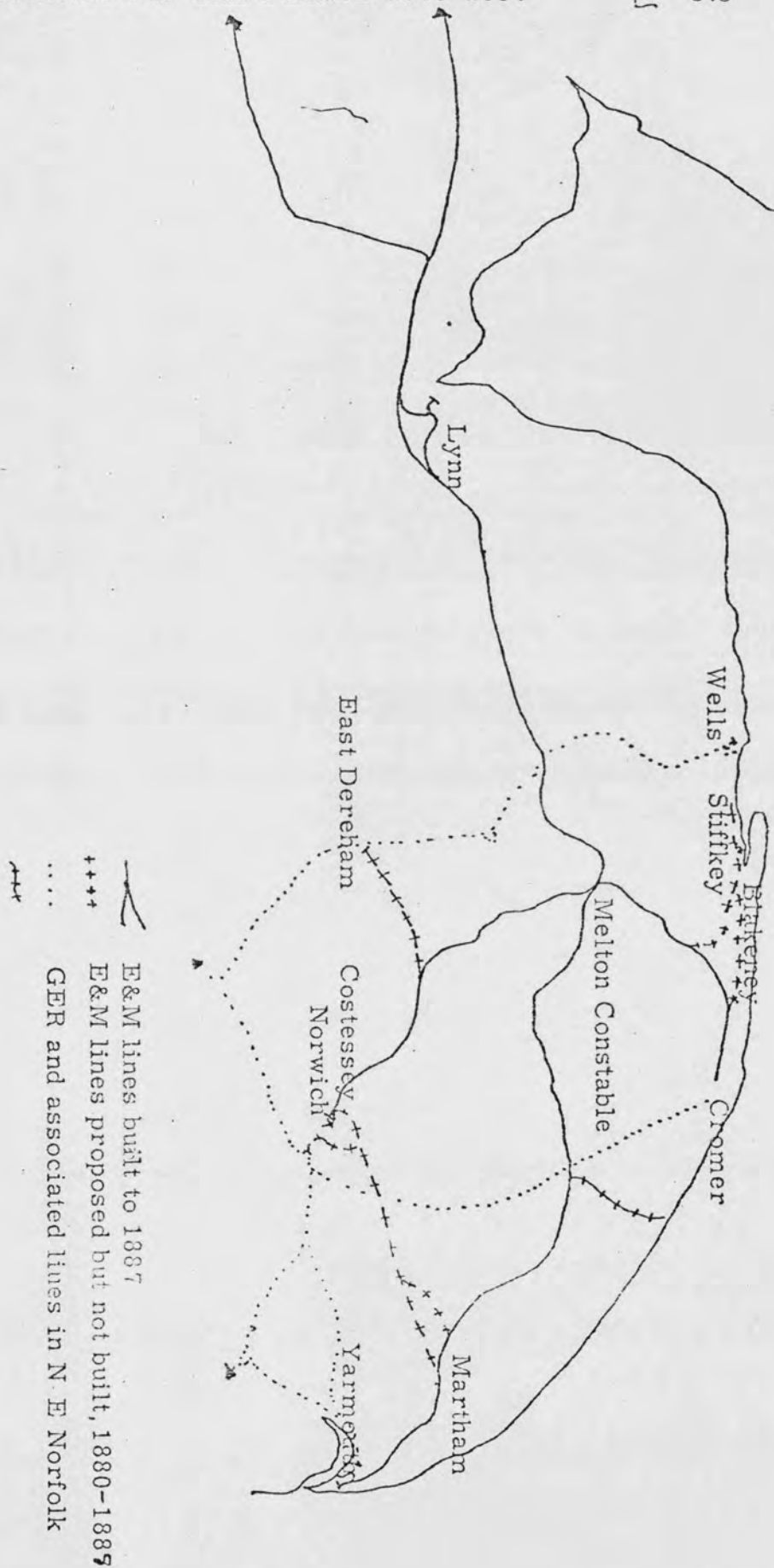
		WEEK DAYS.				SUNDAYS.	
		A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
	London	6 0	12 3			5 5	
	Reading	6 0	11 35 a.m.			5 15	
	Southampton	3 26	1 26 p.m.			6 40	
	Worcester	9 19	2 0			7 10	
	Exeter	10 3	12 50			6 55	
	London	3 0	1 40			6 24	
	London, Kings	5 15	9 0 a.m.	11 45 a.m.		5 40	
	London	7 13	9 30	1 39 p.m.		5 6	
	Reading	9 0	11 47	3 10		6 2	
	Darby		7 58	10 32 a.m.		3 58	
	Peterborough	8 10	10 57	1 35 p.m.		7 25	
	Nottingham	6 15	8 40	11 40 a.m.		5 0	
	Birmingham		8 10			2 45	
	Derby		8 47			3 40	
	Nottingham		8 33			3 40	
	Leicester		9 32			4 20	
	Stafford		10 53			6 0	
	Peterborough (G.N.)	8 45	11 51	MIXED.		7 1	
	LYNN	8 55	11 55	3 30 p.m.	5 30 p.m.	9 10	
	Grimston Road	9 12	12 12 p.m.	5 45	5 45	9 25	
	Hillington	9 18	12 18	5 51	5 51	9 31	
	Massingham	arr.	9 30	12 32	6 11	9 45	
	"	dep.	9 33	12 33	4 8	6 12	9 46
	Rudham		9 41	12 41	4 16	6 24	9 53
	Raynham Park		9 46	12 46	4 21	6 31	10 3
	Fakenham Town	arr.	9 55	12 55	4 30	6 40	10 10

WEEK DAYS

UP TRAINS.		MIDLAND RAILWAY.		MIDLAND RAILWAY.		MIDLAND RAILWAY.		MIDLAND RAILWAY.	
		A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Fakenham Town... dep.	6 50	10 15	1 35	3 20	5 45				
Raynham Park...	6 58	10 25	1 45	3 30	5 55				
Rudham..... "	7 3	10 30	1 50	3 50	6 3				
Massingham arr.	7 11	10 38	1 58	3 59	6 10				
..... dep.	7 16	10 39	1 59	4 14	6 18				
..... "	7 23	10 53	2 13	4 29	6 31				
..... Road ..	7 33	10 59	2 19	4 35	6 39				
..... arr.	7 50	11 10	2 35	4 50	6 55				
..... (G.N.)	9 54	3 23 p.m.		7 28					
..... "	10 48	5 3		8 17					
..... "	12 2 p.m.	5 30		9 50					
..... "	12 27	7 0		12 25					
..... "	1 1	7 45		12 10					
..... "	1 45	8 10		1 55					
..... "	1 30		7 57	11 20					
..... "	12 8		6 5	8 5					
..... "	3 32		9 36						
..... "	11 16 a.m.	2 58	5 0	7 15					
..... "	12 48 p.m.		7 12						
London, King's X	2 0		8 0	10 0					
Hunston	10 0 a.m.	1 21	3 56	6 17	9 2				
Peterborough.....	10 20	1 45	6 0	7 35	8 32				
Ely	9 0	12 38	3 55	6 24	8 17				
Cambridge	9 36	1 20	4 35	6 57	8 42				
London, (Expt. st.)	11 10	2 53	6 8	8 30	10 5				
..... "	11 11	3 0	6 13	8 35					

10 The use of a time ticket is intended to arrive and depart, but the Company
11 does not intend to use it, however, be used to ensure punctuality.
12 The use of a time ticket is intended to arrive and depart, but the Company
13 does not intend to use it, however, be used to ensure punctuality.
14 The use of a time ticket is intended to arrive and depart, but the Company
15 does not intend to use it, however, be used to ensure punctuality.

JOHN FERPER, Manager.



Sources: County Record Office, Deposited Plans and Books of
Reference.

RESIDENCES OF A 20% SAMPLE OF EASTERN & MIDLANDS RAILWAY
SHAREHOLDERS DECEMBER 1885 ADDRESS BOOK

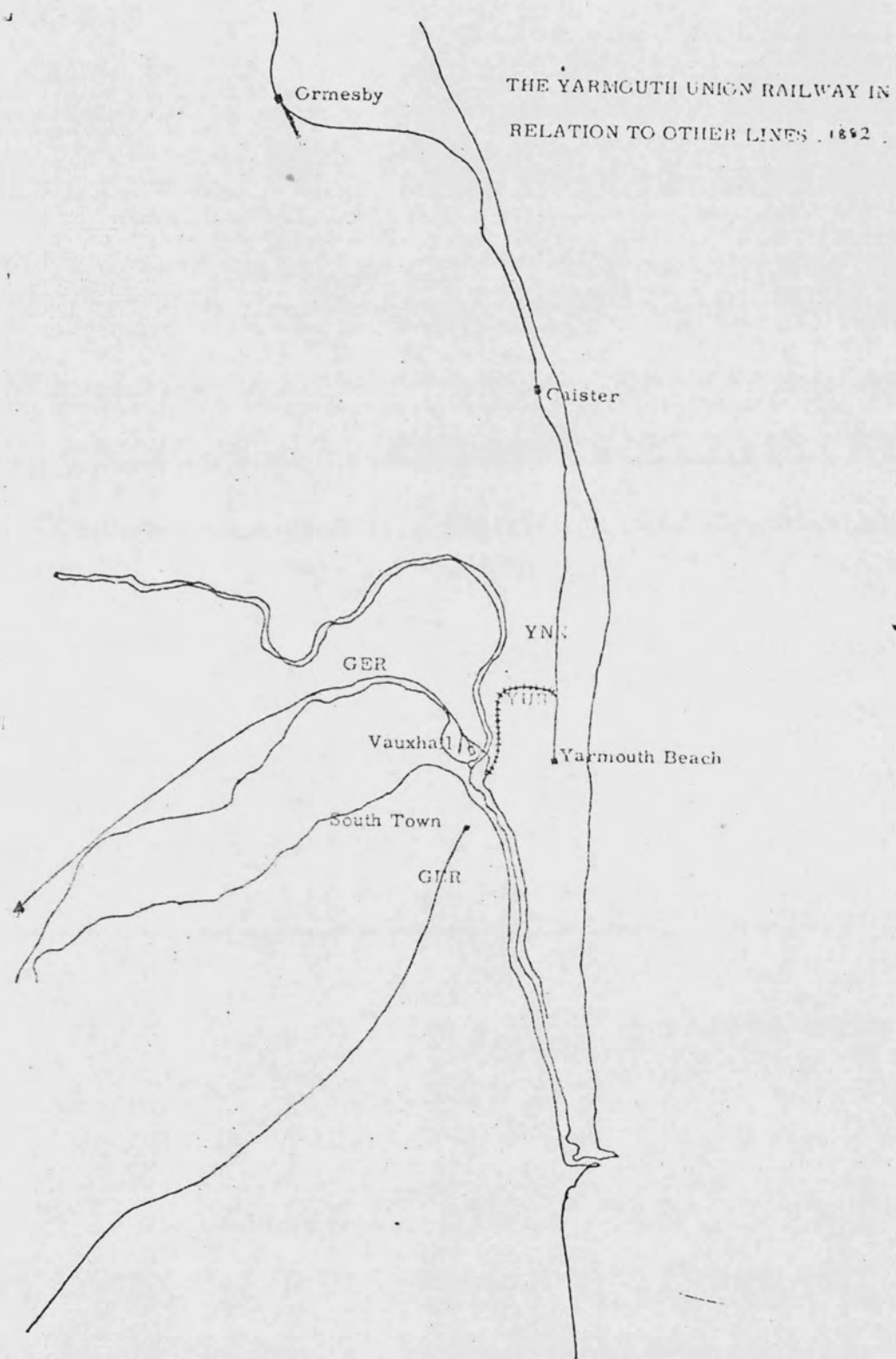
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RESIDENCES OF EASTERN & MIDLANDS RAILWAY SHAREHOLDERS
ELIGIBLE FOR DIRECTORSHIPS 1855

PRO/CER/3

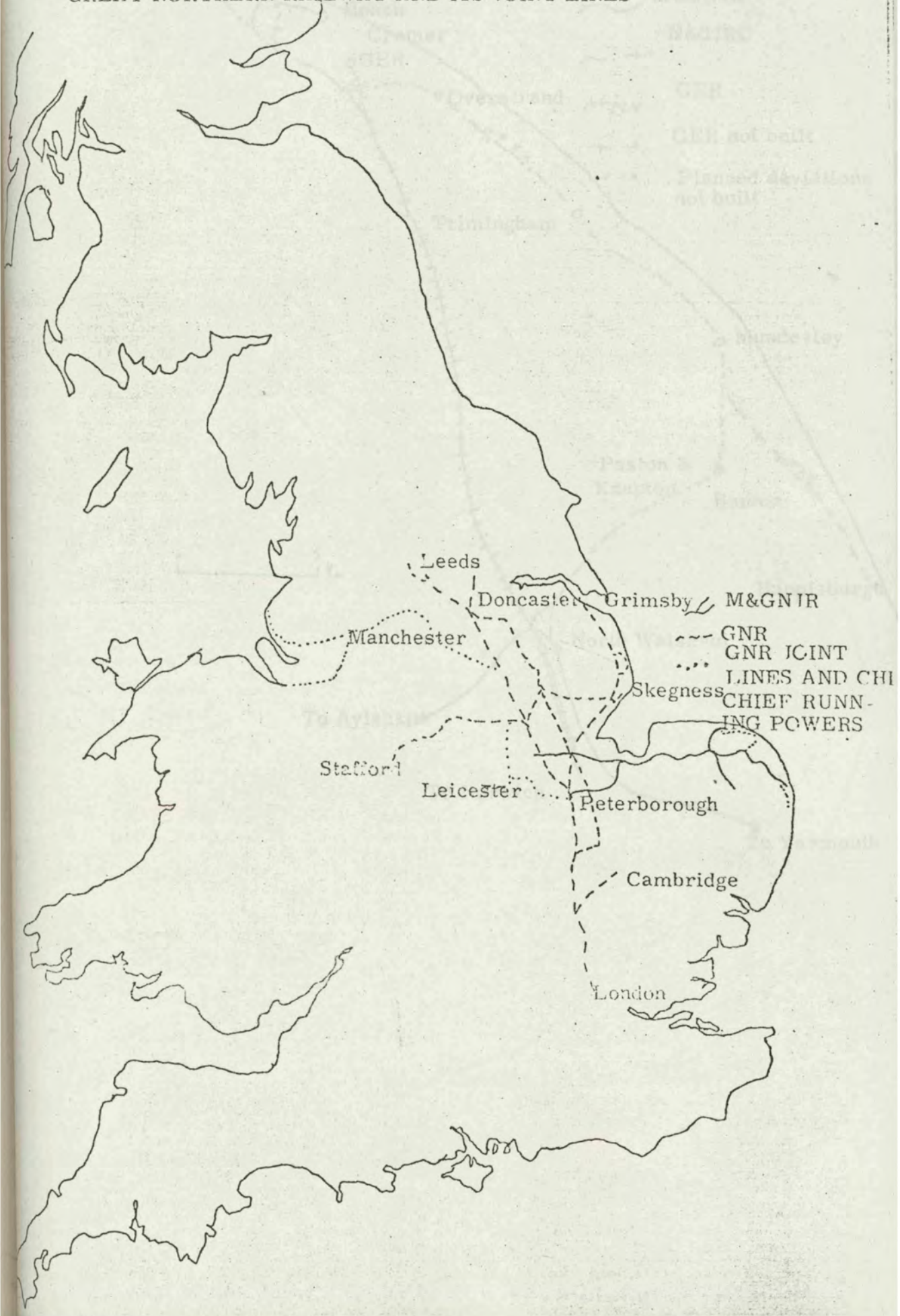




MIDLAND & GREAT NORTHERN JOINT RAILWAY IN RELATION TO THE MIDLAND
RAILWAY AND ITS JOINT LINES (INCLUDING THE SOMERSET &
DORSET JOINT RAILWAY).



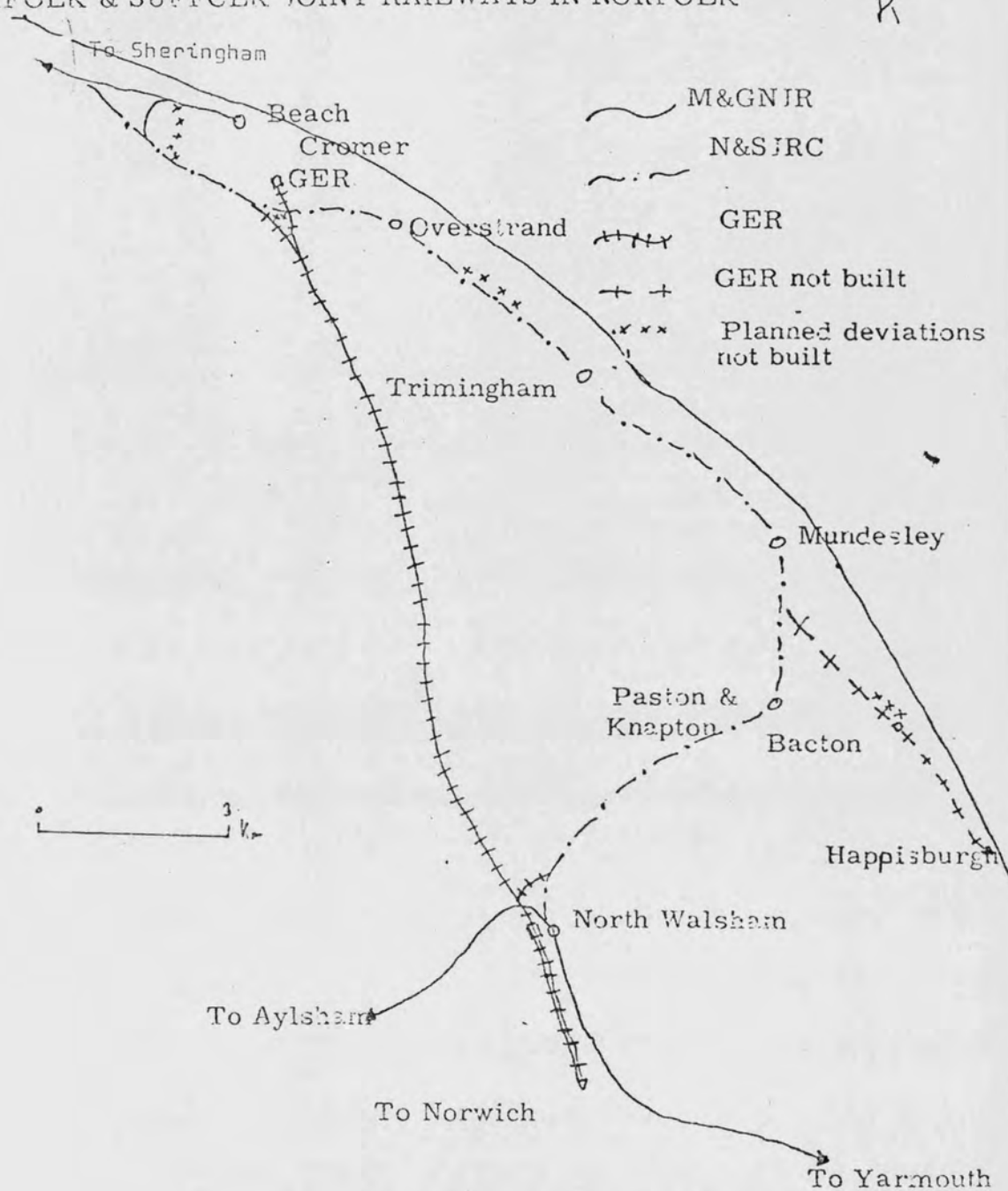
MIDLAND & GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY IN RELATION TO THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY AND ITS JOINT LINES



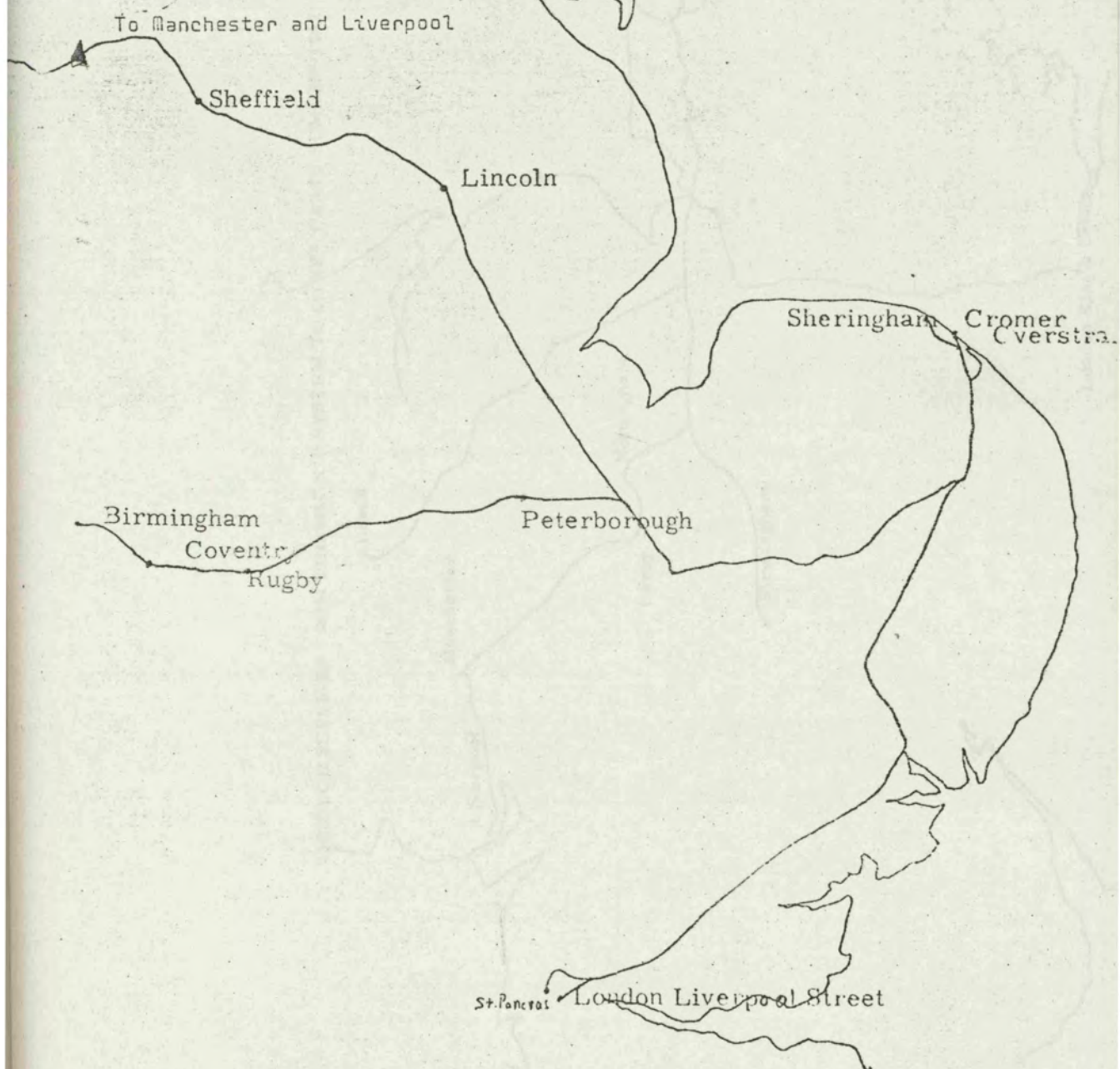
THE NORFOLK & SUFFOLK JOINT RAILWAYS IN NORFOLK

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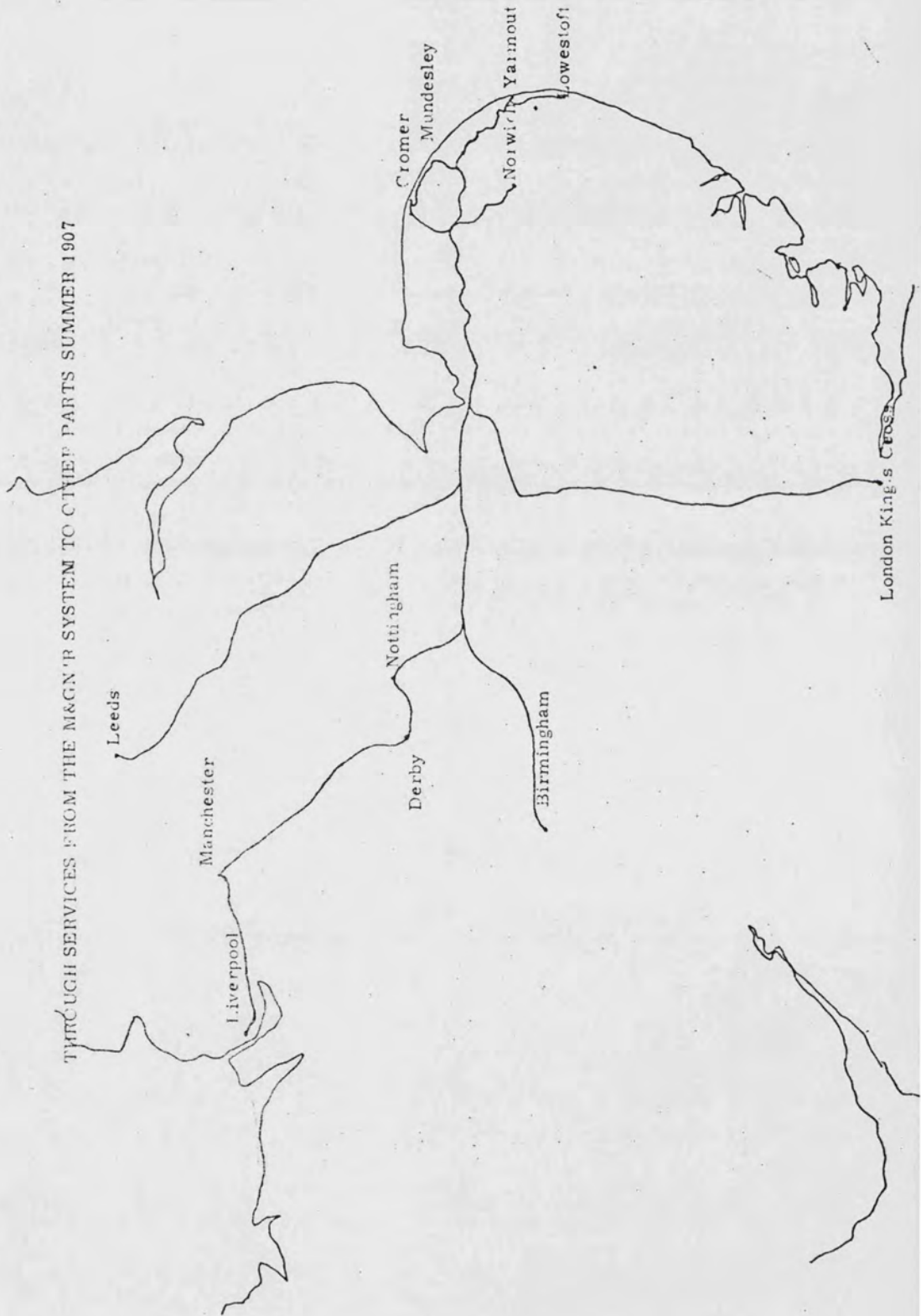
K



GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY THROUGH SERVICES
FROM POPPYLAND, SUMMER 1907.

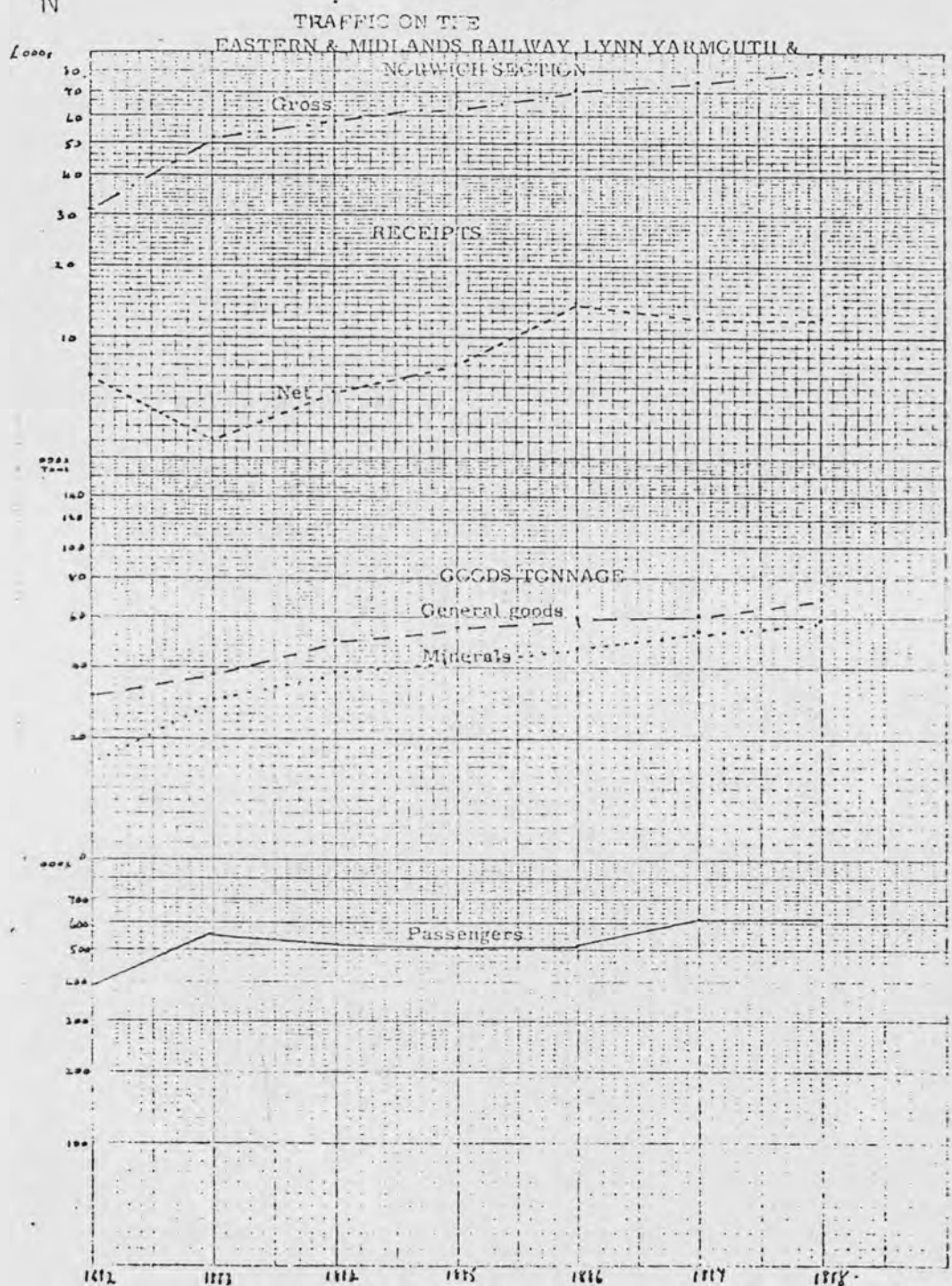


THROUGH SERVICES FROM THE MAGN'R SYSTEM TO OTHER PARTS SUMMER 1907



N

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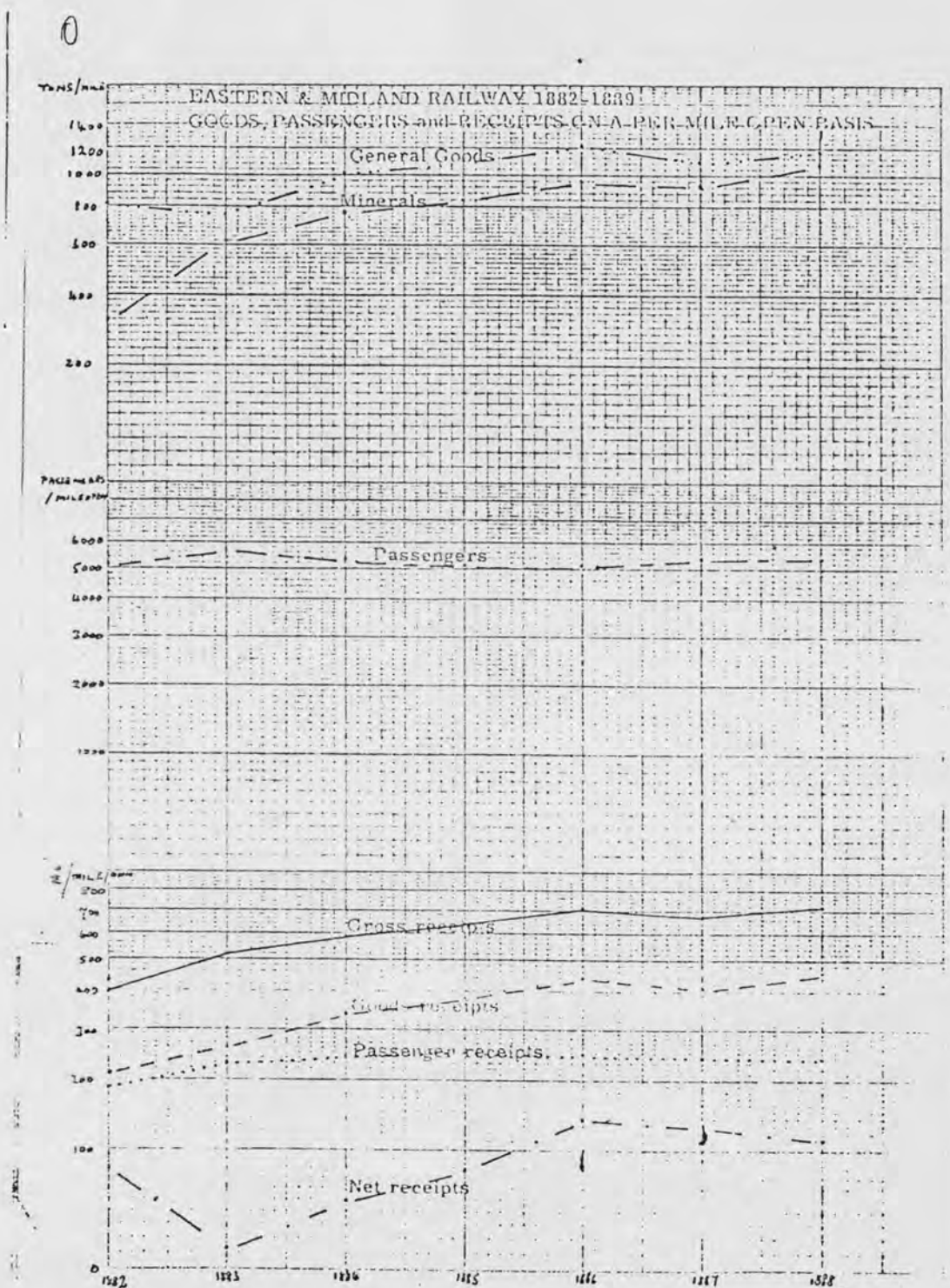


Source: Railway Returns.

0

GOODS PASSENGERS AND RECEIPTS ON A MILES PER OPEN BASIS

EASTERN & MIDLANDS RAILWAY 1882-1889

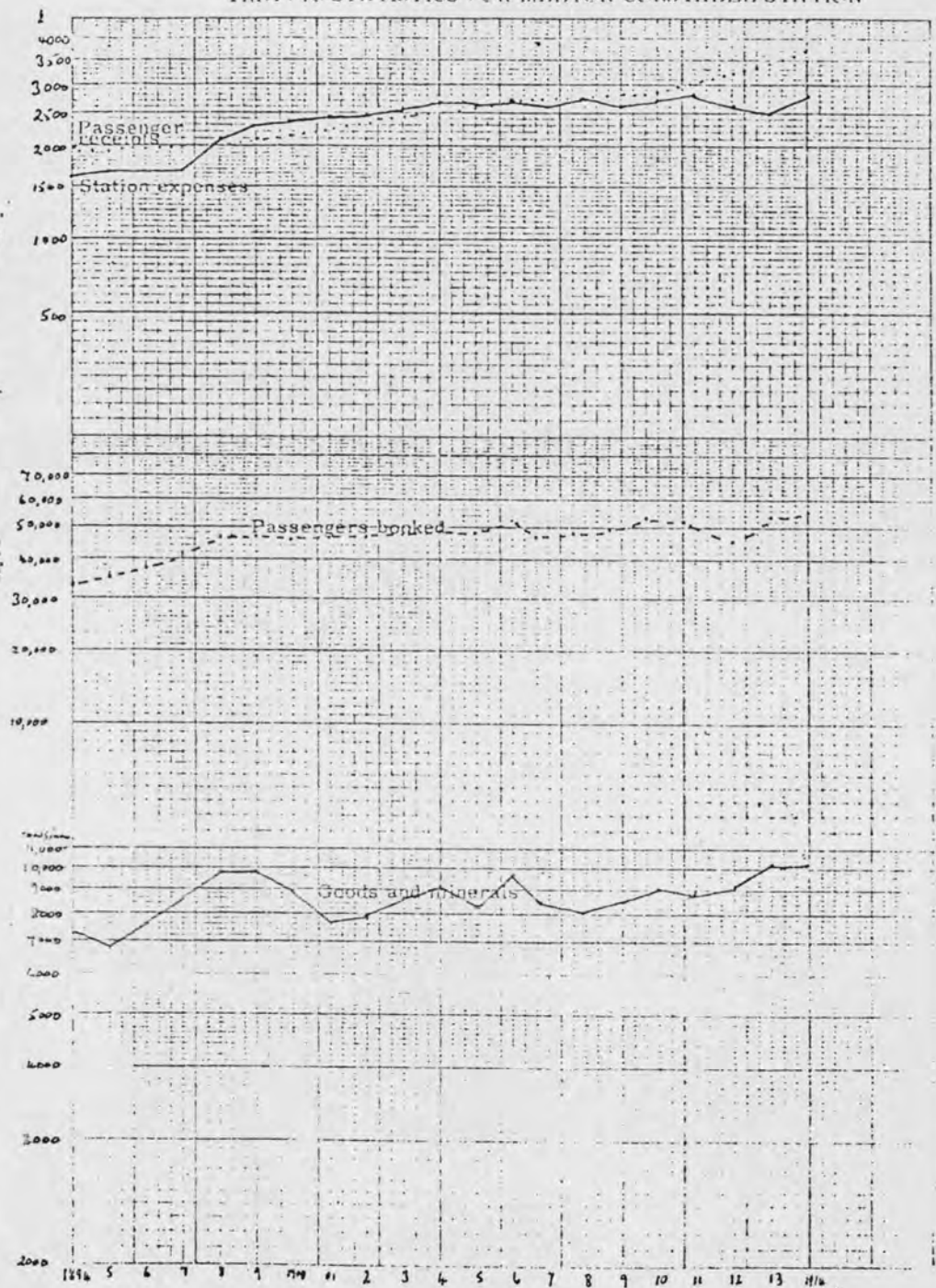


Source: Railway Returns.

P

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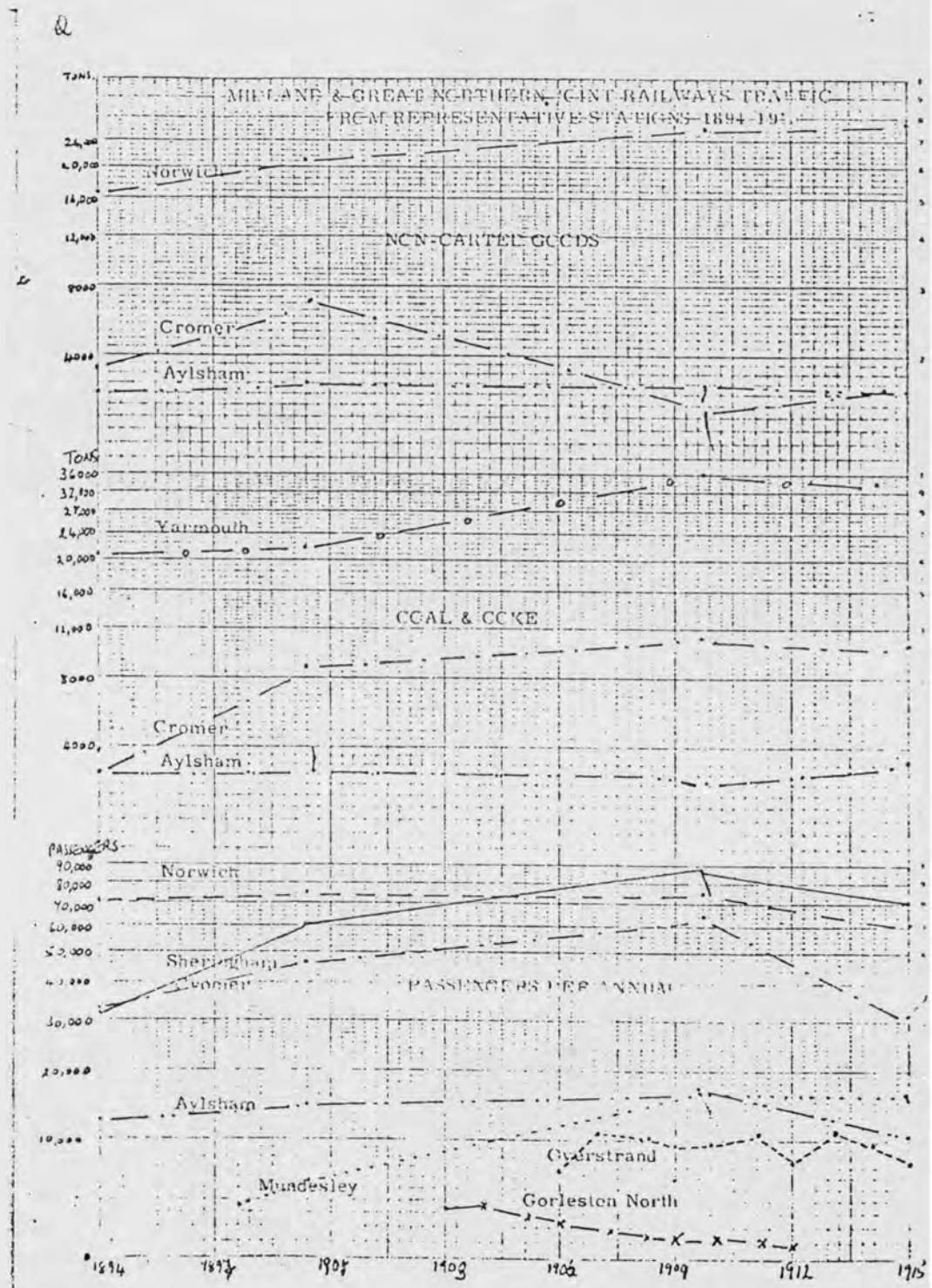
TRAFFIC STATISTICS FOR MELTON CONSTABLE STATION



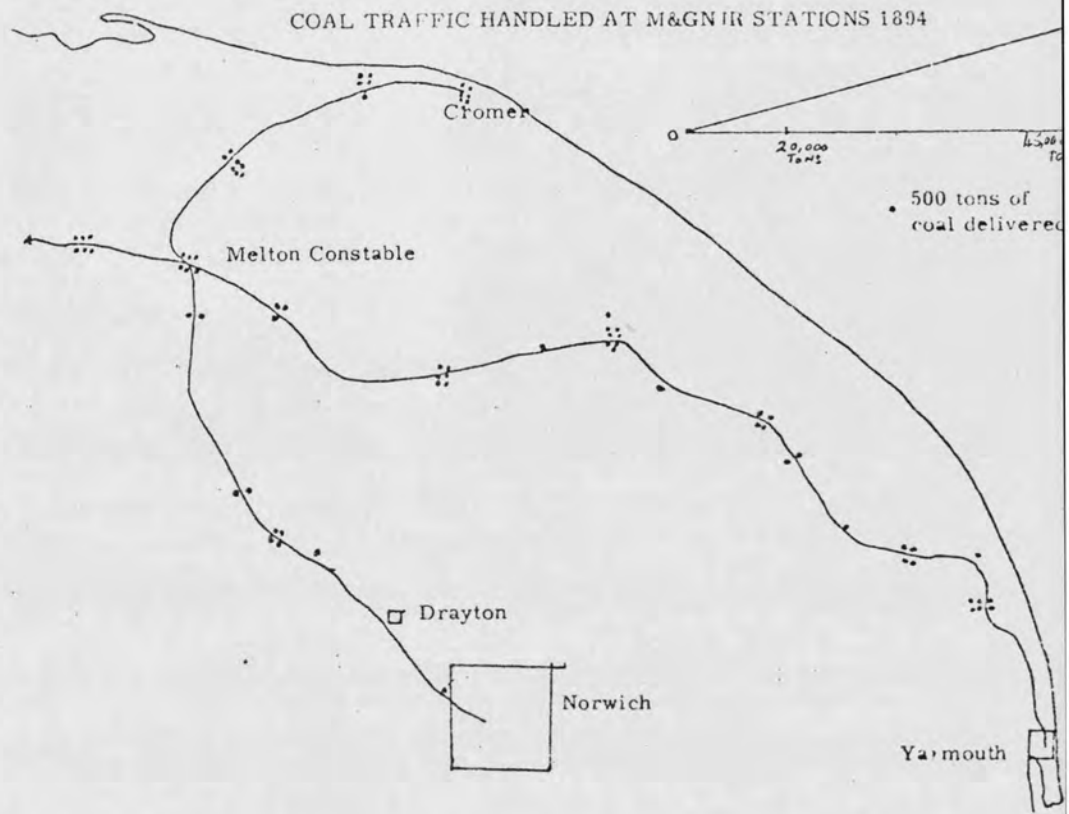
Source: Eastern & Midlands Railway PRO/MGN.

MIDLAND & GREAT NORTHERN JOINT RAILWAYS

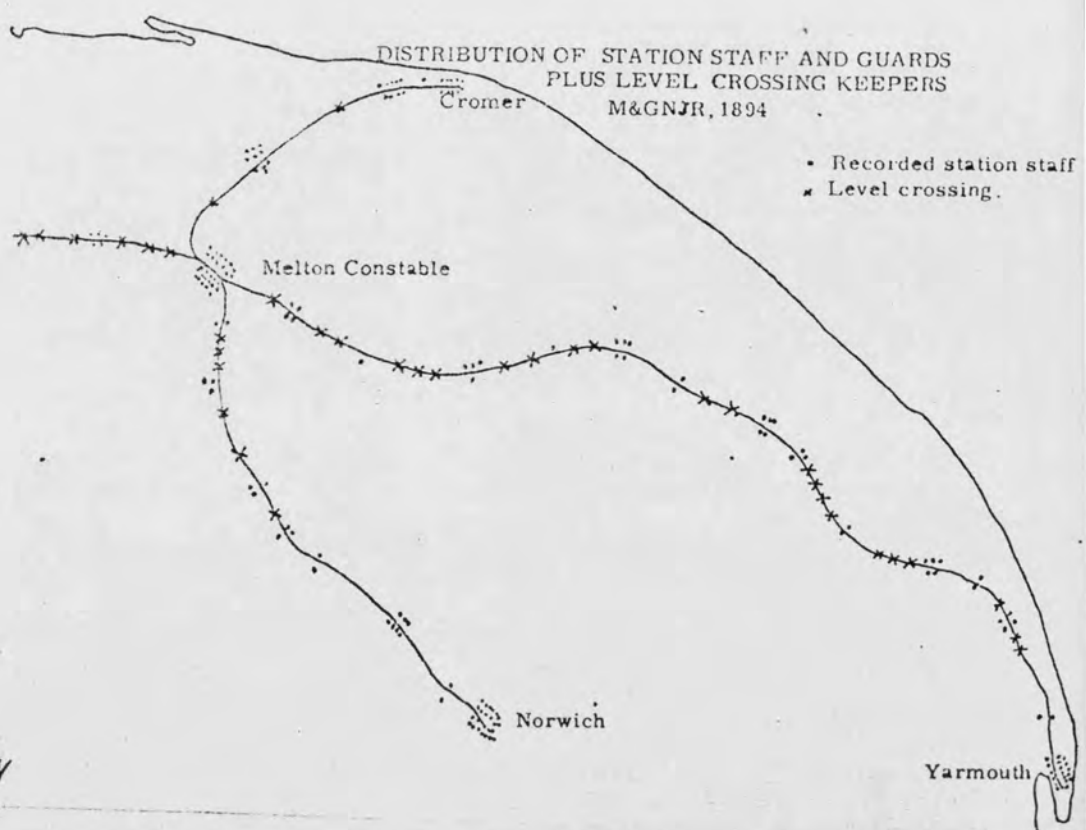
TRAFFIC FROM REPRESENTATIVE STATIONS, 1894-1915



Source: PRO/MGN Traffic Returns.

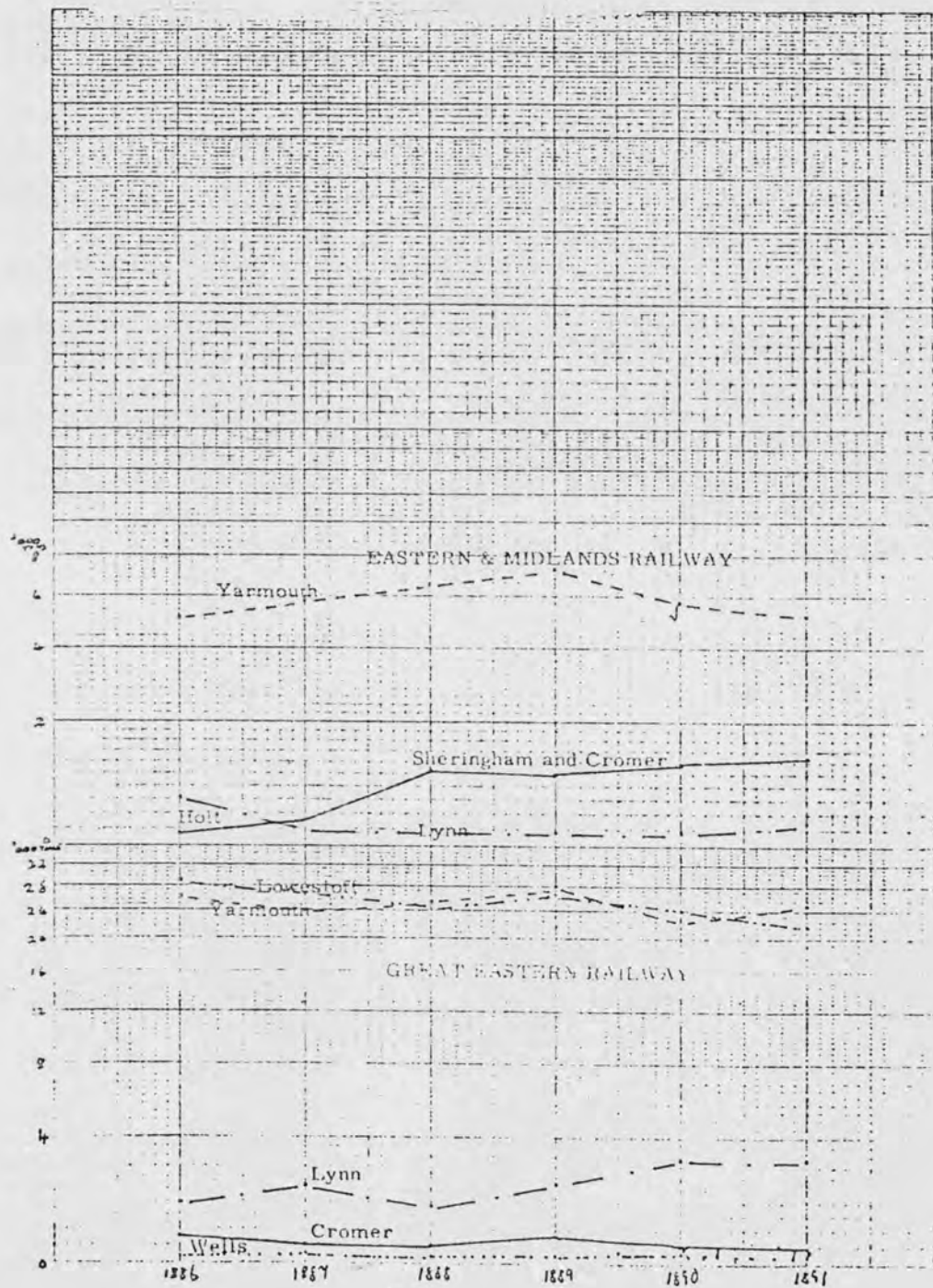


Source: PRO/MGN Traffic Returns and Staff Returns.



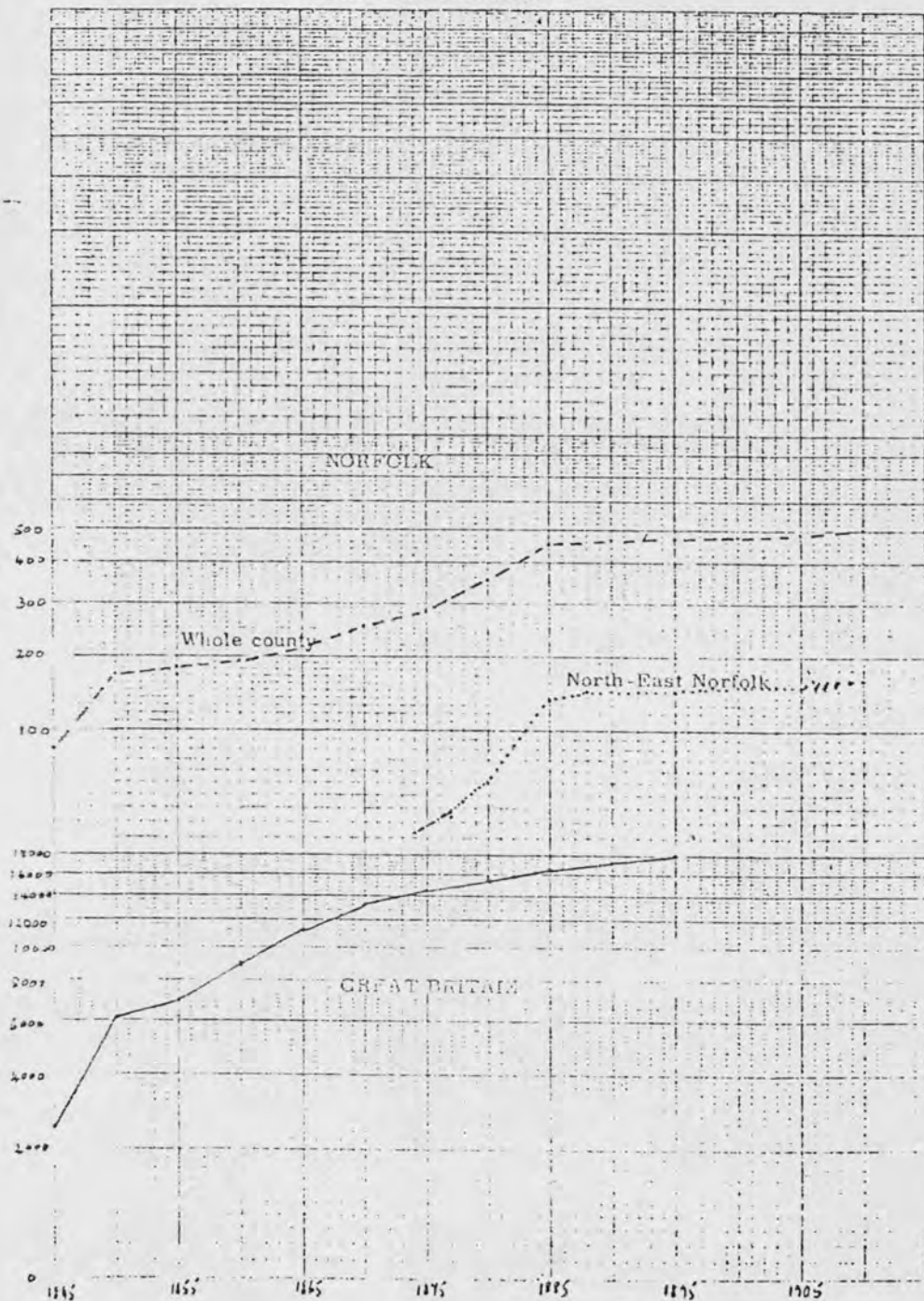
RAIL BORNE FISH TRAFFIC, NORFOLK 1886-1891

S



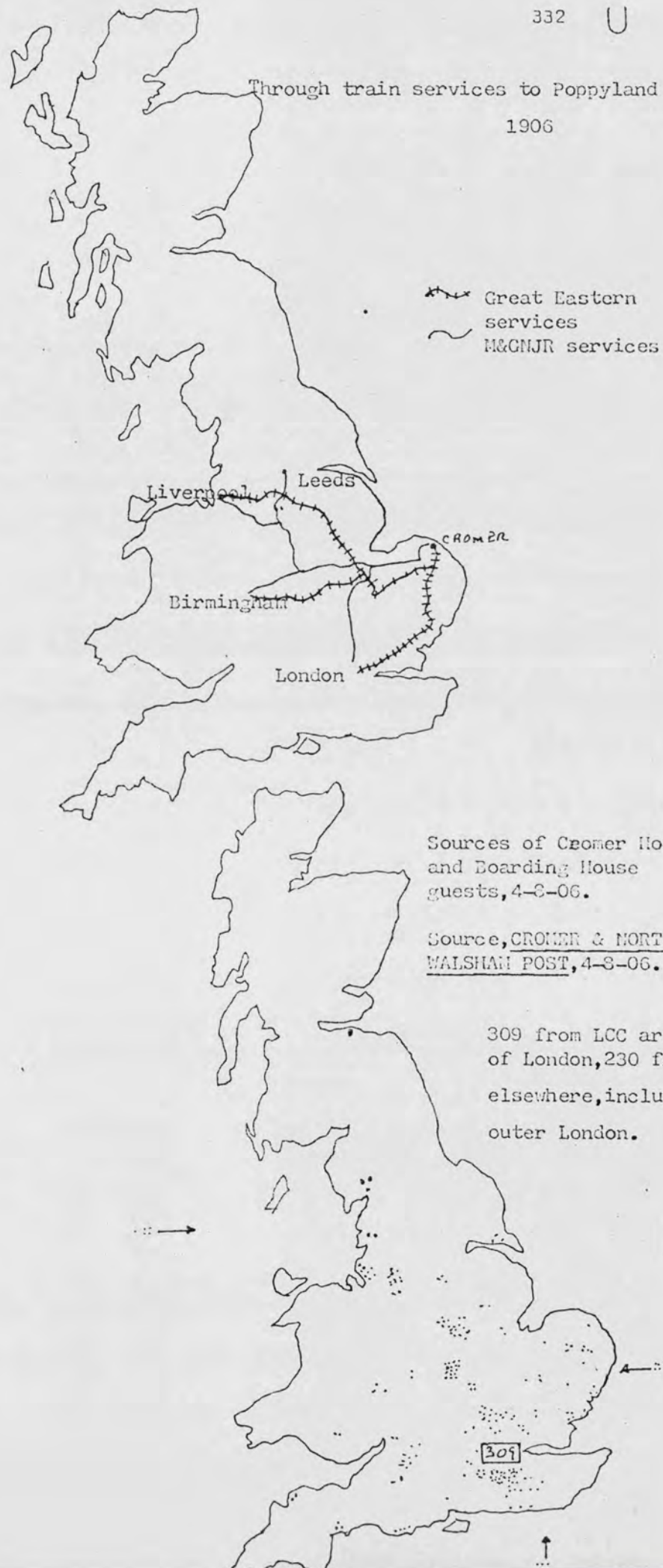
Source: Railway Returns.

RAILWAY MILEAGE



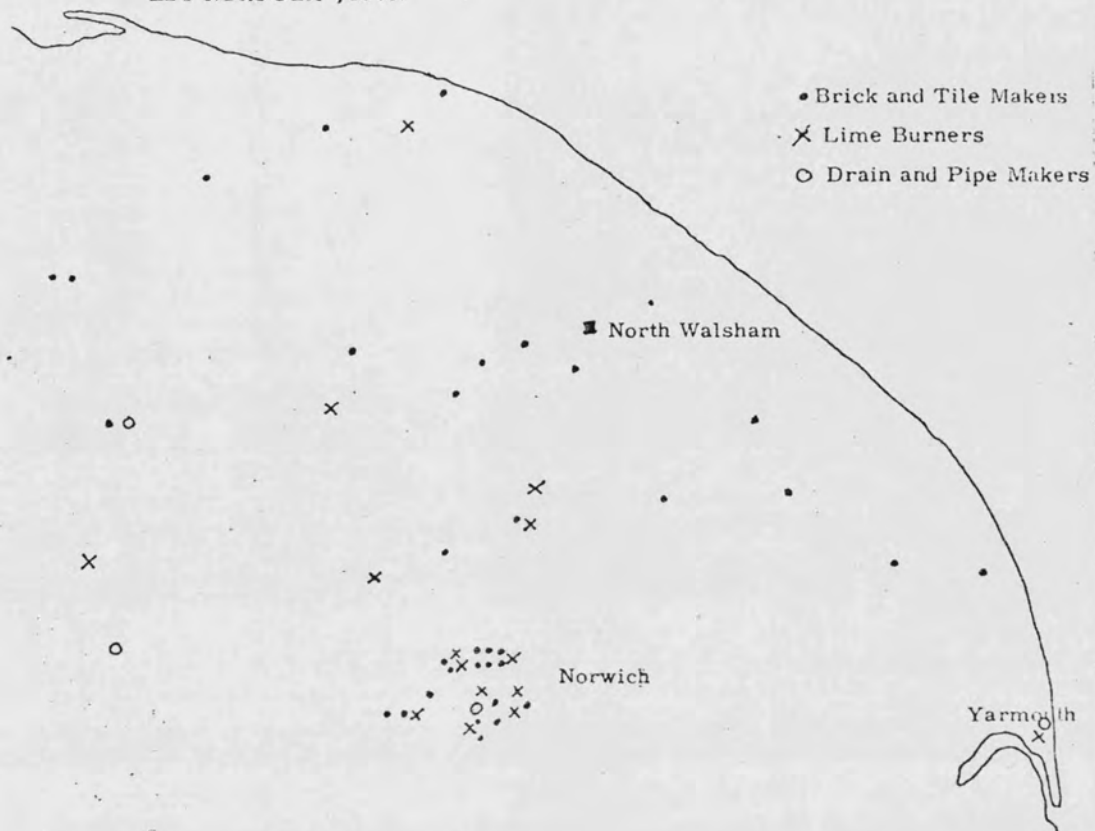
Through train services to Poppyland

1906



DISTRIBUTION OF BUILDING MATERIAL MANUFACTURING IN NORTH -

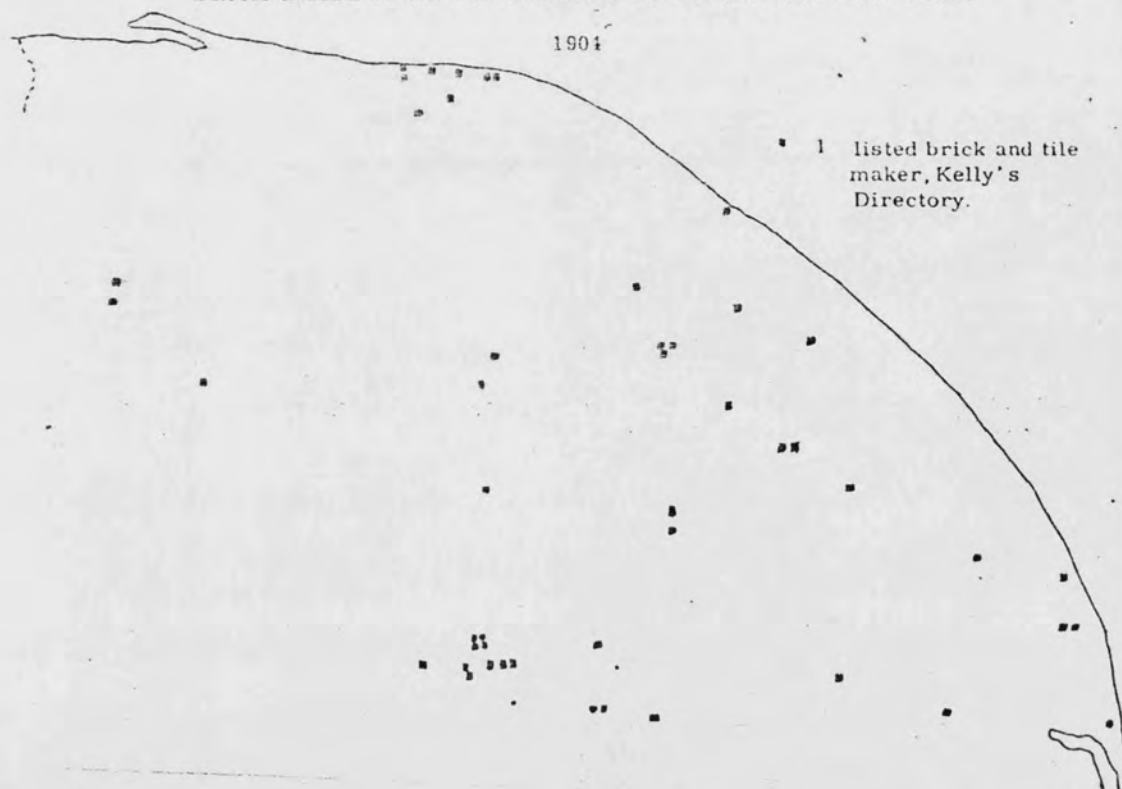
EST NORFOLK, 1870.



Source: Kelly's Directories, Norfolk, 1870 and 1904.

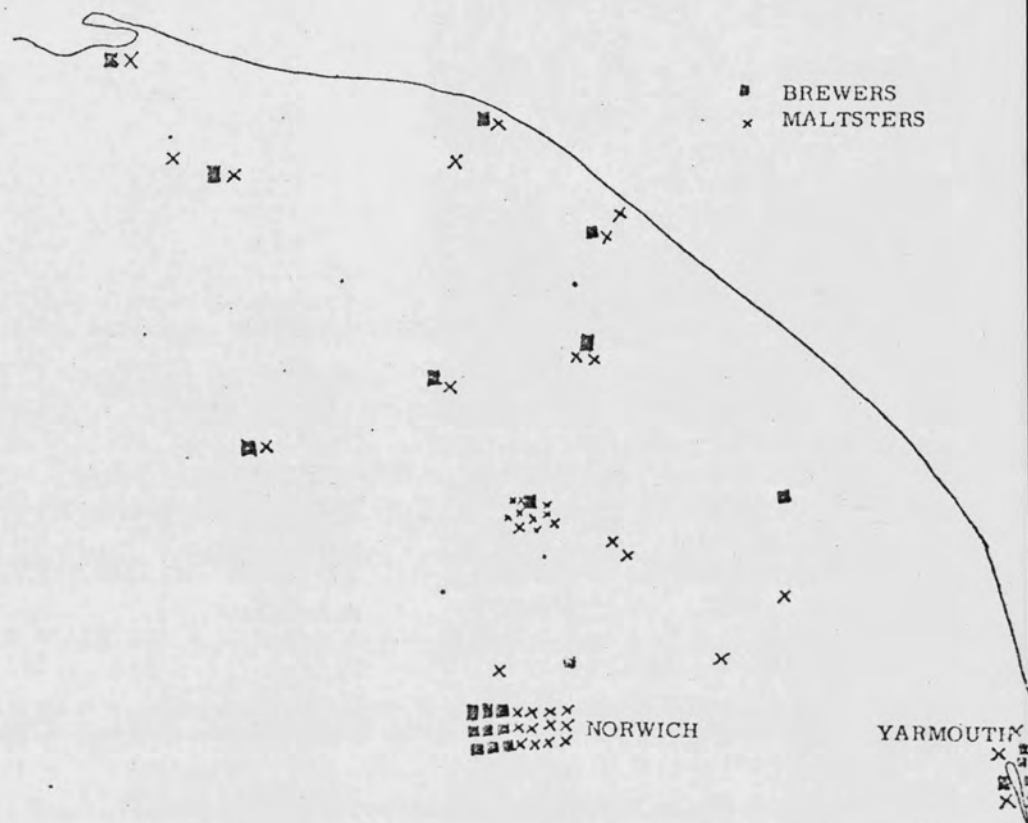
BRICK & TILE MAKER DISTRIBUTION IN NORTH-EAST NORFOLK

1904



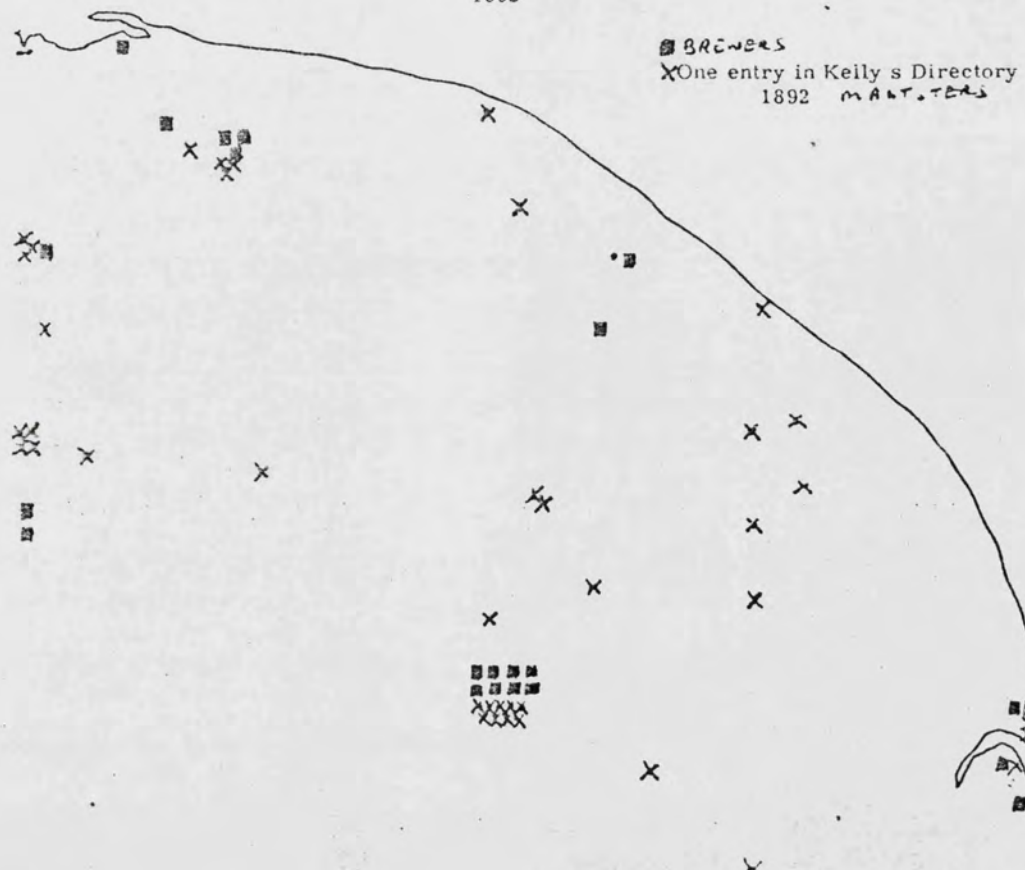
DISTRIBUTION OF BREWERS AND MALTSTERS

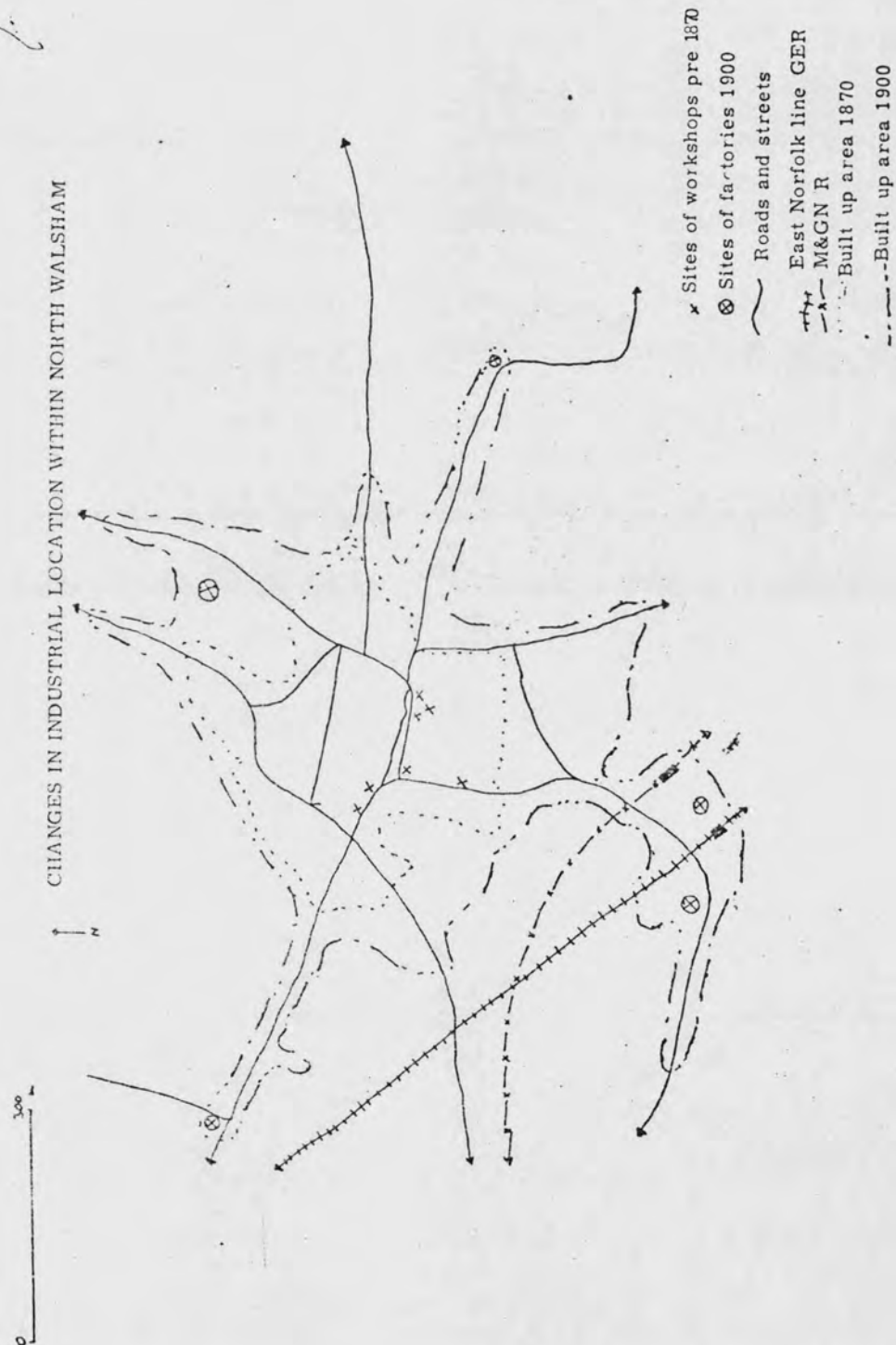
1870



DISTRIBUTION OF MALTSTERS IN NORTH-EAST NORFOLK

1892

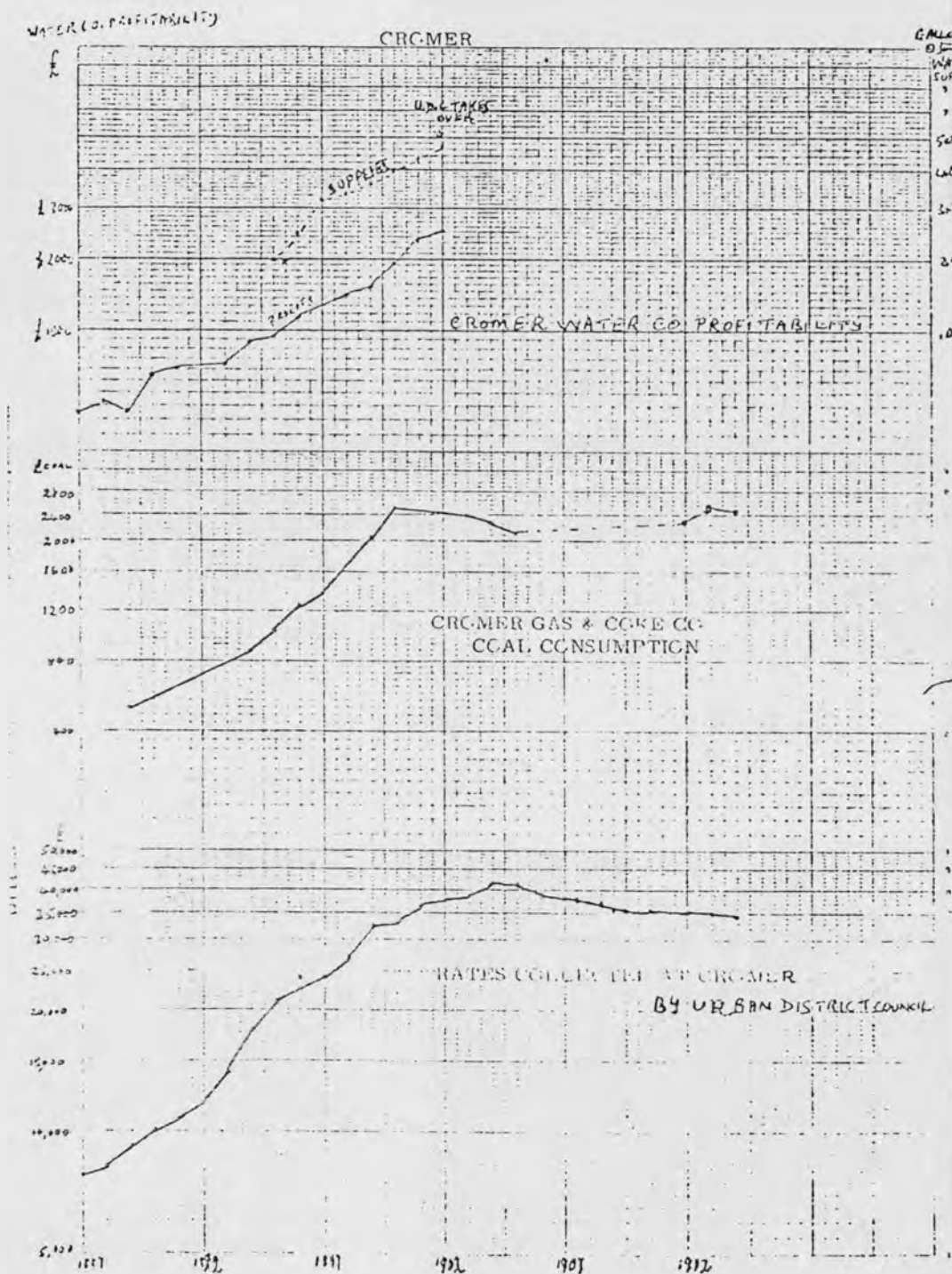




Sources: Kelly's Directories, Norfolk and Ordnance Survey Maps.

CROMER WATER, GAS AND RATES.

My

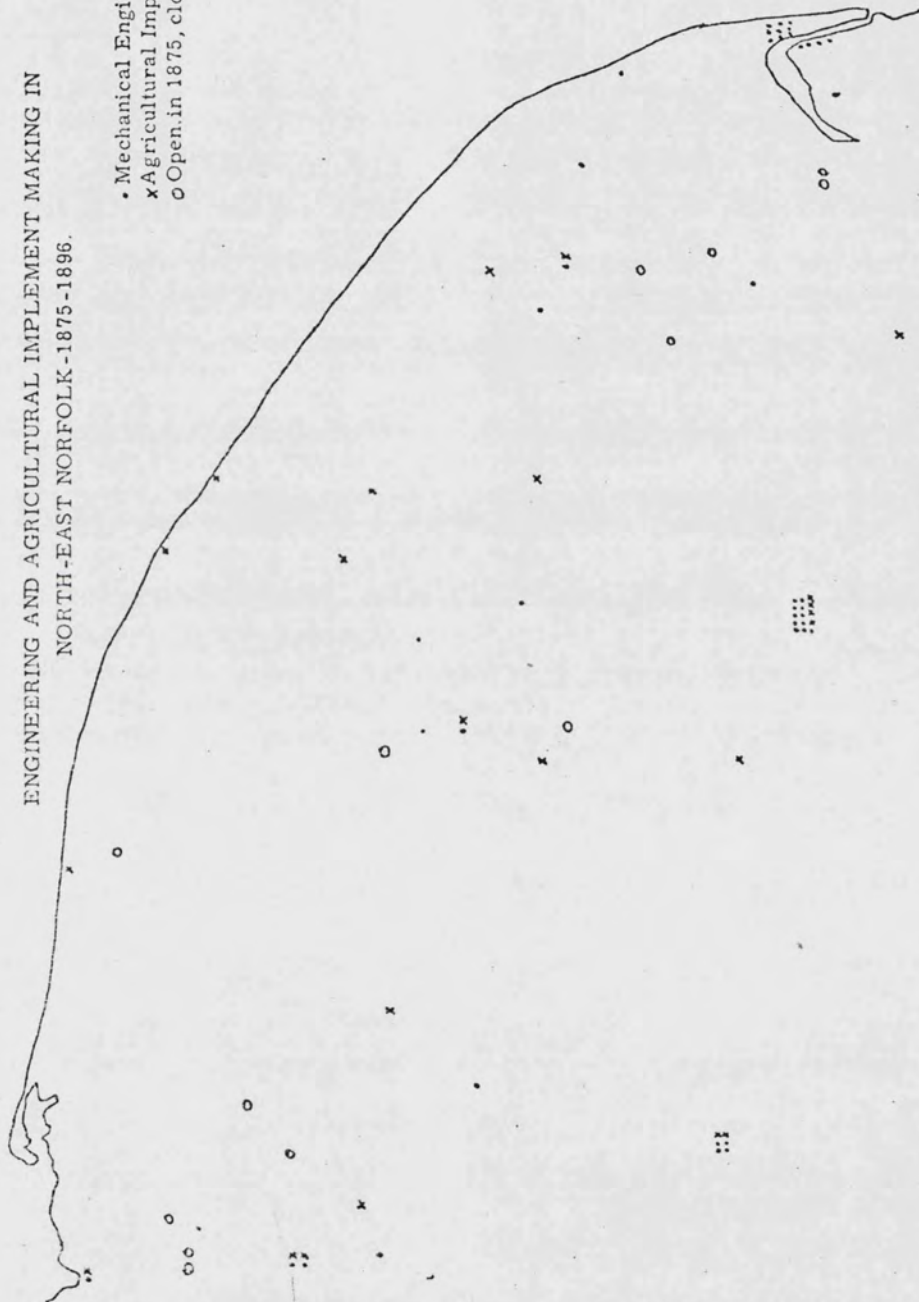


Sources: Annual Reports of CWC, CGCC & UDC, Colman &

Rye Library, Norwich.

ENGINEERING AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT MAKING IN
NORTH-EAST NORFOLK-1875-1896.

• Mechanical Engineering
x Agricultural Implement Making
o Open in 1875, closed 1896.



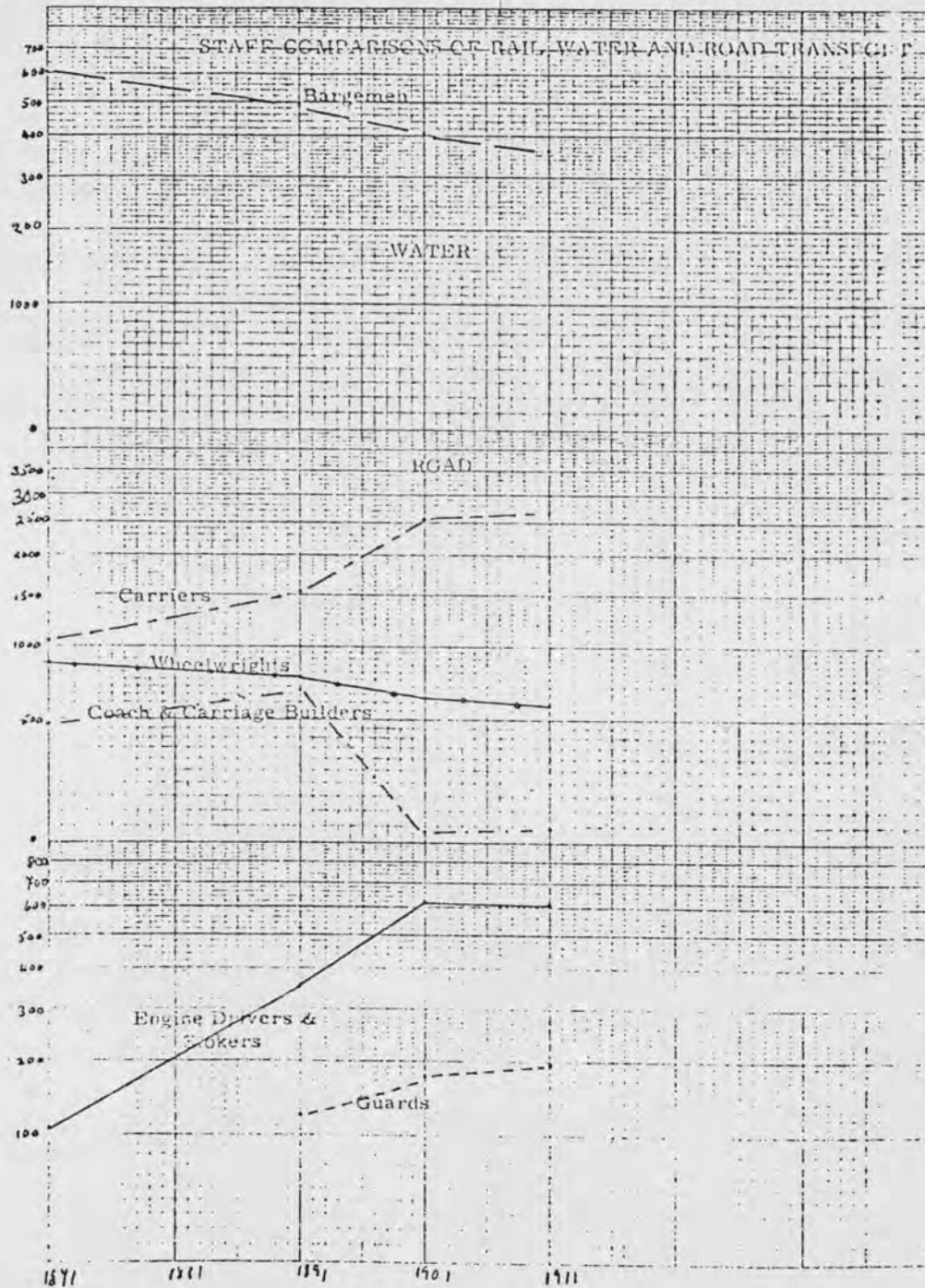
Source: Kelly's Directories, Norfolk, 1875-1896.

AA

STAFF COMPARISONS OF RAIL, ROAD AND WATER TRANSPORT.

OCCUPATIONS TABLES, CENSUSES 1871-1911.

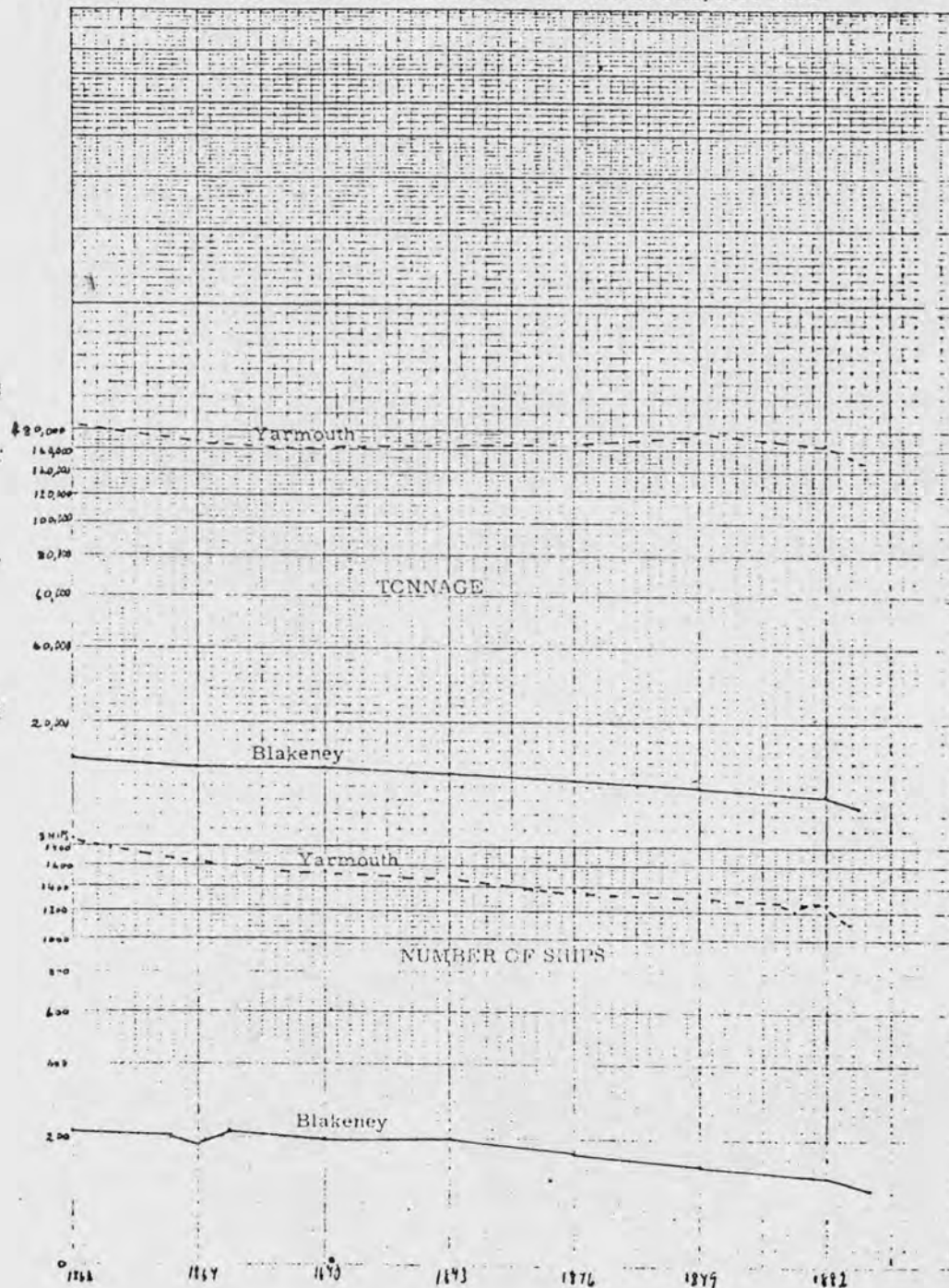
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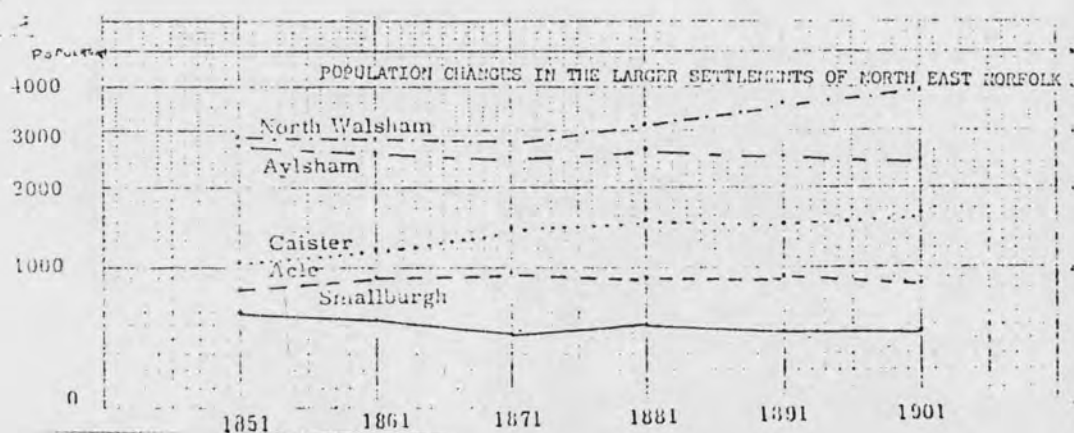
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BB

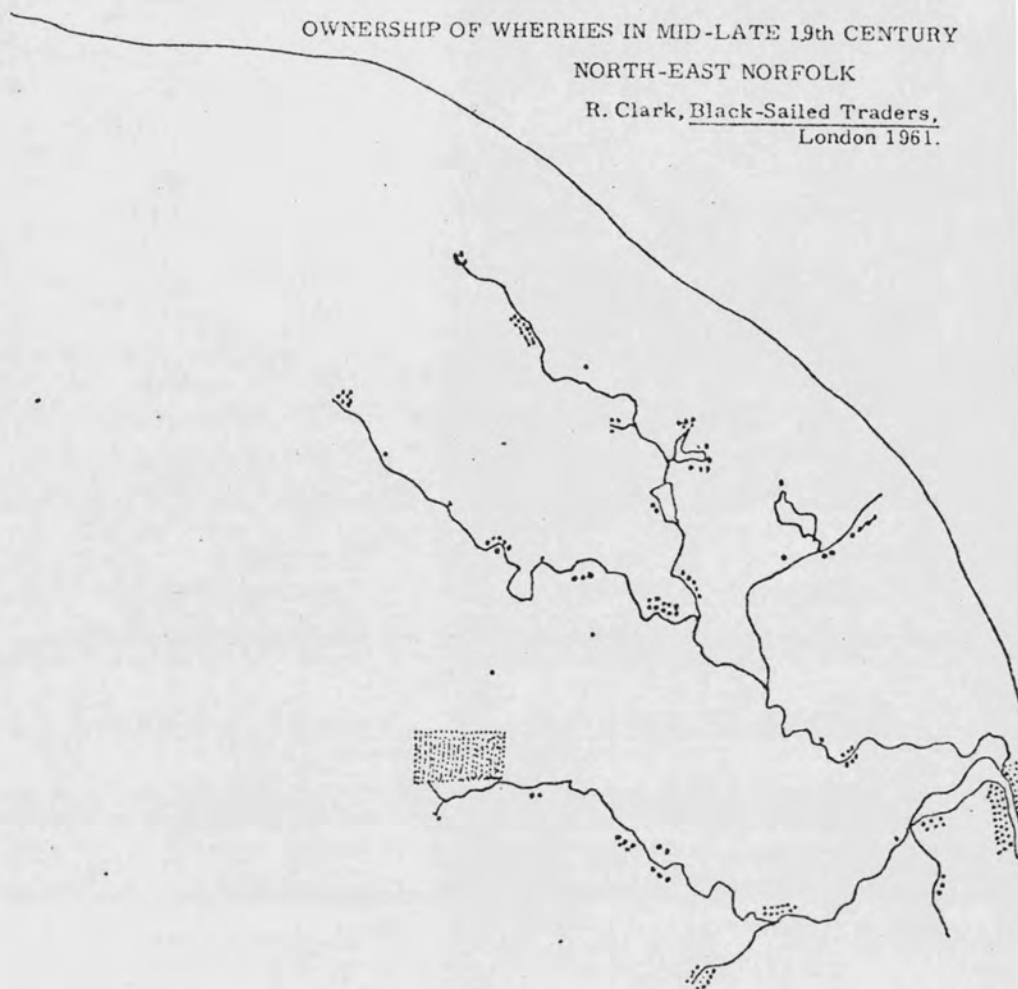
BOARD OF TRADE RETURNS RELATING TO HARBOURS, 1864-1883



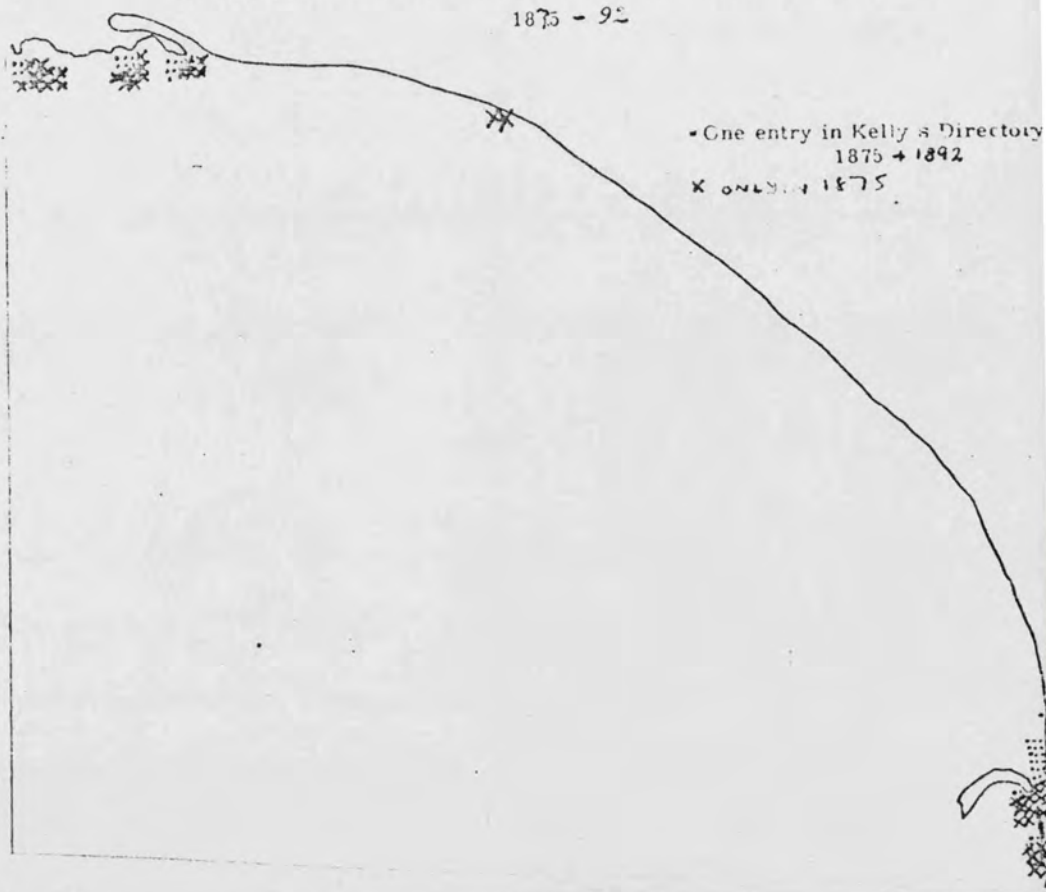
CC



OWNERSHIP OF WHERRIES IN MID-LATE 19th CENTURY
NORTH-EAST NORFOLK
R. Clark, Black-Sailed Traders,
London 1961.



DISTRIBUTION OF MASTER MARINERS IN NORTH-EAST NORFOLK
1875 - 92



AREAS OF NORTH EAST NORFOLK MORE THAN THREE MILES FROM RAIL OR WATER

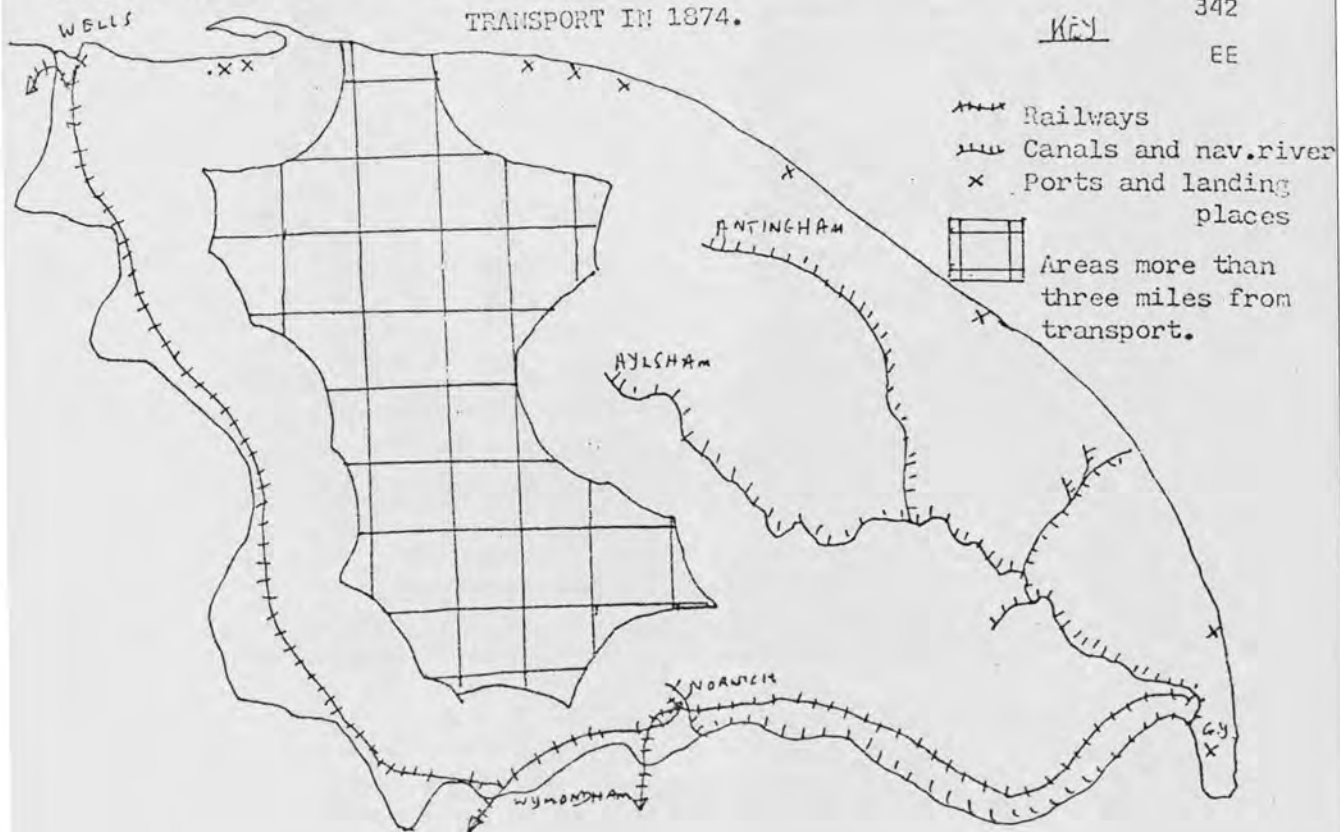
EE

TRANSPORT IN 1874.

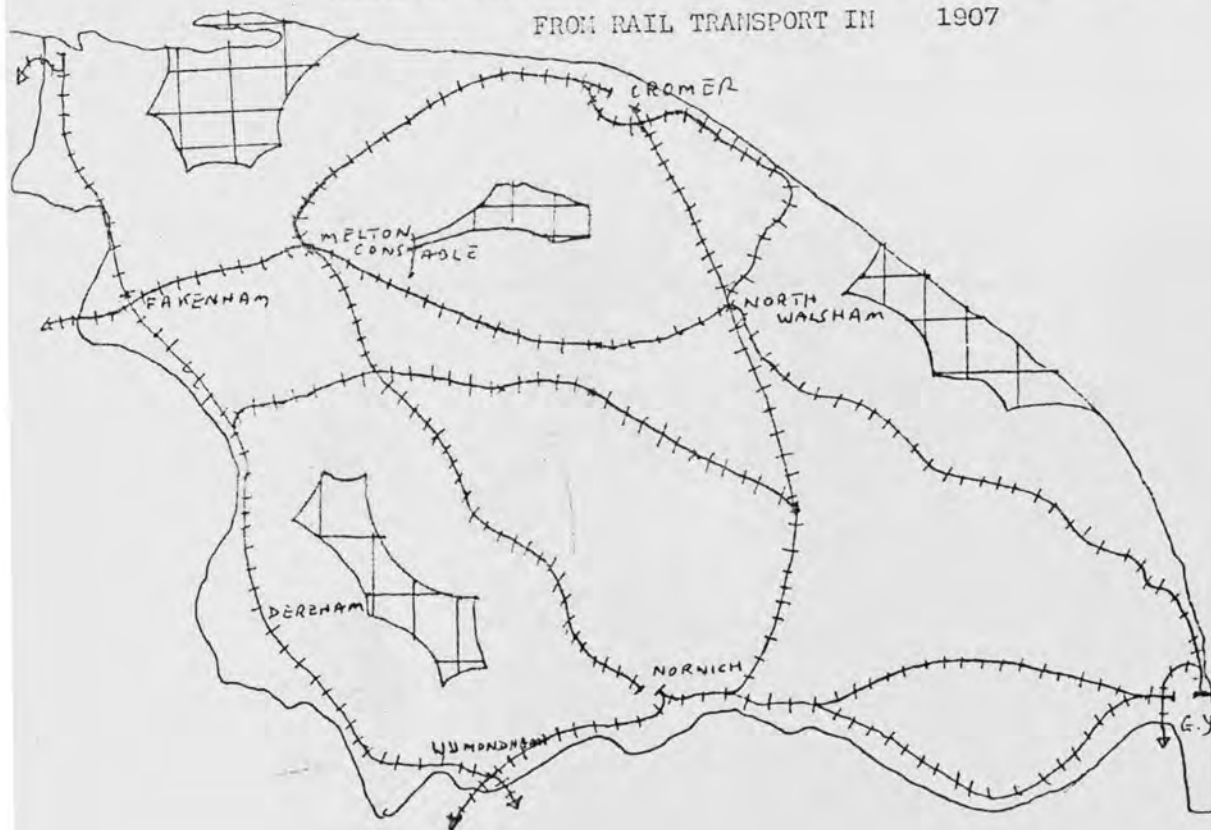
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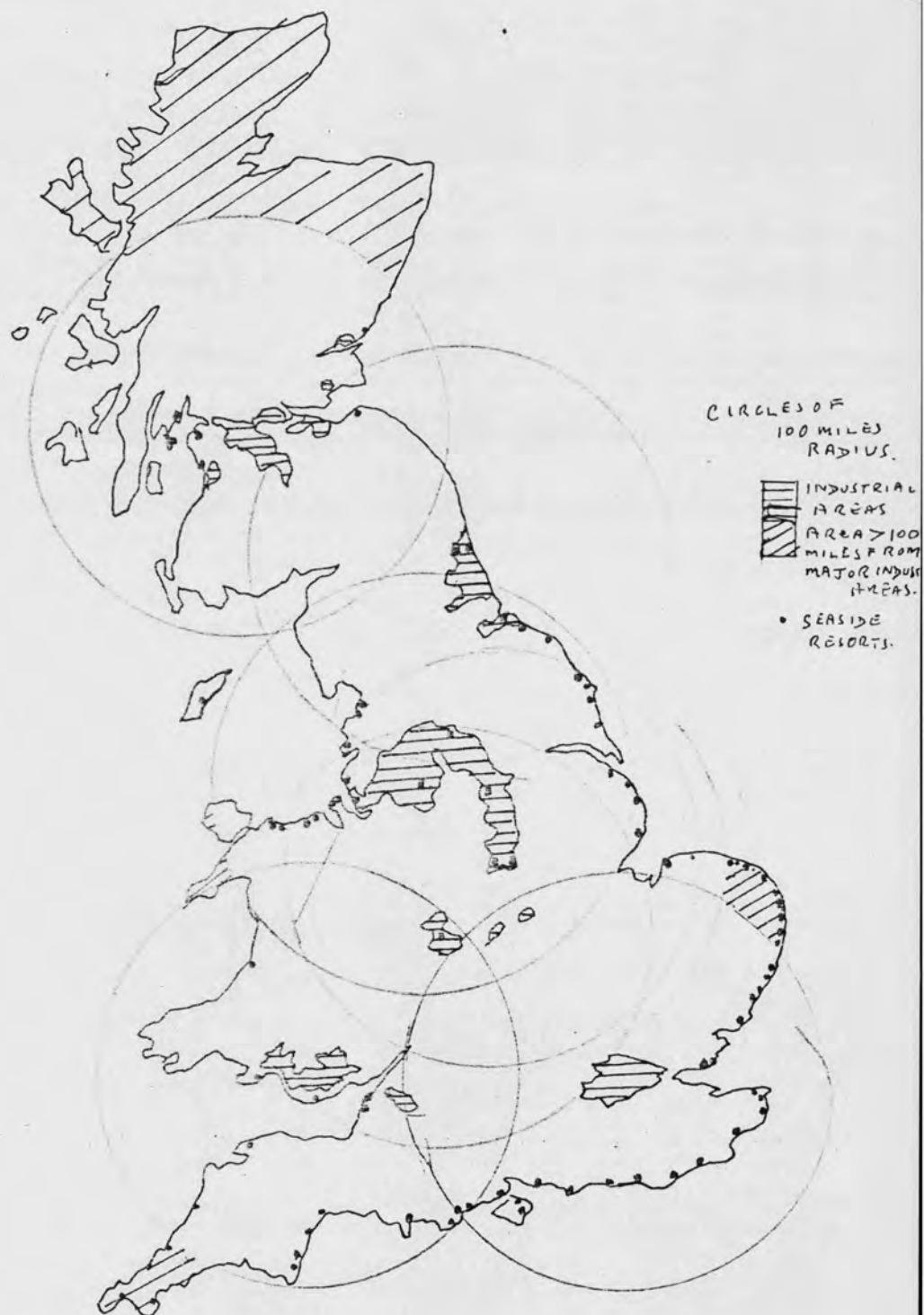
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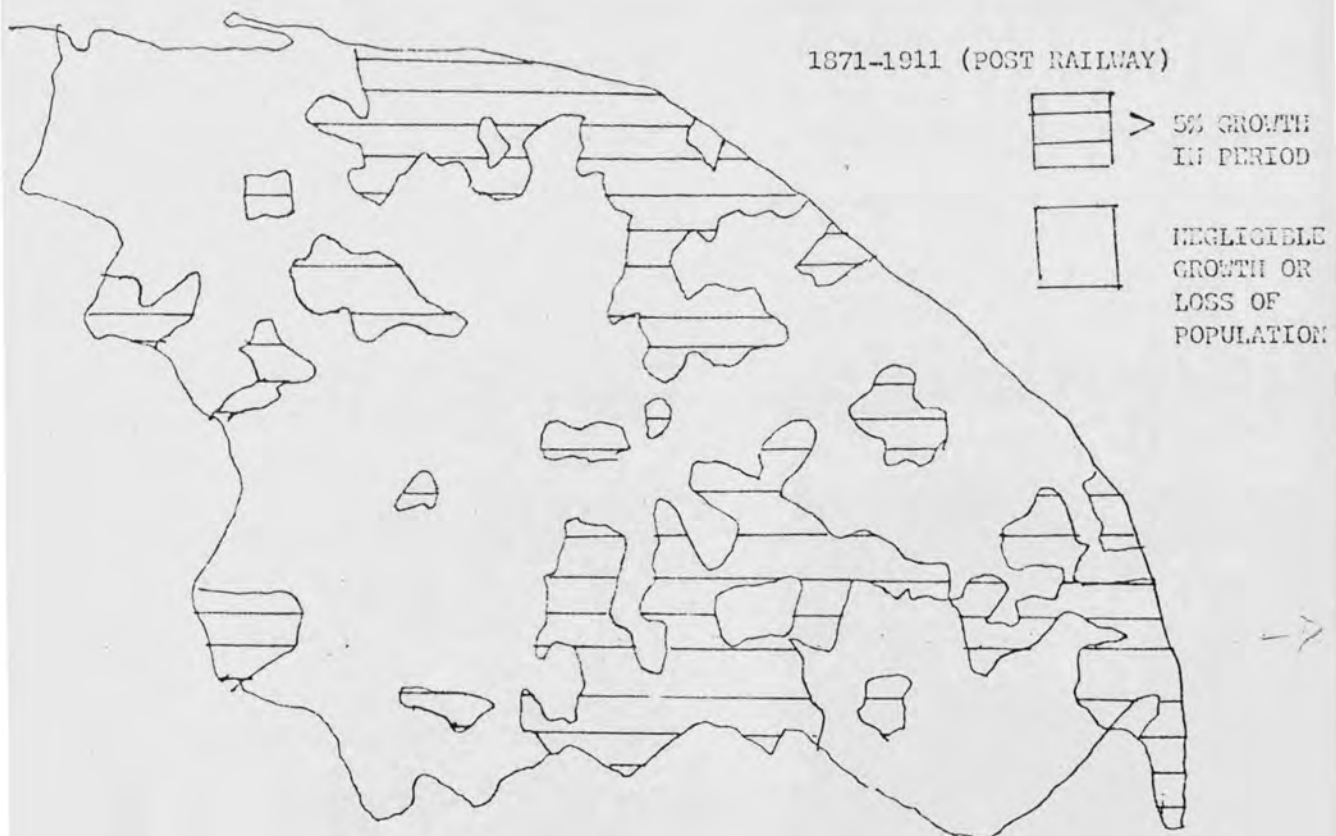
AREAS OF NORTH EAST NORFOLK MORE THAN THREE MILES DISTANT FROM RAIL TRANSPORT IN 1907



RESORTS IN RELATION TO MAJOR INDUSTRIAL AREAS IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

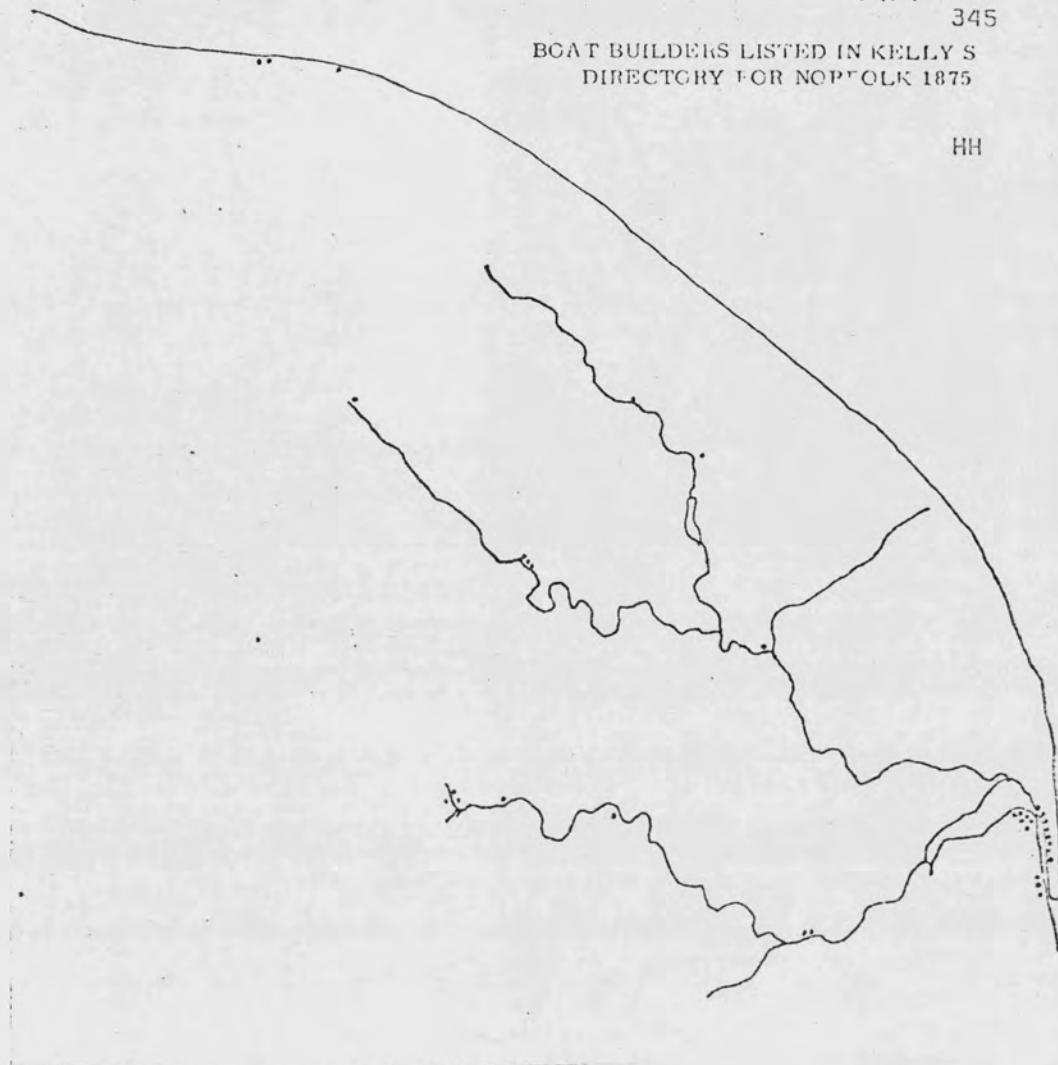


POPULATION GROWTH AREAS OF NORTH EAST NORFOLK

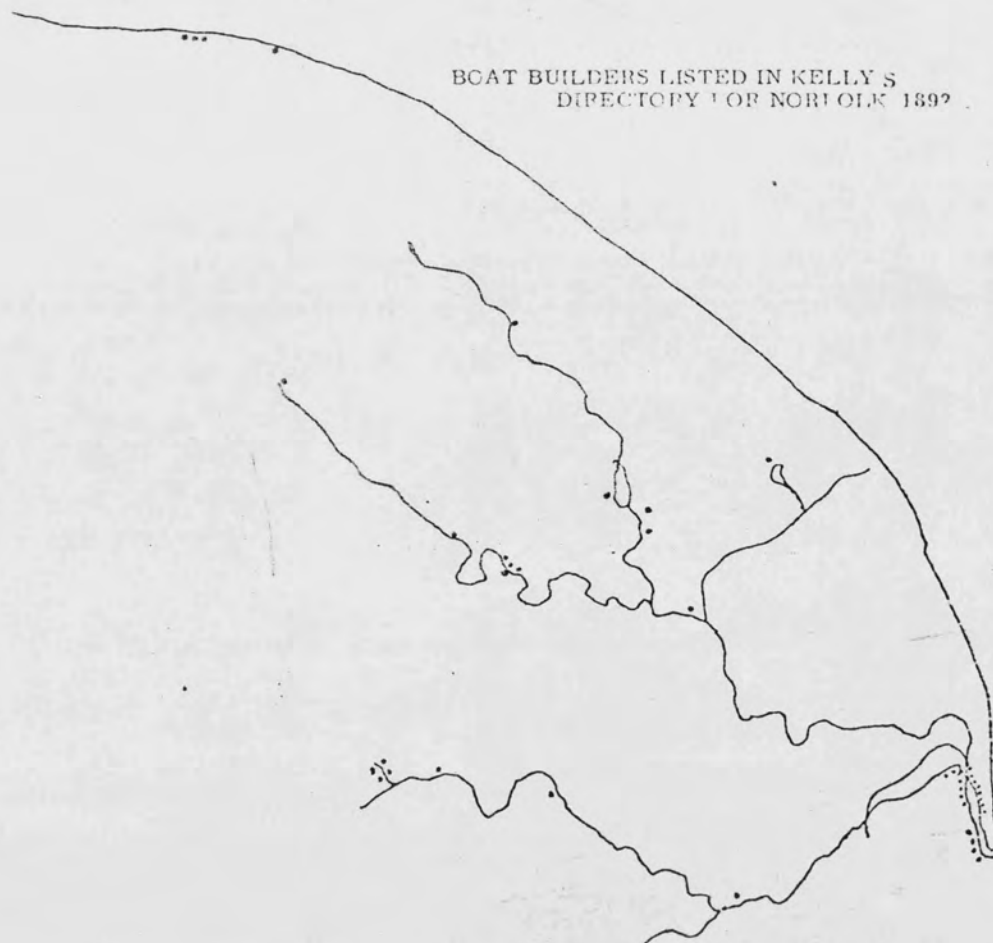


BOAT BUILDERS LISTED IN KELLY'S
DIRECTORY FOR NORFOLK 1875

HH



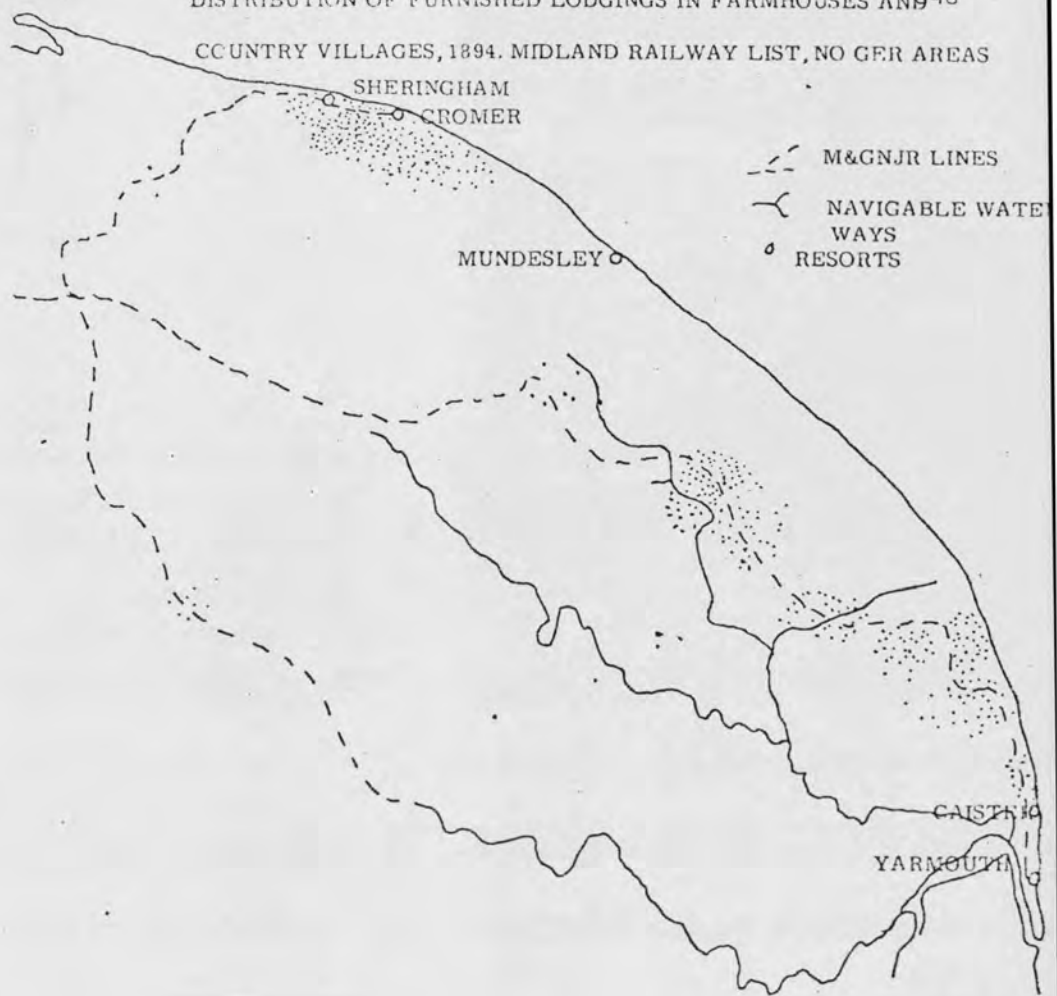
BOAT BUILDERS LISTED IN KELLY'S
DIRECTORY FOR NORFOLK 1892



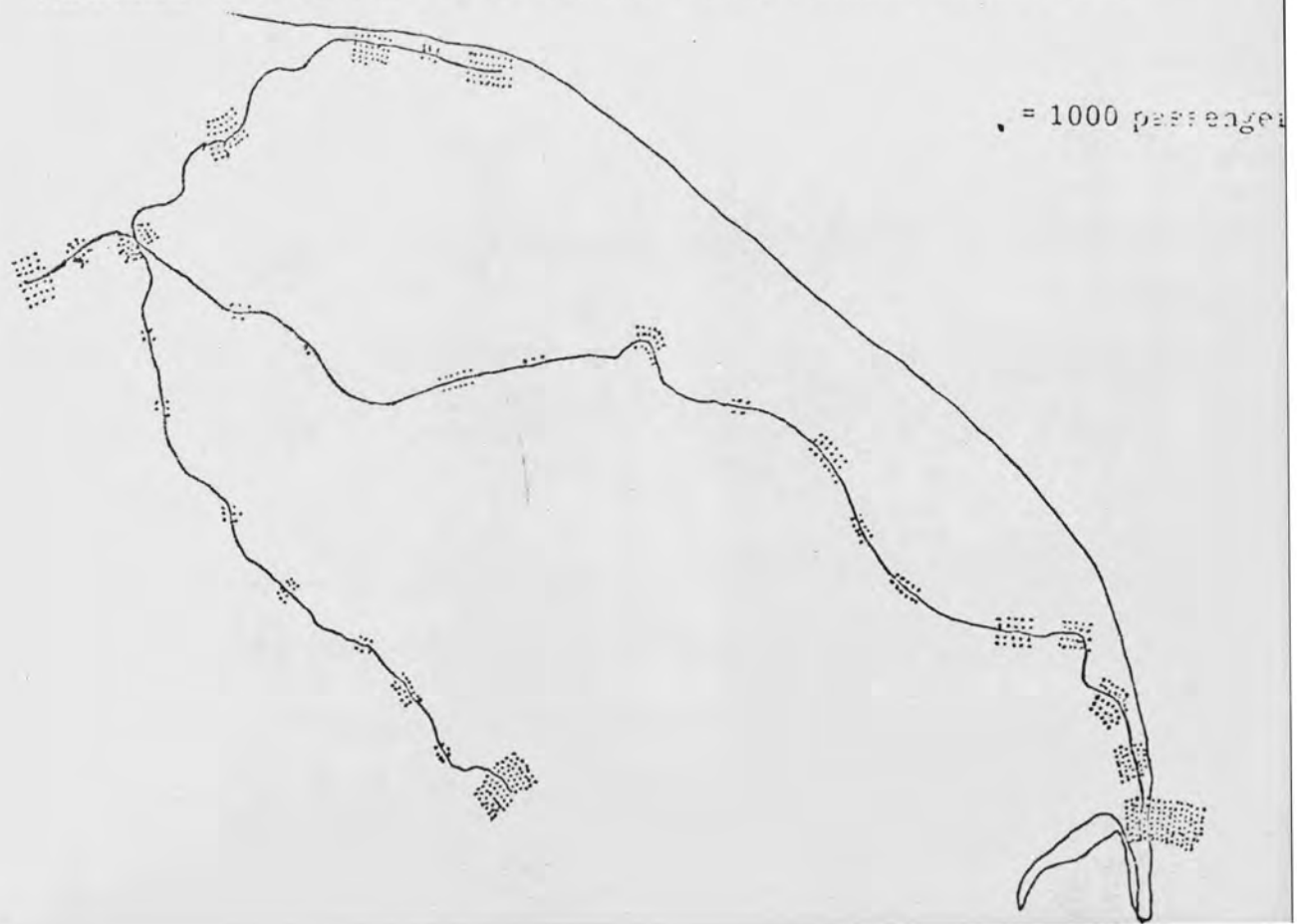
DISTRIBUTION OF FURNISHED LODGINGS IN FARMHOUSES AND

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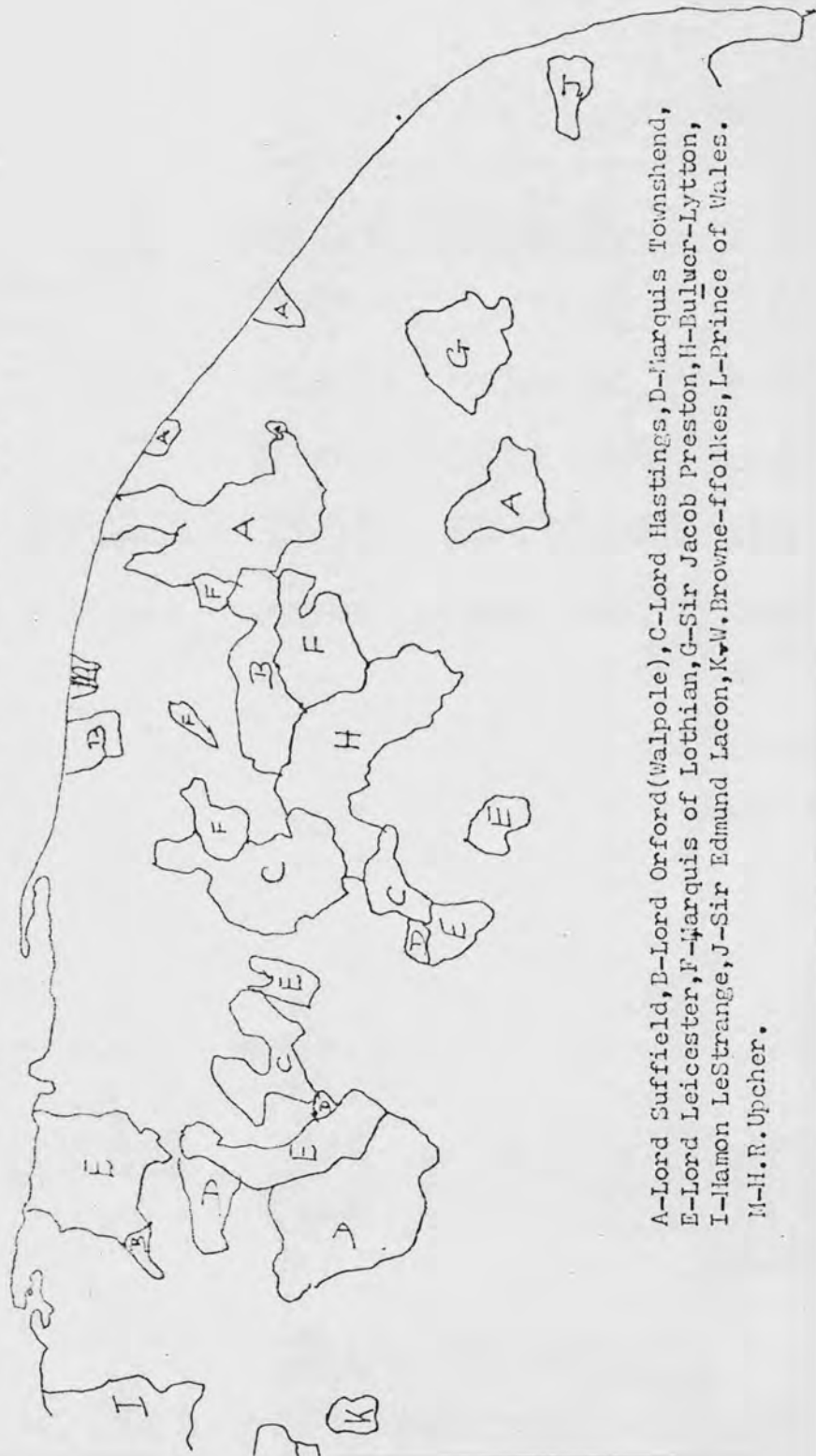
COUNTRY VILLAGES, 1894. MIDLAND RAILWAY LIST, NO GER AREAS



PASSENGERS USING STATIONS ON THE MIDLAND & GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY 1894



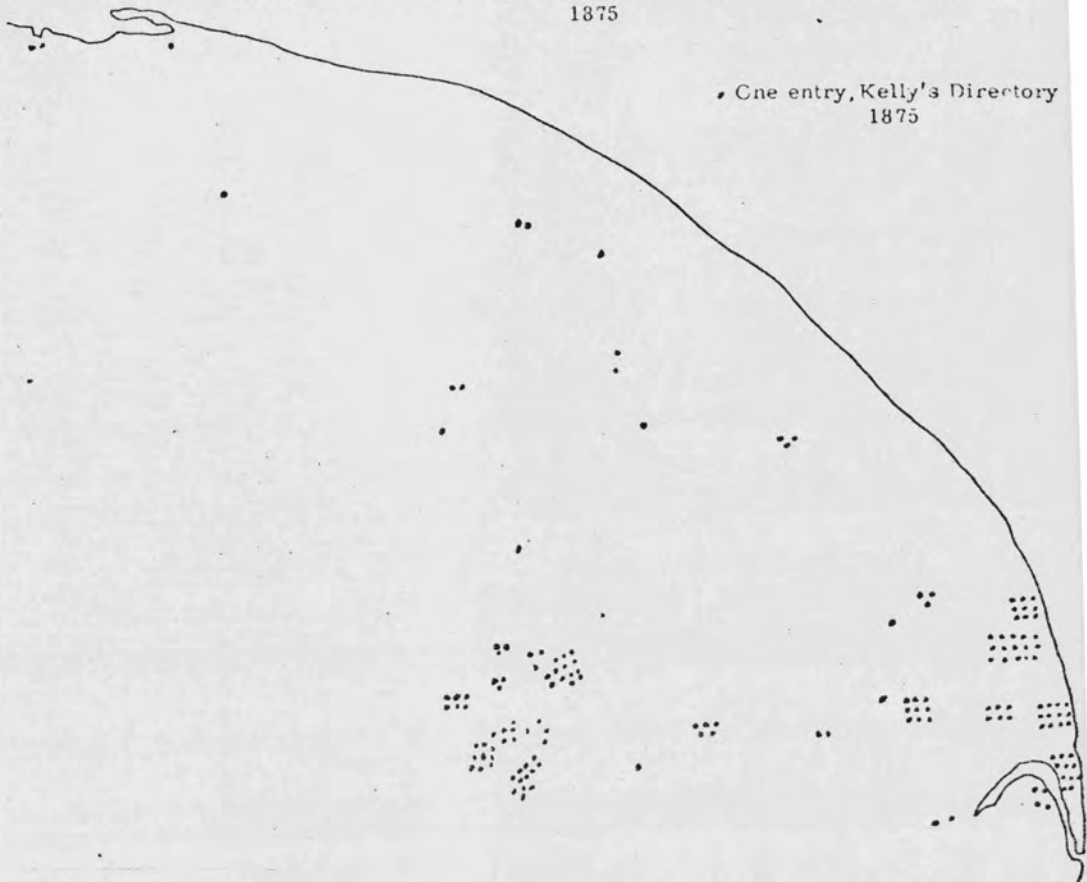
XXXXX ESTATES OF THE GREAT NORFOLK LAIDLORDS, 1837



A-Lord Suffield, D-Lord Orford (Walpole), C-Lord Hastings, D-Marquise Townshend,
 E-Lord Leicester, F-Marquise of Lothian, G-Sir Jacob Preston, H-Bulwer-Lytton,
 I-Maron LeStrange, J-Sir Edmund Lacon, K-W. Browne-ffolkes, L-Prince of Wales.
 M-H. R. Upcher.

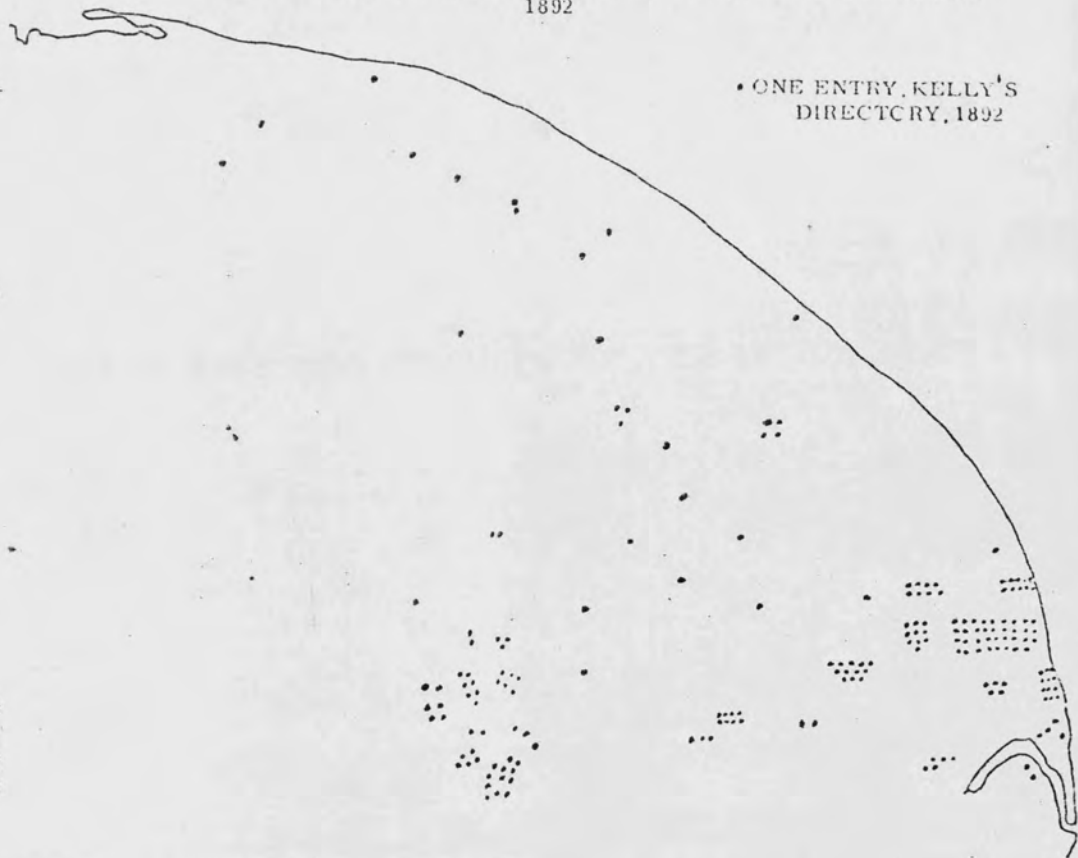
DISTRIBUTION OF MARKET GARDENS IN NORTH-EAST NORFOLK
1875

• One entry, Kelly's Directory
1875



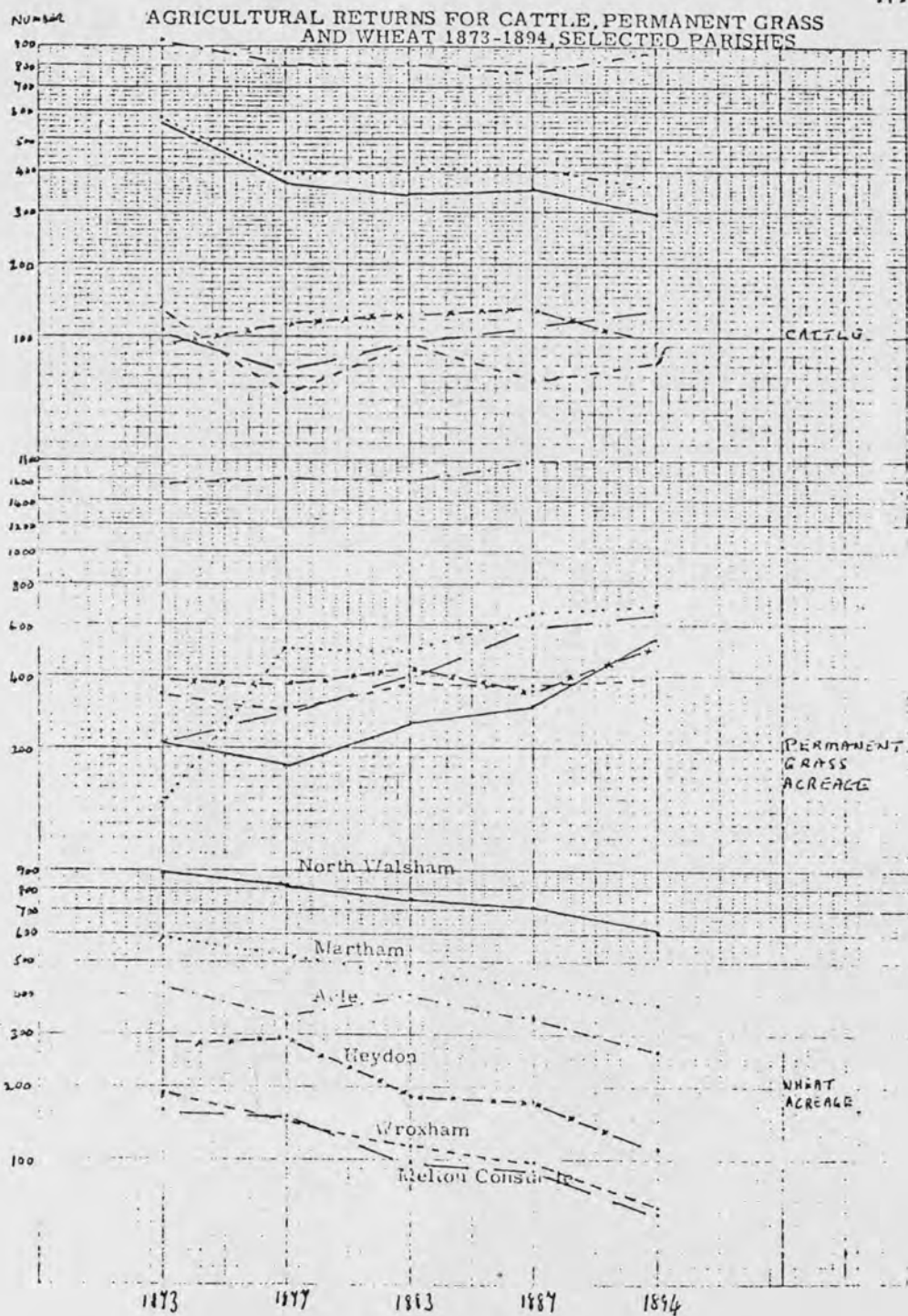
DISTRIBUTION OF MARKET GARDENS IN NORTH-EAST NORFOLK
1892

• ONE ENTRY, KELLY'S
DIRECTRY, 1892

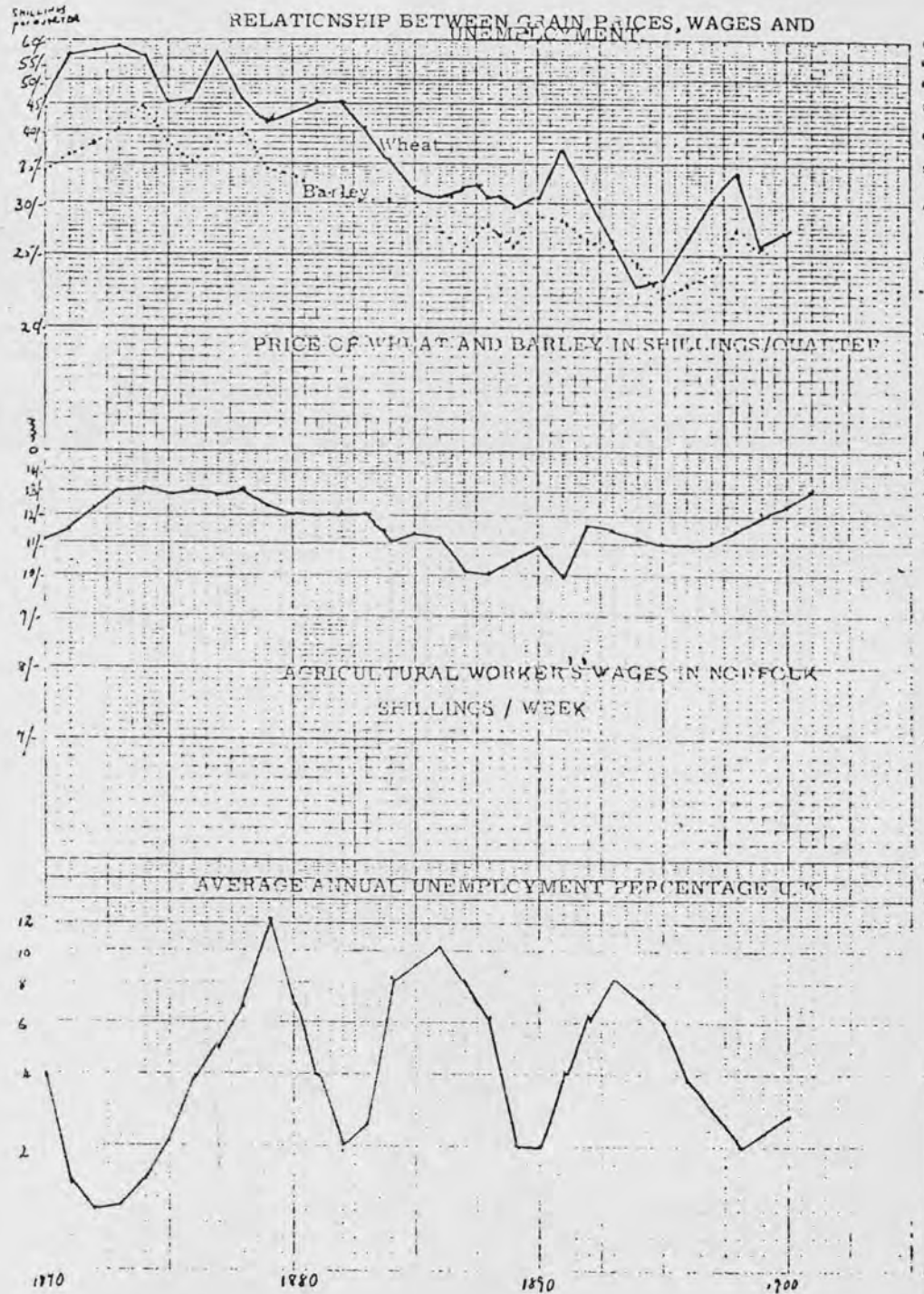


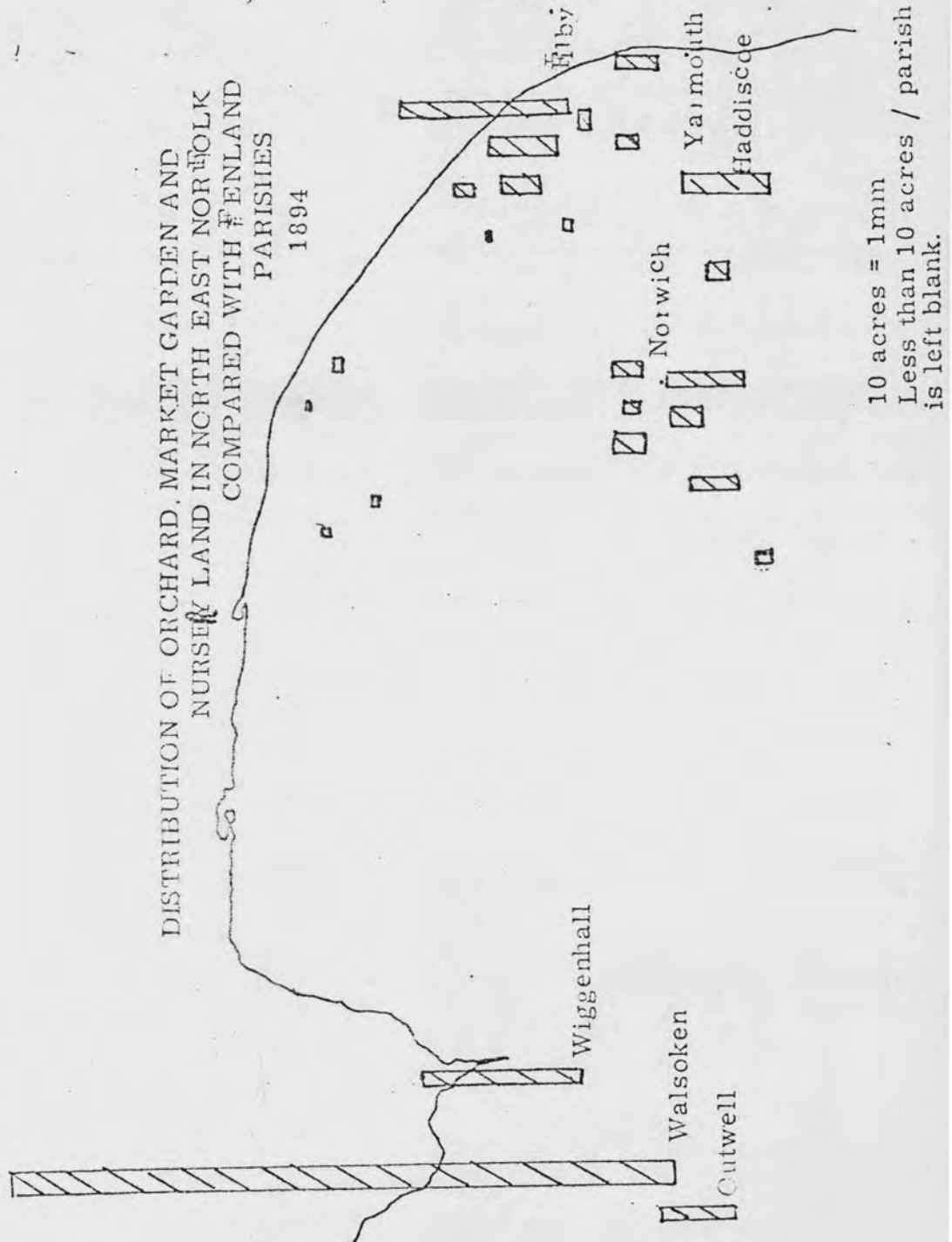
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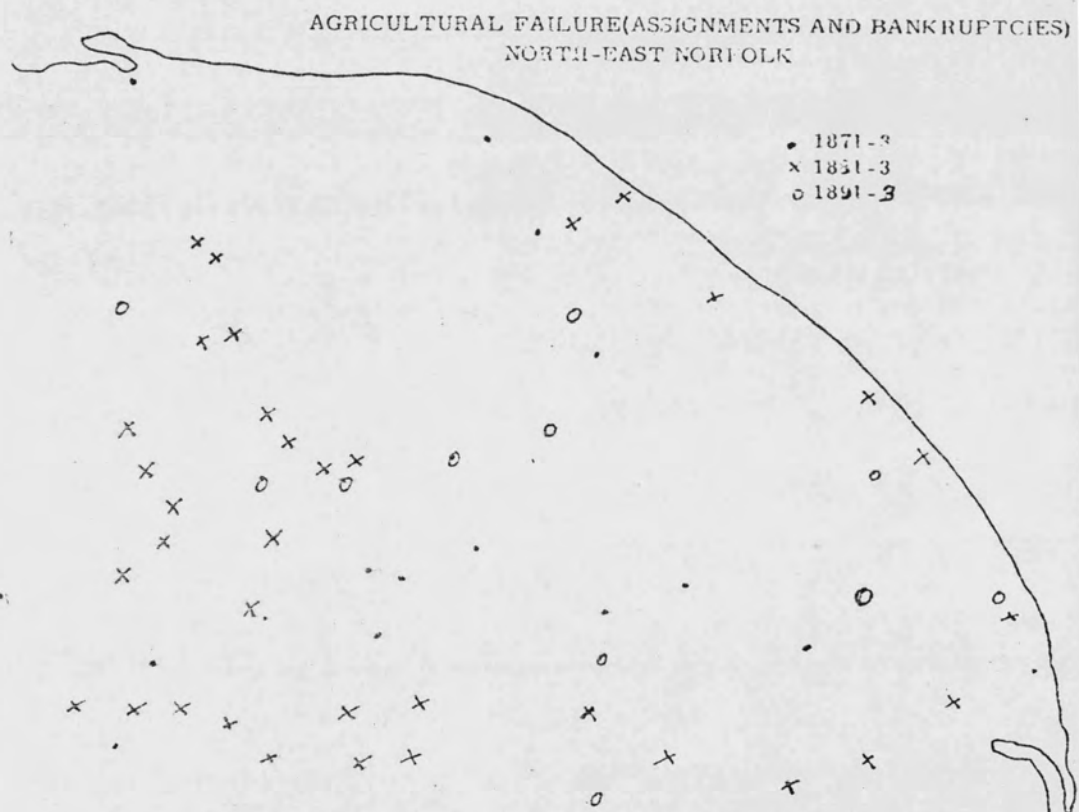


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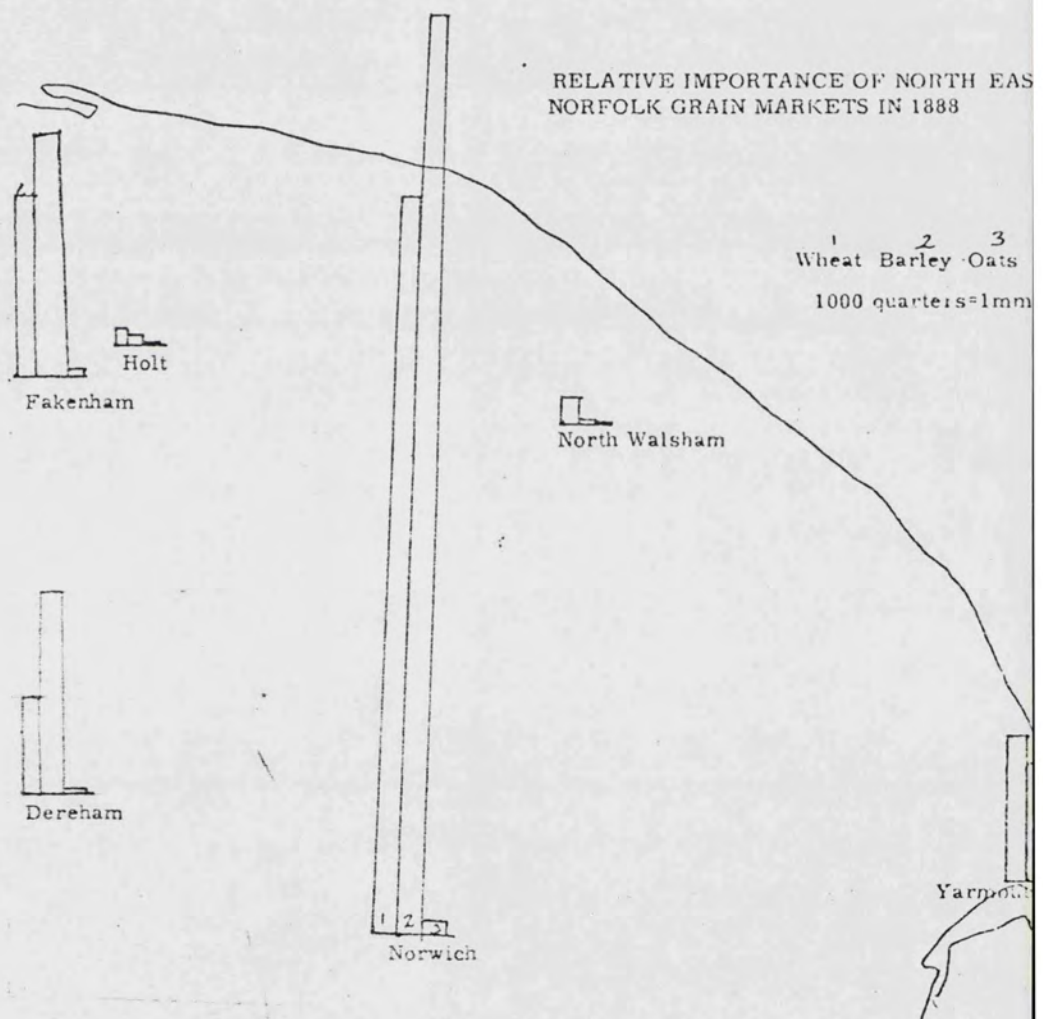
Source: PRO/Agricultural Returns.



Source: Perry, P.J., Where was the Great Depression?

AHR, 1972.

PP



CAPITAL OF THE EAST NORFOLK RAILWAY AND EXTENSIONS

	<u>CAPITAL</u>	<u>LOAN</u>
Ordinary Shares		
1864 Act	£88,000	£29,300.
6% Preference		
Shares 1872	£105,920	
6% Pref. Shs. 1875	£68,780	
Ord. Shs 1875	£48,000	£16,000
5% Mortgage		
Debentures 1876	£36,000	
Aylsham Ext.	£0 0 00	£23,300
Western Ext.	£160,000	

The Great Eastern Railway purchased shares and debentures in the East Norfolk Railway, 3 June 1881 :

Lines already built or under construction - £446,102-6-7d
 Western Extension to completion - £146,773-7-3d

In addition, the Great Eastern Railway built the Brundall to Yarmouth line at a cost of £206,152-8-11d.

The doubling of the East Norfolk Railway from Whittingham Junction to Wroxham in 1895-1896 cost £32,604-4-3d.

CAPITAL OF THE CONSTITUENT COMPANIES OF THE
MIDLAND & GREAT NORTHERN JOINT RAILWAYS.

	<u>CAPITAL</u>	<u>LOAN</u>
Lynn & Fakenham Rly	£828,000	£276,000
to 1881		
Great Yarmouth &		
Stalham (Light) Rly.	£98,000	£32,600
Yarmouth & North		
Norfolk Railway 1878	£60,000	£20,000
Yarmouth Union Rly.	£20,000	£ 5,500
Lynn & Fakenham Rly.		
1882	£150,000	£50,000
Eastern & Midlands	£160,000	£53,000
Railway (Amalgamation)		
Eastern & Mid. Rly. 1884	£100,000	£33,000
Lynn Loop	£100,000	£33,000
Cromer Undertaking	£240,000	£80,000
E & M R 5% 1st Preference		
Stock £ 1887	£45,000	

1893 - Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways issued stock to
acquire above:

MXGNJR 'A' Stock £748,000

MXGNJR 'B' Stock £452,000 No dividend until June 1897.

Cash payment of £160,000 made to satisfy claims on rolling stock,
machinery and lands.

CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF THE

NORFOLK & SUFFOLK JOINT RAILWAYS IN NORTH EAST NORFOLK.

Apportioned jointly between the Great Eastern Railway and the
Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways Committee:

North Walsham to Mundesley	-	£ 72,770- 3 - 10d
Mundesley to Cromer	-	£169,766 - 5- 11d
Yarmouth Beach to Lowestoft		£374,701 - 4 - 1d

of which £171,281-19-3d was authorised for the viaduct and approaches at Yarmouth.

Parliamentary Charges	£ 4,363 -13 - 7d
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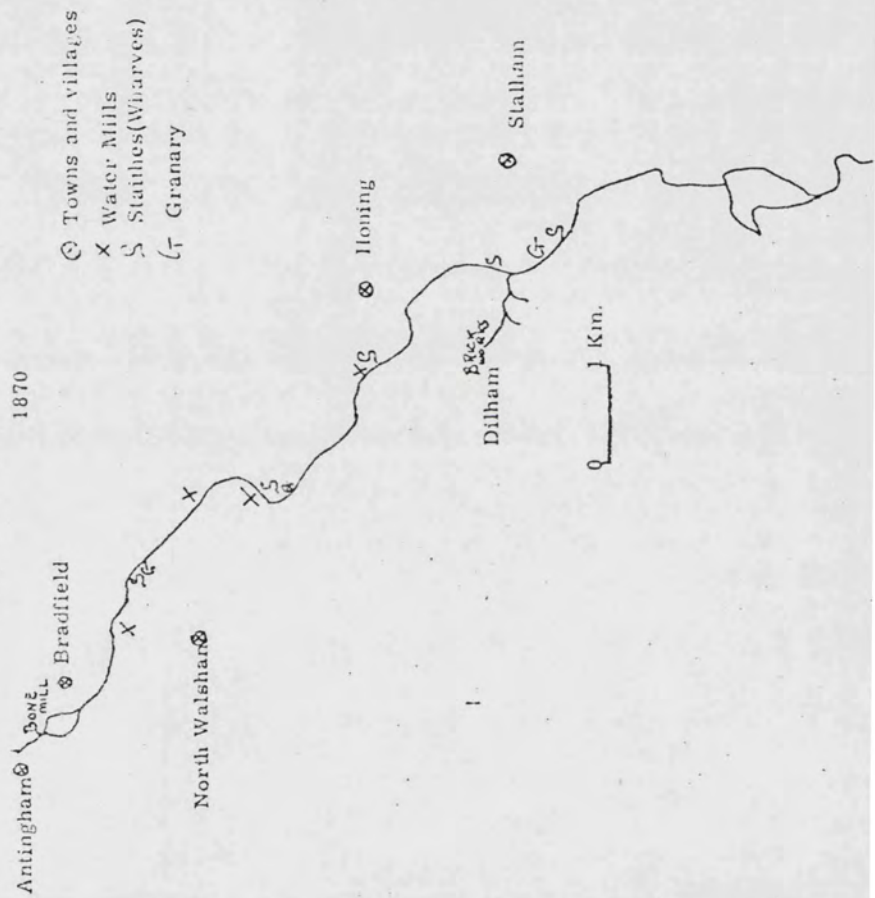
11 11

In addition, doubling of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railways
main line between Corpusty and Langor Bridge in 1899 cost

£70,078 - 7 - 8d

New buildings, machines and water supply at Melton Constable in 1899-1902 cost in excess of £10,000.

INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND STAITHES
ALONG THE NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL.

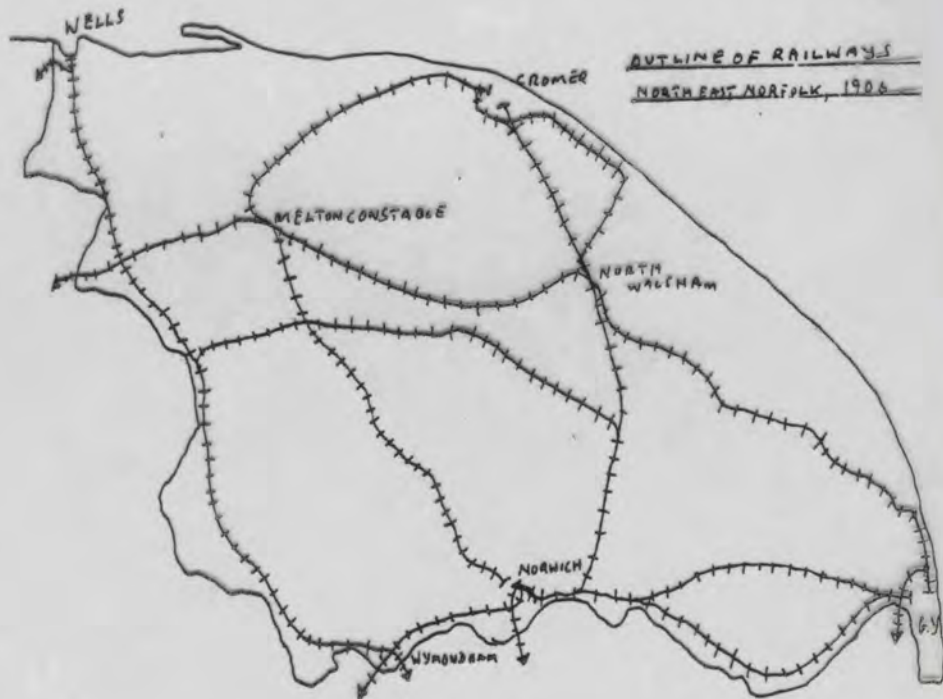


Source: Kelly's Directory of Norfolk, 1870.

PARISHES OF NORTH EAST NORFOLK
SEE INDEX OF NUMBERS



OUTLINE OF RAILWAYS
NORTH EAST NORFOLK, 1906



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15. Barford	56. " St Edmund	95. Field Dalling
16. Barnham Broom	57. " St Peter	96. Filby
17. Barney	58. Buxton	97. Foulsham
18. BARNINGHAM Norwood	59. Bylaugh	98. Foxley
19. " Winter		99. Freethorpe
20. " Little	60. Caister	100. Frettenham
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27. Beeston St Andrew	67. Cley.	107. Guist
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38. BlofieldXX	78. Cromer	116. Hautbois Great
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128. Hindringham	164. Matlaske	197. Roughton
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137. Horsham St Faith & Newton St F.	173. Morton on the Hill	205. Sall
138. Horstead	174. Moulton St Mary	206. Salthouse
139. HOVETON St John	175. Mundesley	207. Sea Palling
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	182. Oxmead	217. Smallburgh
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149. Kettlestone	183. Paston	220. Somerton
150. Kimberley	184. Plumstead by Holt	221. Southrepps
151. Knapton	185. PLUMSTEAD Great	222. Southwood
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152. Lammas	187. Postwick	224. Spixworth
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| 239. Swanton Morley | 276. Wighton |
| 240. Swanton Novers | 277. Winterton |
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| 242. Themelthorpe | 280. Witton (Blofield) |
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ABSTRACT

THE RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EAST NORFOLK 1874 - 1914

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF PhD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

RICHARD STANLEY FRANCIS JOBY, 1982.

North east Norfolk was the last large area of lowland England to have a network of railways constructed. It was an area over 100 miles from the nearest industrial conurbation, lacking in natural resources and also in modernised industry. The construction of the railways in north east Norfolk was a lengthy and difficult process, with many false starts, yet eventually producing two competing systems. The background to these events is examined both for its local impact and for the national implications of railway construction in this remote part of East Anglia.

Financial help from outside north east Norfolk had to be sought in order to complete the railways. The development of resorts and the Broadland boating villages, the relocation of local industry, changes in population and employment, in the marketing of produce and in the relative importance of settlements all occurred in the half century after the opening of the first railway in the district. The extent to which these changes could be attributed to the railways is examined, using a variety of assessment techniques.

The absence of railways in north east Norfolk fossilised the economy of the area for several decades at a time when railway building elsewhere was promoting growth and change. However, within a decade of the initial opening in 1874 of lines in north east Norfolk, railway mileage had achieved a density greater than the national average. Such intensive railway construction and other consequential developments brought a period of high investment and growth in this hitherto neglected district.