DO YOU KNOW ....?
Where Kidderminster shed was.

Many people did not know where Kidderminster shed was as it was not visible from the main Birmingham to Worcester line. However, the 1962 edition of the Ian Allan Locomotive Shed Directory explained its position as follows :-.

84G KIDDERMINSTER
The shed is on the south side of the Bewdley line. The yard is visible from the line.
Turn sharp right from the station yard into Comberton Road. Turn first right into Farfield and bear left with this road. Turn right at the end into the main road and about 250 yards further on, turn right along a cinder path. Continue over the railway footbridge and turn left into Hoo Road at the end of the path. A cinder path leads to the shed from the right-hand side of this road, just past a railway under-bridge. Walking time 20 minutes.

Kidderminster Shed in 1957
(Norman Glover)

The shed was given shed code KID by the Great Western Railway and became 85D when the railways were nationalised. In 1961, it was moved from Worcester to Wolverhampton Division given shed code 84G. In 1963, it moved to the London Midland Region with shed code 2P, and it finally closed to steam on 8 August 1964. A housing estate now occupies the site of the shed, the closest road being Kestral Close.

WHERE ARE WE ? - NO. 4

The following are views taken from the driver's cab between Worcester Shrub Hill and Smethwick Galton Bridge taken in 1988. Can you name the locations?

NAME THE STATION ANSWERS - No 5 : PORT

Here are the answers to Name The Station 5 which featured in the previous issue.

1 - Portsmouth Harbour, 2 - Dudley Port, 3 - Portishead, 4 - Southampton Airport Parkway, 5 - Portslade, 6 - Southport, 7 - Portsmouth Arms, 8 - Port Sunlight, 9 - Newport (IOW), 10 - Port Talbot Parkway, 11 - Devonport, 12 - Porthmadog Harbour

PLATFORM 2

Issue 17 September 2019

A scene from *Great British Railway Journeys* sees a train service approaching Cradley Heath station

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NO LONGER STOPPING AT … CUTNALL GREEN HALT
by John Warren

This is the sixth in a series of articles that looks at the stations between Birmingham Snow Hill and Worcester that have closed since 1960, working down the line from north to south.

Cutnall Green Halt looking north

(Lens of Sutton)

Date Opened	June 1928
Final Passenger Services on	3 April 1965
Number of Platforms	2
Number of Trains (1959)	11 (M-F), 9 (Sa), 0 (Su)
Number of Trains (1965)	10 (M-F), 9 (Sa), 0 (Su)

Cutnall Green Halt looking south

(Bob Pixton Collection)

Station Name : Cutnall Green Halt (June 1928 - April 1965)

Cutnall Green Halt was situated about 2.3 miles south of Hartlebury and 3.4 miles north of Droitwich Spa. It was approximately 0.8 miles south west of the village of the same name, the last ½ mile being along a narrow lane with no pavements. There were no other sizeable communities served by the station. Therefore, it was no surprise that it was not heavily used, and its chief function seemed to be for village school children to get to and from school in Droitwich Spa. For this reason, the station was recommended for closure in the Beeching Report. It saw its final trains on Saturday 3 April 1965, a black day for Worcestershire railway stations as six other stations and halts between Kidderminster and Malvern Link also closed on the same day. Fernhill Heath, between Droitwich Spa and Worcester, will be featured in the next issue. The other five stations and halts were west of Worcester Foregate Street - at Henwick, Broughton Halt, Rushwick Halt, Bransford Road and Newland Halt. Worcestershire County Council have aspirations to open a new station at Rushwick.

Indeed, electrification of the Cross-City Bromsgrove route has improved frequency, but the favoured option of the operator is to terminate at Bromsgrove rather than increase non-electric Hereford services via Droitwich Spa. The situation might change if Hereford trains are diverted by the Camp Hill Line but the aspirational pattern of service for this route has not been publicised.

There are countless other examples of stations where connections are inconvenient. SLUG has highlighted the two Worcester stations in several DfT consultations. The problem at both sites is outdated infrastructure which limits the occupation of platforms. According to a recent report the "DfT response to Great Western Franchise consultation recognises the need for better connections at Worcester". SLUG Chairman William Whiting has contacted Robin Walker, the MP for Worcester to raise concerns and encourage the government to bring forward funding and the planned control period for engineering improvements.

It is absurd that it is easier to make cross-country journeys from Stourbridge Line stations via Birmingham rather than Worcester. Why travel north to take a trip to the south west? SLUG emphasises this predicament in every official consultation and so too does the Worcestershire Rail Users Group Alliance. In fact, Worcestershire County Council needs this backing from campaign groups and has used it as ammunition in its own official strategies. Its website proclaims:-

"This is an exciting time for Worcestershire. The county is set to see unprecedented population, development and economic growth; particularly in our urban areas. Our enviable central location means that there is significant strategic demand to travel. This is especially the case on key road and rail networks which provide direct connections between major economies including Greater Birmingham, Greater Bristol, Cardiff and South Wales, Oxford, London and the South East and further afield".

SLUG has campaigned for more direct inter-city services via Worcester. This is the long term goal. In the short term Stourbridge Line services need to be rationalised instead of terminating at either Worcester Shrub Hill or Worcester Foregate Street, without any logical clock-face pattern. I recently travelled to and from Bath via Bristol Temple Meads and I was impressed by the ease of making a connecting journey. This could be true of Worcester if it were to become a hub instead of a backwater. There is an opportunity here – it must not be missed!

I've just got off this CrossCountry service on platform 12 and my train to Bath Spa can be seen on the left on platform 15. Unfortunately, I had to travel via Birmingham.

I MISSED AGAIN
by Phil Collins (or Rob Hebron!)

There is nothing more frustrating for passengers than missing connections. Whether it is from train to train or bus to train, the inconvenience is the same. I must admit that I don't envy timetable planners because they can't be expected to facilitate every conceivable journey. Unless the same operator is responsible for both legs of a journey, then it is unlikely that connections are provided for. This has been the case since the nineteenth century when railways were first introduced to the British Isles. The private companies were happy to share lines with competitors but went out of their way to make onward journeys difficult on their rivals' trains.

The Stourbridge Line User Group has always campaigned for integrated public transport. This means that we are concerned with our members' end to end journeys. SLUG realises that there is a discrepancy with theory and practice. A turn-up-and-go frequency of trains at Stourbridge Junction does not automatically mean there is good connection opportunity (apart from those with the Stourbridge Town Shuttle). The location of the Junction Station is not convenient for bus transfer and destinations are limited.

Cradley Heath Interchange. One train, no buses!

At Cradley Heath Interchange, train frequency is excellent and yet I rarely see buses waiting there at times when I have gazed through the window of my carriage. Even so, we really can't complain in the West Midlands County because we have a dedicated team, *Transport for West Midlands* which constantly reviews train and bus networks to ensure all areas are covered. This is not the case in Worcestershire where spending cuts have decimated bus networks. After 6:00 pm some townsfolk in Worcestershire are totally dependent on trains to reach the nearest point to their preferred destination.

In Kidderminster, the last bus to Bromsgrove is 1737. In theory, the journey can be done by train to train, changing at Droitwich Spa. At 1752 a train departs Kidderminster station and arrives in Droitwich Spa at 1804. The next train to Bromsgrove is at 1833 from the opposite platform which involves a waiting time of nearly thirty minutes. A passenger can arrive at Bromsgrove at a respectable 1842 but there is still a walk from the station to Bromsgrove Town Centre.

After the peak time period, the clock face nature of the two train timetables no longer applies. Inevitably, connections both ways are hit and miss. The new franchisee, West Midland Railway made improvements to evening frequency in the May 2019 timetable. The Stourbridge Line has benefitted but not the Hereford via Bromsgrove line.

BORN ON THE STOURBRIDGE LINE
by John Warren

Over the past centuries, many notable people have been born close to the Stourbridge line, some with more famous names than others. Here is a small selection of these people, some of whom you've probably never heard of.

JEWELLERY QUARTER

Kathleen Dayus was an author who was born in Hockley in 1903. She grew up in back to back slum dwellings with hand to mouth existence. She described her growing up, married life, parenthood including her decision to hand her children to Doctor Barnardos for a period, and later life, in a series of five books - Her People (1982), Where There's Life (1985), All My Days (1988), The Best of Times (1991) and The Ghosts of Yesteryear (2000). These were brought together under the title: The Girl from Hockley: Growing Up in Working-Class Birmingham (2006). She died just a few days before her 100th birthday in January 2003. In 2012, she was commemorated by the naming of a square in the Jewellery Quarter as Dayus Square.

THE HAWTHORNS

Edith Madeleine Carroll was born in West Bromwich on 26 February 1906. Having adopted her middle name, Madeleine Carroll was an English actress who appeared in 43 films between 1928 and 1949, the most famous being Alfred Hitchcock's "The 39 Steps" in 1935. In the late 1930s, she was the highest paid actress in the world and is believed to have earned $250,000 in 1938. She died on 2 October 1987 at the age of 81.

SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE

Bobby Thomson was born on 5 November 1943 in Smethwick. He was one of the finest left-backs in English football during the 1960s and played 8 games for England in 1963-64. His club career consisted of 278 games for Wolves, 63 for Birmingham and 110 for Luton, and he was promoted to Division 1 at all three clubs. Having ended his career in the United States, he returned to the Black Country to run a sports shop in Sedgley. He died on 19 August 2009, aged 65.

LANGLEY GREEN

Martin Elliott was born on 12 July 1946 in Oldbury and was a professional photographer. He died on 24 March 2010. The chances are that many of you will be asking "Martin who?" However, he is responsible for one of the most iconic images of the 1960s when his photograph of his future wife, Noelle Bott, was distributed by Athena. If you haven't guessed what that photograph was, it is reproduced on the next page.

ROWLEY REGIS

Carlton Lloyd Palmer was born on 5 December 1965. He was an England international footballer and made 18 appearances for his country. He started his career at West Bromwich Albion and made 121 appearances before moving on to Sheffield Wednesday, Leeds United, Southampton Nottingham Forest and Coventry City. He later managed Stockport County and Mansfield Town and made 591 league appearances in total. He now lives in Shanghai with his wife Lucy.

OLD HILL

Josie Lawrence (real name Wendy Lawrence) was born on 6 June 1959 in Old Hill. She is probably best known as an improvisor in the Channel 4 series "Whose Line Is It Anyway?", but also appeared as Manda Best in EastEnders. She has recently appeared in the Channel 4 series "Humans".

CRADLEY HEATH

John Plant (7 December 1951 – 21 November 2006) and Alan Smith (born 1935) were a comedy double act who performed as Aynuk and Ayli. Both were born in Netherton. They were responsible for such "classics" as :- Ayli goes to his local hardware shop to get some stuff to clean a paintbrush. He says to the chap behind the counter, "Av yoe got any terps?". The assistant says, "Do yoe want VHS or Betamax?".

LYE

Sir Cedric Webster Hardwicke was born in Lye on 19 February 1893. He was an English stage and film actor whose career spanned nearly fifty years. His film career stretched over 48 years from 1926 to just before his death on 6 August 1964, and he appeared in 73 films. His theatre work included leading roles, including plays by Shakespeare and Shaw.

The iconic photo taken by Martin Elliott

The series normally broadcasts at the start of each year at 6.30 pm on BBC2. In the ten series up to 2019, Michael has visited the Stourbridge line five times. He visited Hartlebury Castle and Lea & Perrins in Worcester on 17 January 2012, the Black Country Museum, Wordsley Glass Cone (via the Town car) and the Severn Valley on 10 January 2013, Droitwich and the Chateau Impney on 24 January 2014, a whistle factory in Hockley, the Royal Mail sorting office in Kidderminster and Worcester on 18 January 2016, and Cradley Heath and Mushroom Green on 8 February 2019.

Stills from the series, all taken along the Stourbridge line, are shown below. Can you name the locations? (Answers below)

1 - Hartlebury, 2 - Kidderminster Town, 3 - Worcester Shrub Hill, 4 - Birmingham Snow Hill, 5 - Stourbridge Junction, 6 - Jewellery Quarter, 7 - Stourbridge Town, 8 - Kidderminster

The last section of this journey, from Tyseley, was repeated in 1962 when Railway Roundabout showed "London to Birmingham in 5 Minutes", a follow up to the more famous 1953 BBC film "London to Brighton in 4 Minutes". This time, the speeded up journey was on board the "Midland Pullman", one of the luxury blue Pullman sets introduced in 1960. In addition, this colour film actually completed the journey into Snow Hill rather than fade out as it entered Snow Hill Tunnel.

1961 brought us two films of local interest. The first was titled "The Bewdley to Tenbury branch" and included scenes along the entire line from Kidderminster to Woofferton. The second was "Bank Holiday at Bewdley" and showed the special excursions bringing happy Brummie families for a bright summer's day by the river. The latter film was actually in colour, but was obviously broadcast in black and white.

Railway Roundabout featured a number of other films of the Midlands area during its run, including the Harborne branch, the Lickey incline, the Redditch branch and Saltley shed. The films are now owned by the National Railway Museum and are available on DVD.

Moving forward 48 years to 2010 brings us to the start of another long running railway series, although this one is aimed at the rail traveller rather than the rail enthusiast. Of course, this is *Great British Railway Journeys*, presented by Michael Portillo, one of the "Marmite" Cabinet members of the 1990s as he was loved by the right and hated by the left who rejoiced when he lost his Enfield Southgate seat in 1997. He was found the safe Kensington and Chelsea seat in 1999 and served as Shadow Chancellor before standing as a leadership candidate in 2001. Having fallen foul of the party hierarchy in that election, he retired from politics in 2005 and pursued a new career as a television presenter. Given his love of railways, one wonders whether he would have made a brilliant Transport Secretary.

STOURBRIDGE JUNCTION

Despite most people thinking that he was born either in Essex or East London, Ronald Antonio O'Sullivan was born on 5 December 1975 in Wordsley Hospital, the son of Ronald and Maria (nee Catalano). Better known to his fans as Ronnie or The Rocket, he is arguably the most talented natural snooker player of all times and should have dominated professional snooker more than he has. Despite this, he has won the World Championship 5 times, the Masters 7 times, the UK Championship 7 times and has made a record 15 147 maximum breaks in tournament matches.

HAGLEY

Not the legendary jazz musician and panel game chairman, but a distant ancestor, Humphrey Lyttelton was born in Hagley. In 1606, he gave refuge at his house in Hagley to two of the Gunpowder plotters, Stephen Littleton and Robert Wintour, who had escaped from the Holbeach House fight. Humphrey fled, but was captured at Prestwood, Staffordshire. He was tried at Worcester, convicted and sentenced to death. He was hung, drawn and quartered at Redhill, Worcester with four others on 7 April 1606. It appears that his descendant decided that chairing "I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue" was a slightly less dangerous profession.

BLAKEDOWN

Dawn Palethorpe was born locally on 23 May 1936 and brought up at the family home in Knoll Hill, Blakedown. Her father was part of the sausages and pies dynasty. She was one of Britain's most successful international riders of the 1950s and early-1960s, an era in which, with Pat Smythe, she dominated women's show jumping. Initially under her maiden name and later under her married name of Dawn Palethorpe Woffard, she twice won the Queen Elizabeth II Cup at the Royal International Horse Show, took silver in the Ladies European Championships, team gold in the Nations Cup and represented Great Britain at the 1960 Rome Olympics. Her husband Warren Woffard was an American international show jumper. She died on 12 July 2015.

KIDDERMINSTER

Sir Rowland Hill (3 December 1795 – 27 August 1879) was born in Blackwell Street, Kidderminster and was an English teacher, inventor and social reformer. He later served as a government postal official, and he is usually credited with introducing the modern postal service, including the invention of the postage stamp. He later became chairman of the London and Brighton Railway.

HARTLEBURY

Neil Grant Richardson was born on 5 December 1930 in Stourport-on-Severn and was brought up in Hartlebury. He was an English composer and conductor and it is in the former capacity that he is best known. In 1972, a theme tune was required for a new BBC quiz show and Neil composed "Approaching Menace". The programme was "Mastermind" and it is still going strong, along with Neil's theme music. Neil died on 8 October 2010, aged 80.

DROITWICH SPA

Nick Jenkins was born in Droitwich in May 1967. His initial claim to fame was that he created the on-line greeting card retailer moonpig.com, before selling it in 2011 for £120 million. Since 2008, he has been actively investing in start-up businesses but is probably best known for joining the BBC2 series "Dragons' Den" in 2015. He remained in the Den until 2017.

WORCESTER FOREGATE STREET

Matilda Alice Powles was born in Commandery Street, Worcester on 13 May 1864. She was an English music hall performer who adopted, at age 11, the stage name Vesta Tilley and who became one of the most famous male impersonators of her era. She was a star in both Britain and the United States for over thirty years. She married Walter de Frece on 16 August 1890 and became Lady de Frece in 1919 when he was knighted. She retired from the stage after giving a final performance at the Coliseum Theatre in London in 1920. She died on September 16, 1952 in London.

ALL CHANGE AT ... OLD HILL
The changing scene at one of the Stourbridge line stations

ON SCREEN ... THE STOURBRIDGE MAIN LINE AND BRANCHES
1. RAILWAY THEMED TELEVISION SERIES by John Warren

This is the first article in a series that looks at the occasions when the Stourbridge line or its branch lines have featured either in feature films or in television series.

There have been many one-off television documentary programmes on railways in Britain but two series, half a century apart, are probably the ones that most people remember.

The first was *Railway Roundabout*, a series for children of all ages, which was broadcast by BBC between 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm from 1958 to 1962. Ten 25 minute programmes were broadcast each year and featured short films on all aspects of the railway scene. In all 52 programmes were broadcast with a total of 100 short films. The programmes were presented by John Adams and Patrick Whitehouse, who also produced and edited the films. Both John and Patrick were acclaimed Midlands based railway authors, enthusiasts and preservationists. In fact, Patrick helped with the restoration of the Ffestiniog Railway in North Wales and the Dart Valley Railway in Devon and purchased two Great Western Railway locomotives for use on the latter - Small Prairie Tank No. 4555 and Castle Class No. 7029 *Clun Castle*. These locomotives were stored at Tyseley depot, and led to this becoming Birmingham Railway Museum, now a major main line preservation centre and the home of Vintage Trains who operate the Shakespeare Express. In fact, Patrick's son Michael is now Chairman of Vintage Trains and *Clun Castle* is now back in steam.

Railway Roundabout's first film in our area was "The Halesowen Branch", broadcast in 1958. Although all of the filming was done between Halesowen and Dowry Dell Viaduct, Old Hill was mentioned as the junction with the main line.

Halesowen Station

Approaching Moor Street

Two years later, in 1960, Railway Roundabout showed the film "Riding With The Driver in a DMU" which detailed how the first generation DMUs let you sit in the seat behind the driver and get a driver's eye view of the road ahead. The journey chosen was Cardiff General to Birmingham Snow Hill, unfortunately via Gloucester and Stratford-upon-Avon rather than Hereford and Kidderminster. However, the final scene showed the train passing Birmingham Moor Street station and heading into the tunnel 27 years before through platforms were built on the line to Snow Hill.