



# Platform 3



# STATIONS

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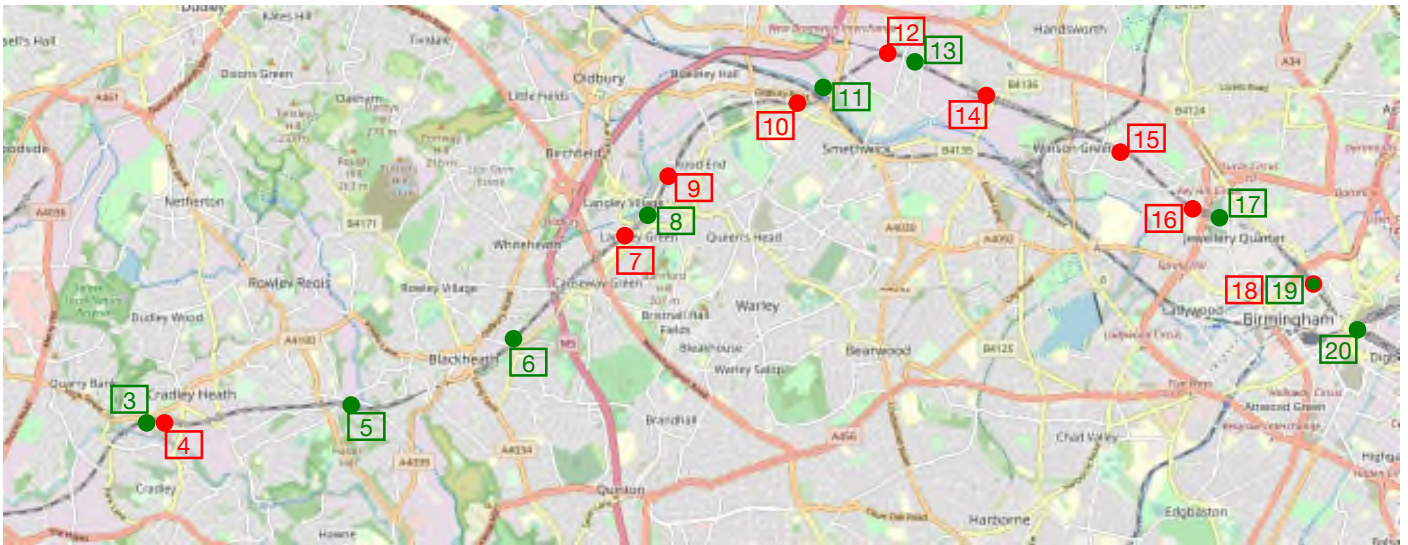
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## INTRODUCTION by Roger Davis

This is the second of two editions of *Platform 3* where we will look at the history of every station, open or closed, along the line from south to north.

In the previous edition, we travelled from Worcester Foregate Street to Lye and detailed 17 stations that were either open or had been closed or relocated.

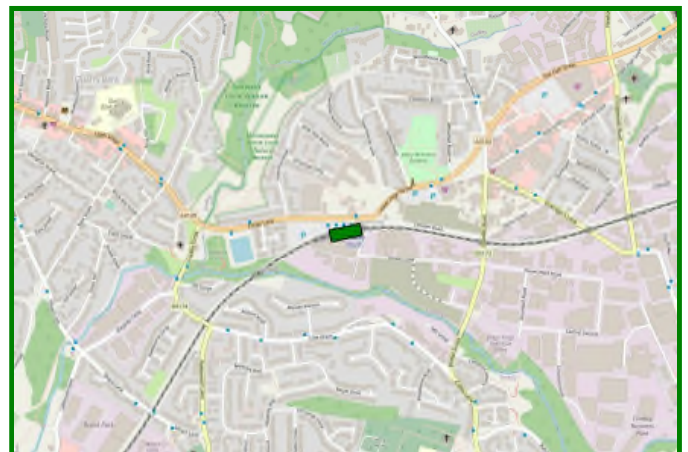
In this edition, we will travel from Cradley Heath to Birmingham Moor Street. In this section of the line, there are eight stations which are still open, seven which have closed, one which has been relocated, and one which closed and later reopened.



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(West Midlands PTE)



Station Name : Cradley Heath (1984-present).

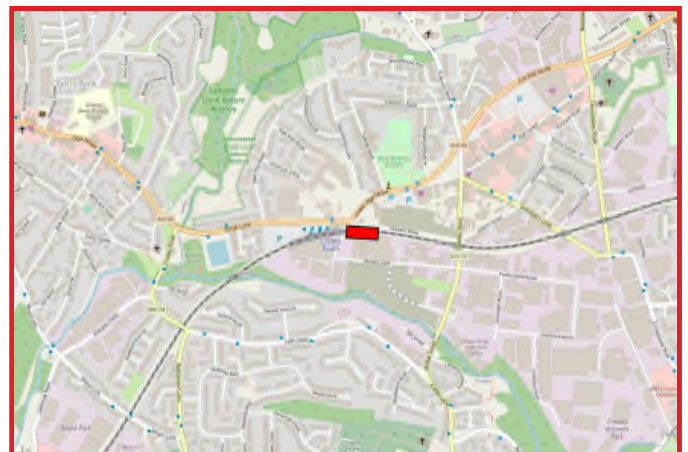
Technically, the first station on the current site opened in January 1984. The down (Stourbridge) platform is the same platform as on the earlier station but the platform buildings were demolished and replaced by a single bus shelter. A brand new up (Birmingham) platform, directly opposite the down platform, with a modern station building, was built on part of the land previously occupied by the Goods Yard and Depot. The rest of this land was converted into a car park and a bus interchange. On 26 July 2015, a brand new bus interchange was opened which included a new waiting area and covered walkway between the station, the bus station and the car park.



## CRADLEY HEATH & CRADLEY

# CLOSED

Opened on 1 April 1863  
Closed on 14 January 1984



Station Name : Cradley (1863-1899), Cradley Heath & Cradley (1899-1968), Cradley Heath (1968-1984).

The original Cradley station opened on 1 April 1863 when the line from Stourbridge to Cradley opened with an onwards branch to Corngreaves Sidings. The station was unlike other stations on the line as it has staggered platforms. The up (Birmingham) platform was built to the east of Woods Lane level crossing with the main station building on this platform with an entrance from Chester Road. The down (Stourbridge) platform was to the west of the level crossing. A footbridge linking the two platforms spanned the level crossing. A large goods yard and goods depot occupied the site opposite the down platform between the main line and Forge Lane. The goods yard and depot were closed in 1968 and the land was cleared. By this time, the station buildings were in a very poor state of repair. In the early 1980s, it was decided to completely rebuild the station. The original station closed in January 1984 and the up platform and buildings were completely demolished.

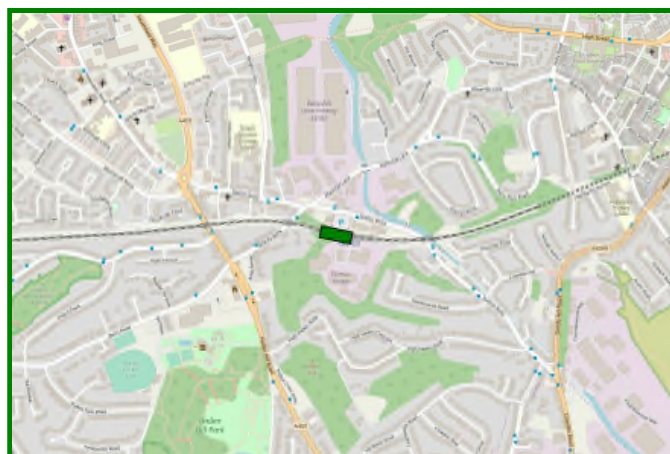
OLD HILL

OPEN

Opened on 1 January 1866



(Stations UK)

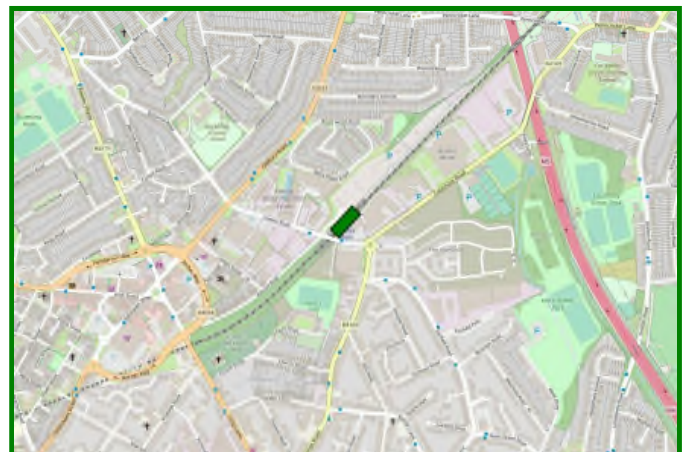


Station Name : Old Hill (1866-present).

The line from Stourbridge reached Old Hill on 1 January 1866 and resulted in the station being opened that day. On 1 March 1878, the station became a junction when two branch lines from the station opened. The first was the “Bumble Hole” line to Dudley which used the main line platforms and headed west before branching right shortly after leaving the station. The abutments of the bridge carrying this line can still be seen. The second branch had its own platform south of the down (Stourbridge) platform and ran to Halesowen where it was met head on by a Midland Railway branch from Longbridge. The Halesowen branch was officially closed on 5 December 1927, although trains for workers at Austin’s Longbridge Works continued until 29 August 1958. The “Bumble Hole” line, which was built throughout with double track, was important as a diversionary route if the main line between Handsworth and Priestfield was closed. However, it did not survive the Beeching cuts and the passenger service was withdrawn on 15 April 1964.

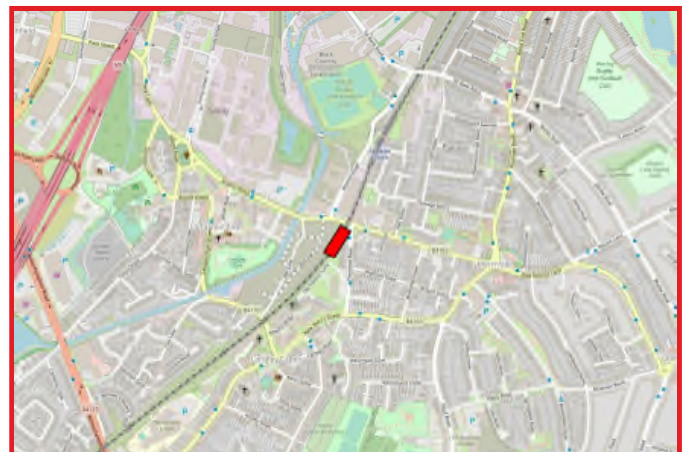


(Peter Shoemith)



**Station Name : Rowley (1867-1889), Rowley Regis & Blackheath (1889-1967), Rowley Regis (1967-present).**

As mentioned before, the line from Stourbridge opened to Old Hill on 1 January 1866. However, there was one major obstacle to clear before the line could be completely opened to Snow Hill, and that was Old Hill Tunnel. This obstacle was cleared on 1 April 1867 and Rowley station opened. The station had a large goods yard to the north of the line and a terminating platform to the north of the up (Birmingham) platform. In 1889, the station was renamed Rowley Regis & Blackheath, a name it was to keep until 6 May 1968 when it was changed to Rowley Regis. Once the goods yard closed and was cleared, Centro took the opportunity to provide a large free car park, originally with 382 parking spaces, but later extended to provide 703 parking spaces. Transport for West Midlands has plans to reinstate the terminating platform to provide an all-stations inner-Birmingham local service in the future, with longer distance services speeded up by omitting some stops east of Rowley Regis.



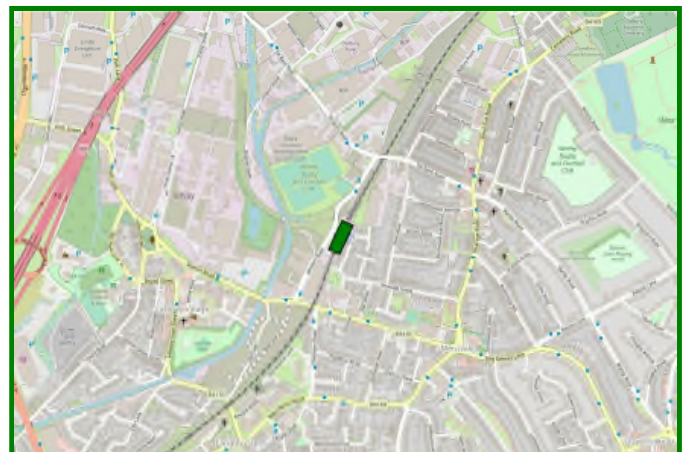
Station Name : Oldbury & Langley Green (1867-1885).

If you visit Langley Green, either by road or rail, you will probably know the notorious level crossing about 400 yards south west of the current station. This level crossing is regularly closed because of the high frequency train service and has been the scene of many acts of stupidity by car drivers. It is in Station Road, which seems a strange name as it does not seem to serve a railway station. However, just to the west of this level crossing was the original Oldbury & Langley Green station, which opened with the rest of the stations along the line on 1 April 1867. The station was short lived and the last trains ran on 30 April 1885, with the current Langley Green station opening the following day. No photographs of the station seem to exist.





(Bernard Shaw)



**Station Name : Langley Green (1885-1904), Langley Green & Rood End (1904-1936), Oldbury & Langley Green (1936-1968), Langley Green (1968-present).**

The opening of a short branch line of less than 1 mile to Oldbury saw Langley Green station open on 1 May 1885 at the junction with the branch. This station replaced the two stations either side of it - at Rood End and Oldbury & Langley Green. The station had four platforms, two on the main line and two on the branch. On 3 March 1915, the branch line to Oldbury closed to passengers as a wartime economy measure. It never reopened. The branch line platform alongside the up (Birmingham) platform saw passenger use from 1967 to 1972, when rush hour shuttle trains from Snow Hill were operated to connect with Stourbridge line services which then operated from New Street. The platform was also used to reverse empty coaching stock workings from Snow Hill to Tyseley from 1968 to 1972 which could not operate directly as Snow Hill Tunnel had been closed. The station building at street level was demolished in the 1990s and replaced by the fine building on the up platform.

ROOD END

**CLOSED**

Opened on 1 April 1867  
Closed on 30 April 1885



Station Name : Rood End (1867-1885).

Rood End station opened on 1 April 1867 and, like the original Oldbury & Langley Green station, only survived until 30 April 1885 when it was replaced by the new Langley Green station. This station was situated about ½ mile north east of the current Langley Green to the west of Rood End Road. There is little known about this station and it is thought that there are no photographs of the station. The station was demolished and there is no sign that it ever existed. The following map shows the relative position of the three stations in the Langley Green area.



## SMETHWICK WEST

# CLOSED

Opened on 1 April 1867  
Closed on 28 September 1996



**Station Name : Smethwick Junction (1867-1956), Smethwick West (1956-1996).**

Smethwick West station was situated to the south of Oldbury Road in Smethwick and just to the west of Smethwick Junction where the lines from Snow Hill and New Street converge. Up to September 1956, the station shared its name with the junction. The station was the most important intermediate station between Birmingham and Stourbridge Junction, with the majority of cross-country services from Snow Hill to Hereford and Cardiff stopping there - the only intermediate stop between Snow Hill and Stourbridge. The station's downfall came when the Jewellery Line was opened on 24 September 1995. The new interchange station at Smethwick Galton Bridge, with platforms on the Snow Hill to Stourbridge and New Street to Wolverhampton lines, opened on the north side of Oldbury Road, with a distance between the two platforms of only 170 yards. A parliamentary service of a train in each direction every Saturday served the station until it closed the following year. The trains on the final day were packed with enthusiasts travelling to the station.



(Michael Mensing)



**Station Name : Smethwick Galton Bridge (1995-present).**

This was the first of the three new stations opened when the line from Smethwick Junction to Snow Hill was rebuilt and reopened. It was officially opened on Sunday 24 September 1995 by John Prescott MP (Shadow Transport Secretary), and passenger services started the following day. The station was by far the most expensive of the three as it was built at the point where the Birmingham Snow Hill to Stourbridge line crossed the Birmingham New Street to Wolverhampton line and is on two levels with platforms serving both lines. This resulted in many authorities, including the Government, questioning the need to build the station given that they did not believe that it would be a success as an interchange and that the additional cost would never be redeemed. Centro has since been vindicated as the original local service on the New Street to Wolverhampton line is now supplemented by additional services to Shrewsbury and Liverpool Lime Street although through services to North/West Wales and Birmingham International ended in 2022.

## HAWTHORNS HALT

# CLOSED

Opened on 25 December 1931  
Closed on 27 April 1968



**Station Name : Hawthorns Halt (1931-1968).**

Hawthorns Halt station was situated either side of Halfords Lane. There were four platforms - three to the west of Halfords Lane for services to and from Wolverhampton and from Stourbridge. The platform for services to Stourbridge was situated where platform 1 of The Hawthorns station is today. The station was not mentioned in timetables, being used solely for football specials. It opened on Christmas Day 1931 for the home Division 1 match against Birmingham City which the Albion lost 1-0 in front of a crowd of 37,906. The station was used for the last time on Saturday 27 April 1968 when the Albion again played Birmingham City, but in the semi-final of the FA Cup at Villa Park, a match they won 2-0 before beating Everton 1-0 in the final. Presumably, it was used to convey Albion fans to Villa Park. Surprisingly, it was not used two days later when the Albion beat Manchester United 6-3 in the league. The opening of The Hawthorns station in September 1995 and the adjacent Metro stop has restored regular rail-based services to the ground.



(Michael Mensing)



**Station Name : The Hawthorns (1995-present).**

This was the second of the three new stations officially opened on 24 September 1995. The original intention was to reopen the station at Handsworth & Smethwick but it was decided that a site to the east of Halfords Lane, and about ¼ mile from the West Bromwich Albion ground that the station takes its name from, was a better option. On 31 May 1999, a Midland Metro stop opened alongside the station allowing easy interchange between the two modes of transport. This has given passengers from the Stourbridge line access to West Bromwich and Wolverhampton via a single cross platform change.





(Geoffrey Skelsey)



(John Alsop)



Station Name : Handsworth and Smethwick (1854-1965), Handsworth (1965-1972).

Handsworth and Smethwick station was situated to the west of Booth Street in Handsworth. Entrance was via a courtyard that led up from Booth Street to the main station building situated on the north side of the station. This station was far more important than Hockley and Winson Green stations with many services from Snow Hill making this their first stop. The station's final hurrah came on Sunday 21 October 1990 when the down relief platform was used to pick up people who had walked the line from Snow Hill. At that time, all platforms were intact, albeit without any buildings, but were swept away when the Jewellery Line was built. The Metro stop at Handsworth Booth Street partially occupies the site of the old main line platforms.



## SOHO & WINSON GREEN

# CLOSED

Opened on 14 November 1854  
Closed on 4 March 1972



(Tony Harden Collection)



(Robert Ferris)



Station Name : Soho (1854-1893), Soho and Winson Green (1893-1965), Winson Green (1965-1972).

Soho and Winson Green station was situated to the east of Benson Road. The main station building was on Benson Road and a footbridge gave access to the four platforms. The Midland Metro stop at Soho (Benson Road) partially occupies the site of the two platforms on the main line. A mound of earth can be seen on the left as you pass the site heading towards Stourbridge Junction and this marks the remains of the down relief platform seen on the left of the top photograph. When the station name was shortened in 1965, this was achieved by crudely painting over the "Soho and" portions of the signs. Things were done on the cheap in the 60s!



(Tony Harden Collection)

# HOCKLEY

# CLOSED

Opened on 14 November 1854  
Closed on 4 March 1972



(Peter Shoesmith)



(Geoffrey Skelsey)



Station Name : Hockley (1854-1972).

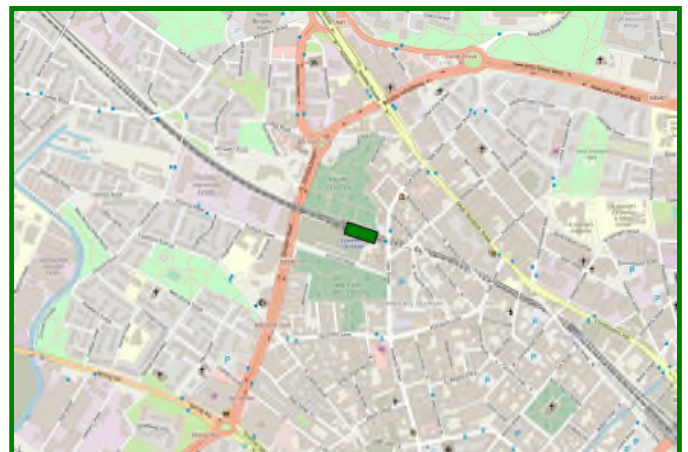
Hockley station was situated to the west of Icknield Street, just to the west of the current Jewellery Quarter station. In fact, the eastern end of Hockley station was just 100 yards from the western end of Jewellery Quarter station. Although four main lines passed through Hockley station (two main lines and two relief lines), the site was restricted by the huge goods depot on the southern side of the line meaning that there was only room for three platforms. Thus the down main line (from Snow Hill towards Wolverhampton) did not serve a platform, as can be seen in the top picture. Thus the station consisted of a platform accessed directly from the entrance, plus an island platform, accessible via a subway, which served the two relief lines. The entrance to the station was from Icknield Street, and the courtyard leading to the station building still exists, albeit now filled with rubbish.



(Peter Shoesmith)



(Peter Shoesmith)



Station Name : Jewellery Quarter (1995-present).

This was the last of the three new stations officially opened on 24 September 1995. The original plan was to build the station on the old Hockley station site, but concerns from representatives from the Jewellery Quarter that this site would be inconvenient due to having to cross the busy dual carriageway of Ickniel Street resulted in the current site being adopted in the heart of the historic Jewellery Quarter. This was despite the site being in a difficult location close to the northern portal of Hockley Number 2 Tunnel with the platforms well below the station entrance in Vyse Street. On 31 May 1999, the station was complemented by a stop on line 1 of the Midland Metro from Birmingham to Wolverhampton which has resulted in a very convenient interchange between the two modes of transport. On 6 December 2019, the railway bridge in Vyse Street alongside the entrance to the station gained a rather lucrative addition when a mural by Banksy (who allegedly attended the same Bristol school as the editor) suddenly appeared.

## BIRMINGHAM SNOW HILL

# CLOSED

Opened on 1 October 1852  
Closed on 4 March 1972

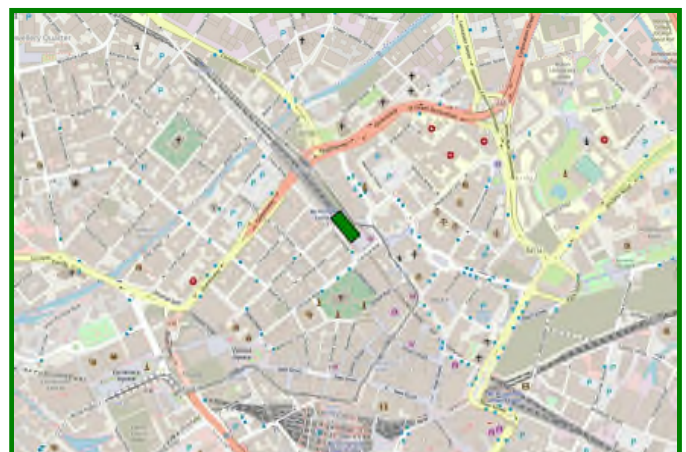


### Station Name : Birmingham Snow Hill (1852-1972)

The station opened on 1 October 1852 when the line from Banbury opened, and the line extended to Wolverhampton in 1854. The original station was a basic wooden structure and was replaced in 1871 by a far more substantial station (*lower photo*). This station also proved inadequate and, between 1906 and 1911, was replaced by the structure that survived until closure. The station was probably at its busiest in the mid-1960s when New Street station was being rebuilt and the line to Euston electrified. Unfortunately, the completion of this project saw the line to Paddington reduced to secondary status. On 4 March 1967, all long distance services through Snow Hill were withdrawn and Stourbridge line services transferred to New Street leaving a skeleton shuttle service from Snow Hill to Langley Green. Snow Hill tunnel closed in March 1968 leaving basic services to Wolverhampton and Langley Green from the bay platforms accessible from Livery Street. It became an unstaffed halt on 5 May 1968 and closed on 4 March 1972. Demolition followed in 1976/1977.



(Martin Beddall)



**Station Name : Snow Hill (1987-1993), Birmingham Snow Hill (1993-present)**

As early as 1973, West Midlands PTE had aspirations to reopen Snow Hill station and the line from Moor Street to Smethwick Junction to create a cross-city route. However, lack of funding meant that it was 1985 before work started to construct the new Snow Hill station and reinstate the line through Snow Hill Tunnel. The station opened on 5 October 1987 named Snow Hill to emphasise its lack of importance. It had through platforms 1 to 3 and terminating platform 4. Services to London Marylebone commenced on 17 May 1993 and the station got its pre-1972 name back. On 24 September 1995, the line to Smethwick Junction reopened and most Stourbridge line services altered to run through Snow Hill. September 1996 saw platform 4 closed to accommodate the Midland Metro. In 2011, a second entrance from Livery Street was opened. Current plans will see platform 4 reinstated as a through platform, the car park above the station demolished and the station buried under a new, much larger, concourse and yet more skyscraper office blocks.



(Chris Mew coll'n)



**Station Name : Birmingham Moor Street (1909-1987), Moor Street (1987-1993), Birmingham Moor Street (1993-present).**

Birmingham Moor Street opened on 1 July 1909 as an overflow station for suburban services to Leamington Spa and Stratford from Snow Hill. The North Warwickshire line had opened on 1 July 1908 but trains terminated at Tyseley due to lack of capacity. Thus Moor Street was opened with only 2 of the 3 terminus platforms ready and with a temporary station building, and was not completed until 1915. In 1986/87, new through platforms were built on the restored line to Snow Hill and, on 28 September 1987, the platforms were opened and the terminus station closed. Chiltern Railways restored the terminus, which was reopened on 11 October 2003. During 2005 and 2006, the tatty canopies on the through platforms were replaced by smart replica GWR canopies. Finally, on 11 December 2010, two terminus platforms were reopened by Chiltern Railways. Current plans will see the reinstatement of the third terminus platform, plus one or two more, and a new eastern entrance and bridge.