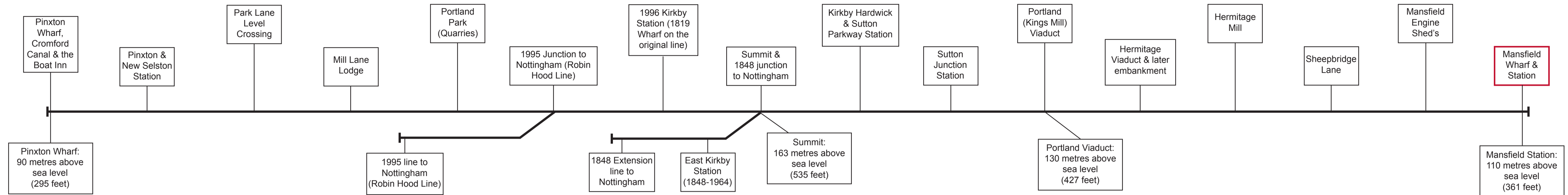
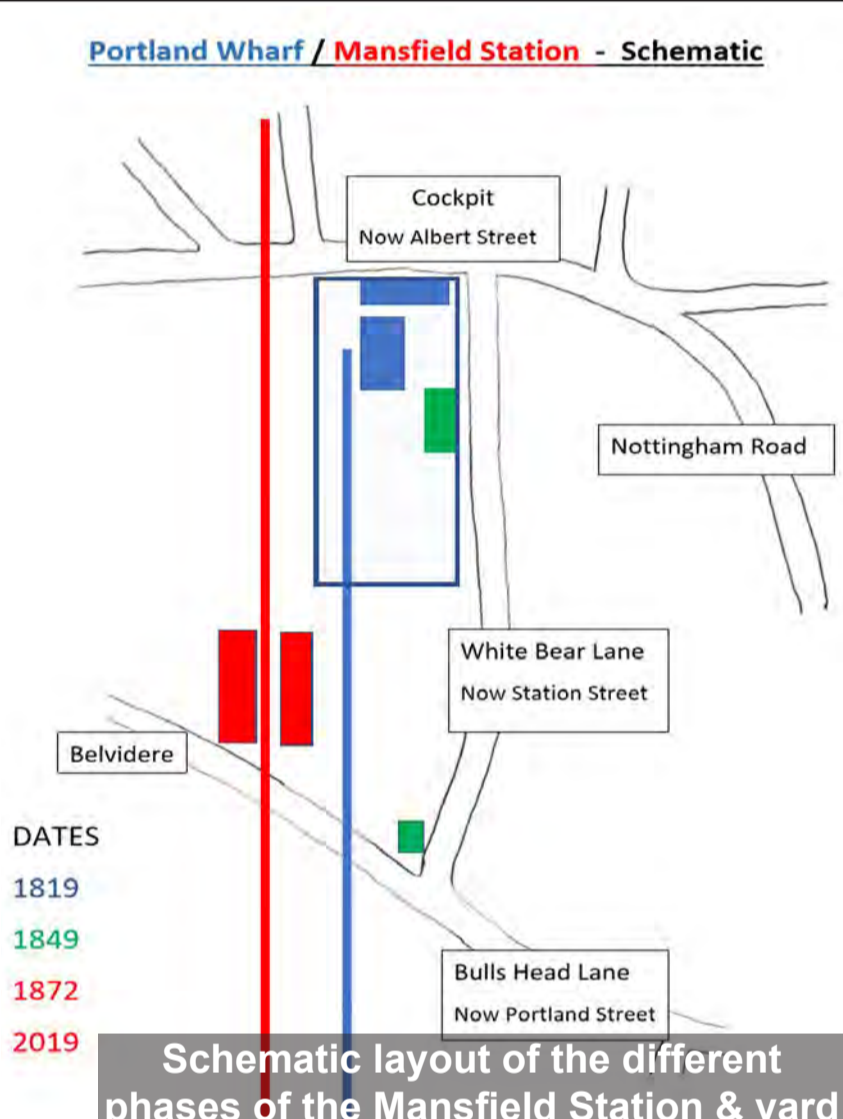


Mansfield & Pinxton Railway - Founded 1819

Mansfield Station



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The first terminus, known as Portland Wharf, was initially a warehouse with loading bays and stables, located at the end of White Bear Lane (now Station Street). With the introduction of passenger traffic, a Passenger Terminus was built in 1849, which became Mansfield Station. This building was superseded by a 'through' station in 1872, which is Grade 2 listed and still in use today.



This major landmark in the centre of Mansfield is Grade 2 listed. A 15 arch, 200-metre long railway viaduct built in stone and brick for the Midland Railway Company, standing up to 18 metres above the street level, and bisecting the town centre. It was opened to passenger traffic on 1 June 1875 and is still in use today, taking the Robin Hood Line from Nottingham to Worksop.



Half a mile southwest of the station, adjacent to the line, stood Mansfield locomotive sheds, with extensive sidings and loading yards stretching between the two. They covered some 12 acres in total. The sheds were built in 1882 and saw service until 1959, when they were superseded by enlarged facilities at Kirkby. The sheds still exist today, used as industrial units.



Adjacent to Mansfield Station, with extensive views over the town, the Midland Hotel was built in 1805 as a private house. From 1850 to 1863 it was used as a lunatic asylum; the estate later being purchased by the Midland Railway Company, to accommodate their railway construction workers. In 1872 part of the extensive grounds were utilised for the new station and its approach road.



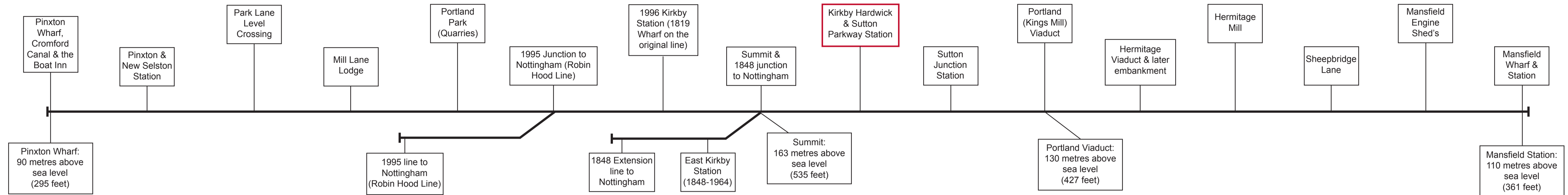
HERITAGE FUND

England's oldest continuously running railway

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Mansfield & Pinxton Railway - Founded 1819

Sutton Parkway Station



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Sutton Parkway Station was built in 1995 for the Robin Hood Line. Previously, the only station serving Sutton-in-Ashfield on the Midland Line was at Sutton Junction, half a mile to the north. In 1892 Sutton Town Station opened and a 3/4 mile branch line linked the town centre to this line. This service became popularly known as the "Penny Emma" train: a penny was the fare and "Emma" came from the initials of the Midland Railway.



Drawn by John Gent



The River Maun at Kirkby Hardwick and close to its source.

As a result of Bess of Hardwick's marriage to the 6th Earl of Shrewsbury, Kirkby Hardwick became one of many properties owned by her descendants – ultimately, the Dukes of Portland. The 4th Duke of Portland was a prime mover in the creation of the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway, investing £5,000 in the project which ran mainly through his land.



Third Duke of Portland



Fourth Duke of Portland

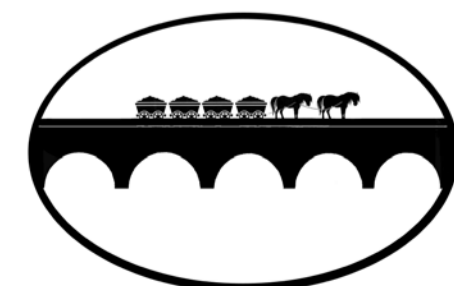


A hundred metres to the west of the station lies the site of the ancient manor house of Kirkby Hardwick – just outside the boundary of Sherwood Forest and close to the source of the River Maun (about 400 metres south of this station). An archaeological excavation in 2012 proved that the site had been occupied since the 13th century. A small siding once ran into a sand quarry on the other side of Low Moor Road.

Kirkby Hardwick Manor was bought by the 4th Earl of Shrewsbury in 1517. In 1530 it provided a night's lodging for a mortally sick Cardinal Wolsey on his way south to face trial in London. He died at Leicester Abbey four days later. In 1536 the Earl used it as his base against the rebels of the Pilgrimage of Grace. The Manor House was demolished in 1966, after being nearly overwhelmed by spoil from Summit Colliery.



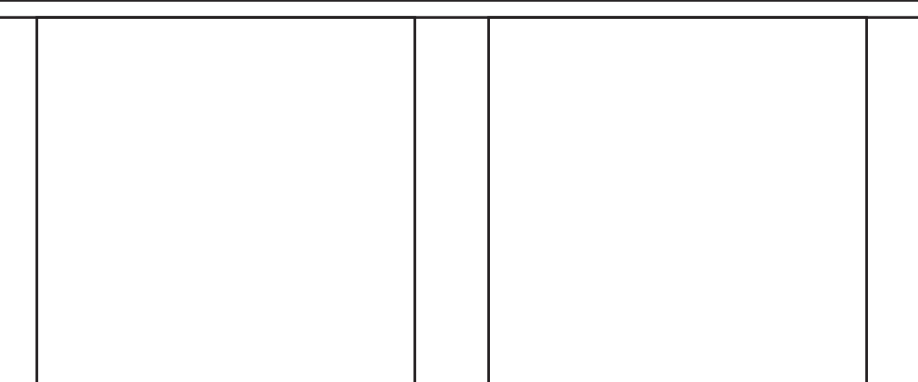
Cardinal Wolsey



England's oldest continuously running railway

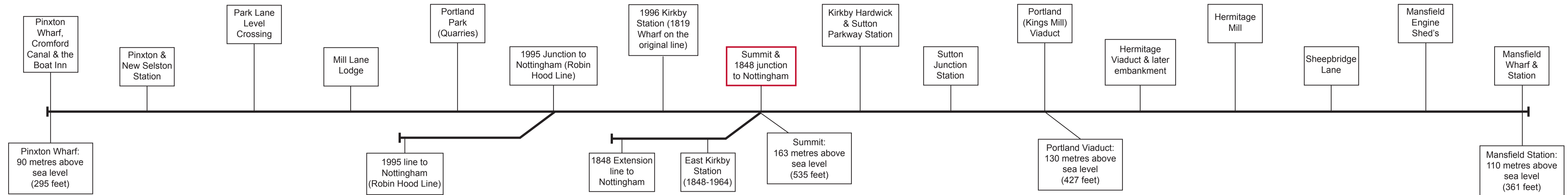
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Mansfield & Pinxton Railway - Founded 1819

The Summit



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Passenger train crossing The Summit. Photograph by David Dykes



Goods train crossing The Summit. Photograph courtesy of Bill Taylor

With Kirkby being at the centre of the railway and the establishment of the colliery it became a logical location to establish engine sheds and sidings at this point. They were built by the Midland Railway Company in 1890 and closed to steam on 3 Oct 1966 but continued to house diesel locomotives until 11 Nov 1970. They were brick built with three tracks and a later adjoining two track shed on the east side of the lines.



Kirkby engine sheds

The surrounding area is known as "The Summit". The name derives from the fact that it was the highest point of the railway. From this point it was downhill all the way to both Mansfield and Pinxton. Springs towards the north of the Summit produce the source of the River Maun. Although there were two rivers running in this region (Maun & Erewash) there was still insufficient water to feed the proposed canal, which is one of the reasons why this railway was constructed instead of a canal. The locomotives in the photographs are standing on the actual summit.

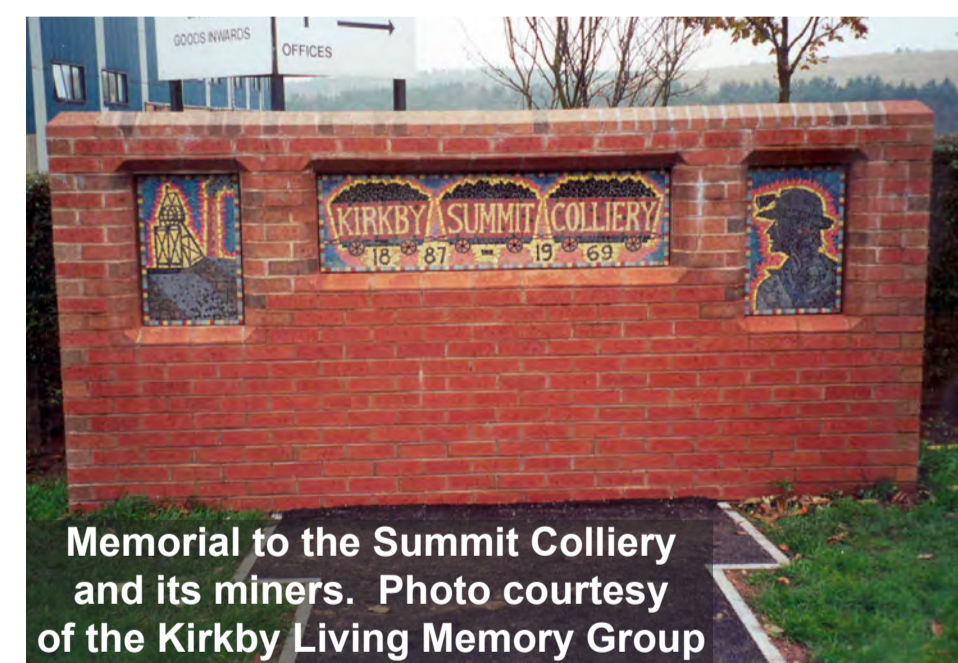


Approaching the Kirkby engine sheds

When the Midland Railway Company purchased the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway they constructed an extension from a junction at The Summit to Nottingham in 1848. That extension used steam locomotives, which meant that passengers to Mansfield had to change at this junction onto horse drawn carriages on the main line, until the following year, when the original line into Mansfield was upgraded to steam.

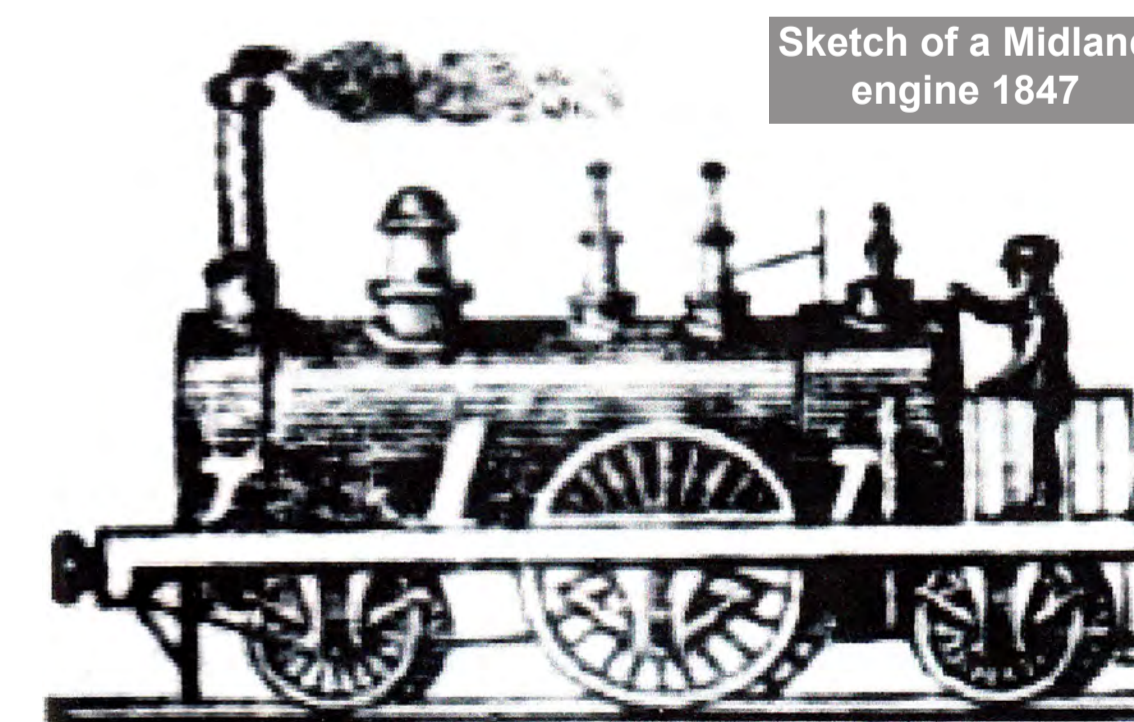


Summit Colliery (also known as Kirkby Colliery)

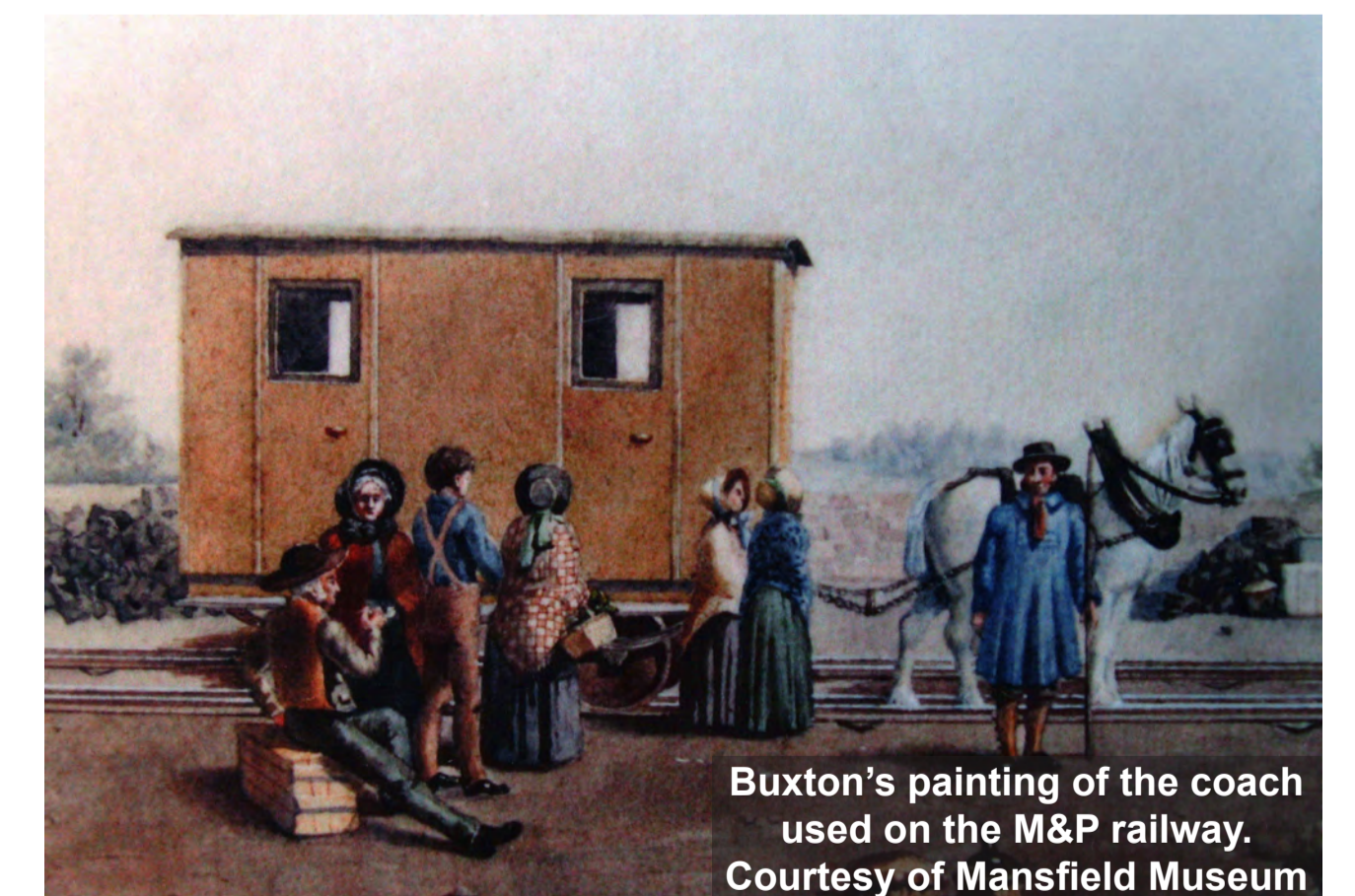


Memorial to the Summit Colliery and its miners. Photo courtesy of the Kirkby Living Memory Group

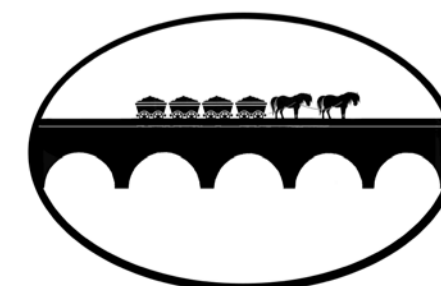
The Kirkby colliery (1867-1969), sunk on this site, became known as the Summit Pit. Many of the coal miners lived in the purpose-built housing estate, across the road, which also became known as "The Summit" estate. A memorial to the colliery and its workforce stands close to the entrance of Wolsey Drive (280 metres to the right).



Sketch of a Midland engine 1847



Buxton's painting of the coach used on the M&P railway. Courtesy of Mansfield Museum

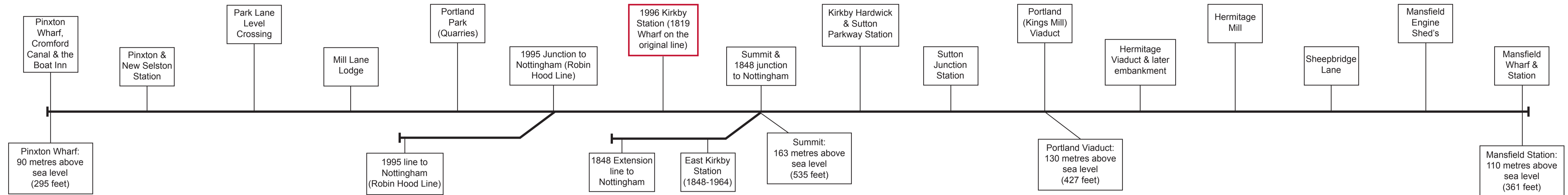


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Mansfield & Pinxton Railway - Founded 1819

Kirkby Wharf



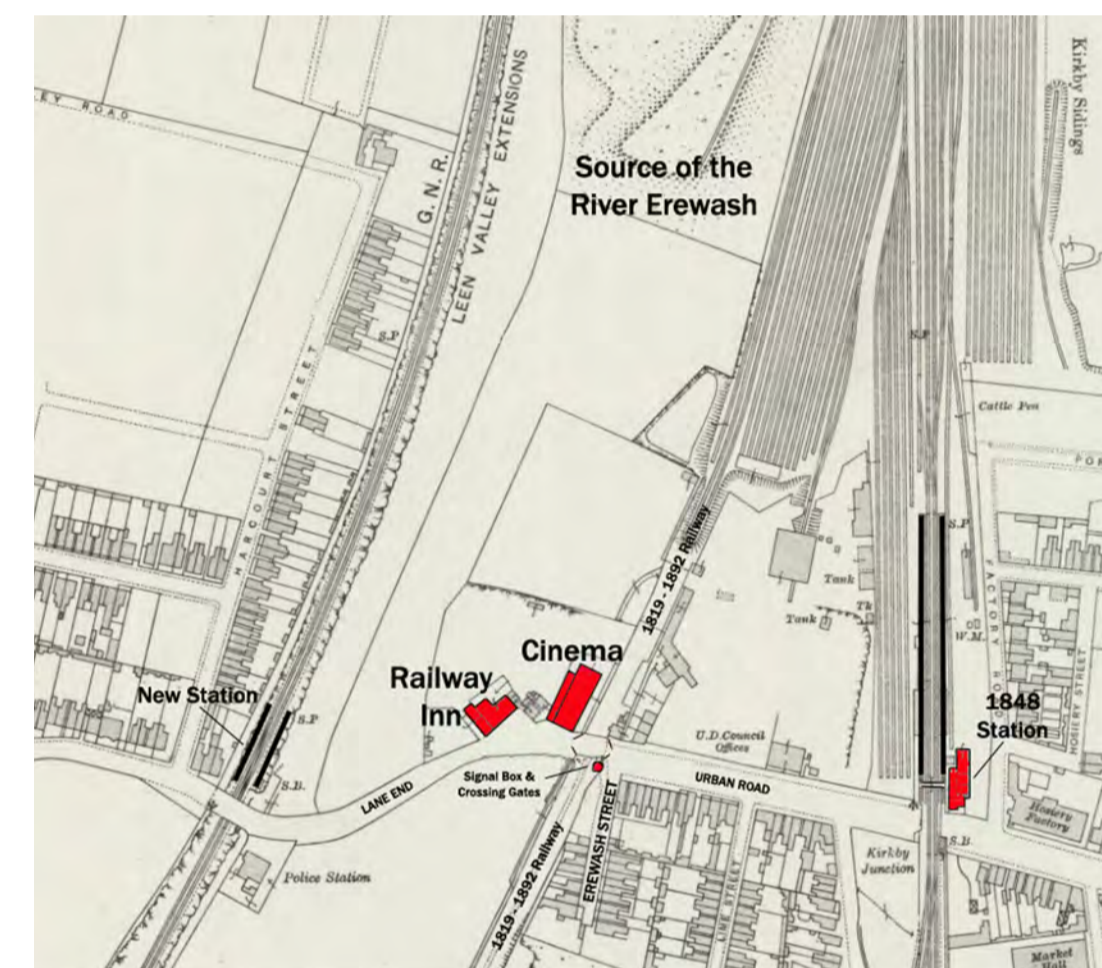
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River Erewash, close to Portland Park

The River Erewash, which played a significant role in the Industrial Revolution, rises just north of the Aldi car park, but runs in culverts across the town centre. It gets its name from the Anglo-Saxon words: 'IRRE' meaning wandering, and 'WISC' meaning a marshy stream. The river meanders south-westwards towards Pinxton, before swinging south to form part of the Notts/Derbys Border, on its 17-mile journey to join the River Trent at Attenborough Nature Reserve.



The King's Cinema



The Kings Cinema once stood next to the former M&P railway track bed

On this site, 100 years ago, stood the Kings Palace Cinema, one of three that existed in Kirkby. It opened in 1912, with seating for 500 people. A balcony was added in 1919. It was refurbished with a Picturetone Sound System in 1930 and flourished, with live speciality acts between the first and second houses. It closed on 15 July 1961 with the film 'Let's Make Love', starring Marilyn Monroe, and was converted for use as a garage. Demolished in 2016 to make way for this car park.

This board stands on the original track bed of the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway. The rough road opposite, which continues as a footpath to Portland Park, was the track bed of the 1819 railway; it once had a signal box on the left corner and level crossing gates across the road. This part of the original line was discontinued in 1892 when it merged with the 1848 Nottingham extension, to reduce the number of level crossings on Kirkby's main road, which had a gated crossing and station near Portland Street.



Track-bed of the M&P railway 1949



Outside the Kirkby railway station 1949

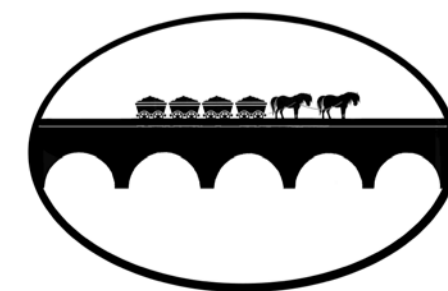


The Railway Inn

Originally built as a row of cottages adjacent to Kirkby Wharf, at the point where the Mansfield and Pinxton Railway crossed Urban Road, the whole row was converted early in the 19th century, becoming The Railway Inn. This lasted as a public house until it was demolished to make way for the Aldi Store.



The former Railway Inn

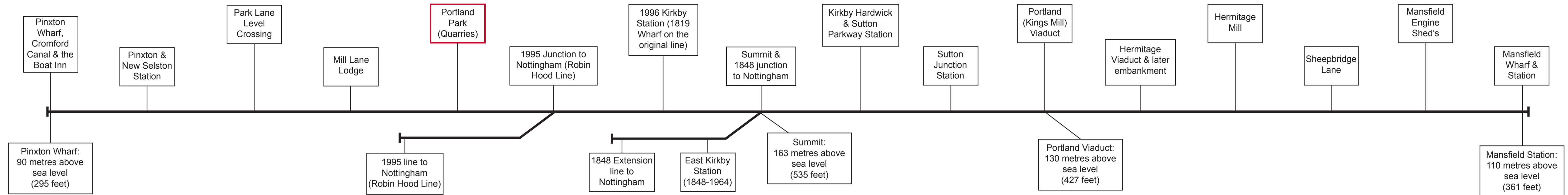


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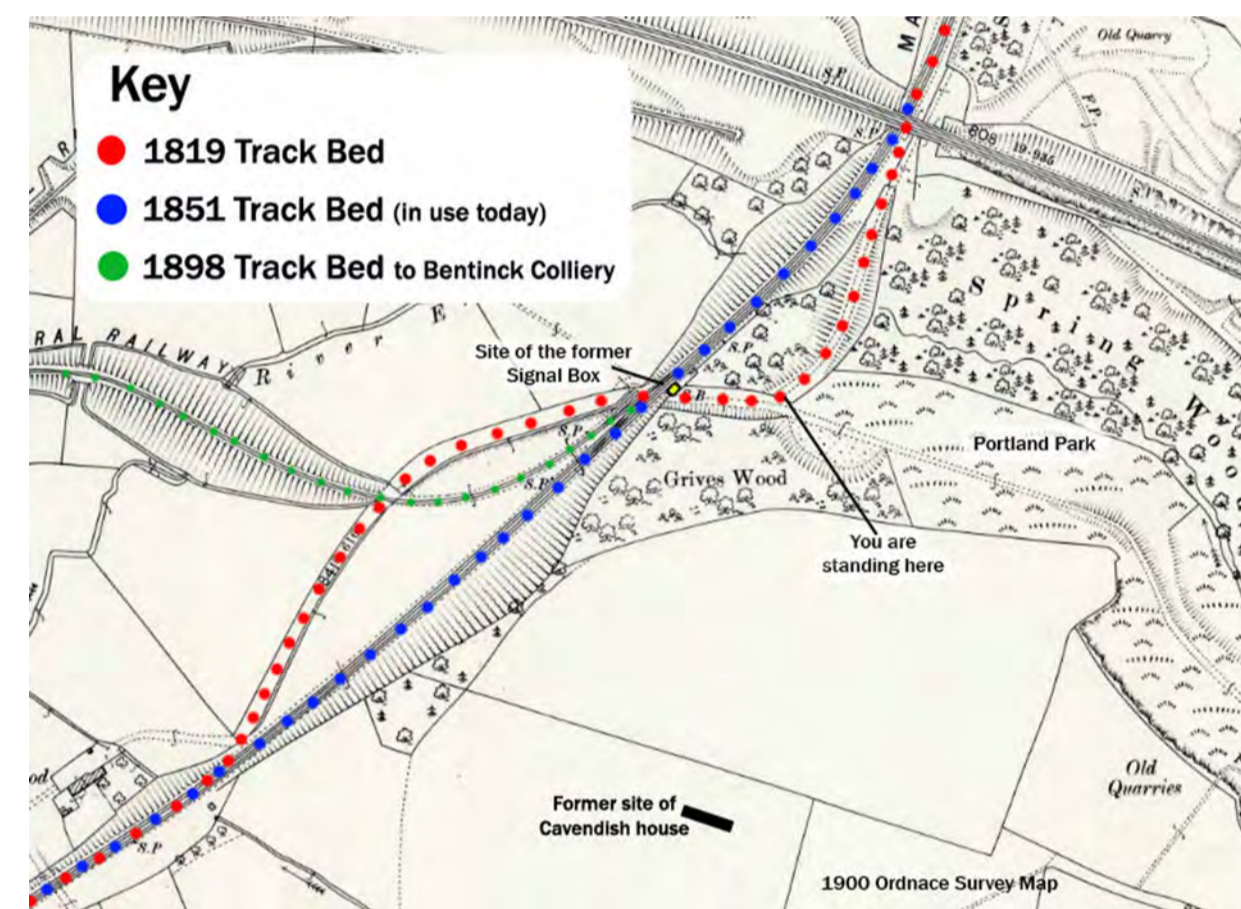
Mansfield & Pinxton Railway - Founded 1819

Portland Park



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This bottom path was once the track bed of the original railway but upgrading the route (1848-50) from horse drawn trucks to steam locomotion meant having to cut out sharp corners that once enabled the horses to go around the hills, to enable the steam locomotives to go straighter and faster. Originally there was an "S" bend at this point which took the rails across the current straightened-out line. Look to your left after crossing the railway and you will see the continuation of the original route along the side of the hedgerow. A branch line was also added at this point, in 1898, to Bentinck colliery.

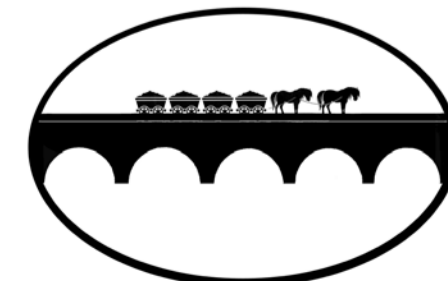
After the introduction of steam locomotives, on the Mansfield & Pinxton railway, signal boxes were introduced to control the movement of trains and to ensure safety for both trains and their passengers. One such signal box stood just to the right of the modern gate, as you cross over the railway at the bottom of Portland Park. It was a 20-lever, three deep panel arrangement constructed in 1905 and closed in 1988.



Upon the hill to the south of this board once stood the ruins of a mansion, partly funded by Bess of Hardwick, that was never completed. In June 1599 Sir Charles Cavendish (son of Bess) was visiting the building site of his new mansion, when he was set-upon by Sir John Stanhope and his party. Sir Charles and Sir John survived the affray, but others were killed or maimed. As a result of this event the new mansion was never completed. Most of the stone from the building was transferred to Bolsover Castle to build the "Little Castle". Only a length of walling remained by the 1950s, as witnessed by this school visit, nowadays no traces survive, except for the story.



Portland Park, known locally as "The Quarries" was once an important source of limestone for both building material and lime burning. Stone from the quarry was used in the construction of the Houses of Parliament. The park was a gift from the Duke of Portland and for more than 100 years it has been used as a leisure park, with a bandstand, children's play area, bowling green and even a rifle range, but more recently it evolved into a Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, due to its abundance of flora and fauna

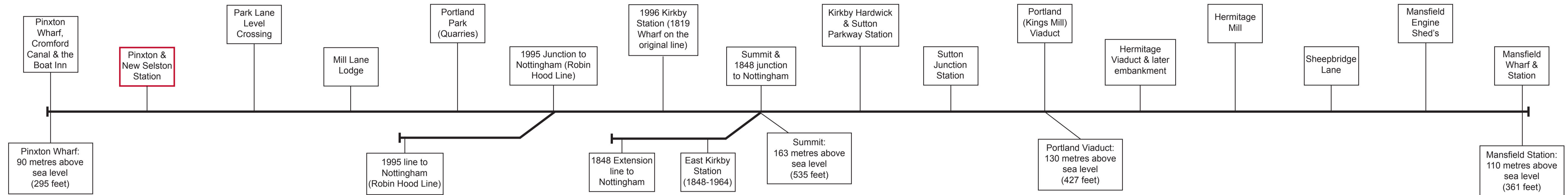


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Mansfield & Pinxton Railway - Founded 1819

Pinxton & New Selston Station

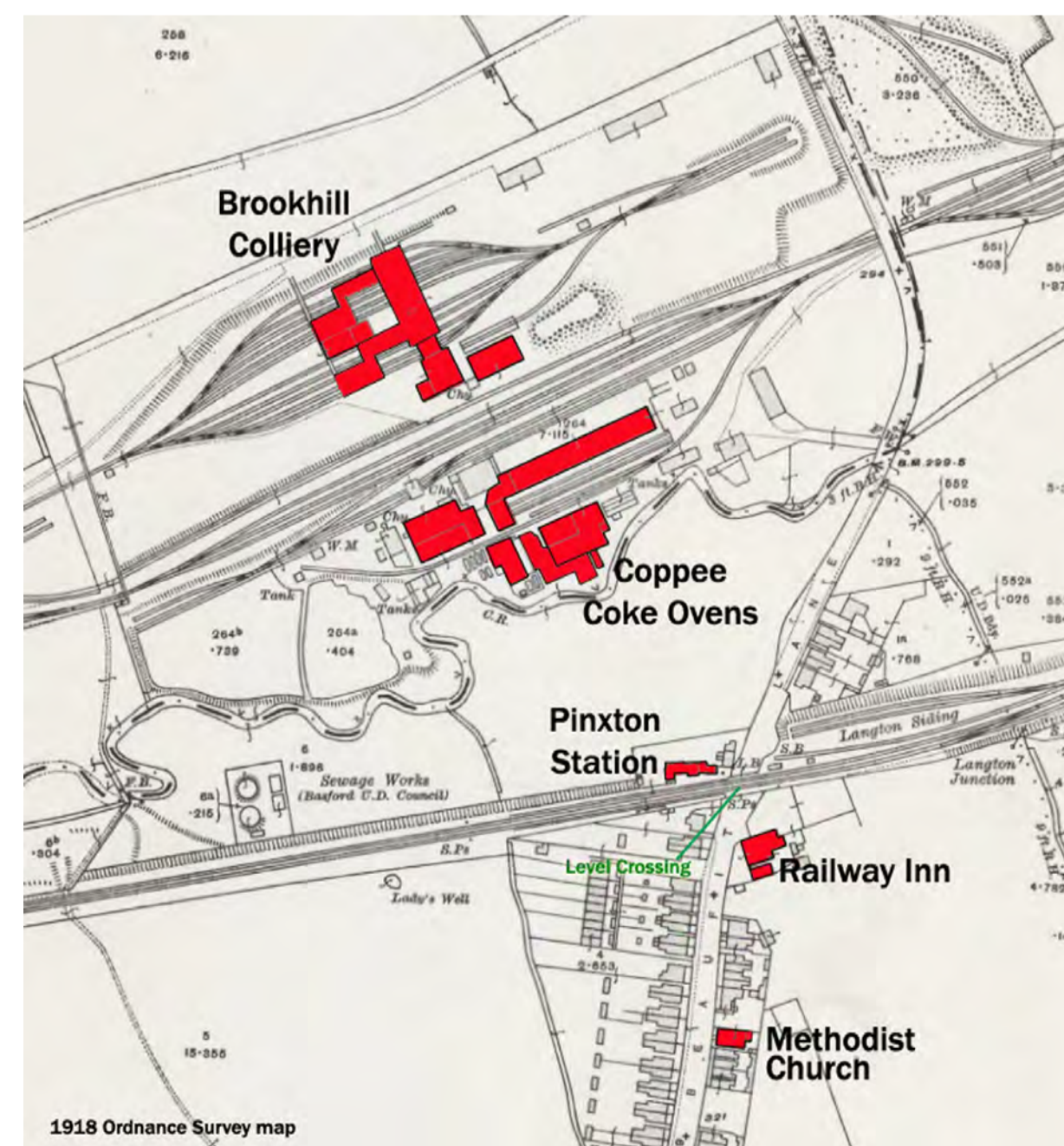


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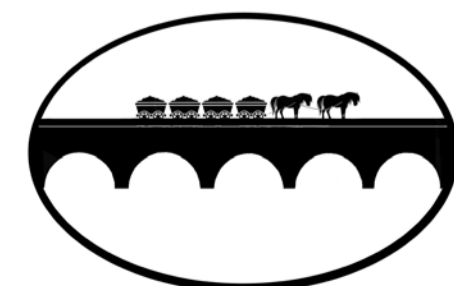


The Midland Railway took over the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway in 1847, upgraded the track for locomotives, but maintained the same alignment at New Selston. The Pinxton & Selston Station was built in 1850. Although closed to regular traffic in 1947, it was used by special passenger trains for many years. The down platform (going away from London) was very short and return excursions from Matlock to Mansfield had to draw up twice. The station was demolished in the 1980s.



Among the residents of New Selston were several ardent Primitive Methodists who decided to build their own place of worship rather than walk a mile to the Methodist Church on Portland Row, Selston. A local stable was used as a temporary meeting place until the new church opened in 1904. It remained active for a hundred years, until closure in December 2005.

A small community developed at New Selston in the late 19th century as there was plentiful work in the local mines. Brookhill Colliery was sunk in 1908 and further employment became available at the coke ovens which converted local coal into blast furnace coke for the iron and steel industry. The ovens produced 350 tons of coke, 1,500 gallons of benzole, 14-15 tons of tar, and 2 million cubic feet of gas per day. The coking plant closed in 1955 and the mine closed in 1968 with the loss of many jobs.

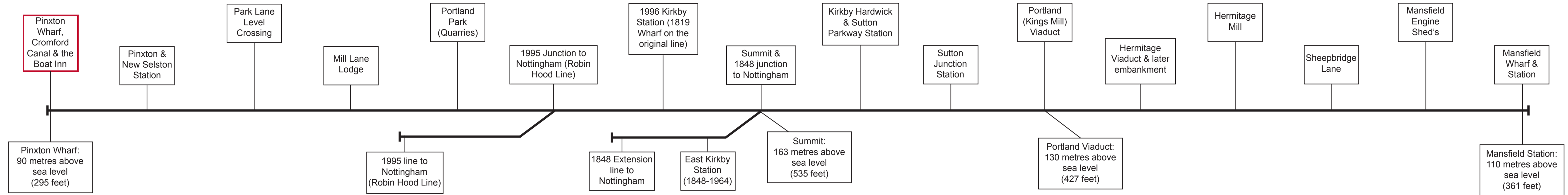


England's oldest continuously running railway

For Further information visit: www.mansfieldandpinxton200.btck.co.uk. There are also several videos relating to the line and our project on Youtube. Thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund these boards were produced as part of a wider project to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway (1819-2019), England's oldest continuously running commercial railway, by a partnership consisting of the Kirkby & District Archaeological Group, Old Mansfield Society, Sutton Heritage Society and the Pinxton & South Normanton History Society.

Mansfield & Pinxton Railway - Founded 1819

Cromwell Canal Wharf



Timeline of the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway

Year	What happened?
1817	Parliamentary approval given to construct the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway. Work commenced on the railway.
1819	The line opened for commercial business on 13th April (Easter Tuesday) with horse drawn trucks.
1832	First known passenger service along the line.
1847	Midland Railway Company bought the line.
1848	Extension opened to Nottingham from a junction at The Summit. Steam engines were introduced along the extension line, while horses were still used on the original line. Kirkby Station Opened on the new extension line to Nottingham.
1849	The original line between the Summit and Mansfield upgraded to use steam locomotives. The first Mansfield station was opened.
1850	Sutton-in-Ashfield Station opened, known as the Sutton Junction Station from 1892. Original line between The Summit and Pinxton upgraded to steam locomotives. Pinxton & New Selston Station opened.
1872	The Portland viaduct, and sharp bend, was taken out of commission and replaced with the Hermitage viaduct, originally made from wood. The older viaduct was still used as a siding. The current Mansfield station was built.
1892	A deviation was made to the line running through Kirkby to reduce the number of level-crossings along the main road.
1924	The Hermitage viaduct was replaced with an embankment. The Portland viaduct was brought back into commission during construction work.
1948	Nationalisation of the railways.
1960	Mansfield engine sheds were closed although still standing.
1964	Passenger services were stopped along this route (both Nottingham & Pinxton) and the Railway stations were closed for business. Diesel engines started to replace steam locomotives.
1966	Kirkby engine sheds were closed.
1970	The sidings over the original Portland viaduct were closed and the rails removed.
1995	Passenger services were re-introduced between Nottingham and Mansfield, along what we now know as the Robin Hood Line.
1998	Passenger services were re-introduced to Worksop.
2002	The Mill Lane, Kirkby, bridge was heavily modernised, but the original core remains, making it the oldest railway bridge in Nottinghamshire.
2019	Celebrated the 200th anniversary of what is the oldest continuously running commercial railway. The Portland viaduct still stands as the oldest railway viaduct in England.



Pinxton Colliery headstocks



Pinxton Colliery



Sketch of the Boat Inn, early 1800s



Cromford Canal basin at Pinxton

This was Pinxton's first deep coal mine, although coal had been mined here since Tudor times. It wasn't until the arrival of the Cromford canal in 1794 that mining took off on a large scale. The introduction of the Mansfield & Pinxton railway in 1819 meant that coal could be transported economically to Mansfield. Within a decade several more deep-mine pits sprang up close to the wharf.

The Cromford Canal was engineered by William Jessop in 1794 and ran for 14.5 miles from Cromford to the Erewash Canal at Langley Mill, with a branch to Pinxton. That branch was important as a route for Pinxton coal to the River Trent, on route to Leicestershire and as a terminus for the Mansfield & Pinxton railway. It was last used as a waterway in 1944.

The canal side pub, known as The Boat Inn, was built when the Cromford Canal came to Pinxton. Tickets to travel on the railway to Mansfield could be bought at the inn after the introduction of a carriage each Thursday in 1832.



Pinxton china works



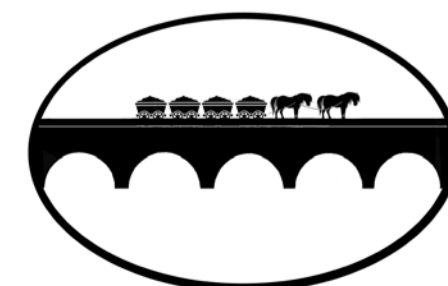
Pinxton china

When John Coke found some interesting local clay, he was persuaded by William Billingsley, a renowned porcelain painter, to build a porcelain factory, which he could manage. The first firing was in April 1796 but unfortunately there wasn't enough profit to pay Mr Billingsley, so he resigned in 1799. In 1806 the factory was leased to John Cutts who moved to Wedgwood in 1813, after which the factory closed. The porcelain is thinly potted and highly translucent and today is much sought after.

D'Ewes Coke lived at Brookhill Hall near Pinxton, which he bought from his father in 1800 and restored for his growing family. He was a Justice of the Peace and the Duke of Rutland's Land Agent. With his two brothers, John and William, he was instrumental in establishing the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway and was a financial contributor to the scheme.



Brookhill Hall, home of the Coke family



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