

**A HISTORY OF THE
WICKSTEED
PARK RAILWAY**

**The story of the railway and park created
by Charles Wicksteed in Kettering,
Northamptonshire**



MINOR RAILWAY HISTORIES – No.3

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Wicksteed in Kettering, Northamptonshire**



PETER SCOTT



"Cheyenne", built by Motor Rail Ltd, has been at Wicksteed since 1966 being built new for the railway. Here the locomotive crosses the bridge by the sluice gate at the south end of the lake (compare to picture on page 20 taken just after the opening of the railway)
(P Scott. 25/4/02)

Overleaf: These two locomotives have been at work on the Wicksteed Park Railway for over 70 years, being built new for the railway in 1931 by Baguley (Engineers) Ltd. "Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur" pose for the author outside the workshop. (P Scott. 11/6/02)

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INTRODUCTION

Narrow gauge trains have been running around the large lake in Wicksteed Park, Kettering for over seventy years, carrying thousands and thousands of happy passengers. A ride on the Wicksteed Park Railway is a fondly remembered treat for many residents of Kettering and other parts of Northamptonshire.

Charles Wicksteed was an engineer and a philanthropist who came to the Northamptonshire town of Kettering almost by chance. He was born in Leeds, educated in Lancaster and served an apprenticeship with a Leeds engineering firm. Wicksteed Park was his creation. Originally conceived as an open space for recreation to accompany his village (to be formed of good quality low cost housing), it became one of the first leisure parks in the country. The main feature is the large lake and it was around this that Charles Wicksteed laid out his 2ft gauge miniature railway. Tragically, he was not to live to see the first passengers enjoy the 1¼ miles ride around the park in April 1931. Since then, except for a break of four years during the war, the railway has run daily every season. The two original locomotives named "The Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur" built new for the railway in 1931 are still at work, joined in 1966 by "Cheyenne". All these locomotives are of the steam outline internal combustion type - ideal for such a railway.

Despite its lengthy existence, the Wicksteed Park Railway has received scant attention from enthusiasts and the railway press - even less than the North Bay Railway in Scarborough that was built around the same time and which opened two months later. This is probably because of its 2ft gauge, falling between narrow gauge and miniature railway interests and possibly the fact steam traction has never featured on the railway. Nevertheless, the railway has an interesting background and history that was both rewarding and worthwhile to research and write.

Here then is the history of the Wicksteed Park Railway, including a biography of Charles Wicksteed and how he came to build such a park in Kettering. Also covered are the other railway attractions in the park, past and present. Although a biography of Charles Wicksteed was published by his daughter in 1933, most of the railway history appears in print for the first time and has been assembled from a number of sources. My thanks are due to Ben Martin of Wicksteed Park for helping to piece the story together, especially after 1973 when he started working for the park. I am also grateful to Alan Keef for access to the Motor Rail Limited records and other items in his "archive". Many others have also assisted, please read acknowledgements section. Additionally, the Kettering local newspapers have been most useful and my thanks go to the staff at the town's Library for their help.

It is hoped that "Lady of the Lake", "King Arthur" and "Cheyenne" continue to run the 1¼ miles around Wicksteed Park and its lake for many more years to come, thereby giving immense pleasure to thousands more children (and adults!) just as Charles Wicksteed intended. I hope this book is a suitable tribute to him and those who helped him build the railway, all the people over the many years who have kept the trains running and of course the three faithful locomotives.

Peter Scott
Reading
October 2002

CHAPTER ONE

CHARLES WICKSTEED

THE HAPPINESS OF CHILDREN WAS EVER HIS DELIGHT

Introduction

Kettering lies in the East Midlands, 75 miles from London and in the county of Northamptonshire. King Henry III granted the town a market charter in 1227 and from the 17th century the town was a centre for the production of woollen cloth and silk. Since the industrial revolution Kettering has been associated with leatherworking and the footwear industry, although as the later declined more modern industries such as light engineering and food production came to the area. Ironstone for use in the steel industry was also quarried in the area until the 1970s, and it was ground conditions that originally brought Charles Wicksteed, a Leeds born man, to the area in 1871.

An engineer by training, he started out in the agricultural business, later moving onto steam engines, boilers, bicycles and then to children's playground equipment. The company he founded in 1876 is still in business today. Charles was a philanthropist, probably stimulated by his Liberal political interests. He had a vision of a model village with good cheap housing and an open recreational area for its residents. Events conspired that it was the recreational area he came to fully develop for the benefit of the residents of Kettering. What became Wicksteed Park is one of the oldest public leisure parks in the country and is still going strong today. Here is the story of that remarkable man.

Early Years & Apprenticeship

Charles Wicksteed was born in Kingston Terrace, Leeds on 30th March 1847 to the Reverend Charles Wicksteed and his wife, Jane. Reverend Wicksteed was minister of Mill Hill Chapel, a Unitarian church in Park Row, Leeds. As an interesting aside the Reverend's cousin, Frederick Swanwick, drove the locomotive "Arrow" (which hauled one of eight special trains) for George Stephenson at the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway on Wednesday 15th September 1830. The young Charles Wicksteed was to be the seventh of a family of nine. In 1854 due to his father's poor health the family moved to Upper Eyarth, about 3 miles from Ruthin in Denbighshire, North Wales. After a short time, and finding the surroundings to his liking, the Reverend Charles Wicksteed acquired a 180 acre farm called Hafod-y-coed (summer-abode in the wood) near St Asaph in the Vale of Clywd. Here the young Charles Wicksteed's interest in agricultural machinery and animals was born. He did not attend a local school, but went to a small boarding school in Lancaster managed by William Henry Herford and run along Pestalozzian lines (in which the child is guided to learn through practice and observation and the natural employment of the senses) and supported by Unitarian families. Here he was educated until the age of 16.

In 1863, on his 16th birthday, Charles returned to Leeds as he was to be apprenticed to the engineering firm of Kitson & Hewitson. This company was originally established in 1835 by James Kitson and between 1838 and 1938 it built over 5,000 locomotives for railways at home and abroad. The company ceased trading in 1945. He began on a shaper machine and

after 6 months moved to the locomotive drawing office. There he spent 18 months before moving to the erecting shop. During his time at Kitson's, Charles apparently developed a passion for locomotives. However, after completion of his apprenticeship in March 1868 it was not railway locomotives that he was to work with, but agricultural steam engines for ploughing.

Ploughing & Politics

In 1868 he started a steam ploughing business that employed a large multi-bladed plough, which was drawn across the field and back by two traction engines stationed on opposite sides of the field. Living in a caravan, Charles travelled to find work, moving his steam traction engines and workers around with him. Relatives supported his initiative and gave Charles £1,250 that allowed him to commence ploughing at Castle Acre near Swaffham in Norfolk and also for the Earl of Leicester and the Prince of Wales' estate at Sandringham. It was not all plain sailing though - he was crushed by an engine resulting in a fractured thigh. When he was up and about again on crutches, he found his injured leg was 1½ inches shorter than the other. He limped for the rest of his life. Charles was greatly influenced by his contact with the Earl of Leicester, who was a Liberal and it was during this time his keen interest in politics was stimulated, which would eventually lay the basis for Wicksteed Park. However, it was almost by chance that his ideas would be put into practice in the Northamptonshire town of Kettering.

Arrival in Kettering & Business Development

To find work for his equipment during the summer months, Charles needed to look for heavier ground. So in the summer of 1871 he moved his caravan and equipment to the East Midlands. He wrote to his sister from near Kettering, saying that he liked the area so much he had decided to stay. In 1876 he purchased a ¼ acre of land off the Stamford Road in Kettering and founded Charles Wicksteed and Company, Engineers - mainly for the repair of his and other steam traction engines. Later the company moved nearby to Digby Street. His political interests now developed, principally through Lord Channing, Liberal MP for East Northamptonshire. For a short time Charles was a member of the Urban District Council and the Old Board of Guardians. Later he became a member of Northamptonshire County Council, a JP, County Alderman and a member of the education committee.

On 13th December 1877 he married Mary Jean Gibb (whose brother, James Gibb, effectively invented table tennis) with whom he had two sons: Arnold and Ralph and a daughter, Hilda. April 1885 saw the death of his father and in 1896 Charles started planning a large house in two or three acres to the west of Kettering on the Northampton Road, where his mother could stay with his family from time to time. This he named Bryn Hafod (hill summer-abode) after his beloved childhood home in North Wales. His mother was to die in March 1902. In 1894 he ceased his steam ploughing work, which was taken over by a Mr J P Grundy, and concentrated on boiler making tools and equipment, and his other engineering interests. In 1898 he started production of bicycles, an advert in 1899 stated "*High class machines from £5 upward*". Charles Wicksteed and Company was registered in 1906 and by 1912 was employing 200 people. His two sons were also engaged in the company. In 1907 Charles suffered an industrial loss when his invention, a semi-automatic gearbox for cars, proved a failure (see Appendix Six for a full story and its connection to a miniature railway

locomotive). However, he followed this with a hacksaw that had a hydraulic lift on the return stroke, which he patented and was a great success. A sideline until the First World War was wooden toys.

Wicksteed Village Trust

Over the years Charles Wicksteed had been formulating plans for the social improvement of the residents of Kettering. His original idea was to develop a model village of more than 150 low cost prefabricated homes with decent sized gardens, and an adjacent space for recreation consisting of a large grass area and a lake. By 1913 business was going so well he was able to take the first steps towards fulfilling this dream by purchasing some land off the Pytchley Road (in the south of Kettering) for £16,000. At the time this merely was a small spinney and arable fields sloping down to the River Ise. The deal was completed in January 1914, by which time he had drawn up the proposed plan of the village and park. The area of land concerned was bounded to the west by the Pytchley Road, Barton Road to the north, the River Ise in the east and the Midland Railway's St Pancras to Sheffield railway line to the south.

Sadly, on 9th February 1914 his wife Mary Jean died aged 62. The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 meant little progress was made on his plans, although on 29th January 1916 Charles formed the Wicksteed Village Trust to administer the estate and its funds. The Trust was formed principally to build a model village for the "working class" at below average rents, offering generous gardens and a large open space for children to play. There were no shareholders, no private profit and no payment to the trustees. The Trust comprised eight honorary trustees and the three main objectives behind the Trust were:

1. Improving the lives of the people of Kettering and elsewhere in the UK.
 2. The prevention of cruelty and unnecessary pain to animals.
 3. The prevention of any practices inhumane to man or beast.
- Charles' love of animals and his care for other human beings is obvious in these objectives. The aim of the recreation area or park (as stated by the Trust) was "*to give healthful recreation to the working class*". Thus were laid the foundations of Wicksteed Park.

Development of Wicksteed Park

With the Trust in place, development could proceed - more so after the end of the war in 1918. In 1917 the first playground equipment was installed in the park, this being designed by Charles and constructed by his engineering company, which was soon to become the largest manufacturer of park and playground equipment in Europe. In 1919, construction of a 23 acre lake commenced. This was formed on the site of the River Ise, a dam being built across the valley. The resulting lake is said to hold approximately 113 million litres (25 million gallons) of water. The completed lake was officially opened on Saturday 14th May 1921, the *Kettering Leader* referring to it as "Barton Lake" - a name that seems not to have been perpetuated.

1921 also saw the building of bungalows in Paradise Lane, off Pytchley Lane, just to the west of the park. These were some of the earliest examples of prefabricated concrete buildings anywhere. Although Charles' original idea was to develop a model village as outlined above, the lifting of building restrictions following the First World War and the creation of the first

council house estates, made his plans superfluous. Therefore, the continued development of Wicksteed Park became his main aim.

The main additions and improvements to the park will be covered in the next Chapter, suffice to say by 1928 Wicksteed Park was attracting large numbers of visitors. These required tea and sandwiches in the pavilion and the catering staff were stretched to the limit trying to keep up with demand. Charles had seen the need for the automatic slicing and buttering of bread and his engineering company, had by around 1934, designed and built a machine capable of slicing and buttering bread at a rate of 3,600 (another report states 2,200) slices per hour. Later, these machines were sold in large quantities to the catering trade, some of them being installed on cruise liners. Despite the comments above, Charles continued some residential development, building bungalows to the east of the park called "Lakeside" for his workers. These were completed in 1930.

His love of animals is embodied in the statue in the gardens to Jerry, his favourite dog and faithful companion. Jerry was a lakeland fell terrier and was with Charles from 1920 until 1928. In that year he went on a business trip to South Africa and Jerry went missing. He was never found and in May 1929 Charles erected the statue in his honour, the inscription reading *"Closely bound to a Human Heart, Little Brown Dog, You had your part in the levelling, building, staying of streams in the park that arose from your masters dreams"*. Also in 1930 he started planning the miniature railway that would run around the lake. Sadly, he was never to see it completed and carrying passengers.

A Tragic End

On 25th February 1931, Charles Wicksteed was taken ill with a severe attack of influenza, followed by slight pneumonia and fits of deep depression and sleeplessness. He was confined to his bed at Bryn Hafod until Saturday 14th March, when he attended an event in Wicksteed Park. With his health slowly improving, although still suffering from depression, he again visited the park on the afternoon of Wednesday 18th March and inspected the paddling pool. That evening he retired to bed at 10.30pm and slept until about 4.00am on Thursday 19th March 1931. It seems he then awoke and distraught with depression, went to the kitchen, put his head inside the gas oven and killed himself. He was found sometime after 6.00am by one of the maids who had smelt gas. He left no note, nor made any mention of taking his own life. The Coroner recorded a verdict of "Suicide whilst of unsound mind" at the inquest held on Friday 20th March 1931 at Bryn Hafod.

This was indeed a tragic end, Charles had only said ten days before to his Doctor "I do want to live to Easter Monday to see my railway opened". In fact he promised the Doctor he would personally take him for the first ride. Charles Wicksteed was 83 years old and only a few days from his 84th birthday. The funeral took place during the afternoon of Monday 23rd March 1931. The service was appropriately held in the pavilion in Wicksteed Park, commencing at 2.30pm, with 1,000 people inside and many more outside. Charles Wicksteed's body was then taken to London Road Cemetery in Kettering, where he was laid to rest alongside his wife. Kettering had lost a great visionary and benefactor. A memorial was erected to him in the rose gardens, close to Jerry's statue, in June 1934.

Recent History

The company Charles Wicksteed founded - Charles Wicksteed and Company Limited continued to trade successfully. The output was split between children's playground equipment and machine tools. In June 1960 the company became part of Dorada Holdings Limited. Later, two separate companies were formed: Wicksteed Engineering Limited (incorporated 28th March 1966) and Wicksteed Leisure Limited (incorporated 21st April 1958). Different Holding Companies own these concerns, although both Holding Companies belong to the same person. Wicksteed Leisure Limited is located in Digby Road, Kettering and manufactures playground equipment for schools and parks, along with landscape furniture. It is the leading manufacturer of high quality playground equipment in the United Kingdom. Wicksteed Engineering Limited is located in Hove Road, Rushden (about 7 miles south of Kettering) and is the United Kingdom's largest manufacturer of tools for tube expanding, pulling and cleaning with a large export market. The company also undertakes a range of engineering work, including tools for the motor industry.

It can be seen that these two companies very much reflect the two main interests of Charles Wicksteed and the fact they are still trading over 120 years later, along with his leisure park says something for the vision and drive of the minister's son from Leeds. A letter received by him from a fellow County Councillor in 1921 perhaps sums it up very well *"I have just returned from inspecting your park and, more particularly, the lake. My dominant feeling for the moment is that there ought (at least) to be erected a gold statue of you in the streets of Kettering. Personally, I should have it with spectacles pushed well back on the forehead and the right arm raised (in denunciation of Lloyd George and all his work!). Underneath I would write, "One who loved - if he occasionally cursed - his fellow men". Joking apart, I thought the whole thing delightful, and behind it all, one seemed to see the original, forceful personality, lavishing loving care over every detail. It must be an abiding joy to you to think of the healthy happiness you have given to the inhabitants of Kettering, perhaps more so because your great work has so far received no public recognition, nor a tenth part of the gratitude to which you are entitled. There is no other man in the town who could have done what you have done. The park shows genius, besides generosity"*.



Two devices used on publicity material for Wicksteed Park.

The example on the left is from 1971 and that on the right from 1996, which was used only for that season, the roller coaster logo replacing it from the 1997 season.



The memorial erected in the rose gardens (now known as the memorial gardens) in June 1934 to mark Charles Wicksteed's achievement in forming Wicksteed Park. The inscription reads *"Erected by Public Subscription to commemorate Charles Wicksteed donor & designer of this park"*. Behind the memorial, which stands in the centre of gardens, can be seen the pavilion building.

(P Scott. 25/4/02)

Also placed in the gardens is the statue dedicated to Jerry, Charles Wicksteed's dog and faithful companion from 1920 until 1928. It was erected in May 1929 and the full inscription reads *"Jerry. The constant companion of Charles Wicksteed 1920 - 1928. Closely bound to a Human Heart, Little Brown Dog, You had your part in the levelling, building, staying of streams in the park that arose from your masters dreams"*. Just behind the statue, on the other side of the hedge, is the railway station.

(P Scott. 25/4/02)



CHAPTER TWO

WICKSTEED PARK RAILWAY

PLANNING, CONSTRUCTION & OPENING

Early Developments in the Park

There seems to be no date recorded when Wicksteed Park (or Barton Park as Charles Wicksteed originally named it) first opened to the public. This is doubtless because, initially, it was merely an open space set aside for recreation. The first playground equipment installed in 1917 were a few swings constructed of scaffold poles. However, this simple act changed the character of the park. Now children came to play, accompanied by their parents - who before long joined in as well! Spurred on by this Charles Wicksteed installed more and more things to amuse the children - the park continually developing. The *Kettering Leader* of Friday 21st May 1920 reported that "*The Wicksteed Pleasure Park refreshment canteen is now open for the summer season*". As mentioned in Chapter One, the lake started in 1919 was officially opened on Whit Saturday, 14th May 1921. Other developments were: pavilion and theatre (opened 1923), rose gardens (1924), children's paddle boats on the lake (1925); water chute, bandstand & fountain (all 1926); addition to pavilion (1927), cycle track (1928) and the subject of this work - the miniature railway (1931).

Planning the Railway

Quite when Charles Wicksteed first thought of building a miniature railway to add to the attractions in the park is not clear. However, the idea would not have come as a surprise. He had first come across railway locomotives at close quarters during his time in the erecting shop at Kitson's in Leeds - here he was "among the locomotives he loved", according to Hilda Wicksteed in the book about her father. In fact during this time he even enjoyed some footplate rides on a goods engine on the Midland Railway, "realising another of his ambitions". This was presumably on a locomotive built by Kitson's for the Midland. Therefore, his love of locomotives and the desire to entertain and amuse children (and their parents) could be brought together by the addition of a miniature railway in the park.

It must be assumed he had started considering the railway by the summer of 1930 at the latest, as the locomotives were ordered in September of that year. At that time large scale miniature railways (ie those for moving a good number of people in reasonably sized coaches) were fairly rare. Those that did exist were virtually all steam operated and of 15" gauge. It could be reasonably assumed that Charles Wicksteed wanted a railway that could move a lot of people over a fair length, be readily available and not requiring skilled drivers, although with locomotives that "looked the part". Therefore a narrow gauge railway operated by internal combustion "steam outline" locomotives would be the most suitable to match these requirements. The only railway running in 1930 of that sort was the 2 foot gauge Lilleshall Abbey & Woodland Railway in the grounds of Lilleshall Hall near Newport in Shropshire, which had opened in April 1928. The railway employed two locomotives built by the Burton-on-Trent based firm of Baguley (Engineers) Limited. This company built a 0-4-0 petrol steam outline locomotive for the opening of the railway and the following year a more

successful example that was almost identical to the locomotives that were to run on Charles Wicksteed's proposed railway.

Whether Charles Wicksteed was aware of the railway at Lilleshall Hall is not known, but he also looked to Baguley (Engineers) Limited for his locomotives and rolling stock, who supplied him with two locomotives and a total of eight carriages. The only other company supplying similar equipment around this time was Hudswell, Clarke & Company Limited of Leeds, which supplied equipment for the North Bay Railway in Scarborough, whose planning and construction was contemporaneous with Charles Wicksteed's line, and which Baguley had unsuccessfully tendered for. It is assumed Charles himself planned and set out the route of the railway – this being most likely given that he had done so with most other features in the park. In an article in *The Locomotive Magazine and Railway Carriage and Wagon Review* it is stated "...he [Charles] also designed a miniature railway". Presumably Baguley's were able to advise on purely railway matters, like clearances, gradients and curvature. A history of the Baguley Companies appears in Appendix One. The *Model Railway News* of January 1931 noted the planned railway "*A 2ft gauge miniature railway is to be laid in the grounds of the beautiful park given to Kettering, to encourage outdoor life, sport and recreation, by the well known engineer, Mr Charles Wicksteed*". After a brief description of the park it went on "*The new line is designed to take visitors to various parts of the park and will be operated by two petrol engines camouflaged very skilfully to look like steam locomotives. These are now being made by Messrs Baguley's*".

Construction

Building of the railway presumably took place over the winter of 1930/1931. Reports suggest that Charles Wicksteed used men from his engineering company to undertake the construction of the railway. This was almost certainly the case. The Great Depression, started by the Wall Street crash of 29th October 1929, was at its height at this time (it had started to ease by the mid-1930s) and his company was struggling to find work - so with Charles being a Liberal and a philanthropist, he would have been grateful for the excuse not to have to lay men off. Much rather put them to useful work building his railway!

One of these was Bill Moore who helped lay the track. He had also had a hand in the building of the cycle track and gardens. The route required little earthworks of note, being mostly close to the shore of the lake, although there were four bridges over various streams and waterways. One of these was a long bridge on a curve. The minimum radius curve on the railway was 100 feet. It is not known where the rails and points were obtained. The whole railway was said to have cost £3,000. There are no reports about the line's construction, although the *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 20th March 1931, on reporting Charles Wicksteed's death, stated "*The miniature railway, the child of Mr Wicksteed's ingenious mind, is at present being constructed round the Park, and will shortly be completed*".

Locomotives and Rolling Stock

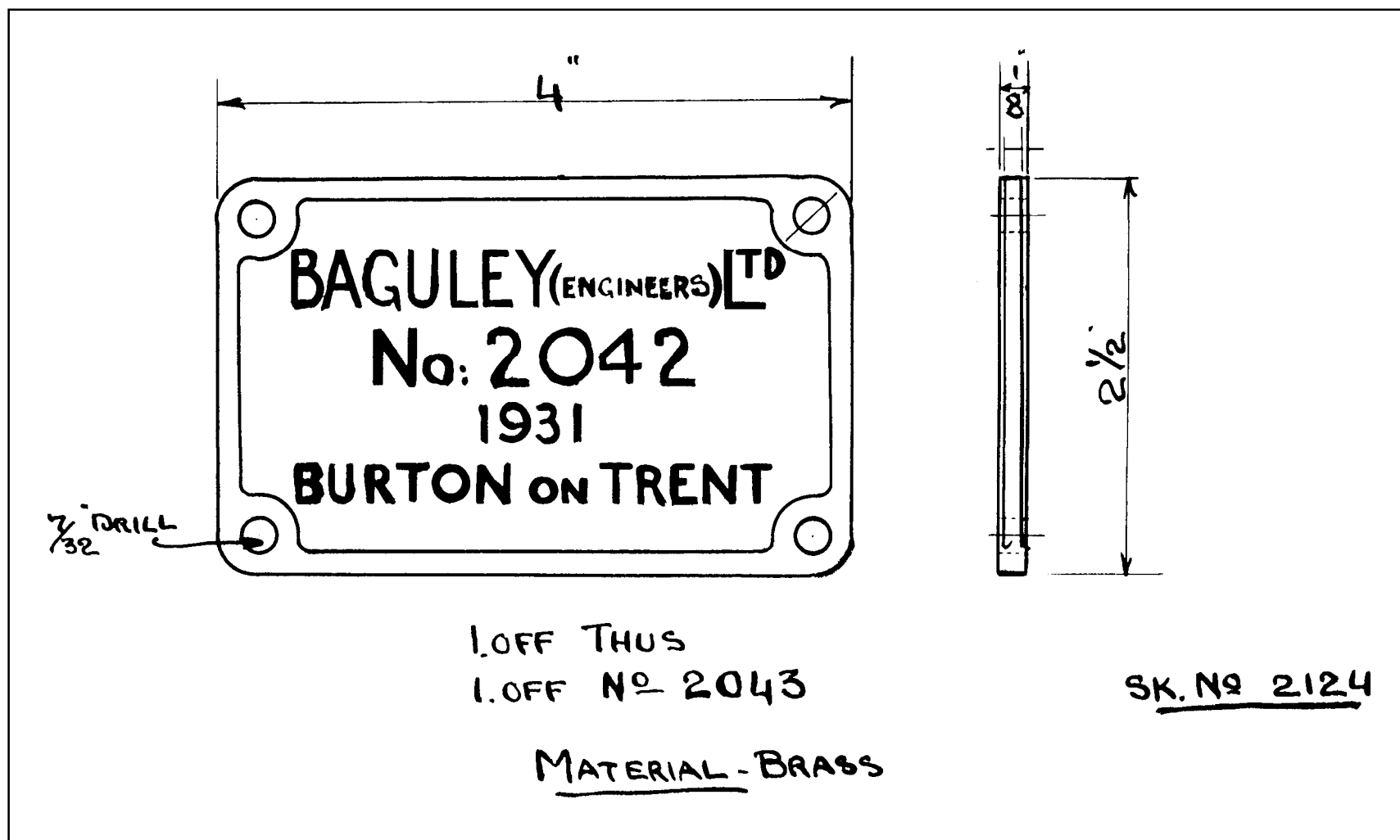
Technical details and dimensions of the locomotives and carriages appear in Appendices Two and Three respectively. Baguley (Engineers) Limited's specification (for one locomotive) is dated 19th September 1930. Under "Description" it stated "*The locomotive is generally as shown by photographs of the 0-4-0 type wheelbase 3' 1½" gauge 2' 0in*". The photograph

supplied was almost certainly of the second locomotive (works no.1769) built for Lilleshall Hall in 1929. On the original specification someone has crossed out 2' 0" gauge in pencil and amended it to 20". Interestingly, this was the gauge of the locomotives for which Baguley prepared drawings in their unsuccessful bid for the North Bay Railway at Scarborough. In his book *Baguley Locomotives 1914-1931* (IRS 1975) Rodney Weaver explains how Baguley's also arranged designs for 18" gauge locomotives and carriages for miniature railways. Despite these alternatives, which were no doubt shown to Charles Wicksteed, he opted for 2 foot gauge and a locomotive very similar to the example at Lilleshall Hall.

Anyway, to return to the specification – it went on "*The engine is of the internal combustion type having 4 cylinders 90mm bore x 130mm stroke, developing 20/25HP and using petrol as fuel*". This was a Baguley four-cylinder petrol engine and was fitted with a two speed Baguley "combined" transmission gearbox. The exhaust was "*to be carried up through the chimney*". The dimensions of the wheels were given as 18" diameter with a tread of 3¾". Axle boxes were "*cast iron fitted with gun metal bearings and arranged for oil lubrication*". Springs were "*laminated form, best Sheffield make*". Tanks and cab "*are of steel throughout*", and here a hand written note adds "*2in higher than Lilleshall*", thus confirming the prototype for the design. The brake was stated to be "*screw down brake acting on all wheels blocks are cast iron*". Weight in running order was given as about 2¼ tons. Under "Alarm" it said "*The locomotive is fitted with a gong*". As it will be seen this was changed to a bell. *The Locomotive Magazine and Railway Carriage and Wagon Review* of 15th May 1931 gave figures for consumption (per locomotive) during seven hours of continuous running as: 10 gallons of petrol and 30 gallons of water. The maximum load for one locomotive was stated as five coaches.

Charles Wicksteed officially ordered his two new locomotives and carriages on Wednesday 24th September 1930. A letter dated 25th September 1930 to "*Charles Wicksteed & Co Ltd, Stamford Road Works, Kettering*" confirmed the order thus "*2 0-4-0 internal combustion locos. 4 cyl engine 90mm bore x 130mm stroke developing 20/25HP two speeds in each direction of 3 and 6mph. Gauge 2ft. Generally as photographs 14829B and 14829C. No's 2042 and 2043*". Unfortunately, it is not known what the photographs showed. A similar letter also dated 25th September 1930 confirmed the order for the rolling stock. Baguley appeared to give carriages works order numbers, and this one was WO910. The letter was headed "Order 1883 Sept 24th 1930". "*6 Open coach underframes complete with platform, but without seats or seat irons, to be fitted with central swivelling drawgear and spring radial buffers generally as shown on print W186. Wheels Hadfields cast steel 14" dia, axles running in roller bearings, axle boxes working in steel guides and spiral springs. Steel channel frames strongly braced and stayed*". Although not mentioned specifically, the carriages were four wheelers, with roller bearings and weighing 1 ton 3 cwt empty. It will be noted these letters and orders were addressed to Charles Wicksteed & Company, not the Wicksteed Village Trust.

A few days before the official order was received, Baguley's had an order from Charles Wicksteed that was allocated number WO896 and which was dated 22nd September 1930. This stated "*order letter September 20th 1930. 1 set of steel wheels fitted with axles for 20" 2' 0" gauge complete with roller bearings. To be delivered immediately to the Wicksteed Village Trust, The Pleasure Park, Kettering*". There followed a list of materials that confirms this order was for two axles with wheels (ie four axle boxes). The (hand) alteration to the gauge will be noted. It is not known for certain what these wheel sets were for, but it is quite likely



Baguley works diagram for the brass plates fitted to 2042 & 2043. For some reason they were fixed on different sides on the two locos. 2042's plate was fixed to the right hand cab side (in respect to the driver), while that on 2043 was on the left hand side. (Reproduced by courtesy of Baguley Engineers Ltd, from original drawing held by Lichfield Record Office. Ref: B4288/B/2)

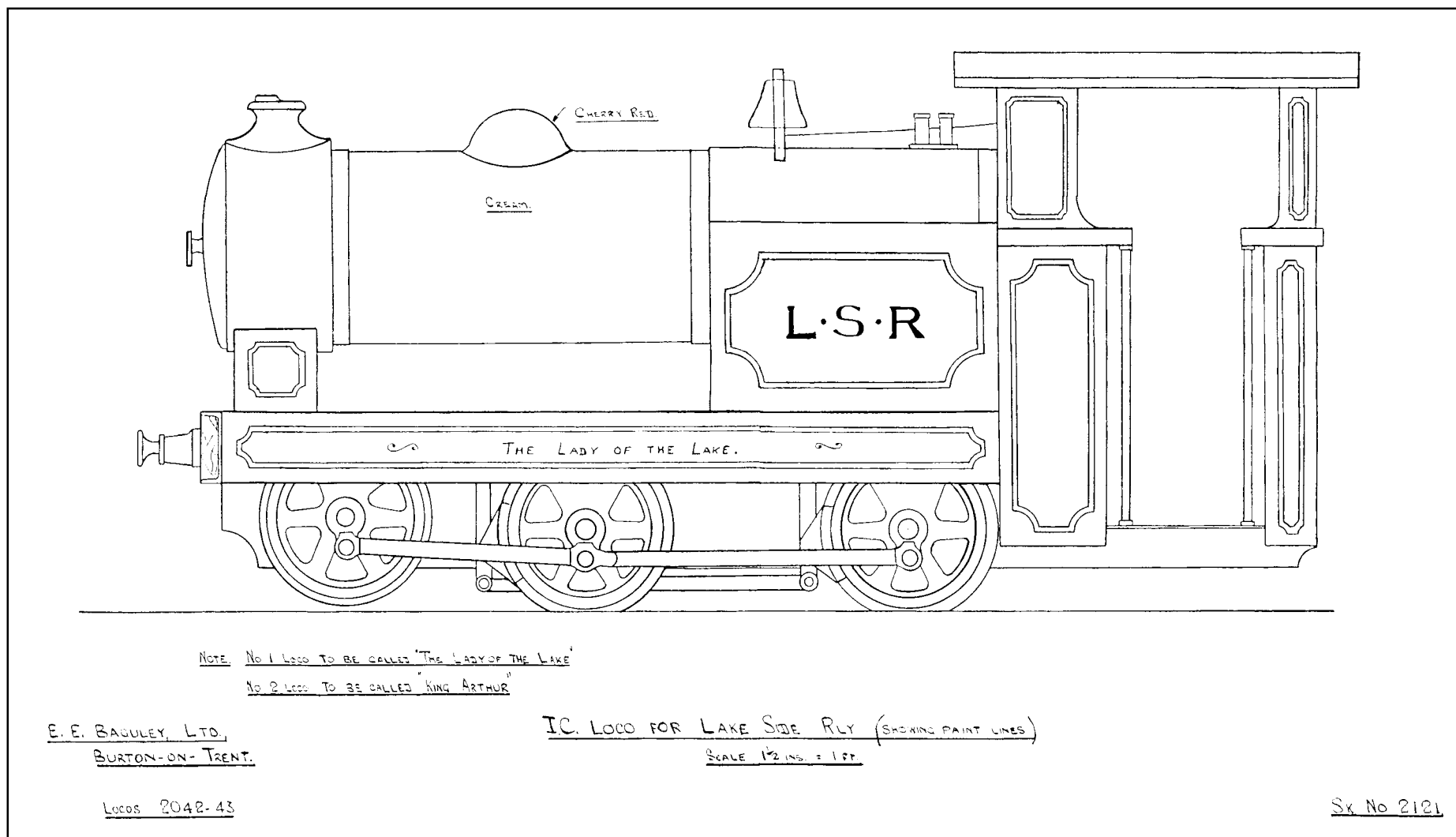
they were for a wagon to assist in constructing the railway. The order is annotated "*Very Urgent*". No doubt Charles Wicksteed & Co added the necessary bodywork.

Work now progressed on the locomotives and rolling stock. The majority of the original drawings are dated between December 1930 and February 1931. A note dated 2nd December 1930 in the Baguley archives states "*Two carriages are to be complete with seats*", followed by another (30th January 1931) which added "*2 coaches only to be fitted with reversible seats straight across, seats for remaining coaches will be supplied and fitted by customer*". Obviously manufacturing seats and the like would have been no problem to Charles Wicksteed, as this was becoming a large part of his business. It would seem these two carriages were in addition to those in WO910, making a total of eight. The Baguley finished coaches were to be identifiable due to their different seat design. The 30th January 1931 letter also contained a note about the proposed livery of the locomotives "*2042/3 Locomotives & Carriages. To be painted Cherry and Cream, samples will be furnished later*". An undated Baguley drawing (SK2121) shows the intended livery, with the locos painted cream with lining and other details picked out in cherry red. A note adds that "*No.1 Loco to be called The Lady of the Lake*" and "*No.2 Loco to be called King Arthur*". However, it seems Charles was not too happy about this colour scheme, as a Baguley note dated 26th February 1931 says "*2042/3 – to be painted Midland Red and lined gold. Both locomotives to be lettered on side L.S.R. One locomotive to be lettered on both sides "The Lady of the Lake" and the second locomotive "King Arthur". The lettering as customer's sketch dated 16th February 1931. The side rods are to be painted between the heads and the heads polished*". Presumably the livery of the nearby London Midland and Scottish Railway (and the earlier Midland Railway), which must have become familiar to him during his trips to London, was more to his liking. Cherry red and cream locomotives would have been a bit garish! L.S.R. stood for Lake Side Railway.

The names chosen (presumably by Charles) were doubtless due to the proximity of the new railway to the lake, and the fact the lake was the main feature of the park. They come from Arthurian legend. King Arthur was a Celtic medieval hero brought up by Merlin. In one version of the story he is given his magical sword Excalibur by the Lady of the Lake (as opposed to pulling it from a stone). Another story has Lancelot, the lover of Arthur's queen Guinevere, being brought up by Vivien - the Lady of the Lake.

The locomotive drawing mentioned above (SK2121), shows a bell mounted between the false dome and safety valves, with a cord running into the cab. The addition of the bell instead of the gong mentioned in the specification was no doubt a change requested by Charles. From a letter in the Baguley archives it seems the bell was obtained from John Taylor & Co, Bell Founders & Bell Hangers of Loughborough. A letter from them (to Baguley's) dated 19th February 1931 states "*Cast of best gun quality bell metal, finished diameter about 7" at the mouth....*" and goes on "*£4.0.0d (four pounds) for both bells packed and delivered to your address*". It finishes "[the bells] *would have a distinctive ring and would be suitable as warning bells on locomotives*". A drawing shows the bell to be 5⁵/₈" high. In the end they were mounted just in front of the cab.

As the planned opening of the railway approached, presumably the unfinished carriages were dispatched to Kettering and Charles' engineering works for completion. Baguley records note that the locomotives were dispatched in April 1931, the actual date not being known. In fact, this must have been either 1st, 2nd or 3rd April, as will be seen below. The finished locomotives were indeed very similar to works no.1769 at Lilleshall Hall. The main



Baguley drawing produced to show the suggested paint scheme of cream and cherry red. Dome, smokebox, chimney and lining were red. Note the company name on the drawing - officially E E Baguley Ltd did not come into being until April 1932. (Reproduced by courtesy of Baguley Engineers Ltd, from original drawing held by Lichfield Record Office. Ref: B4288/B/2)

differences being that the Wicksteed locomotives had painted "smokebox doors" (as opposed to polished brass) and larger, shaped driver's spectacles (round on 1769). The locomotives cost £410 each. This was a good price as 1769 had cost £400 in 1929. The carriages cost £19.15s each.

Opening

The completion and opening of the railway must have been totally overshadowed by the death on 19th March 1931 of Charles Wicksteed. This tragic event has been detailed in Chapter One. Nevertheless, work progressed - no doubt as Charles would have wanted.

The railway opened on Good Friday, 3rd April 1931. The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 10th April 1931, reporting on the new railway under the headline "*Lakeside Railway's Popular Debut*" stated "*The first train ran on Good Friday*". The report went on "*On Easter Monday the first trip began at about ten o'clock. It was filled promptly, and it and its companion continued running until dark, carrying in all about 4,000 passengers - not all of them children, by any means*". The weather was poor on the Friday - rain keeping visitors away, but on the following days large crowds visited the park each day. *The Locomotive Magazine and Railway Carriage and Wagon Review* of 15th May 1931 gave the opening day as Easter Saturday, but went on to report that on Easter Monday and Tuesday a total of 7,600 passengers were carried. The carriages seated 18 people each (three passengers each on six seats), making a total of 72 for four coaches, which was the normal formation of a train. Fares at opening were 6d adults and 3d children.

The first "passenger" was Robert Wicksteed (Grandson of Charles Wicksteed), with the first driver being Bill "Tinker" Jackson. He was a lorry driver at Charles Wicksteed Engineering and was seconded for the opening of the railway. He stayed on for a couple of weeks until everything was working well and then returned to Wicksteed Engineering. Robert Wicksteed recalls how he became the first casualty on the railway when the train was being tested before public opening "*The train and track were being tested. My father and a representative of the firm were reversing at the back of the lake and I was sitting in the back coach. They started waving at me, I waved back and the next moment something hit me on the back of my head. They hadn't been waving at me, but trying to get me to pull my head in because there was a tree coming up. The tree was cut down the next day*".

There does not appear to have been any official opening ceremony - at least none was reported. It is likely Charles Wicksteed intended to have one, possibly on Easter Monday. Indeed he is reported as saying to his Doctor only said ten days before he died "*I do want to live to Easter Monday to see my railway opened*". He also promised the Doctor he would personally take him for the first ride.

The Route Described

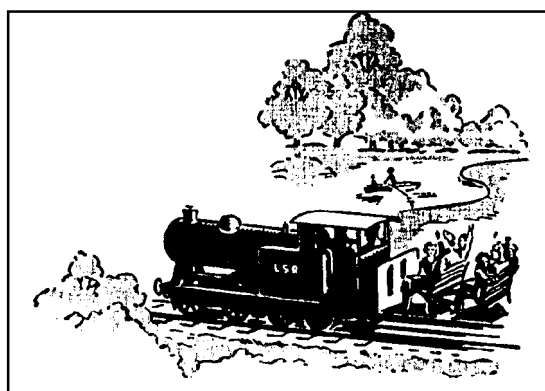
The complete railway, 1¼ miles in length, was in the form of a circuit – mainly around the lake, which trains transversed in a clockwise direction. The main station was at grid reference SP88057707, close to the gardens and Jerry's statue. From here the line crossed the path down to the lake and struck out across open ground towards the edge of the park and Barton Road. Coming alongside Barton Road, the line turned to the south and crossed over the

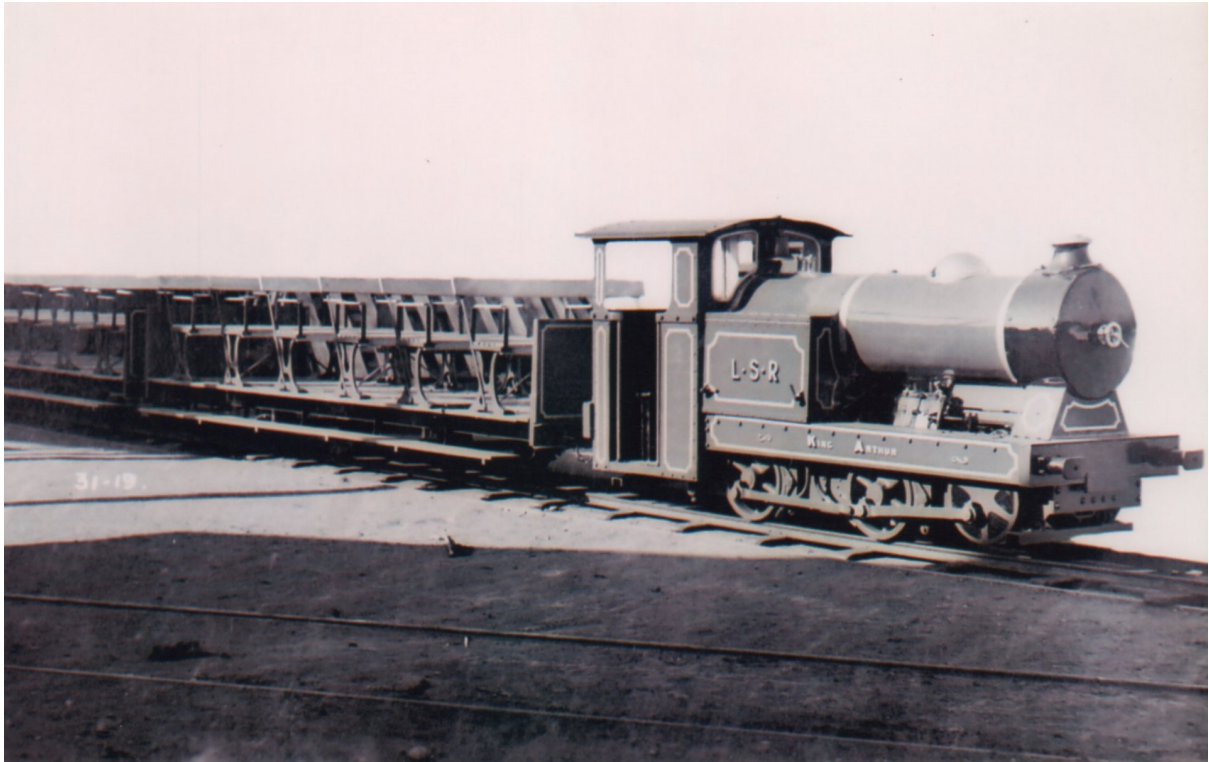
stream feeding the lake. Next a sluice was bridged between the lake and the River Isè near the water chute. The line now ran almost due south on a narrow stretch of ground between the shore of the lake and the River Isè (this being the new course of the River after the lake was built). At the southern end of the lake, the line turned sharply west and crossed the tip of the lake on a curving bridge alongside a weir feeding back into the River. Following the south shore of the lake closely, a bridge was required over the original course of the River Isè where there was a sluice gate. The line now turned north, still closely following the shore of the lake. At this point the main LMS St Pancras to Derby and Sheffield railway line was only a short distance away to the southwest. The shore of the lake was now left, as the line turned slightly to the northeast to run close to the cycle track. Curving around the top of this, the line ran across open ground, climbing slightly, to return to the station. The whole journey took about 10 minutes.

The article in the *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 10th April 1931 about the railway's opening, contained a description of a ride on the new railway *"Just come with our representative and see what you think of it. That little box affair near the Italian garden is the booking office. We buy tickets there and climb in the open carriage. Our train is the "King Arthur" - the other ("The Lady of the Lake") is standing by for the moment. We are now drawing slowly out of "Garden Station"; we are gathering speed; we pass "Boathouse Station". We rumble over the first bridge. It is easy to see the waters of the lake below us. We are moving steadily along the lakeside, a foot from its edge. We can hear the water lapping against the embankment. Those people in boats who rest their oars to have a look at us are obviously impressed by the sight of the neat little engine, a wisp of smoke coming from its funnel, which pulls us. The dam of the lake is now approached. We seem to be suspended right over the water just here. The flood water pours over the weir with a fine roar; you could almost reach over and feel the splash of it on your hand. That, by the way, was "Embankment Station" we passed just before we got to the head of the lake. On our left is the cycling track, and on our right.... but there is no need to point out to you all the sights of the Park to be seen in passing. We are now back at "Garden Station" and so must get out, unless you want another sixpenn'orth"*. The article was accompanied by picture of "King Arthur" passing over the bridge by the sluice gate. In his book *Liliputbahnen* (published in 1938), Dr Walter Strauss states there were four stations, but the *Kettering Leader & Guardian* reporter mentions only three. A photograph of Garden Station shows it be merely an open platform and a signboard, as were probably the other stations.

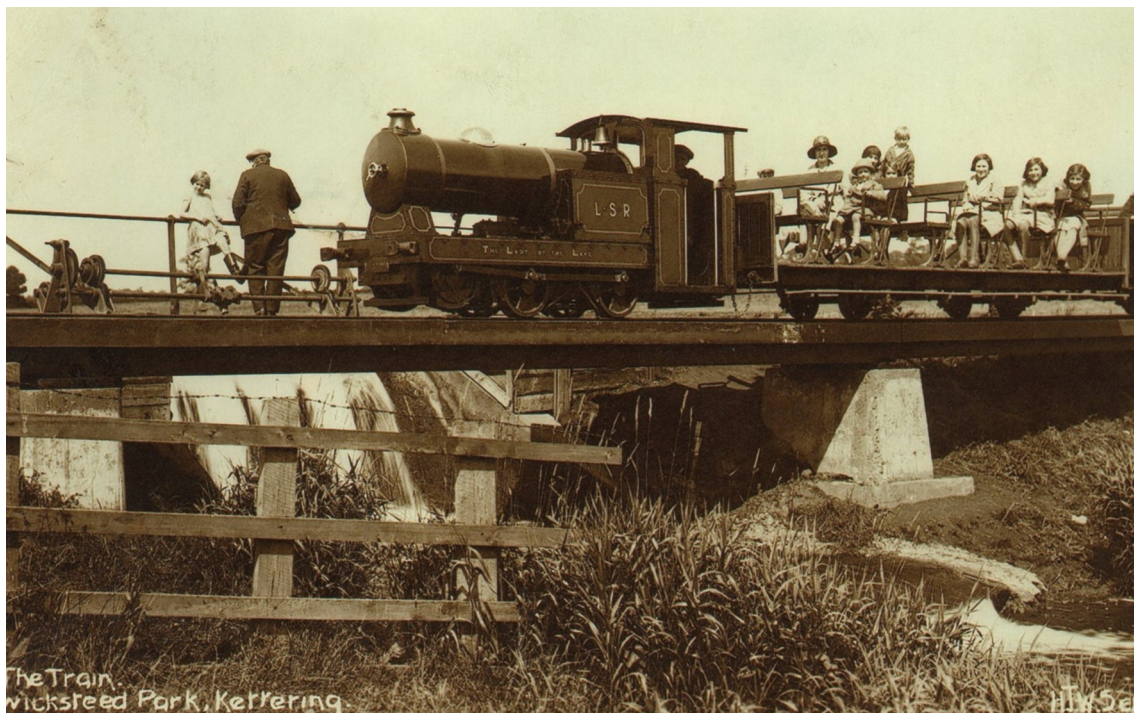
Wicksteed Park was now the proud owner of a superb new miniature railway that was to prove enduringly popular with visitors to the park. It was a great tragedy that Charles Wicksteed was not able to see its completion and enjoy a ride on it behind "The Lady of the Lake" or "King Arthur".

This delightful drawing was used on the cover of the guide books (*"An Account of Wicksteed Park & Trust"*), from the 1930s until the 1950s. It depicts one of the Baguley locomotives, with the lake in the background.

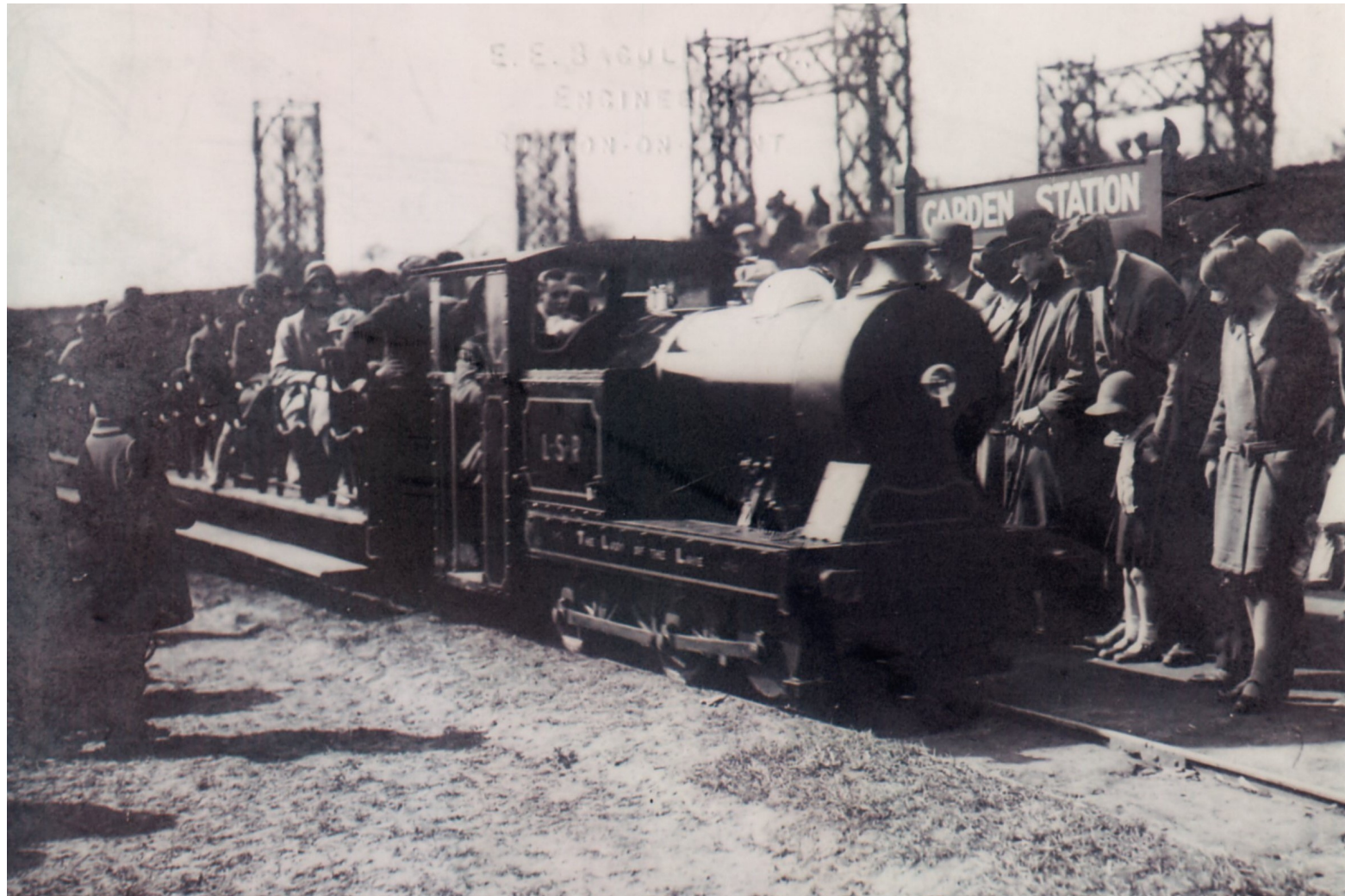




A Baguley works photograph of 2043 "King Arthur" (in what appears to be works grey livery) with the two coaches that were completed by Baguley. These coaches had seats with a single cross slat at the back as opposed to "garden seats" of the Wicksteed coaches. (Baguley [Engineers] Limited. 1931. Reproduced by courtesy of Baguley Engineers Ltd, from original photograph held by Lichfield Record Office. Ref: B4288/C/1/7)



2042 "The Lady of the Lake" crosses the bridge by the sluice gate, probably soon after the railway opened. A similar view (except with 2043 "King Arthur") appeared in the *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 10th April 1931 reporting on the opening of the railway. (HTW series postcard. Courtesy I Hurst)



2042 "The Lady of the Lake" at Garden Station in the very early days of the railway. At that time the station was a simple affair.
*(Baguley [Engineers] Limited. Reproduced by courtesy of Baguley Engineers Ltd, from original photograph held by Lichfield Record Office.
Ref: B4288/C/2/247)*

CHAPTER THREE

WICKSTEED PARK RAILWAY

ALTERATIONS & DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

This Chapter provides a chronological potted history of the park from 1931, along with the main developments and changes to the railway, its locomotives and rolling stock. A track plan and an extract from an Ordnance Survey 25" Map appear at the end of the text of this Chapter. Details about the operation, staffing and ticketing arrangements on the railway are dealt with in Chapter Four. The various incidents and accidents are described in Chapter Five. The railway has gone under a number of different names over the years. At first it was known as the "Lake Side Railway" or "Lakeside Railway". Other titles have included "Miniature Railway", "Wicksteed Park Railway", "Wicksteed Park Lakeside Railway", or just plain "Railway". The 2002 leaflet shows it as the "Lady of the Lake Train Ride" on the park plan. It will be seen from the following, the track layout of the railway has hardly changed since it was opened in 1931 - surely a testament to Charles Wicksteed's design of the park and railway itself.

The 1930s

The railway's first season came to an end in autumn 1931 and the owners must have been pleased at the result – the railway had been very popular with visitors to the park. The 1930s saw major developments in the park, with new additions and improvements almost every year up to the Second World War. Those in the early part of the decade were the golf course (1932), toy shop (1933) and the aviary (1934).

The tunnel, one of the railway's main features, was added for the 1933 season. The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 6th January 1933 reported "*Visitors to the park will have another thrill next summer. The miniature railway is to run through a 180ft tunnel, which is now being constructed of concrete on the far side of the lake*". This was simply a decorative feature, as the land either side of the tunnel walls was merely at ground level. However, it gave an extra thrill for the children. It was built on a slight curve so daylight was not visible all the way through. Grid reference was SP88257687. The tunnel survives in this form, albeit with new ends. Photographic evidence suggests there was a loop or siding, served by a facing point just past the bridge near the water chute, in the area where the tunnel was built. This ran between the running line and the River Ise – the running line being close to the shore of the lake at this point. It seems that when the tunnel was built in 1933, the running line and loop/siding were swapped over. The tunnel was built over the loop/siding and this became the running line. The former running line became a siding between the tunnel and lake, served by a facing point. It ended a little short of the south portal of the tunnel, as that end of the tunnel was very close to the shore of the lake. It has not been possible to confirm whether the original loop was as such, or merely a siding. Operationally, a loop would have been more convenient. In either event it was used as storage for one of the trains if a one train service was in operation, the new siding by the tunnel taking over this function.

An ice cream plant was added in 1935 and in the same year the toy shop was doubled in size. Although when the railway opened it appears to have had three or four stations, the plan of the park for the 1935 season shows only one – that by the gardens. This remains the only station on the railway. It is likely the others were short lived, the difficulty of managing hoards of passengers, most wanting to ride all the way around, probably saw their closure. With only one station, ticket collection and passenger control would have been much easier. August Bank Holiday 1935 saw the park attendance record broken. On Bank Holiday Monday, 5th August 1935, 40,000 people visited Wicksteed Park. 400 cars were accommodated and 1,300 sit-down teas were served. The railway carried 6,000 passengers - "King Arthur" and "The Lady of the Lake" must have been hard at work all day. The park was normally open at night, although the attractions were of course closed. However, from the winter of 1935/1936 the park was closed at night after damage done by vandals, including killing ducks on the lake with catapults and stones. The humped-back bridge over children's boating lake was built in 1936. By August 1937 the station had gained a large canopy, covering the platform and the track.

Records were broken again at August Bank Holiday 1937 and this seems to have been a little too much for the locomotives. The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 6th August 1937 reported "*When the record breaking business was at its height on the Wicksteed Park Miniature Railway early on Monday evening [2nd August], the two over-worked engines both broke down. One stopped at the station, and the other, fortunately, stopped no further away than the cycle track, so the travellers did not have far to go when they got out and walked*". It is likely over-heating caused the failures, a not uncommon feature of Baguley steam outline locomotives. A sad event in the railway's history occurred later the same month when a small boy was killed by a train on Tuesday 24th August 1937. This accident is covered in Chapter Five.

The winter of 1937/1938 saw both locomotives receive a full overhaul at Baguley's (now known as E E Baguley Ltd). The record in the Baguley archive states "*Locos 2042/3. Full overhaul 24/11/1937. To be completely dismantled and overhauled. Locomotives to be painted, lined & varnished. Genuine Crimson Lake to be used. To be complete ready for service Easter 1938*". In the park, a joy wheel was added in 1938 along with a central ticket office and new souvenir shop. The water chute was completely rebuilt in 1939. Sadly the developments and improvements came to an abrupt end on Sunday 3rd September 1939 with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Second World War

At least initially Wicksteed Park remained almost fully open with the railway running and was certainly still very popular. The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 18th April 1941 reporting on Easter Sunday stated "*Despite war-time travel restrictions a large holiday crowd thronged the Wicksteed Park on Sunday [13th April]. The miniature railway attracted a great many visitors, with the boating lake running a close second. Supplies in the canteen were of course limited, but nevertheless, many people had picnic teas. Motor coaches were noticeably absent but petrol rationing did not prevent scores of private cars from being used by visitors*". The wartime travel restrictions produced a record attendance over the August Bank Holiday weekend of 1941 and the railway seems to have continued to operate until the end of the 1941 season.

By 1942 petrol rationing appears to have become more severe and this brought about the closure of the railway. The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 10th April 1942 reported "*Petrol shortage prevents the running of the motor boat and miniature railway this year at the Wicksteed Park, Kettering, where the summer season has now commenced [on Good Friday, 3rd April]. All other attractions are available as usual*". The railway was not to run again until after the war. During the close down, the locomotives and rolling stock were presumably put safely in store. By 1943 it seems the park was only partially open. The public was still admitted and functions were held in the grounds. "Holidays at Home" weeks were carried out and some dances took place when accommodation was available. The pavilion was used as a military billet. In 1943 American troops were housed there and were moved out, probably by early 1944.

The end of the war came in 1945, but it was not until 1946 that trains were to run again on the railway. It is most likely the first trains ran on Good Friday, 19th April 1946. The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 5th April 1946 reported on the railway's forthcoming reopening under the headline "*Lakeside Train to run at Easter*". It went on "*All aboard! and We're off! Will be shouted by innumerable children at Easter when they board the miniature railway at Wicksteed Park, Kettering, for a trip. It will be running again for the first time for five years. A special petrol allowance has been secured and the train is almost bound to be the highlight of the Park's summer season. Motor boats, which have not been on the lake since 1941 have been repaired*". The same paper of Friday 26th April 1946 reported on the Easter Holiday "*The largest queue of the day [Easter Monday, 22nd April] however, was for the Miniature Railway. At one time the queue stretched from the "station" to the lake, and well over 4,000 men, women and children had rides*". The railway had well and truly reopened.

Post War 1940s and the 1950s

August Bank Holiday 1946 saw the park record broken. The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 9th August 1946 stated "*45,000 people, an all time record filled Wicksteed Park on Monday [5th August]. Between 5,000 and 6,000 had rides on the miniature trains*". With the end of the war and materials slowly becoming available again, development of the park and its facilities could restart. In 1948 the canteen kitchens were rebuilt and fitted out with new equipment to replace that damaged by the military occupation. 1949 saw the opening of a fruit shop.

As far as the railway was concerned 1952 and 1953 were important years – as both locomotives were re-engined. The locomotives had been hard at work from 1931 until 1941 and from 1946 until 1952, and must have covered many thousands of miles. 2043 "King Arthur" was the first to be dealt with. The original Baguley 20/25HP petrol engine was removed and a P3 Perkins 3-cylinder diesel engine installed (No.1000537). This was rated at 25HP at 1500rpm. The work was undertaken at Baguley's works at Burton-on-Trent in the spring of 1952. The various drawings in the Baguley archives are dated between April and May 1952, with a note stating "*Perkins P3 fitted Whitsun 1952*". It is likely therefore "King Arthur" was back at work at Wicksteed Park by June 1952 (Whit Monday was 2nd June 1952). This probably came as a welcome relief to the park staff. Reporting the busiest ever Easter, the *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 18th April 1952 under the headline "*Park crowds broke all records*" said "*Unfortunately, one of the two miniature trains was out of order and with everyone wanting a ride, the queue was never less than 100 yards long*". 2042

"The Lady of the Lake" was given the same treatment at Baguley's during the winter of 1952/1953. The drawings are dated December 1952 and January 1953. Presumably from Easter 1953, "The Lady of the Lake" was again hauling trains on the railway. Both locomotives now had Perkins badges fitted on their smokebox saddles. However, sometime prior to this 2042 had become "Lady of the Lake", "The" being dropped from the name. A postcard (see page 39) clearly shows the locomotive with the shorter name, but without the Perkins badge fitted.

Still, had events turned out differently, instead of the locomotives being re-engined, a new locomotive would have been ordered and built by E E Baguley Ltd. Wicksteed Park seems to have been considering this towards the end of 1950 at the latest. A letter in the Baguley archives from the park, dated 1st December 1950 states *"We are anxious that the exhaust pipe should discharge out of the funnel, as on our old pattern, and that a warning bell should be fitted, similar to those on our present engine"*. This was in response to a quotation received from Baguley and which shows the proposed locomotive had been allocated works number 3372. Baguley's response was a letter dated 19th February 1951 stating *"Order 2893. Loco 3372. One 0-4-0 type Miniature Railway locomotive fitted with Perkins P4 diesel engine, plate clutch, three speed gear and reverse box, final drive by jackshaft and spur gears, as at present fitted to locomotives 2042 & 2043. The locomotive to be painted and varnished in approved colours. Warning bell to be attached and exhaust to be discharged through the funnel, as the present locos. Delivery required early 1952"*. This would have given Baguley's a year to build the locomotive. It is not known what the intended appearance of the locomotive was to be. Some design work was undertaken, but in the end it was never ordered. Instead 2042 and 2043 were both re-engined. A note merely states *"Loco 3372. This loco was never built. Original loco 2042 was converted under S2488 similar to conversion of 2043 to S2168"*.

Around this time, two extra coaches, supplied by E E Baguley Ltd, were added to the fleet of eight (to make a total of ten). It has not been possible to discover exactly when the new coaches were introduced, their arrival does not seem to have reported by the local press and the Baguley archives contain no record of them. A photograph in the *Kettering leader & Guardian* of Friday 7th August 1953 (taken on August Bank Holiday Monday, 3rd August) shows a train formed of four coaches suggesting the new vehicles not arrived by then – the paper noting all previous park attendance records had been broken on that day. A visitor to the park in 1956 remembers five coach trains, indicating the new vehicles may have arrived in 1954, 1955 or early 1956. It is thought the extra coaches were braked (one for each train), with a screw down hand brake that could be operated by a guard. This was probably what the *Kettering Leader* in their special supplement of 14th January 1966 (in the 1950s section) was referring to when it said *"...and the miniature trains were given a better braking system and an extra coach each"*. Presumably, it was felt that with the new diesel engines each locomotive could manage an extra coach. Certainly the extra capacity would have been welcome, the 1950s were very busy years for the park. The station platform was not lengthened and even today the locomotive has to stand outside the platform and canopy.

Improvements to the park went on. The coronation hall, having been started some years before, was completed in 1954 as a cinema. The miniature car track opened in 1955 and pets corner was opened in 1956 – the same year that saw parking rules introduced. No doubt more and more people were coming in their own cars, instead of using public transport. The park's own ice cream factory also opened in 1956 and continued to produce its own ice cream into the 1990s. 1957 saw an incident where "Teddy Boys" laid a boat across the railway track,

apparently without any serious outcome. A letter dated 18th February 1959 from "The Wicksteed Park" to E E Baguley Ltd has a sketch of the tunnel "*showing cross section as requested*". Why this information was needed at that time is not known, possibly a new locomotive was still being considered. For the record the tunnel was 7ft 10in high and 8ft 0in wide. The sides were upright for 4ft 6in before the arch of the roof commenced. 2042 "Lady of the Lake" appeared in the *English Electric Magazine* of February 1959, this being a picture taken in the Baguley workshops, probably in the winter of 1958/1959 when both locomotives were having a full overhaul.

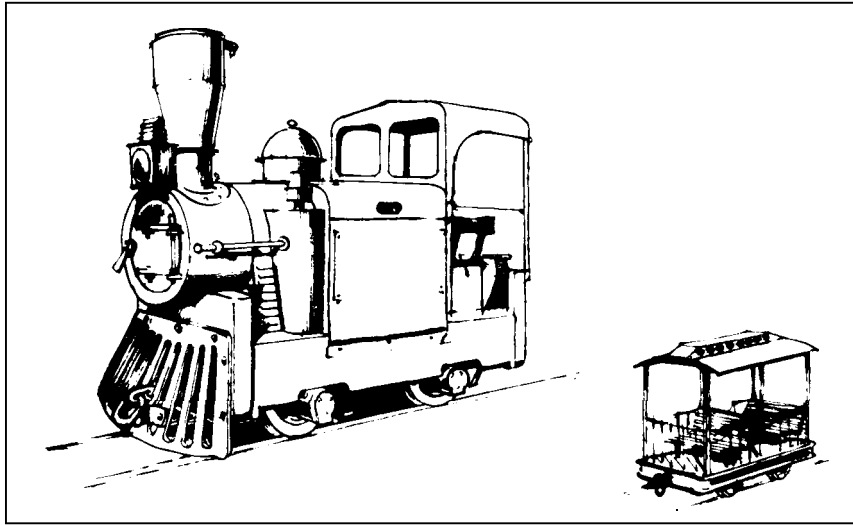
The 1960s

In the first half of the decade the park proved very popular with the public. 500,000 passengers rode on the railway in 1964. The largest ever attendance was on Sunday 8th August 1965 when there was an estimated 60,000 visitors in the park. A new golf club building was opened in 1964 and in 1969 a new administration and head office block was built.

March 1961 saw both locomotives fitted with reconditioned Perkins P3 engines. According to the Baguley record cards the engine numbers were 1R025106 (2043) and 1R025107 (2042). Both locomotives were delivered back to Wicksteed Park on 21st March 1961. The park celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1966, the railway doing so with a brand new locomotive. The celebrations presumably marked 50 years since the Wicksteed Park Trust was formed in 1916. Special tickets were issued to mark the event and they were sent to schools for distribution. Both the *Kettering Leader* (of 14th January 1966) and the *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* (of 29th March 1966) printed special supplements.

In fact a complete new train was obtained for the 1966 season. The locomotive was ordered from the Bedford based firm of Motor Rail Limited. Their "Works Order" is dated 8th December 1964, although the "Vehicle Record Card" carries the statement "*Letter Order dated 10.3.65*". The "Works Order" gives a delivery date of "*2nd April*" – it is not known whether 1965 or 1966 was intended. In fact the locomotive was not dispatched until 26th February 1966. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* in their supplement of 29th March 1966 reported that "*...the western-type train, "Cheyenne" which pictured above on its trial run one day last week. The new train is to join the other old faithfuls when the season opens on Good Friday [8th April]*". This was to be the only steam outline locomotive ever made by Motor Rail Limited and was a modified 40S type, a 4-wheel 3½ ton locomotive powered by a Dorman 2LB 40HP diesel engine (No.WE80838). Works number was 22224 and the price was given as £2220. The frame was extended at the front, with a ballast weight at the rear. The bodywork was said to be loosely based on a Union Pacific 4-4-0 locomotive and was complete with cow-catcher, large headlamp and diamond shaped chimney. The cab was also slightly higher than a normal 40S type. (Although in the Motor Rail file containing photographs of the new locomotive there are a number of pictures of a Union Pacific 4-4-0, it cannot be said there is much of a likeness!). The new locomotive was named "Cheyenne" and a picture even appeared in the July 1966 edition of *The Railway Magazine*. The Cheyenne are a native North American Indian people, who gave their name to the state capital city of Wyoming. It became a city soon after the Union Pacific Railroad made a junction there in 1867 and was made capital in 1890. Subsequently, "Cheyenne" became the preferred normal motive power, with the two Baguley locomotives only being used at busier times, or when "Cheyenne" was not available. A three train service was now operated on the very busiest

days. Why Wicksteed Park went to Motor Rail, as opposed to Baguley's is not known – they were to return to Baguley's again some years later when another new locomotive was proposed.



This Motor Rail sketch is dated 1964 and was titled "*4½ ton Simplex loco converted to resemble Cheyenne [sic] locomotive*". It was presumably prepared to show Wicksteed Park what was possible. It will be noted the sketch shows a number of variations from the actual locomotive constructed – such as no frame extension at the front and a different cab design. The proposed carriage appears to be a short wheel based type with just two seats, those built were longer and had six seats.

(Motor Rail Ltd. Courtesy Alan Keef)

Five 4-wheel coaches were built to accompany "Cheyenne". Photographic and documentary evidence suggests the frames, wheels and roofs were supplied and constructed by W G Allen Limited of Tipton, Staffordshire (through Motor Rail Limited). The floors and seats were provided and fitted by Wicksteed Engineering. These seem to have been fitted by them in Kettering before arrival (complete) at the park. The *Narrow Gauge News* of August 1966 noted "*Frames and bogies [sic] for five coaches were delivered at the same time [as "Cheyenne"] these have now been fitted with "bodies" open sided, but roofed*". However, as already noted, photographs suggest the coaches left Motor Rail as frames with wheels and roofs. As these were covered coaches, passengers on the railway had some protection from the weather for the first time in 35 years. They were similar to the Baguley coaches and seated 18 people (in six seats) per coach. A short time after "Cheyenne" was delivered a few minor modifications were carried out in June/July 1966, the most visible being for extra ventilation - louvers in the engine side covers and grills in the "smokebox door". A few years after "Cheyenne" arrived, cow-catchers were added to "Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur". The main reason was to match "Cheyenne", but concerns following a little girl being run over and killed in 1967 (see Chapter Five for details) were also considered.

W G Allen Ltd

W G Allen Limited (later W G Allen & Sons plc) was incorporated on 5th June 1909. Their main railway output seems to have been narrow gauge wagons, although they did build some man riding cars for the National Coal Board. The company went into receivership on 30th January 1985 and was dissolved on 9th April 2002.

The 1970s

After a quiet decade as far as new developments were concerned, the park moved forward again in the 1970s. A new dogem's building was added in 1971 and the arboretum was also started. 1974 saw the St George's suite added to the pavilion. A boat called "Mississippi Queen" was launched in January 1975 to sail on the lake.

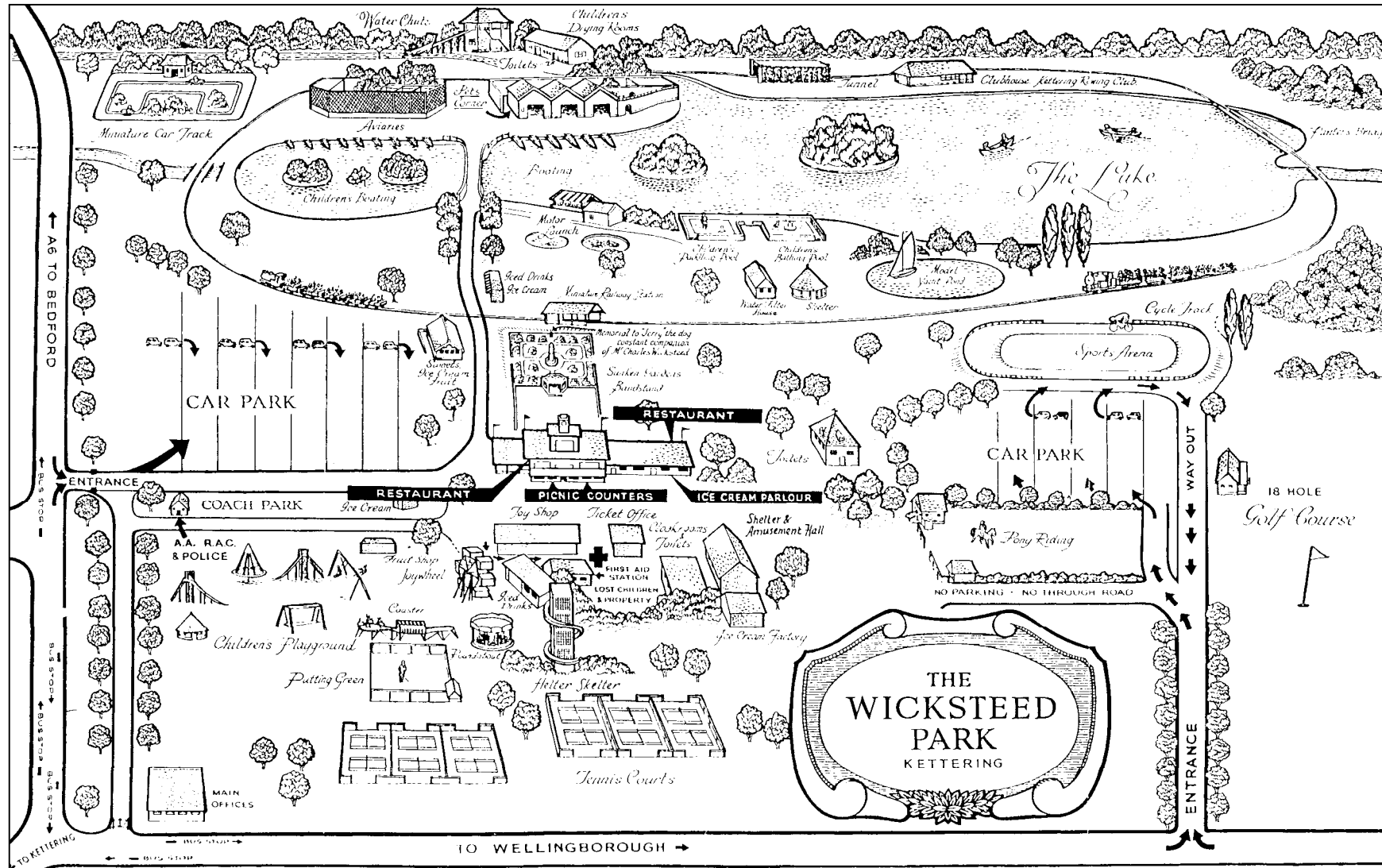
On the railway, 2043 "King Arthur" had hydraulic transmission installed during the winter of 1970/1971. Fitted was a type H.572.G Hydraulic Torque Converter, made by British Twin Disc Limited of Rochester, Kent. The work was undertaken at the workshops of G Lewis & Son, Kettering, whose premises were in Queen Street/Carrington Street. At that time, this company serviced the park's rides and equipment, and continued to do so until the number of rides increased. 2042 "Lady of the Lake" has not received this treatment and remains with its original Baguley transmission.

In 1974 the boathouse on the far side of the lake near the tunnel, latterly used by the Kettering Rowing Club as a club house, became a workshop and railway shed. A pair of facing points was added in the running line, a lead off this then split into two lines. One ran into the workshop, the other ran between the building and the lake to form a siding. This layout remains the same at the present time. At one time (in the 1920s & 1930s) this boathouse building was formed of an old standard gauge railway coach body and it is thought when the present building was erected, the railway was diverted slightly to run behind it, as opposed to close to the lake shore as before.

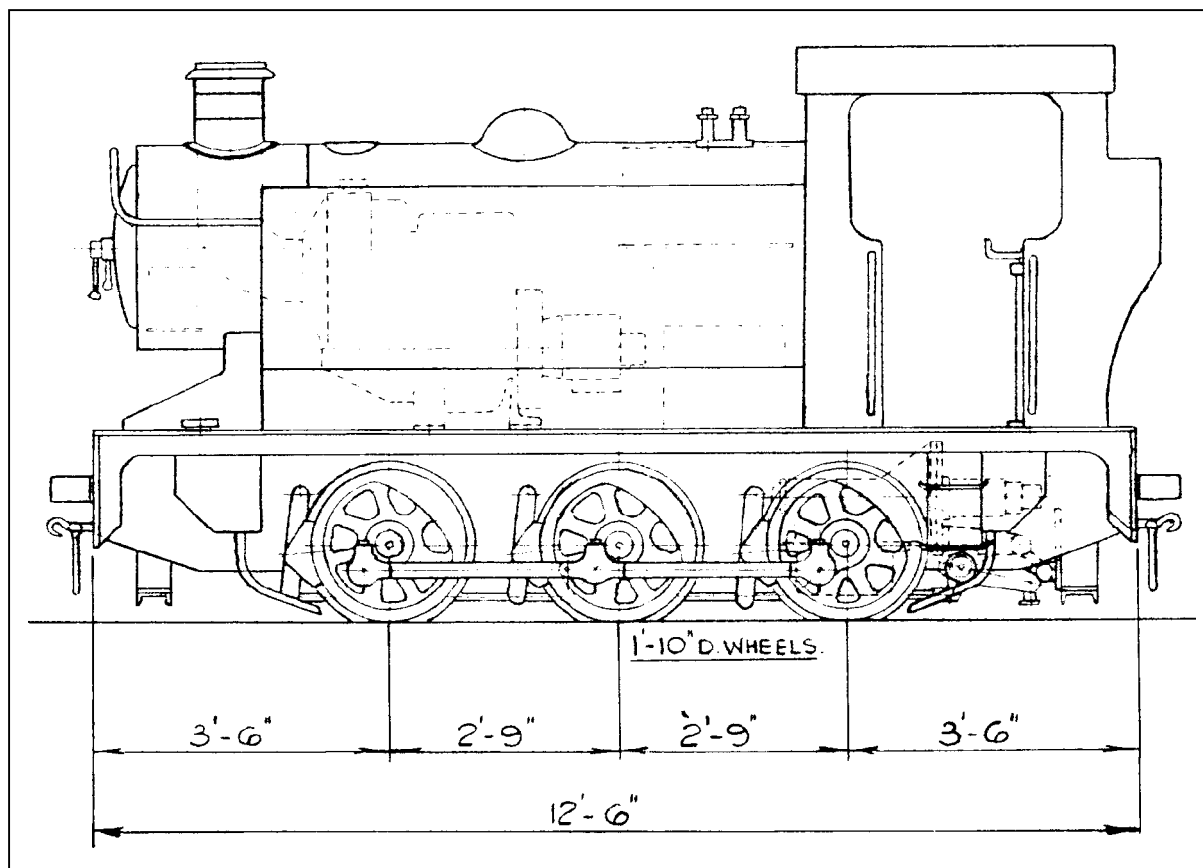
A new feature was a nature trail. This was set out around the southern half of the lake and surrounding area, with numbered points of interest. It was officially opened on Saturday 17th April 1971 and a small guide book was also printed for those following the trail. A new station was provided to serve the trail – "Nature Trail Halt", and this seems to have opened in 1974. It is not shown on the park plans for 1972 or 1973, but does appear on the 1975 version. Apparently its opening was connected to the fact Value Added Tax (VAT) was introduced on 1st April 1973. VAT was not charged on transport, so the opening of a second station neatly freed the park from being levied VAT on its train fares! It was a simple affair, located at about SP88097639. The second edition (dated April 1979) of the nature trail guide book, marks the halt and mentions you could cut the trail short by catching a train from there. The halt remained shown on park plans until the 1990s, last appearing on the 1995 version. However, it is thought the halt had not been used for sometime before that. It may be significant that the rules regarding VAT were changed on 1st April 1995, so that all rides including railways in parks became liable for VAT – the station had lost its main purpose.

In 1977 consideration was given to a brand new locomotive. This time Wicksteed Park went back to Baguley's at Burton-on-Trent, now trading as Baguley-Drewery Limited. Drawing 10874 shows a handsome steam outline 0-6-0 locomotive, based on a GWR/BR Hawksworth pannier tank. Overall dimensions were length 12ft 6in, width 4ft 0in and height 7ft 0in. Hydraulic transmission driving the rear axle was proposed. The price was to be £15,800. New coaches were also to be provided and Baguley's intended these to be built by Alan Keef Limited (then located at Cote Farm, Bampton, Oxfordshire). Unfortunately, as with the 1950s proposal, the plans came to nothing and the locomotive was never built.

Wicksteed Park Railway - Chapter Three: Alterations & Developments



A plan of the park dated May 1971. The future railway workshop at the time was a club house for the Kettering Rowing Club.



Extract (slightly reduced) from Baguley-Drewery Ltd drawing 10874, showing the new locomotive proposed in 1977. Regrettably it was never built.

(Baguley-Drewery Ltd. Courtesy Alan Keef)

Returning to the park – a skateboarding rink was built in 1978 and the same year saw the ferris wheel open. In 1979 a standard gauge industrial steam locomotive was put on static display by the children's playground. The history of this locomotive is fully detailed in Chapter Six. The 1970s had seen a fall in attendance (probably due to the development of large theme parks like Alton Towers) and by 1979 the number of visitors to Wicksteed Park for that year had fallen to 350,000, but the 1980s was to see large scale investment to attract back the crowds.

The 1980s

The early 1980s marked a change at Wicksteed Park. Investment saw new rides and attractions, the majority of which were open by 1982. This investment saw dividends and in 1982 attendance was 750,000 - over double that of 1979. A BBC Radio One roadshow was held in the park on Easter Monday, 7th April 1980 and the BBC television programme "It's a Knockout" took place on 27th April 1980. The BBC returned in July 1982 when an edition of the Radio Four programme "Down Your Way" came from the park.

The railway celebrated its 50th anniversary on Good Friday, 17th April 1981. Both Baguley locomotives were fitted with special circular headboards proclaiming "Golden Jubilee 1931 - 1981. 50 years". The two engines were posed for a photograph, "Lady of the Lake" on the running line and "King Arthur" on the engine shed line, near the water chute. This view

appeared in the *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Friday 27th March 1981. On the Good Friday a special run was made with "Lady of the Lake". Driving was Robert Wicksteed (Charles Wicksteed's grandson and the railway's first passenger), while the railway's first driver, Bill Jackson, rode on the train as a passenger. Another passenger was Bill Moore who had helped lay the track in 1931. Robert Wicksteed admitted to practising driving the day before, not having driven one of the trains since before the war. He went on to say the railway had always run at a profit and had carried about 10 million passengers since it opened. One of the special headboards is now displayed on the wall of the station.

Plans for large scale improvements in the park were unveiled on 12th November 1981 and included what the *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* described as "*An electric monorail system*". The same paper of 6th April 1982 stated the monorail would be built in stage two. In the event it was never built (although a pedal cycle monorail was later provided, see Chapter Seven). However, 1982 did see a major relaunch of the park and some significant new attractions. The pirate ship and roller coaster opened, and petrol cars were introduced on the former cycle track. Car parking charges were withdrawn and a new ticketing system for the various attractions (including the railway, see Chapter Four) introduced. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 4th November 1982 noted that the railway was the most popular ride and carried 459,000 passengers in a season.

April 1982 saw a collision between two trains (see Chapter Five for the full story) and following this accident, the Railway Inspectorate recommended the fitting of air brakes to the trains. Also they would only sanction the continuing operation of three trains on the railway at busy times, if a signalling system was installed. As the three train service was only required on about three days a year, it was decided the cost of the signalling was not justified and that two trains at busy times would be sufficient. Therefore, although the newer covered coaches were all fitted with air brakes, only five of the Baguley coaches were so treated – the remaining five being withdrawn. On the Baguley locomotives, finding room for the equipment was difficult. The left-hand (looking out from the cab) "side tank" was doubled in size to accommodate the compressor. The reservoir tank was placed under the buffer beam, entailing moving the cow-catcher forward. All this work was undertaken during the winter of 1982/1983, and was carried out by Harrison Brakes of Kettering at Wicksteed Park. The brakes were tested by the Railway Inspectorate with the train loaded with kerbstones as dummy weights. The tests were satisfactory - thankfully it was a dry day! Of the five Baguley coaches that were withdrawn - two were scrapped, two remain as frames only and are used for carrying rail and one has been converted into a wagon for maintenance. This is fitted with air brakes and has an open section for carrying sleepers and the like, a box for accommodating a generator and a wooden sided section for ballast. Air horns were fitted to the locomotives at the same time the air brakes were installed, these being mounted on the roof.

The winter of 1982/1983 saw the first major realignment of the track since the railway had opened in 1931. The section running northeast from the station towards Barton Road was straightened out, a cutting being dug for the new formation. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 28th January 1983 had a picture of a JCB excavating the new cutting under the headline "*Park train's new layout*". The park's managing director was reported as saying "*We are creating a cutting on a gentle curve near the station which will have bridge over it eventually*". In 2002 this has yet to happen. The report went on "*The track has not changed since it was first put down more than 50 years ago. The first 200 yards of new track, including the cutting, are under construction now and will be ready for next season which*

starts at Easter". The new cutting seems to have been made a feature. The annual "Railway Attractions" supplement to the June edition of the *Railway Modeller* has under the Wicksteed Park entry "Ride through new scenic railway cutting". The siding at the station was added at the same time, the points used were obtained new from Balfour Beatty. The long siding between the tunnel and the lake was removed with this work. This had been used to store the spare coaches, which were now to be kept at the station in the siding there. As has already been mentioned, one set of five Baguley coaches was taken out of use at this time so the station siding only had to accommodate five coaches.

2042 "Lady of the Lake" became famous when on Tuesday 13th December 1983 Esther Rantzen of the BBC television programme "That's Life" visited the park for filming part of an opening sequence for a new series starting in January 1984. Car parking fees were re-introduced in 1986, at £1.00 per vehicle. Autumn 1986 saw the start of a track relaying programme that continued until 1993, when the project was completed. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 9th April 1987 reported "The narrow gauge railway at the park is also being improved. During the winter £20,000 was spent to relay 700 yards of track and the remainder will be done over the next few years". However, the relaying caused some consternation. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 22nd October 1986 reported under the headline "Rumour on the wrong tracks!" that there were rumours the railway was being closed and lifted to be replaced by a monorail. It went on "Two sections of track totalling more than 600 yards have been removed as part of a major overhaul. Mr Ralph Alderson, acting general manager, said "I have heard the rumours from several sources. I don't know where they started but there is no truth in them at all. We have no plans whatever to put in a monorail – it would be far too expensive. We have a rolling programme to replace the track". And so the railway carried on towards its sixtieth anniversary.

The 1990s and the New Millennium

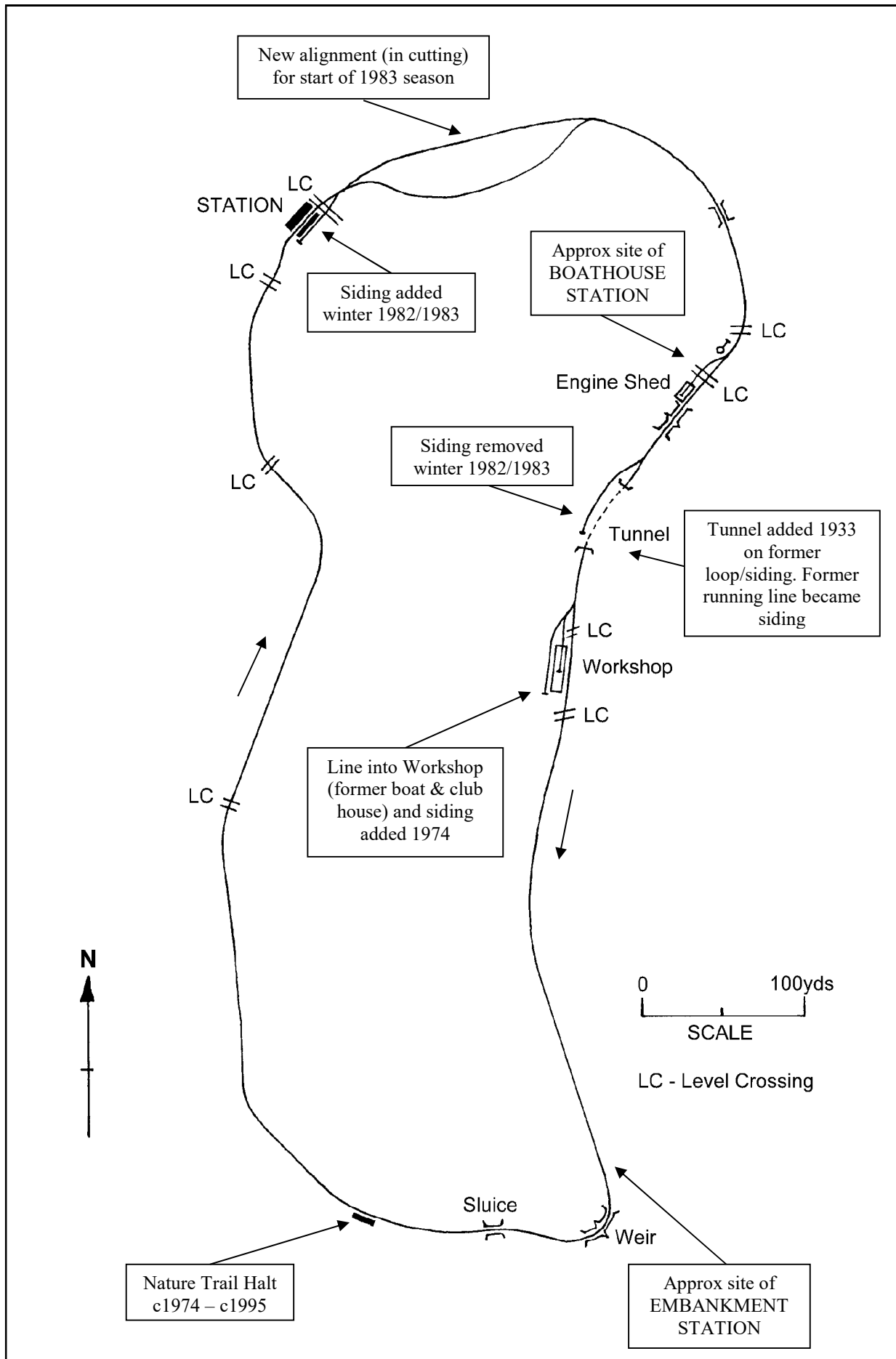
The 1990s saw a number of new rides and attractions added. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 15th January 1990 noted that £300,000 had been spent. New rides for the 1990 season were two German built nautic jets (individual water chutes) at a cost of £25,000 each, a cup and saucer ride costing £11,000 and a £15,000 new motor boat (called Kingfisher). In 1991 the pedal cycle monorail opened (see Chapter Seven) and in 1992 a new large roller coaster was built, with a junior roller coaster being added in 1994.

In early 1992 it was decided that the Baguley locomotives required a full repaint. Therefore, in February 1992 they were sent to A E Smith, a coach builder in Kettering. Sometime before, the Baguley locomotives had received an extended right hand "side tank" to match the other side, which was enlarged when the air brakes were fitted. "King Arthur" and "Lady of the Lake" were turned out in the same livery but with simpler lining and their names on the "side tanks", with "WPR" on the running plates. The works numbers and year of build were added on the smokebox door. A year or so later, "Cheyenne" was repainted in green & black (from black & red) – this work also being done by A E Smith. In 1996 the 75th anniversary of the park was celebrated (1921 was the year the lake, then the main feature of the park, was officially opened). The *Kettering Evening Telegraph* produced an anniversary supplement. Here it was stated the railway carried over 250,000 passengers each year, indeed the railway is still the most popular ride. 1996 also saw the introduction of the Canadian style children's train. In the same year 2043 "King Arthur" had a new Perkins P3 (type 4/3.152) engine fitted.

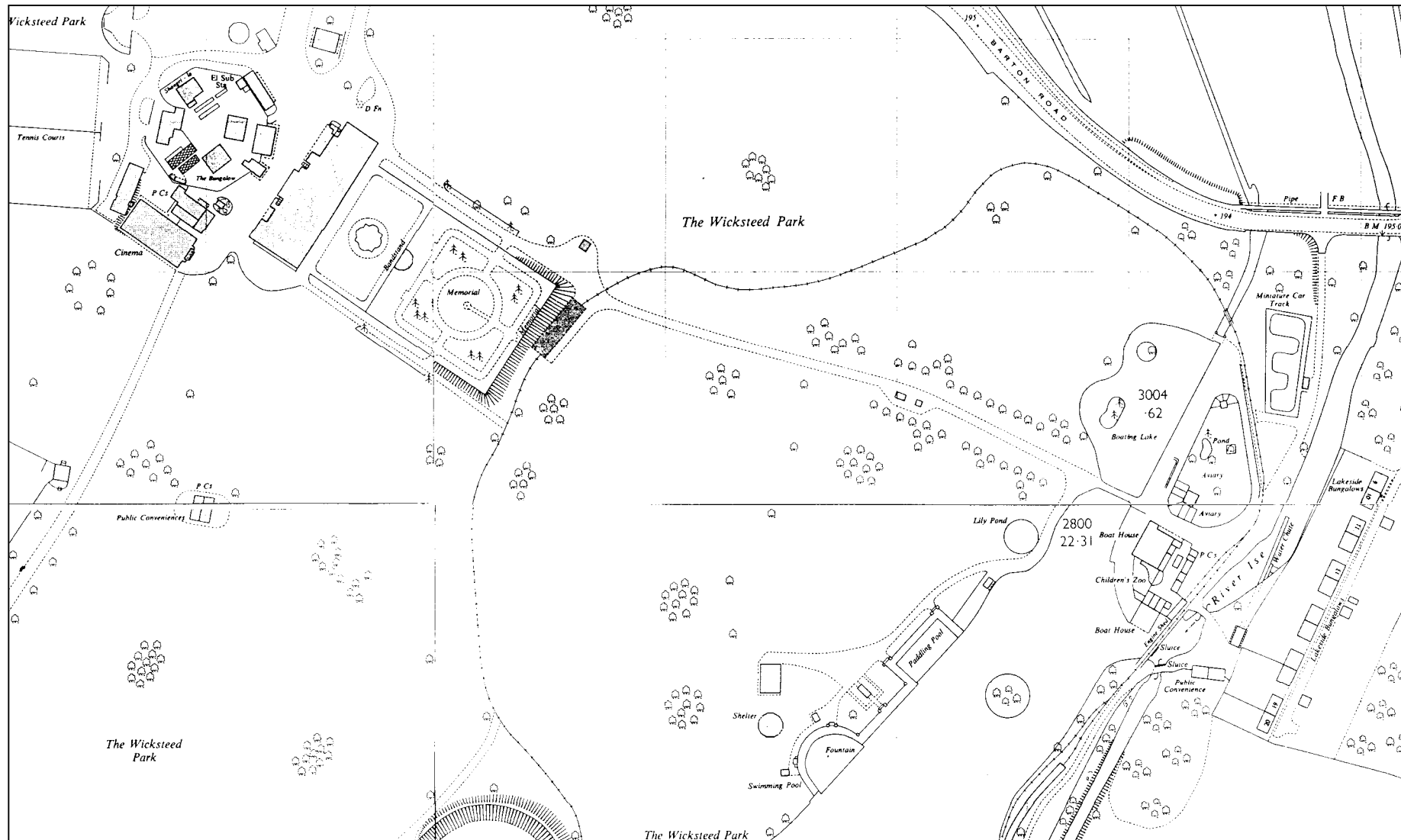
1997 saw a new logo and signage introduced for the park and "Santa Trains" ran on the railway for the first time in December 2000. The 2001 season saw a new £250,000 free children's playground installed, which Charles Wicksteed would have much approved. Marking the end of an era, Robert Wicksteed stood down as Chairman of the Trustees on Friday 26th April 2002. In May 2002 all the Baguley coaches were re-wheeled using wheels and axles obtained from the Ffestiniog Railway. August 2002 saw one of the Baguley coaches taken into the workshop for a major reworking of the body. It had been decided to adapt one of the coaches to allow the carriage of wheelchairs and as this was a change of use, the rest of the coach had to be brought up to modern safety requirements. The main alteration is the fitting of waist high side panels and doors. The seats at one end can be removed to allow space for two wheelchairs. If this trial is successful, the other coaches will be updated as well – with presumably one of the covered coaches having space for wheelchairs. In the summer of 2001, consideration was given to acquiring a steam locomotive. However, the idea has not yet been progressed with and at present "Cheyenne", "King Arthur" and "Lady of the Lake" still regularly circle the lake to the delight of children and adults alike. During the summer school holidays, around 2,000 people each day will ride on the railway. 2002 was the first year an accurate passenger count has been kept and as at 15th September, 158,955 passengers had travelled on the railway.

A Journey on the Railway in 2002

A trip on the railway today will start at the only station, located adjacent to the memorial garden. First, we have to buy two ride tickets from one of the ticket offices in the park. The nearest one, if it is open, is close to the station – just down the path leading to the lake. Each ticket costs 90p, making a ride on the railway £1.80 for an adult or child. At the station if it is a quiet day we can board the train as it waits in the station platform under the canopy. The coaches in use will probably be the covered ones, with the open coaches standing spare in the siding adjacent. The locomotive will almost certainly be "Cheyenne" and if large crowds are expected in the park "King Arthur" may be on the spare coaches ready. The guard will collect the tickets and check the safety chains are in place. Then, with a blast on the powerful horn, we are off. Crossing the path leading down to the lake, the siding trails in right. Descending we run through the cutting formed in the winter of 1982/1983. Next on the right is the nautic jets and cycle monorail. Curving to the right we cross over a stream on a small bridge. With the cycle monorail station right, the water chute is visible left. A facing point leads into a siding off to the right, which serves the engine shed. Passing beside this building, we rumble over a short viaduct crossing part of the lake. Next the tunnel is approaching and screams from the children will no doubt accompany the darkness. On exit, the lake is close by on the right. Another siding goes off right. This serves the workshop, which was formerly an old boat and club house. We have now left the bustle of the main part of the park and are running along by the lake and an avenue of trees. Few people are seen down here. The line now swings sharply right, as we cross the head of the lake on a curved bridge by a weir. A High Speed Train on the mainline might be heard at this point and after short distance another bridge is crossed by a sluice gate. The train now follows the shore of the lake closely and curves to the right. We are now returning to the noise and bustle – the "arena" area of the park is left, with many rides and amusements inside the racing car track. A curve to the left brings our train to the final stretch back to the station. A hoot on the horn is required as we approach a busy footpath crossing. The driver will have applied more power to climb the gradient back into the station and the end of our 1¼ mile journey. The trip has taken around 10 minutes.



Wicksteed Park Railway - Chapter Three: Alterations & Developments



An extract from an Ordnance Survey 25" Map revised in 1967/1968 and published in 1970. Reproduced here approximately full size.
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An extract from an Ordnance Survey 25" Map revised in 1967/1968 and published in 1970. Reproduced here approximately full size.
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What is probably "The Lady of the Lake" (judging by the works plate) heads a train out of the station and across the path down to the lake on the start of its journey.
(*M & L National Series Postcard. c1940s. Courtesy I Hurst*)



Some 50 years later, there are fewer visitors visible, as "Cheyenne" departs with the covered set of coaches. "King Arthur" stands spare in the siding, which was added in winter 1982/83.
(*J Scott. 3/6/02*)



"King Arthur" waits to depart with some expectant passengers. The locomotive looks smart and well cared for. A cow-catcher and air brakes are yet to be fitted.
(Sydney A Leleux. 6/7/62)



"Lady of the Lake" shows the modifications that came with air braking. Note the reservoir under the extended front buffer beam and extended side box. The locomotive has yet to be repainted to suit. "King Arthur" is just visible behind.
(G Fairweather. c1991)



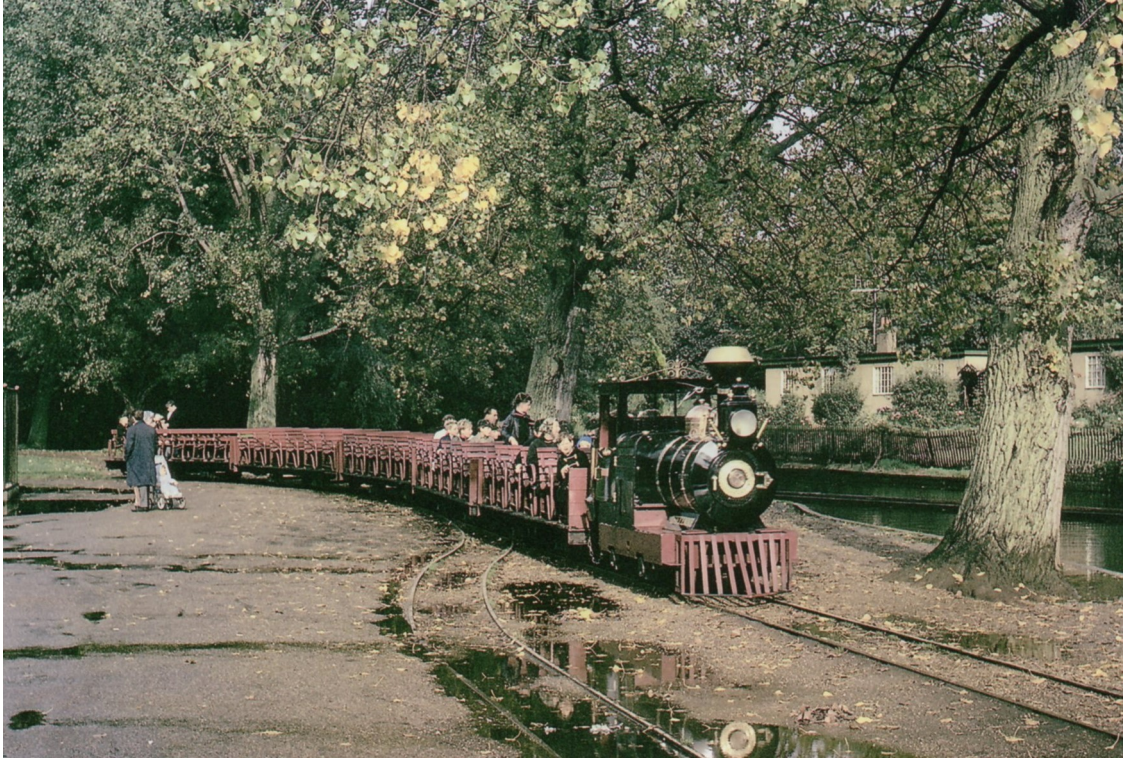
"Cheyenne" and the five covered coaches head away from the station, down through the cutting into which the line was re-routed in the winter of 1982/1983.

(P Scott. 27/8/02)



"Lady of the Lake" is about to cross the bridge at the north end of the park near Barton Road (which crosses the bridge in background). This view appears to date from before Easter 1953 when the locomotive was fitted with a Perkins diesel engine - there is no badge on the smokebox saddle. However, "The" has already been dropped from its name.

(Raphael Tuck & Sons Postcard. Early 1950s. Courtesy I Hurst)



"Cheyenne", unusually hauling a set of Baguley coaches, passes over the points leading into the engine shed. "Lakeside" bungalows built by Charles Wicksteed in 1930 for his workers can be seen to the right. They are still in use today.

(F Pugh. 1/10/66)



"King Arthur" and "Cheyenne" pose for the photographer and make for an interesting comparison. The latter is on the running line, while the former is on the engine shed line.

(F Pugh. 27/9/75)



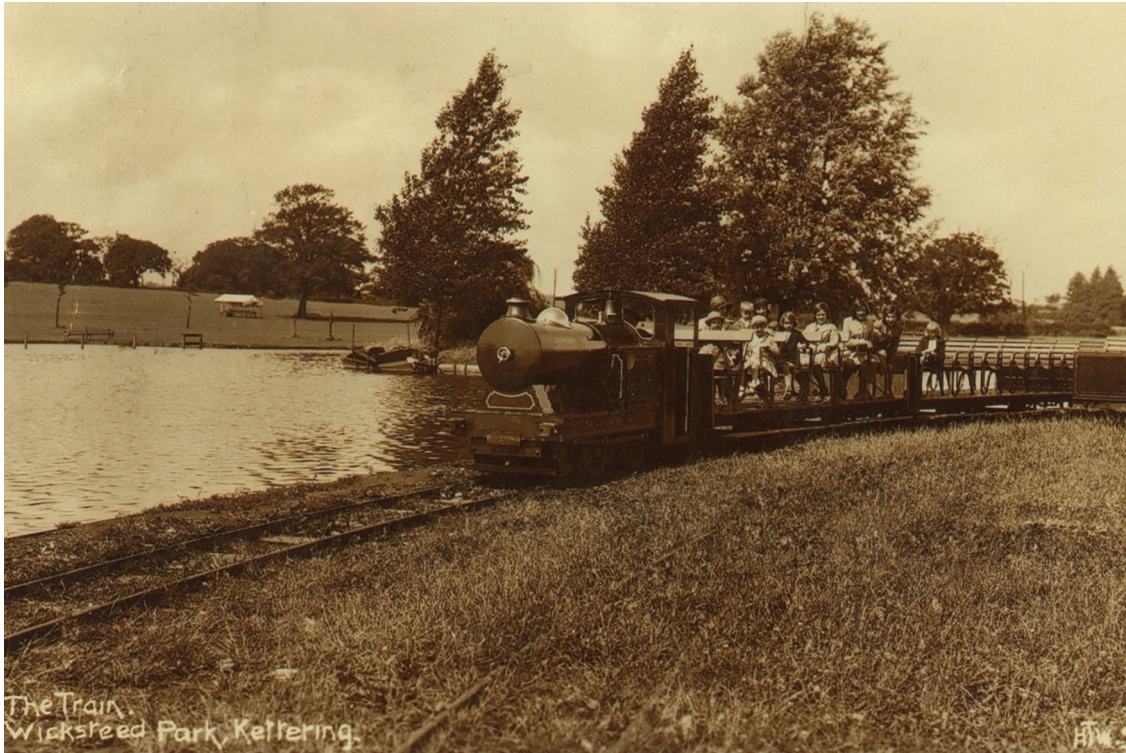
A superb view of "Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur" outside the engine shed.
Compare to the photograph on the title page.

(F Pugh. 17/5/80)



"Cheyenne" crosses the bridge behind the boathouse and alongside the water chute, which is clearly visible right. This bridge, like the others now has guard rails.

(F Pugh. 17/5/80)



This view dates from 1931 or 1932 - before the tunnel was built here. The siding or loop to store the spare coaches can be seen right, with an end of a coach visible. A coach with Baguley seats is formed behind "The Lake of the Lake", note the different seat design.
(HTW Series Postcard. Early 1930s. Courtesy I Hurst)



"Cheyenne" comes around the curve south of the workshop on the eastern shore of the lake.
(P Scott. 27/8/02)



At the south end of the lake, the line crosses a long bridge on a curve known as "Panter's Bridge". Here, viewed from the rear of the train is "Cheyenne".

(P Scott. 27/8/02)



"Cheyenne" crosses the bridge by the sluice gate in a view identical to that on page 20, but taken around 71 years later. The addition of guard rails is the most obvious change.

(P Scott. 27/8/02)



A train comes around the southwestern corner of the lake. On the original, signals and telegraph poles on the Midland Railway can be seen above the cab roof.

The locomotive is probably "The Lady of the Lake".

(Postcard, unknown publisher. 1930s. Courtesy I Hurst)



"Cheyenne" is only a little further around the line than the train above. The trees have grown somewhat over the years. The train is now heading north back towards the station.

(F Pugh. 17/5/80)



A lightly loaded train hauled by "Cheyenne" is crossing the level crossing at the north end of racing (former cycling) track. Here the line starts a gentle climb back to the station.
(P Scott. 25/4/02)



"Lady of the Lake" is about to cross the path leading down from the pavilion and enter the station at the end of its 10 minute, 1¼ mile journey.
(J Scholes. 3/5/80)



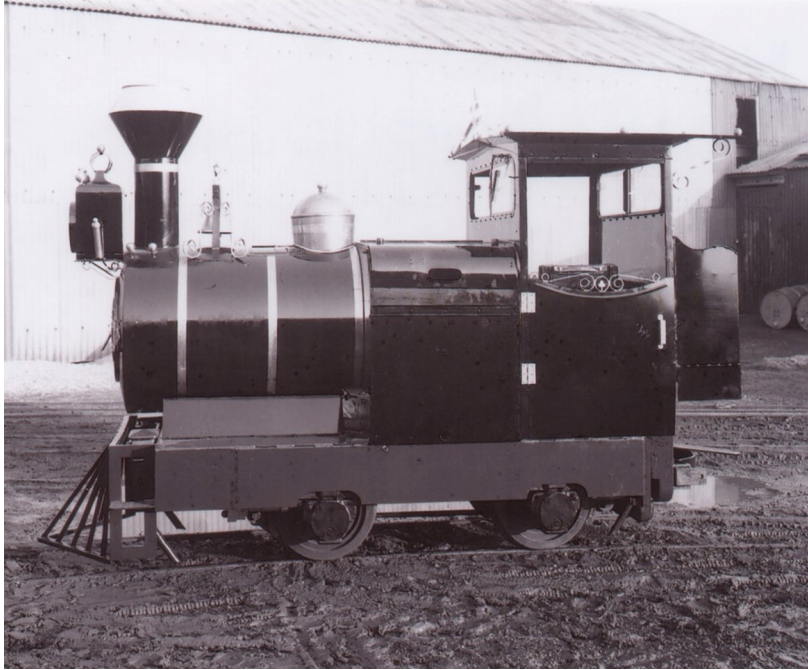
The railway celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1981. Here "King Arthur" and "Lady of the Lake" pose (outside the engine shed) with their special headboards.

(Reproduced courtesy of Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph. 27/3/81)



One of the headboards now adorns the station end wall.

(P Scott. 11/6/02)



Works number 22224, yet to be named "Cheyenne" is seen before delivery in the yard of Motor Rail Limited at Bedford. The frame extension at the front is clearly visible. Extra ventilation was later added in the engine side covers and smokebox door.

(Motor Rail Ltd. 2/66. Courtesy Alan Keef)



Another view of 22224 in Motor Rail's yard, but this time with two coaches. This photograph suggests the coaches were supplied as they are seen here - as frames complete with running gear and roofs, but with no floors or seats. These were added by Wicksteed.

(Motor Rail Ltd. 2/66. Courtesy Alan Keef)



A line up of all the railway's motive power for the author. "Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur" stand on the line to the workshop, while "Cheyenne" is on the running line. The picture was taken just after the end of service for the day.

(P Scott. 11/6/02)



"King Arthur" has just pulled the maintenance wagon out of the engine shed (its normal stabling place). The wagon is built on a former Baguley coach frame and is air braked.

(P Scott. 27/8/02)

CHAPTER FOUR

WICKSTEED PARK RAILWAY

OPERATION, TICKETS, STAFF & ANECDOTES

Operation

The railway opened in 1931 with two trains available for service. It is fairly certain only one was used at quiet times, but with both trains in use on busy days. The second train, when not in use was presumably stabled on the siding or loop on the far shore of the lake, close to where the tunnel was built in 1933. After that the siding between the tunnel and the lake was used to accommodate the spare train. The locomotives were housed in the engine shed near the water chute and boathouse. This was presumably built for the opening of the line, and at first seems to have been a simple wooden shed. Later it was rebuilt as a proper building. As eight coaches were originally supplied to the railway, it is most likely each train was formed of four vehicles - even when only one train was in use. Photographic evidence supports this. After the mid 1950s, when another coach for each train was provided, trains were normally formed of five coaches. In 1966 with the arrival of "Cheyenne" and the five covered coaches, three trains were available for service. Therefore, on the very busiest days a three train service was operated, this being the case up to the time of the collision in 1982. After that, one set of five of the original Baguley coaches was taken out of service and a two train service became the norm again at busy times.

Nowadays "Cheyenne" and her train of five covered coaches are parked in the tunnel each night and the spare rake of five Baguley open coaches is kept in the siding at the station. "King Arthur" and the maintenance wagon are housed in the engine shed by the boathouse and "Lady of the Lake" is stabled in the workshop. The two coach frames used as rail carriers are kept on the siding alongside the workshop.

Before "Cheyenne" arrived in 1966, presumably both locomotives were used without favour, as each should have been identical in performance. On the arrival of "Cheyenne", this became the normal preferred locomotive to be used, with one (or both) of the Baguley's in use if traffic permitted. After "King Arthur" was fitted with hydraulic transmission in 1971 this became the preferred second locomotive. In fact, "King Arthur" is the favourite locomotive with the staff, while "Cheyenne" remains the management's favoured choice. With a maximum of two trains running today "Lady of the Lake" is the least used, but it still sees some action. "King Arthur" is normally used for any maintenance trains that are required to run.

On opening, the railway seems to have had three or four stations. Although, this seems to have been reduced to just one, by the gardens, quite early on in the railway's life. This one station (originally called "Garden Station") has remained to the present time. Here all trains stop and all passengers have to change, rejoining the queue (if there is one) before having another ride. A halt called "Nature Trail Halt" was provided at the south end of the lake for a number of years. Trains have always operated around the railway in a clockwise direction.

The park attractions traditionally opened on Good Friday each season. In more recent years (starting with the 2000 season), this has been the weekend before Easter. Opening was then daily until the end of September or October. In more recent years daily opening finishes in early September with weekend opening until the school half term week in October, when the park is open daily, the season ending at the close of that week. Each day the park is open, trains have generally started running at 10am. The time of the last train has varied with the time of year and how busy the park is. In the early years on busy days this was dusk. In the present day, on bank holidays it will be 7pm. The track is walked every morning before operation commences. At around 9.50am the train is brought up to the station – this will be usually "Cheyenne" and the covered coaches. If the park is likely to be busy, "King Arthur" will also be driven up to the station and attached to the rake of Baguley coaches - ready to be used if passenger numbers warrant it. Good sunny days will see the Baguley coaches used instead of the covered coaches. All the locomotives can work on either set of coaches.

As would be expected on a simple railway, signalling equipment is minimal. In fact for many years there was none. Following the accident in 1982 (see Chapter Five for details) a signal was installed above the canopy of the station. This is used when two trains are running. When a train occupies the station, it displays a red light and when the station is empty a green light is shown. This then is visible to drivers of approaching trains, after they have rounded the bend by the racing track. The only other "signal" is a point indicator fitted to the facing points that lead into the engine shed near the boathouse. This is a disc with an arrow. Two trains are now the maximum number allowed on the railway - anymore would require some form of signalling.

Tickets

From the opening of the railway, tickets were sold at "Garden Station" - the main station. In the early days of the railway, photographs show tickets being checked whilst the train was in motion, with the ticket collector moving alongside the outside of the coaches using the footboards. Nowadays tickets are collected at the station. At quiet times the guard does this before the train departs and at busier times tickets are collected as passengers are admitted to the platform.

Tickets continued to be sold at the station at least until the time a new ticketing system was introduced for all attractions in the park. Then intending passengers had to buy vouchers from ticket offices in the park and hand these in when using each attraction, the number of vouchers varying depending on the attraction. This new arrangement was introduced at the start of the 1982 season on Good Friday, 9th April 1982. With the new arrangements, adults and children paid the same for a ride on the railway - the actual price for a ride fell to only 10p. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Saturday 10th April 1982 commented that "*New ticket system well received*". Later wrist bands were introduced and these entitled the wearer to unlimited rides on all the attractions. This system remains in force today.

Entrance to the park has always been free, this being one of Charles Wicksteed's principal aims in founding Wicksteed Park. However, since the 1950s (except for a short period between 1982 and 1986) charges have been made for car and coach parking.

Sample Ticket Prices (1931 – 1981)

Year	Adult	Child
1931	6d	3d
1956	6d	3d
1960	9d	6d
1962	1/-	6d
1966	1/6	9d
1968	2/-	1/-
1971	12½p (2/6)	7½p (1/6)
1973	15p	10p
1975	17p	12p
1977	20p	15p
1979	25p	20p
1981	30p	25p

Sample Voucher/Ticket Prices (1982 – 2002)

Year	Cost of Vouchers/Tickets	Number of Vouchers/Tickets for ride on railway
1982	10 for £1.00	1
1983	10 for £1.00	1
1992	4 for £1.00	3
1995	6 for £2.00	3
1997	60p each	2
1999	70p each	2
2001	75p each	2
2002	90p each	2

Over the years many varieties of tickets have been used on the railway. Up to the 1960s these seem to have been standard size railway card tickets (Edmondson style). The examples that have been seen were all printed by Willsons of Leicester. By the mid 1960s a change had been made to Automat tickets, but still unique to the railway. By the decimal age (post 15th February 1971) the tickets merely had "Amusement" printed on them and were presumably common to all the park attractions. After the change to vouchers/tickets and wrist bands, different designs have been used but mostly with "Ticket to Ride" printed on them. Examples of six typical tickets can be found on the next page.

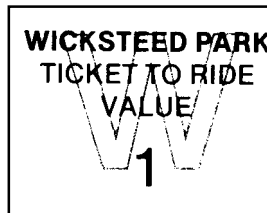
Examples of Tickets



Two tickets from the earlier days of the railway. 17294 was coloured white with a blue wash across the middle. 14504 was an interchangeable ticket - a number of these would have been required for a trip on the railway. The original was coloured pink with two yellow vertical stripes either side of the 2d.



76315 was blue in colour, while Automat ticket 29880 was coloured green. These two tickets appear to date from the 1960s or 1970 judging by the fare.



Finally, two tickets dating from after the voucher/ticket system was introduced in 1982. Then a specific number of vouchers or tickets had to be purchased for a ride on each attraction. The left-hand example dates from 1991 and was white with a blue W. Ticket 1055 dates from 2002 and was coloured blue and cost 90p.

(All railway tickets are courtesy of Mike Freeman)

Staff

The railway has a mix of permanent and seasonal staff and this has probably always been the case. Ever since the railway opened a driver and a ticket inspector/guard have manned each train. Nowadays, the guard remains at the rear of the train and can apply the brakes in an emergency. In the days before air brakes the guard controlled a hand brake. At busy times the station is also manned, and tickets are collected before passengers join the train. When tickets were sold at the station, and at quiet times, the guard doubled as a ticket seller. An engineer is responsible for the locomotives, coaches and track.

The *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 12th August 1955 carried an article about a Cambridge theology student who took a summer job collecting tickets on the railway. It is interesting in that it gives an insight as to how the railway was operated at that time. "*The bell clangs, the whistle blows and another Wicksteed Park special leaves the station. As it chugs out of the station the conductor, bearded 23 year old Peter Bellamy, swings aboard and begins another busy ten minutes punching tickets and answering the innumerable questions his young passengers fire at him*". The paper then went on to describe his day "*He starts at 9am sweeping the station and joins his train, King Arthur, at 11am. From then on except for a break for lunch he and the driver are there as long as the crowds remain. Rain, hail or sunshine, the trains run as long as there are people to board them and its just a matter of donning a mac if the rain is falling*". It would appear at this time crews were allocated to specific locomotives, other references to this have been noted. The paper went on to record that 1955 was the second season Peter had worked on the railway and he would possibly be back in 1956 – the last year of his studies at Downing College, Cambridge

Anecdotes

For those brought up in Kettering, the two original locomotives "King Arthur" and "Lady of the Lake" are part of everyone's childhood memories. The park was also popular with those living elsewhere in Northamptonshire, with Sunday school trips and the like to the park. The railway would have been an essential part of any visit.

Isobel Sleight was brought up in Kettering and remembers visits to the park in the 1950s and 1960s. She returned in the 1970s with her own children and comments that they seemed to get a lot of fun from the railway, enjoying its simple appeal. She says the railway was the best part of any visit to the park, this being the case right into her teens and is probably still the case now "*despite all the park's added attractions!*". She goes on to describe her memories of the railway "*It is hard to pin down exactly what the attraction was. I think there was always a sense of anticipation as you paid for your ticket, climbed onto the train and waited for it to fill up and the driver to ring the brass bell in his cab. Excitement mounted as seats became full and a slight sense of panic set in amongst the late arrivals – would they be in time for a ticket? Sometimes they weren't and those of us who had the foresight to arrive early felt a pleasant smugness as the bell rang and we trundled off! The train made its way down through the park, through the meadows along the side of the lake, past the aviaries and water chute and into the tunnel. The sense of anticipation as the tunnel approached was really quite considerable and the entry into the tunnel was always accompanied by screams and shouts (from the more unruly elements!). Emerging from the tunnel the track took us alongside the lake, and then on to the really exciting bit of the journey. I can still feel the sense of anticipation mixed with anxiety and excitement! The track ran over a little tributary of the*

lake, with a sheer drop on either side into the water – and it always seemed that the train rocked even more as it crossed this particular piece of track, seemingly about to hurl you out into the lake. There was a small waterfall on one side of the track (lock gates, I think) but in those days Niagara Falls couldn't have been more intimidating! The sense of relief as your carriage reached "terra firma" was always immense. We were then on the home straight as we made the slight incline up the park and back into the station. An unfailingly satisfying experience!"

Richard White remembers his father worked on the railway in the late 1940s and early 1950s as a ticket inspector and guard. These men collected tickets on the move, using the wide carriage step boards. As his father was swinging from carriage to carriage he lost his footing and dropped into the lake. When the driver stopped laughing, he managed to stop the train for him to climb back on – the water only came up to his knees. Richard himself remembers visiting his grandmother (who lived in Kettering) in the 1950s and 1960s and visits to the park had to include a ride behind as many of the locomotives as possible. As after "Cheyenne" arrived in 1966, there were three trains running at busy times, grandmother was none too pleased! He adds *"The park railway has always been a favourite of mine, with many memories – such as the bridges with no guard rails, the two older carriage sets squeezed into the old carriage siding next to the tunnel and chained to a tree to stop kids moving them"*. On one trip he remembers "King Arthur" struggling away from the station - after about 200 yards the driver stopped the train and shouted to the guard *"If you don't mind taking the handbrake off, perhaps I can keep the train moving"*.

Eileen Patrick, of Kettering, remembers her father drove on the railway in the late 1940s and early 1950s. She can vividly recall as a young child, her mother sitting her on the train and when the ticket collector came along saying *"I haven't got a ticket but my daddy is driving the train"*. She only had that treat a few times each summer though. Also remembered is an occasion when her father came home and related how he had stopped the train and jumped into the lake to rescue a woman that had fallen in. His usual locomotive seems to have been "King Arthur".

The tunnel at one time had wooden doors, which were tied back when trains were running. Once some children untied the doors and shut them in front of the train. The doors were destroyed, luckily the train was being hauled by "Cheyenne" and the remains of the doors went over the top of the locomotive and train – the covered coaches protecting the passengers.

One anecdotal story concerns two locomotives that were supposed to have been built for the railway by a garage owner in Leicestershire. Norman Headley, a retired farmer from the west of Leicestershire recalls a family legend that before the Second World War his grandfather had built two locomotives for Wicksteed Park and that one was called "Little Jean" after Norman's grandmother. He thought these locomotives were steam or steam outline petrol engines. It seems his grandfather, whose name was Mugglestone, owned a garage in the village of Overseal (just west of Ashby-de-la-Zouch). Apparently this was an "upmarket" establishment with a showroom and a good workshop. It is confirmed he did build a petrol locomotive for the nearby tramway of the Reservoir Pipe Company. This company made sanitary pipes and the tramway (with a presumed gauge of 2ft) served their clayworks.

However, during the research for this book no trace has been found of these locomotives. It is known that most of the original earthmoving for the development of the park and lake was

done by tractor, so no railway was involved there. Nor is it likely any locomotives helped in the construction of the railway itself. Little earthworks were required, and surely one locomotive would have been sufficient. From newspaper reports we know that the railway opened with "The Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur" and no photographs have been found that show any other locomotive at work on the railway except these two or "Cheyenne". It would seem therefore, this story as it stands is only family legend. It is conceivable though his father could have helped in the building of "The Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur" at Baguley's in some way, or perhaps the locomotives worked another railway – although which is a mystery.

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An advert from the *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 29th March 1983.



Early on a Bank Holiday Monday, "King Arthur" stands spare on the set of Baguley coaches in the siding at the station, ready to be used if the passenger numbers warrant it. Note the signal on top of the station canopy, visible above the locomotive cab roof.

(J Scott. 5/5/97)



Engineer responsible for the railway locomotives (among other things!), Ben Martin, stands amongst his charges. The location is the siding leading to the workshop.

(P Scott. 11/6/02)



A view looking along the railway towards the siding leading into the engine shed. The tunnel can just be seen among the trees. The point indicator formed of a disc with an arrow can be clearly seen. The water chute is immediately on the left.

(P Scott. 25/4/02)



"Cheyenne" has just past the workshop. The tunnel is just visible behind the last coach. The siding between the workshop and lake contains two Baguley coach frames.

(P Scott. 25/4/02)



Some 40 years separate these two pictures of "King Arthur", both taken at the same spot - the siding leading into the engine shed opposite the water chute. In the top picture the regular driver of "King Arthur" at that time, John Henry Williamson, stands by the cab with the locomotive on the running line. In the lower picture "King Arthur" is on the siding having been brought out of the engine shed for the photographer. A number of changes to the locomotive will be noted. Removal of the buffers, extended buffer beam to allow for air cylinder underneath, cow-catcher, longer sides boxes and an air horn on the cab roof are the most obvious. The railway has also changed name from LSR to Wicksteed Park Railway.

Compare to the present livery as shown by the picture on the title page.

(Top: *Courtesy Eileen Patrick. Late 1940s or 1950s*)

(Bottom: *R Bryant. 1/7/90*)



CHAPTER FIVE

WICKSTEED PARK RAILWAY

ACCIDENTS

Introduction

Thankfully, there have been very few accidents on the Wicksteed Park Railway, but sadly two deaths have occurred. In fact the two children who died were not passengers on the railway. Overall this is a good record when one remembers the railway has been running (except during the later war years) since 1931 and carries somewhere in the region of 200,000 passengers every year. In this Chapter the major incidents over the years are detailed, mostly from accounts in the local newspapers. Some of these mention a fatal accident in 1977, when a boy ran into a moving train, this is an error - that accident took place in 1937.

1935 – Newspaper Boy Hurt

The first recorded incident seems to have occurred in the railway's fifth year of operation, although it did not involve a passenger. On 22nd August 1935 a party of 150 newsboys from the Peterborough area visited the park for their annual outing. One of the boys, Joseph Bean of Queen's Drive West, Peterborough; received head injuries when he tripped over one of the rails. According to the *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 23rd August 1935, this happened "*about 30 yards in front of the train. The train stopped and the boy was in no danger of being struck*". He was taken to Kettering General Hospital and after treatment was allowed to return home with the rest of the party. The boy was reported as being employed by Elmer's of Lincoln Road, Peterborough.

1937 – Five-year old Boy Killed by Train

The first serious accident in the history of the railway occurred in 1937 when a local boy was killed, although again he was not travelling on the train. This was the first fatality to have happened in the park. It seems the lad ran into the side of a moving train. The accident and inquest were reported in the *Kettering Leader & Guardian* of Friday 27th August 1937.

On Tuesday 24th August 1937, five year old Derrick Adams of Pine Road, Kettering had gone to the park along with four of his brothers and sisters. Derrick was third of the five children and the eldest son. Their mother had packed them a picnic and at 2pm the children went off to play in the park for the afternoon. They were not accompanied by an adult.

At about 5pm the driver of the train, Percy William Bradshaw of Lyveden Place, Kettering; felt a bump about 500 to 600 yards after leaving the main station. He first thought the engine had run over a stone placed on the line by children and looked back, but could not see anything. He kept watching and after another 15 yards he saw a bundle in the centre of the track. Stopping the train he thought it might be a coat that had fallen from a carriage, however, as he approached he realised that it was a body of a child. He shouted to the ticket collector, Percy John Oliver of Paradise Lodge, Kettering; who was on the second coach. He

ran to the boathouse for assistance, while the driver went to the injured boy. An ambulance officer on duty in the park gave immediate attention and then Derrick was conveyed to Kettering General Hospital on the back seat of a private car. He was admitted at 6pm, semi-conscious and suffering from extreme shock. His right thigh was practically amputated and his right arm badly smashed, amputation being necessary. There was a cut on one of his temples. Tragically, he died at 7.15pm from his injuries. Following the accident the train was driven into the tunnel and locked up. It was not recorded which locomotive was involved.

Despite the train being full with 70 passengers, none of them seems to have witnessed the accident, as they were "*looking in the opposite direction where there was more to interest them*". This presumably being the lake and the various activities thereon. A Mrs Harris of London Road, Kettering described (to a *Kettering Leader & Guardian* reporter) how she saw "*the child walking down a slope. He seemed to be walking towards the track, looking in the opposite direction to which the train was coming. He did not seem to hear it at all and then when the train passed I could not see the child as it obstructed my view, but I did see the body rolling underneath for the full length of the carriage. It was the most horrible sight I have ever seen*".

The inquest was held at Kettering General Hospital during the evening of Thursday 26th August 1937. The boy's father, Frederick William Adams, gave evidence of identification and stated Derrick had often been to the park since he was one or two years old. He did not think that the boy had ever ridden on the railway. Mrs Kate Elizabeth Selkirk of Broadway, Wellingborough recalled the incident "*Many people were on it [the train] and I saw a boy by himself stepping towards the train, which as it passed obstructed my view. Then I saw the little boy being tossed about by the wheels underneath the train and what seemed to be a bundle left on the rails after the train had passed*". In answering questions she added that the train was travelling at normal speed and that the driver could not have possibly seen the child. She was unable to say if the boy had tried to board the train.

Driver Percy Bradshaw giving evidence stated that children ran behind the trains and sometimes tried to board them when they were moving. He said this was his sixth season of driving the train, and added the train always had four coaches and it could stop in six yards in an emergency. In the course of the inquiry the park manager, Mr A Neal, described how children pushed each other on to the track as the train entered the station and following three incidents in a few weeks, four park employees equipped with canes had been instructed to keep the children back (how times have changed, that would not go down too well today!). He added that since opening in 1931, 746,000 passengers had travelled on the train and 100,000 had been carried in the 1937 season up to the time of the accident.

The Coroner commented that the Police had difficulty in finding eye-witnesses and that what had happened was only surmised. He added that it was clear that the engine had not knocked down the boy, but he had been so by the second or third carriage. A verdict of accidental death was returned by the jury. The funeral took place on Saturday 28th August at 2.30pm at Kettering Cemetery, London Road, Kettering. In retrospect, it seems odd that the boy walked or ran into the side of the train - especially somewhere around the middle of its length. It is perhaps more likely he was trying to board the moving train.

1967 – Two-year old Girl Killed by Train

The second fatality happened at Easter 1967 and again the child was not a passenger, but was knocked down and killed by the train. The accident was reported in the *Kettering Leader* of Friday 31st March 1967.

On Easter Monday, 27th March 1967 two year old Linda Ann Jones and her family from Balfour Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton had gone for a day out to Wicksteed Park. Just before the incident Linda was accompanied by her godfather Mr E Loryman, when a woman asked him for directions to the first aid post. When he turned around Linda had disappeared. Stephen Collins of Kettering, the guard on the train hauled by "King Arthur" saw a girl by the side of the track, but when he passed the spot she was not there. He then ran forward to tell the driver to stop the train. The train was being driven by Edward Conneely also of Kettering, who had not seen the girl. He stopped the train immediately, but the little girl was found underneath the middle of the last carriage. Visitors in the park helped by lifting the carriage clear of her body, so she could be pulled out. The kiss of life was applied, but Linda was believed to have died instantly. The girl's parents did not know of the accident until alerted by their eight year old son. An eye-witness, 14 year old Charles Cragg, said he saw the girl rolling along in front of the train and then go under the carriages. It seems Linda ran right into the path of the train.

On Tuesday 28th March 1967, the East Northamptonshire Coroner formally opened and adjourned the inquest into Linda's death. The casualty officer at Kettering General Hospital said Linda had suffered from severe internal injuries. Death had been instantaneous. The inquest was reopened on Tuesday 11th April 1967 at Kettering Police Station. The Coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death, stating "*This was the most tragic occurrence, but I suppose there is always an element of danger in any park no matter what takes place*". He cleared the driver, the park management and the Linda's godfather of any blame. A short time after this, cow-catchers were fitted to the Baguley locomotives – possibly as a result of this accident.

1982 – Two Trains Collide

The next recorded accident actually directly involved some of railway's passengers. On Easter Sunday, 11th April 1982, two trains collided injuring 26 passengers. The accident was reported in the *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Tuesday 13th April 1982 and the *Chronicle & Echo* (a Northampton Paper) of the same date.

At "*tea-time*" a train hauled by "Lady of the Lake", driven by Mr Colin Curtis and reportedly carrying about 100 passengers was nearing the end of its circuit and approaching the station. However, it seems the gradient thereabouts defeated the train and it came to a stand. Mr Curtis then reversed for about 20 feet, scattering sand on the rails to improve adhesion. This was to no avail, so he reversed again. But this time, on a steeper part of the gradient, Mr Curtis found he had difficulty in stopping his train running back – despite the locomotive driving forward. The train was now in the area of the cycle track and around the blind bend there, came the second train hauled by "Cheyenne" and driven by Mr Ernie Butler. The two trains collided at about 5mph, although apparently Mr Curtis had managed to stop his train by then. Several passengers jumped clear, but many others were thrown off the train or flung into the adjacent seats or guard rails. Three ambulances were required to ferry those needing

treatment to hospital. There, 14 people between the ages of 2 and 58 were treated for shock, bruises and cuts. All were discharged after treatment. 12 people were treated by nursing staff at the park.

The driver of "Lady of the Lake", Colin Curtis was initially blamed for the accident and was removed from driving duties, which he had performed every summer since 1975. He did not *"follow the correct procedure after his train failed to negotiate a slope on the park tracks"* the park manager stated. However, it was later found that the driver of "Cheyenne" had poor eyesight and in addition had broken an unwritten rule that a train would only proceed beyond the curve if the train ahead was seen to be in the station. Following this accident, air brakes were fitted to the trains and on the instructions of the Railway Inspectorate, three train operation was stopped and a signal was fitted above the station, visible to approaching drivers.

1989 – Derailment in the Tunnel

On Bank Holiday Monday, 1st May 1989 a derailment occurred in the tunnel, bringing an unwanted extra thrill to the passengers on board the train. Around 15 of them received minor injuries. Both the *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* and the *Chronicle & Echo* of Tuesday 2nd May 1989 reported the incident.

The train involved was hauled by "Lady of the Lake" and became derailed in the tunnel. It then ran along against the tunnel wall, until brought to an abrupt halt by the post at the exit portal. It was this sudden stop which caused a few injuries. One passenger was reported as saying *"The train engine had just got to the entrance of the tunnel and it seemed to veer from side to side. I sensed it was derailling seconds before it collided with the end of the tunnel. It made everyone jump and a lot of people bumped into seats in front of them. If it had gone a yard further it would have gone into the water"*. Five children between the ages of 3 and 6, and three mothers were taken by ambulance to Kettering General Hospital, where they were treated but not detained. Some passengers were treated by first aid staff at the park. There was a lot of damage to the carriages and one had its frame badly twisted. This was scrapped and replaced by one of the carriages that had been withdrawn (and held as spare) in 1982. The railway was closed pending an investigation by the Railway Inspectorate, which revealed the derailment had been caused by the fracture of a rail retaining clip on the outside of the rail. "Lady of the Lake" derailed inside the spread track and the weight of the following coaches forced the locomotive forward across the track until it struck the tunnel wall.



The logo employed in the 1980s



A view of the curve at the north end of the former cycle track, looking towards the station.
This is the area where the two trains collided in April 1982.

(P Scott. 25/4/02)



"Cheyenne" emerges from the tunnel and passes over the points leading into the workshop.
When in May 1989 "Lady of the Lake" derailed inside the tunnel, the train was
brought to an abrupt halt by the post of the tunnel exit portal.

(P Scott. 25/4/02)

CHAPTER SIX

STANDARD GAUGE LOCOMOTIVE

DISPLAYED IN PARK 1979 - 1992

Introduction

In June 1979 a standard gauge steam tank locomotive was put on display in Wicksteed Park. This engine had an interesting background, related to the geography of the area. Although it left the park in August 1992, it is still resident in Northamptonshire. This Chapter relates the history of the locomotive, before and after its time at Wicksteed Park.

Lackenby Steel Works & Irchester Ironstone Quarry

The area around Wellingborough, like that around Kettering and a good part of Northamptonshire, was rich in iron ore. This was quarried from the 1850s onwards, the presence of the London & North Western Railway and the Midland Railway, allowing the ore to be easily transported to the local iron works. Later, the iron ore was transported much further, but eventually exports took over and quarrying ceased in 1969.

The ironstone quarries where our locomotive was to work were close to Irchester, just south of Wellingborough, collectively being known as Irchester Quarries. The original owner was Butlin, Bevan & Company Limited, who appears to have opened the quarry around 1872. Ownership changed to Thomas Butlin & Company Limited from 27th June 1899 and to James Pain from 1912. This latter company installed a standard gauge railway to serve the quarries, linking on to the London & North Western Railway's Northampton to Peterborough line at Wellingborough Midland Junction. James Pain sold the quarries on 8th June 1922, the new owner being Irchester Ironstone Company Limited, which was controlled by Cargo Fleet Iron Company Limited (of Teesside). In 1928 this company became a subsidiary of South Durham Steel & Iron Company Limited, which had been formed in 1898. The South Durham Steel & Iron Company officially took over ownership from 3rd October 1953. Irchester Quarries were formed of three main pits: Wembley (worked from 1924 until 1941), Lodge (1937-1969) and Wollaston (1956-1968). All these were connected by rail, with the locomotive shed being near to the village of Little Irchester at SP905661.

Much of the ironstone from Irchester went to the various iron & steel works on Teesside, and it was here that our locomotive started its working life. Works number 2323, was a 0-4-0 saddle tank, built by the Kilmarnock firm of Andrew Barclay, Sons & Company Limited at their Caledonia Works in 1952 - one of 14 steam locomotives to be built by the company in that year. Postwar changes to the iron & steel industry brought about the building by Dorman Long & Company Limited of a new 680 acre works at Lackenby, near Grangetown, just to the northeast of Middlesbrough. Construction of the new works started in the early 1950s and 2323 was supplied new to Lackenby by Andrew Barclay, leaving their Caledonia Works on 25th February 1952. 2323 had outside cylinders 16 x 24in in size with driving wheels 3ft 7in in diameter - the design and appearance being typical of the company. The locomotive was numbered No.6 at Lackenby, with a number plate on the cab side.

The arrival of new diesel locomotives at Lackenby in the early 1960s rendered No.6 (2323) spare and on 13th April 1964 the locomotive was sent to Irchester to work in the ironstone quarries. However, there was already a No.6 at Irchester, so almost immediately after arrival the number plates were turned upside down – renumbering her to No.9! This number was then carried throughout her time at Irchester Quarries. Livery was black, lined yellow with yellow side rods and buffer beams. South Durham Steel & Iron Company Limited was amalgamated with Stewarts & Lloyd Limited and Dorman Long & Company Limited on 22nd June 1967, Dorman Long becoming the British Steel & Tube Company Limited, with the other two as subsidiaries. This company was then taken over by the British Steel Corporation on 23rd June 1968. With a closure threat averted in March 1968, No.9 was kept at work. But in January 1969 traffic further diminished and No.9 was not regularly used, if at all. Closure of the quarries was announced on 14th May 1969. The ironworks at Hartlepool and Cargo Fleet, which Irchester had supplied since 1922, were being closed and the iron ore was not suitable for the new works like Lackenby. The last train of ore left on 4th July 1969. In 1971 Irchester Country Park opened on the site of the Wembley Pit and in 1987 the Irchester Narrow Gauge Railway Trust moved to the park and opened a small museum and metre gauge demonstration line, close to the site of the old locomotive shed.

Irchester Recreation Ground

Six steam locomotives and one diesel remained on site at closure - and No.9 was destined to be preserved locally. Irchester Parish Council contained a railway enthusiast, Rene Graham Wood, who persuaded the council to try and buy a locomotive from the company to put in the local recreation ground. However, the quarry manager Mr Carden said "We have disturbed the villagers by quarrying operations for almost a century; it is about time we gave them something". Therefore, No.9 was repainted by three employees – Mr F Inwood, Mr F Wood and Mr J Rawley. The *Kettering Leader* of Friday 8th August carried an article that showed the men working on the locomotive, and went on "*For the last fortnight.....They spent hours removing the grime and grease of years of hard wear and tear. They cleaned out the old firebox and boiler and repainted the bodywork in a resplendent green, black and red*". The locomotive was then placed in Wollaston Road Recreation Ground (SP923655), Irchester in August 1969. It had arrived there by 14th August and was probably delivered around the time of the newspaper article. The number 9 was not displayed. Irchester Parish Council was now the proud owner of a standard gauge railway locomotive and the local children had a new attraction to play on.

Inevitably in such a location, vandalism became a problem and following an asbestos scare; No.9 was (rather ineffectually) fenced off in 1978. The lagging around some of the pipes became exposed, but was later found to be harmless. Ten years after the locomotive arrived, it was decided No.9 should go to a home where she could be better looked after. The locomotive was first offered to the County Council for display in Irchester Country Park, but this was turned down. Instead she was offered to Wicksteed Park. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Friday 27th April 1979 reporting the move, quoted Irchester Parish Council Chairman Les Stringer "*I think this is an amicable solution to the problem as far as everyone is concerned. It had been vandalised very badly and was a nuisance to nearby residents*". The paper went on to say "*The loco is likely to remain where it is for some time yet as the ground is too soft to allow it to be removed easily*". In fact on Wednesday 6th June 1979 she was moved to Wicksteed Park.

Wicksteed Park

The locomotive moved was by low loader and a large crane off loaded No.9 at Wicksteed Park. Here she was positioned by the edge of the children's playground at SP87927720, almost overlooking the path down to the gardens and railway station. *The Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Friday 8th June 1979, reporting No.9's arrival, quoted a park spokesman as saying "At the moment it is going to be cleaned up and left as an attraction for the children. All the work will be done by the park's own staff. The engineer is a steam locomotive enthusiast and it will be his responsibility to restore it to full working order". Whether there was ever any serious intention to get No.9 into full working and steaming order is doubtful.

It seems by early 1980 little had been done to improve the appearance of the locomotive. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 7th February 1980 reported "A rusty old steam engine at the park is proving so popular with youngsters that staff cannot get near enough to paint it. Mr Wicksteed admitted the engine was unsightly but said they intended to paint it. "It was much larger than I expected and we couldn't put it anywhere else because it sank through the tarmac. We intend to clean it up and paint it. But staff can never get near it with a paint brush because it is always seething with people" he said". However, it seems the locomotive proved very popular with the children.

Rushden Station

After 13 years on display in Wicksteed Park, the locomotive was to move again. Presumably, it was thought a more suitable home should be found for No.9, where the facilities and expertise existed so she could be returned to steam. On Sunday 16th August 1992 she was moved by the Territorial Army to the former Rushden station (SP957672), the base of the Rushden Historical Transport Society. The Society was formed in 1976 and had by 1986 opened a museum in the station. Under the name Rushden, Higham & Wellingborough Railway, they hope to run trains over part of the former Midland Railway's Higham Ferrers branch. At the moment, the locomotive remains unrestored, parked with the other stock owned by the society at the station. Hopefully, one day 2323 will be in steam again.

Summary

- 25/2/1952 **Dorman Long & Company Limited**
Lackenby Works, Grangetown, Middlesbrough
- 13/4/1964 **South Durham Steel & Iron Company**
Irchester Ironstone Quarries, Northamptonshire
- 8/1969 **Irchester Parish Council**
Wollaston Road Recreation Ground, Irchester, Northamptonshire
- 6/6/1979 **Wicksteed Park**
Kettering, Northamptonshire
- 16/8/1992 **Rushden Historical Transport Society**
Old Station, Rushden, Northamptonshire



No.9 (Barclay 2323 of 1952) stabled by the shed at Irchester Ironstone Quarry. The locomotive had arrived from Lackenby Steel Works a few weeks earlier.

(Sydney A Leleux. 3/5/64)



Following the closure of the Ironstone Quarry in 1969, 2323 was repainted and placed in Woolaston Road Recreation Ground, Irchester. In this view the local children seem to be enjoying playing on the locomotive - climbing on top of and crawling under it.

(Sydney A Leleux. 14/8/69)



Arrival at Wicksteed Park was on 6th June 1979 and 2323 was placed by the edge of the children's playground on a very short length of track. The locomotive proved popular with the children. The pirate ship behind was added in 1982.

(R Bryant. 1/7/90)



By the time this view was taken, the locomotive had been fenced off. This was no doubt due to safety considerations. Just under two months later 2323 left Wicksteed Park.

(A Everett. 28/6/92)

CHAPTER SEVEN

OTHER RAILWAYS

CYCLE MONORAIL, CANADIAN TRAIN & MODEL RAILWAY

Introduction

As well as the railway itself and the standard gauge locomotive placed on display, there are and have been, a few other items of a more general railway interest in Wicksteed Park over the years. These are the monorail, the Canadian train and a model railway. A road (or land) train also operates in the park. This Chapter briefly describes these other "railways".

Cycle Monorail

Mention of a monorail as an added attraction had first been made in 1981, this being an electric type. Eventually a cycle monorail was built, where the public provided the motive power. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of 15th January 1990 in describing the new features for the 1990 season went on "*and that will be followed next season by a new 200m long cycle-monorail which should be ready by Easter 1991. The £250,000 rail, which will stand around three metres off the ground, will allow visitors to pedal their way round the park and get a bird's eye view of the other attractions*".

The new monorail opened on Good Friday, 29th March 1991 - the first day of the 1991 season. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Tuesday 2nd April 1991 reported "*Queues built up for the latest attraction, a monorail ride, but one of the park's oldest rides, the miniature train, showed it still had plenty of pulling power*". Located in the northeast corner of the park, the monorail runs round the children's boating lake (later known as the small lake), with its station adjacent to the railway between the mini-cars and aviaries at SP88357705. The braced box sectioned track is supported 3 metres above ground level on steel posts, which are set in concrete. The track is 255 metres in length and takes a meandering route around the lake. The ten cars are constructed of plastic with a steel chassis and are made to simulate helicopters. Motive power is provided by the rider, who peddles the car around the track. Returning to the station the car is pneumatically braked to a stop to prevent a collision with the car in front.

The whole installation was made by Vekoma Rides Manufacturing of Vlodrop in the Netherlands. Wicksteed Park was the fifth installation of a cycle monorail made by the company. Interestingly, the history of Vekoma Rides has a number of similarities to that of Wicksteed Engineering. Vekoma was founded in 1926 by Hendrik Op het Veld, a farmer's son and blacksmith. Developing his business he manufactured harrows, ploughs and sowing machines. He also developed expertise in small steel structures. When the agricultural industry went into decline in the early 1950s the company got involved in steel structures for the mining industry. Decline in that industry brought a change to work for the petrochemical industry, before in 1967 they entered the amusement business. From 1983 this was the company's only work. From moving from agricultural to light engineering to the amusement industry, the company has followed the same route as Charles Wicksteed did.

Canadian Train

This is basically a children's fairground ride and is located in the arena area (inside the racing car track) at SP88007678. It was installed in 1996 and manufactured by Industrias Falgas of Girona, Spain. It has a circuit of track (about 15" gauge), with a number of tight curves, along with a tunnel. The train is formed of an articulated set of five coaches. It is remotely controlled and has no driver, the train picking up its power through the running rails.

Model Railway

The first model railway opened at the start of the 1979 season on Good Friday, 13th April 1979. The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Tuesday 17th April 1979 under the headline "*Wicksteed's Bumper Weekend*" stated "*Main attraction was the Hornby Railway Exhibition which is new to the park this year*". The annual "*Railway Attractions*" supplement to the June 1979 edition of the *Railway Modeller* has under the Wicksteed Park entry "*A Hornby scenic railway exhibition; 20' x 10' exhibition of 12 Hornby trains with rolling stock in scenic setting, together with a 12' x 6' Monza race track for scalextric cars*". Admission was 20p for adults and 15p for children. It was housed in the pavilion building. This model exhibition and display seems to have lasted until the end of the 1982 season. However, it was replaced by a new layout and display.

The *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph* of Thursday 19th April 1984 reported "*Wicksteed Park throws open its gates to the new season tomorrow after a £100,000 facelift. New attractions include.... a model centre featuring a large Hornby railway layout....*". The June 1984 "*Railway Attractions*" supplement to *Railway Modeller* described it as "*Large model railway exhibition covering a Hornby layout, separate Mountain Railway, German railway layout, working steam models, 3½" gauge x approx 20/25 metres long track of working steam driven Rocket, Video Cinema showing film of Cape to Cairo Railway, Railway Wonders of the World & British Steam Cavalcade*". This was located in a building in the amusement area, as opposed to the pavilion. It seems to have closed by the 1990 season as it is not shown on the park plan for that year.



The roller coaster logo introduced for the 1997 season. The word "leisure" was dropped in 2000 and from the 2001 season the banner underneath "Wicksteed" was removed entirely.

Appendix One

The Baguley Companies

For a full history, "Baguley Locomotives 1914-1931" by Rodney Weaver, published in 1975 by the Industrial Railway Society is recommended.

Baguley (Cars) Limited was registered as a company on 3rd September 1911 with Ernest Baguley as manager. Born in 1863, Ernest Edwin Baguley (later Major Baguley) had served an apprenticeship in a Tyneside shipyard, before moving to the drawing office of W G Bagnall Ltd in Stafford. Baguley (Cars) Ltd had their works in Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire (SK238228) and as the name suggested, cars were to be their main business.

However, the First World War brought the need for 2 foot narrow gauge railways and by the end of the war Baguley had supplied 50 petrol 0-4-0 locomotives to the War Department, most seeing use in France. Motor car production resumed in 1919, but ceased for good in 1921. The company expanded the railway side of the business and undertook general engineering for the local brewery companies in Burton-on-Trent. On 10th April 1923 the company changed its name to Baguley (Engineers) Limited in respect of the changed nature of its work.

Baguley (Engineers) Limited built their first steam outline "miniature" railway locomotive in 1928 for Lilleshall Hall in Shropshire, with another locomotive for the same location being completed in 1929. In early 1931 the two locomotives were constructed for the subject of this book - Wicksteed Park. These were the last steam outline locomotives to be built by Baguley (Engineers) Limited, but not the last by the Baguley companies. In April 1930 the Drewry Car Company terminated its manufacturing agreement with Baguley, causing the loss of a major part of its output. The order for the Wicksteed Park locomotives and coaches must have meant welcome work at this time. However, the loss of the Drewry work, coupled with an unprofitable order for locomotives from Poland, caused the company to be put into receivership in August 1931, the works closing in October 1931.

It was not long though before Ernest Baguley started a new company. E E Baguley Limited was registered on 30th April 1932 and had a small works off Clarence Street, Burton-on-Trent. In 1934 they moved to larger premises in Uxbridge Street (SK243225). This new company went on to build another seven steam outline locomotives – three for Trentham Gardens in Stoke-on-Trent and four for Robert Lakin of Streatham, who was an agent for fairgrounds rides and the like. Ernest Baguley remained Managing Director of E E Baguley Limited until 1946, passing away on 14th November 1948.

The Drewry Car Company brought a controlling interest in E E Baguley Limited in 1964 and in June 1967 the company of Baguley-Drewry Limited was formed. Following the cancellation of the main part of a locomotive order for Mozambique, Baguley-Drewry Limited went out of business in December 1984. However in January 1985 some of its staff formed a new company – Baguley Engineers Limited, located in Maltings Industrial Estate, Derby Road, Burton-on-Trent. This last company is still trading (in 2002), and undertakes some railway work such as wheels and axles, as well as supplying spare parts. In 1996 HPE Tredegar Ltd acquired the rights to build locomotives to the original Baguley-Drewry designs

and this culminated in an order for seven locomotives for export to Sudan. Nevertheless, HPE Tredegar Ltd went into receivership in November 1996, apparently following problems with three railcars it had built for the Snowdon Mountain Railway.

"Miniature" narrow gauge steam outline locomotives only amounted to a small part of the total output of the Baguley companies. Their standard and narrow gauge products have been exported all over the world and many are still in service. However, the locomotive supplied to Lilleshall Hall in 1928 is thought to be the first 2 foot gauge steam outline type ever built, preceded on any gauge, by probably only the 1909 Bassett-Lowke built "Blacolvesley" (see Appendix Six for Charles Wicksteed's connection with this locomotive).

Motor Rail Limited

For a full history, "A Guide to Simplex Narrow Gauge Locomotives" by David Hall and John Rowlands, published in 2001 by The Moseley Railway Trust is recommended.

The Motor Rail & Tramcar Company Limited was incorporated on 20th March 1911. The founders were John Abbott, who had interests in the East India Tramways Company (which ran horse trams) and George Gale, an accountant. In 1907 work began on a scheme to motorise these trams using petrol engines with mechanical (and later) electrical transmission. The outcome of this, in 1909, was a patent for the "Simplex" gearbox submitted by John Abbott's son, John (Jack) Dixon Abbott.

The intention of the new company was to build and sell railcars and tramcars using petrol engines and the new Simplex gearbox. The first vehicles were built at the Phoenix Ironworks in Lewes, Sussex - but by 1914 the company was looking for new premises. Work for the War Office meant increased pressure for a new works and in early 1916, an agreement was reached with the Bedford Engineering Company to use its premises at Houghton Road, Bedford. John Abbott passed away on 23rd August 1916, while his sons John Dixon Abbott and Tom Dixon Abbott continued to serve the company.

The majority of work at this time was the construction of 60cm gauge petrol locomotives ("Trench Tractors") for the War Office - the first appearing in 1915, with over 700 being produced in 1918. At the start of that year a new site was purchased in Elstow Road, Bedford (TL053488). This was a former laundry and later adjacent land was also acquired. The works expanded again in 1920, when the adjoining premises of Slogger Engineering became available. The first standard gauge locomotive was built in 1919 and although tramcars and railcars continued to be produced, standard and narrow gauge locomotives dominated in the 1920s. On 16th April 1931 the name of the company was changed to Motor Rail Limited.

A road dumper truck was first produced in 1939, the Motor Rail Dumper. The Second World War again brought orders for locomotives from the War Department, although this time diesel engines were employed. Following the war, Motor Rail started to develop its export market and recruited agents in India, the Far East and particularly Africa. In fact, even before 1953, 500 locomotives had been sold in South Africa. In the 1950s the company was probably at its peak - in 1958, 10 locomotives a month were produced. However, even at its height, Motor Rail was a small company employing no more than 150 people – very much smaller than its main competitors.

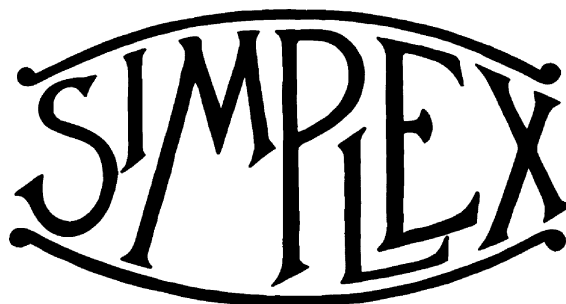
After some managerial changes in 1965, some new ideas were introduced. Flameproofing, hydraulic transmission and narrow locomotives for mines, along with battery electric locomotives, being main ones. By 1969, 90% of Motor Rail's output was for export. The company also sought to diversify. This work included forklift attachments, concrete breaking machines and road sweepers. On 1st September 1972, Motor Rail Limited became a Holding Company and the business of manufacturing locomotives and other vehicles passed to a wholly owned subsidiary company called Simplex Mechanical Handling Limited. In 1977, Wemyss Development Company bought control of Simplex Mechanical Handling Limited and Motor Rail Limited. By the early 1980s, locomotives had become a very small part of the company's business. In 1983 this section of the business was transferred to Simplex Locomotives Limited, although still on the same premises and with the same staff.

A one-off locomotive order was received in 1986 and Simplex subcontracted this work to Alan Keef Limited of Cote Farm, Bampton, Oxfordshire. A similar order in 1987 went the same way, and in August 1987 it was decided to cease locomotive work and close the factory at Bedford. All the equipment and machine tools were sold at auction at Elstow Road on 15th September 1987. The locomotive business was transferred to Alan Keef Limited, now at their new premises at Lea Line, near Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. Simplex Mechanical Handling continued to deal in drum handling machinery, but the original Motor Rail company was dissolved on 15th December 1987. Alan Keef Limited continues to provide spares for Simplex locomotives.

The locomotive supplied to Wicksteed Park, was the only steam outline type Motor Rail ever produced, although other examples were later adapted to be so. The rest of the vast output was for industrial concerns at home and abroad – indeed many of their locomotives can still be found at work around the world. The oldest locomotive in British industrial service is thought to be Motor Rail 5402 of 1932, still hard at work on a Scottish peat farm.

Baguley (Engineers) Ltd.

Burton-on-Trent



© Alan Keef Limited



A Baguley works photograph of 2043 "King Arthur", with the two coaches that were completed by Baguley's. The locomotive is fully lined and painted – compare to photograph on page 20 where it is finished in works grey livery.
(Baguley [Engineers] Limited. 1931. Reproduced by courtesy of Baguley Engineers Ltd, from original photograph held by Lichfield Record Office. Ref: B4288/C/2/302)



By way of a comparison, here is a view of "Cheyenne" by the siding leading into the workshop. This was the only steam outline locomotive built as such by Motor Rail Ltd, although other examples were converted later by their owners.

(P Scott. 11/6/02)

Appendix Two

Details of Locomotives

WORKS NO	NAME	BUILT	BUILDER	GAUGE	WHEEL ARGMT	ORIGINAL ENGINE	WEIGHT	LENGTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT	WHEEL BASE	WHEEL DIAMTR
2042	THE LADY OF THE LAKE (1)	April 1931	Baguley (Engineers) Ltd	2ft	0-4-0	Baguley Petrol 20/25HP (2)	2.3 ton	11ft 0in	3ft 6in	5ft 6in	3ft 1½in	1ft 6in
2043	KING ARTHUR	April 1931	Baguley (Engineers) Ltd	2ft	0-4-0	Baguley Petrol 20/25HP (3)	2.3 ton	11ft 0in	3ft 6in	5ft 6in	3ft 1½in	1ft 6in
22224	CHEYENNE	Feb 1966	Motor Rail Ltd	2ft	4w	Dorman 2LB Diesel 40HP	3.5 ton	10ft 6in	4ft 2in	7ft 3in	3ft 4½in	1ft 6in

Notes

Dimensions for 2042 & 2043 are as locomotives originally built.

(1) - 2042: Name shortened to "Lady of the Lake" by 1952.

(2) - 2042: Perkins 25HP diesel engine fitted 1953.

(3) - 2043: Perkins 25HP diesel engine fitted 1952. Hydraulic transmission fitted 1971.

Appendix Three

Details of Rolling Stock

NUMBER OF VEHICLES	BUILT	BUILDER	OVERALL LENGTH	OVERALL WIDTH (1)	SEAT WIDTH	WHEEL BASE	WHEEL SIZE	SEATS
2	April 1931	Baguley (Engineers) Ltd	18ft 3in	4ft 10in	4ft 0in	8ft 0in	1ft 2in	18 Reversible
6	April 1931	Baguley (Engineers) Ltd & Charles Wicksteed Engineering Co Ltd (2)	18ft 3in	4ft 10in	4ft 0in	8ft 0in	1ft 2in	18 Fixed
2	Mid 1950s	E E Baguley Limited (3)	18ft 3in	4ft 10in	4ft 0in	8ft 0in	1ft 2in	18 Fixed
5	March 1966	W G Allen Limited & Wicksteed Park (4)	19ft 8in	4ft 10in	4ft 6in	8ft 3in	1ft 0in	18 Fixed

Notes

- (1) - Excluding footboards
- (2) - Frames built by Baguley, seats added by Wicksteed
- (3) - Thought to be brake coaches
- (4) - Frames built by Allen, seats added by Wicksteed

The only other items of rolling stock (at present) are:
 One maintenance wagon (built on a former Baguley coach frame)
 Two former Baguley coach frames used as rail carriers

Appendix Four

List of Known Postcards

This is not an exhaustive list, as it is quite likely that not all the postcards published showing the railway have come to light. Multi-view cards are not listed if the railway view appears on another postcard in full. Variations such as tinting, wording on the back and changes in style are not listed where the view is the same. The date shown below relates to the approximate date the photograph used was taken, as opposed to the date(s) the card was published and/or available. Where details are shown in **bold**, those cards appear in the book. The majority of the information for this section was supplied by Ian & Lynne Hurst, to whom thanks are due.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title on Card</u>	<u>View Depicted</u>	<u>Approx Date of View</u>
<u>ETW Dennis Ltd, Scarborough</u>			
K1010L	Miniature Railway, The Wicksteed Park, Kettering The Train, Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Lady of the Lake at north end of park near Barton Road Cheyenne at level crossing near north end of racing track	Mid 1950s Mid 1980s
<u>HTW Series</u>			
	The Train, Wicksteed Park, Kettering The Train, Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Lady of the Lake passing stabled coaches at site of tunnel Lady of the Lake crossing bridge by sluice gate	Early 1930s Early 1930s
<u>J Salmon Ltd</u>			
21195	The Miniature Railway, Wicksteed Park, Kettering	King Arthur running from station towards Barton Road	1930s
<u>Kingsley, Leicester</u>			
KN1343	Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Cheyenne approaching station	1970s
<u>M & L National Series</u>			
	Wicksteed Park, Kettering Miniature Railway, Wicksteed Park, Kettering Miniature Railway, Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Baguley locomotive crossing bridge by boathouse Baguley locomotive departing from station (front view) Baguley locomotive departing from station (side view)	1940s 1940s 1940s

Wicksteed Park Railway - Appendix Four: List of Known Postcards

Photochrom Co Ltd, Tunbridge Wells

V3598	Wicksteed Park, The Miniature Railway	Baguley locomotive departing from station (view towards lake)	1930s
72374	Kettering, Wicksteed Park, Miniature Railway	King Arthur passing site of tunnel	Early 1930s
78915	Kettering, Wicksteed Park, Lake & Miniature Railway	Baguley locomotive passing north end of lake	Late 1930s
79166	Wicksteed Park, Kettering, Lakeside Railway	Baguley locomotive at southwestern corner of lake	Late 1930s
79170	Wicksteed Park, The Paddle Boat Pool & Lake	Baguley locomotive passing north end of lake	Late 1930s

Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd

KT36	Miniature Railway, Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Lady of the Lake crossing bridge near Barton Road	Early 1950s
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Valentine's & Sons Ltd

G2624	Model Yacht Pond, Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Baguley locomotive passing yacht pond by cycle track	1930s
G2931	Miniature Train, Wicksteed Park (Kettering Multi-view)	Baguley locomotive at north end of lake near Barton Road	1930s

Photographic Heritage

KE-00xx	Wicksteed Park (Kettering Multi-view)	Cheyenne on eastern side of lake	1980s
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Unknown Publishers

K120	Lakeside Railway, Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Baguley locomotive at southwestern corner of lake	1930s
	The Wicksteed Park, Kettering	Lady of the Lake emerging from tunnel	1960s
	The Wicksteed Park, Kettering, The Miniature Railway	King Arthur passing points leading into engine shed	1960s

Appendix Five

Chronology of Important Dates

30th March 1847	Charles Wicksteed born in Leeds
1871	Charles Wicksteed moves to Kettering
January 1914	Land for village and park purchased
29th January 1916	Wicksteed Village Trust formed
1917	First playground equipment installed in park
14th May 1921	Lake officially opened
24th September 1930	Two locomotives and eight carriages ordered
19th March 1931	Charles Wicksteed dies
3rd April 1931	Railway opens
1933	Tunnel built
24th August 1937	Small boy killed by train
1942 - 1945	Railway closed due to war and petrol shortage
19th April 1946	Railway reopens after war
1950	New 0-4-0 locomotive proposed, but never ordered
1952	2043 "King Arthur" fitted with Perkins diesel engine
1953	2042 "Lady of the Lake" fitted with Perkins diesel engine
Mid 1950s	Two extra carriages obtained
March 1961	Reconditioned Perkins engines fitted to both locomotives
March 1966	New locomotive ("Cheyenne") and five carriages arrive
27th March 1967	Small girl killed by train
1971	Hydraulic transmission fitted to 2043 "King Arthur"
1974	Track laid into existing building to form workshop/shed
1977	New 0-6-0 locomotive and carriages proposed, but never ordered
6th June 1979	Standard gauge locomotive arrives on display
17th April 1981	Railway celebrates its 50th anniversary
9th April 1982	New ticket system introduced
11th April 1982	Two trains collide
Winter 1982/1983	Air brakes fitted to locos and carriages. Five carriages withdrawn
Winter 1982/1983	Track realigned, siding added at station & siding removed near tunnel
1st May 1989	Train derails inside tunnel
16th August 1992	Standard gauge locomotives leaves
1996	New Perkins engine fitted to 2043 "King Arthur"
December 2000	Santa trains run for the first time
2002	Railway still in operation and carrying passengers after 71 years

Appendix Six

The Wicksteed Gearbox & "Blacolvesley"

One of Charles Wicksteed's many inventions was a change speed semi-automatic gearbox for use in motor cars. However, it was not a success and he suffered a bad loss because of it. Interestingly, one of the gearboxes came to be used in a historically significant miniature railway locomotive and is still in service today.

Motor cars were in their infancy in 1906 when Charles invented his gearbox. At that time changing gear on cars was clumsy and difficult. His patent application (No.10389 of 3rd May 1906) was headed "*Improvements in or relating to Speed Gears particularly adapted for use in Motor Vehicles*". The patent was accepted on 8th November 1906. Charles applied for another patent (No.1458 of 19th January 1907) which dealt with the reverse gear arrangement. This patent was accepted on 5th September 1907. The gearbox was described in *The Automotor Journal* of 9th February 1907. This stated that the gearbox was "*now exhibited in public for the first time at the Crystal Palace Show*". Initially car manufacturers were enthusiastic about the new gearbox and Charles pushed ahead with plans to manufacture the boxes on a large scale. Sadly, when the new gearbox came to be incorporated in cars then in production, the manufacturer's interest diminished. This was mainly due to the alterations needed to the car to accommodate the gearbox being too great. Also, servicing difficulties became apparent, because of the lack of garages and trained mechanics. In the end Charles Wicksteed's gearbox on which he had pinned so much hope was a complete failure. However, as far as miniature railway locomotives was concerned that was not the end of the story.

The Blakesley Miniature Railway was built by Charles William Bartholomew a wealthy civil engineer to connect his home, Blakesley Hall, with the Blakesley station on the East & West Junction Railway (later Stratford-on-Avon & Midland Junction Railway) near Towcester. The 15" gauge line was opened in 1903 and apart from being used to bring goods from the mainline station to the hall, it also carried passengers. In 1909 the well-known Northampton firm of Bassett-Lowke built a steam outline 4-4-4T petrol engined locomotive for the railway to a Henry Greenly design. Like Charles Wicksteed some twenty years later, Charles Bartholomew wanted a locomotive that looked like a real steam engine, but could be ready for action immediately. This then was the first ever steam outline internal combustion locomotive built, an elegant engine named "Blacolvesley" and delivered to Blakesley where it ran its first trials on 11th September 1909. It was fitted with one of Charles Wicksteed's gearboxes (serial number 58 to be precise). This had three speeds and (as usual) only a single speed reverse gear. The latter was removed by Henry Greenly, who designed a separate reverse system. The engine was a NAG four cylinder petrol motor car engine of 12-14HP. Here Charles' invention met with success, as the locomotive was said to be a good performer, able to haul 4½ tons up a 1 in 30 incline and speeds in excess of 30mph.

The railway at Blakesley Hall was dismantled in 1939 and its stock sold off. "Blacolvesley" went through a number of owners, being located in Newcastle, Saltburn and Haswell (County Durham) before being on display at the Lightwater Valley Railway near Ripon until 1994. It is now privately owned and has been fully restored to working condition. It is perhaps fitting that a Wicksteed gearbox should find success in the first ever steam outline locomotive, as such locomotives have run for over 70 years on his railway in Wicksteed Park.



The first ever steam outline internal combustion locomotive, "Blacolvesley" built in 1909, employed a Wicksteed gearbox. This had been developed for the motor car industry but was a failure. Here we see the attractive 15" gauge 4-4-4T locomotive at Ravenglass.
(D Holroyde. 26/4/97)



Compared to "Blacolvesley", which had been built to resemble a steam locomotive as closely as possible, Baguley's locomotives were basically industrial types with steam engine features added, but nonetheless attractive. "Lady of the Lake" and "King Arthur" make for an imposing photograph outside the workshop. Note the Perkins badge.
(P Scott. 11/6/02)

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The *Narrow Gauge Railway Society* Library. The Ordnance Survey for permission to reproduce sections of their maps.

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