

Walk No4: The Green Line to Edwalton

19th May 2020

A walk of about 6½Km, with a bit of railway history.

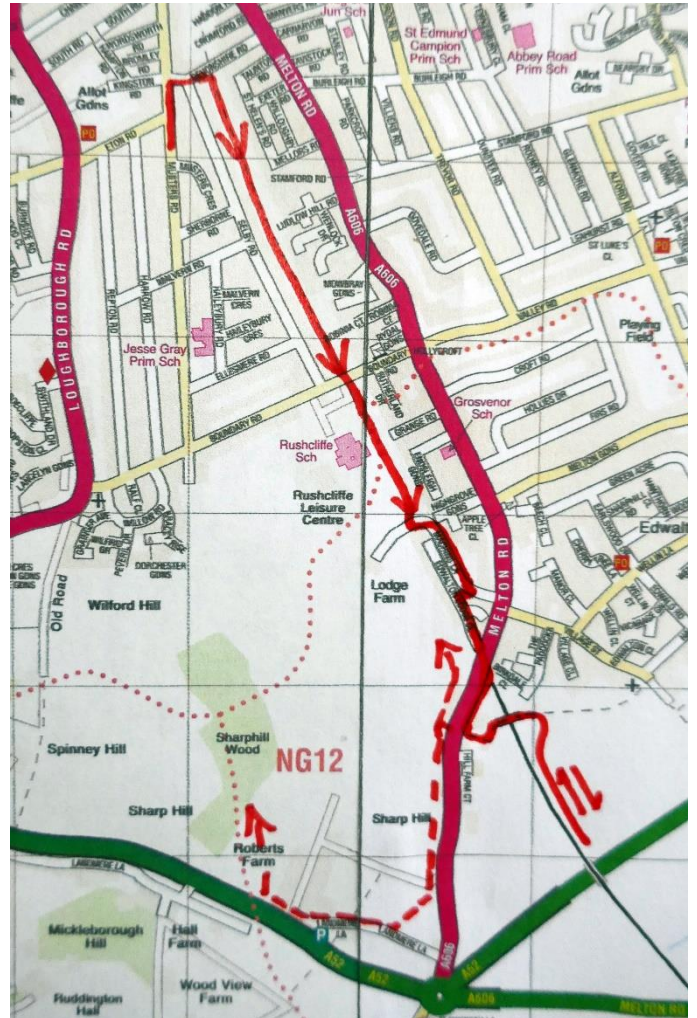
Some railway photos (and rail history) are from a friend, Alan Quayle, others are from www.old-dalby.com/Then&now (marked C)

From Musters Road turn into Devonshire Road and then, immediately before the old railway bridge, go right and up the steps onto The Green Line.



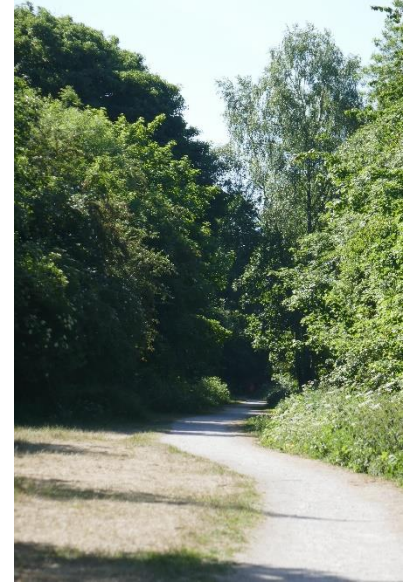
The Green Line was part of the old Midland Railway running from St Pancras, London, via Melton Mowbray to Nottingham Midland station via Lady Bay bridge. The line was closed by Dr. Beeching in the late 1960s.

After its closure, parts were proposed for housing but some was retained as open space and the Green Line was opened in 1989 for use by the local community. The Friends of the Green Line now maintain the site with help from the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust on behalf of Rushcliffe Borough Council.





At this time of year the path is resplendent with dog roses



And trees provide shade and colour while concealing the surrounding housing. This somewhat hides the physical shape of the route which starts as an embankment but soon levels and then becomes a cutting, which is quite deep when it reaches Boundary Road....

.....as seen in this 1964 photo before there were any mature trees!



Part way along the line, on the left, we pass Ludlow Hill Industrial Estate and The Square housing development....

.....as seen from the path»

and from Ludlow Hill.



This was the site of an old brickworks owned by T J Smart.

Smart's Brickworks is recorded in Kelly's Directory 1900 edition and is shown (in yellow) on this 1912 OS map – and a very much smaller West Bridgford!

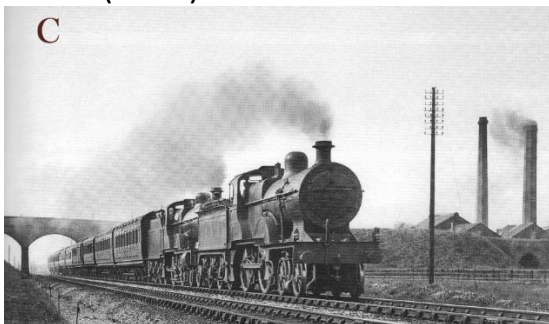
The works provided the majority of the bricks needed for the ever expanding West Bridgford, both for housing & industrial use. The works closed during the 2nd World War, due to the glow from the kilns which compromised the blackout regulations, and did not reopen after the war.

The kilns were demolished in the early 1950's and the site was then used by Mason's Timber Merchants.

The brickworks was served by a short spur from the old railway line.....



A double-headed service passes Smart's Brickworks at Ludlow Hill on route to London (1932).



A London train passes the brickworks site and Smart's siding (sometime during the 1950's)



The railway went under Boundary Road, but now we have to go up a zig-zag of steps and cross over Boundary Road and continue along the old alignment, now completely filled in and recently surfaced to provide better pedestrian access from the new housing off Melton Road to Rushcliffe School. There are more roses to admire as we pass.



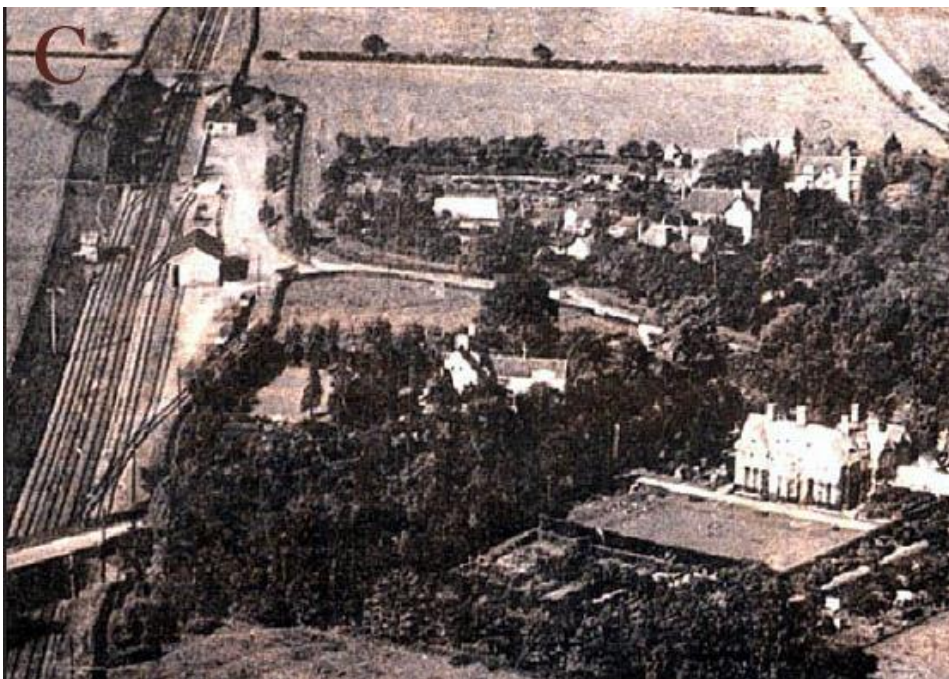


Passing the continuing housing development earthworks (which, apparently caused flooding at Rushcliffe School in February), the path joins Machins Lane (earlier known as 'the road to Shacklocks Farm') at the remains of an old bridge over the railway, which we cross and continue along the lane until there is a right turn.



This was the entrance to Edwalton Station which was opened for goods on 1st November 1879 and to passengers on 2nd February 1880.

An aerial view in the 1930s shows the railway north to south on the left with the goods shed prominent and a signal box opposite. Towards the top of the site can be seen the 'up' side station building and Machins Lane bridge beyond.



The railway went under a bridge carrying Melton Road, seen here at the bottom left of the picture, with Edwalton Hall on the right.

This old photo is looking towards Nottingham, with the 'up' (towards London) platform station building on the right. The first bridge is the one we have just crossed – now Machins Lane – and the far one, visible through the first, is Boundary Road.



Edwalton Station was closed to regular passengers on 26th July 1941, probably as a war-time economy, but was used briefly in March 1947, when severe flooding meant road traffic could not easily pass through West Bridgford, and for excursion trains in 1958 and 1959. It closed to freight in 1965.



This photo (taken 11.1.1958) shows a local freight train on the 'up' line. On the left are coaches left in the siding all week and used only at weekends for holiday specials and excursion trains

This photo (taken 27.9.1958) is of a football excursion train to London St. Pancras – one of the very few excursion trains to call at Edwalton after the closure of the station for regular passenger services.



The site of Edwalton Station is now housing – Edwalton Lodge Close....



....which takes us to Melton Road.



On the south side of Melton Road the old cutting is partly filled in and entirely overgrown

– but we can reach it again by going right along Melton Road and turning left at Hall Farm Court



Go between the housing on the left (marked private road but it is a footpath access) and turn left at the end of the road and down a short footpath.....



.....which takes us to the remains of an old bridge (later referred to as X) across the rail alignment



A steep and difficult clamber down to the right from this bridge (NOT RECOMMENDED) does lead to the old track level - the floor of the cutting is still covered with ballast but there is little other evidence of the railway.





Beyond this point the alignment is almost impenetrable, but can be followed, parallel to the alignment, by first walking over the bridge (at point X above) and then turning right along the edge of the golf course (keeping a careful eye on any golf action!)

After about 200 yards the rail alignment comes out of the cutting – and now there are rails – which are in use.



The alignment becomes an embankment and continues alongside a new housing estate (Acacia Way)



This active track continues, beyond where we can safely see, crossing the A52 and then the A606.



Following the closure of the whole line as a through-route in 1968, the section between the A606 and Melton Mowbray was converted for use as the Old Dalby Test Track. This was used initially for the Advanced Passenger Train project and later the Pendolino units. It has been used for pantograph development and OHLE testing and for testing various diesel multiple units and London Underground trains, including those destined for Crossrail.

On 17 July 1984 the track was used to test the integrity of flasks used to transport nuclear fuel elements by rail. A diesel locomotive (remotely controlled), weighing 140 tonnes and pulling three carriages, was intentionally crashed at about 100 miles per hour into a pre-arranged, derailed, flask-carrying wagon. The behaviour of the flask was monitored in

detail and the observations used to validate numerical modelling of the likely effects of such an impact. Apparently, the flask withstood the impact (but not the carriages!) – the wreckage was quickly cut up and removed to avoid any public concern.



At this point we could continue walking around the golf course and/or visit Edwalton Village – but that will be another walk!

So, back to Melton Road and we have a choice; go right on Melton Road and back the way we came,

or go left on Melton Road towards Notcutts Wheatcroft Garden Centre, perhaps exploring the new housing developments.....



....and return over Sharphill Wood (joining Walk No1).