

Welford and Weston Local History Society

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Newsletter 83 – December 20th, 2022

Stratford & Midland Junction (SMJ) Railway + Binton Station

A talk by Peter Lewis

27 January 2023, at 7:30 pm in Welford Memorial Hall

*Do you recognise this bridge? If you're aged 65 or under the chances are that you won't, unless of course you happen to be a railway enthusiast. This bridge used to mark the Northern entry point into Welford, with the main road (now the B439) in the background. The bridge carried a railway from Stratford to Binton, Bidford and finally Broom. This photograph was taken by Stephen Thompson in **1961** when the track was still in situ, but coming to the end of its life. The sign showing the 'Flood Deepest Point' is still there today!*



I'm told, by people who were around at the time, that the road under the bridge used to flood quite often. Following heavy rain, water used to pour off the fields in Binton and find its way, as water does, down across the main road, to the lower area where the railway bridge had been built.

*A hundred years earlier in **1864**, an Act of Parliament authorized the making of “a Railway for the Northampton & Junction Railway to the Great Western Railway at Stratford-on-Avon.” You may be thinking why would anyone consider building a railway from Bisworth in Northamptonshire to Stratford and hence to the 3 B's, Binton, Bidford and Broom.*

Well, in the 1860s, the idea of moving large volumes of iron ore from the huge Northampton iron ore fields to the blast furnaces in South Wales, seemed to make a lot of sense, and so the Stratford and Midland Junction Railway was born. Join us in the Memorial Hall, Welford, on Friday 27th January 2023 to discover what happened.



The railway station at Binton (now absorbed into the Duchy development at The Holt)

This illustrated talk will be given by Peter Lewis, who collaborated with Andy Thompson (not related to the Stephen Thompson mentioned earlier) in jointly ensuring the publication of a book on the Stratford & Midland Junction (SMJ) railway in 2019. It's a fascinating story.

This talk will be available to people attending in person in the village Memorial Hall, as well as available remotely via Zoom. The choice is yours.

You will receive an email from Karen Dickinson, inviting you to join this meeting, about a week before the meeting itself. This email is being sent to all members, whether or not you will be going to the Memorial Hall or viewing remotely via Zoom. Please check in your junk folder if you don't receive it.

On the evening of the talk, you will be able to join the meeting by Zoom from 19:00. The talk itself will start at 19:30. If you are fairly new to Zoom, I would encourage you to join the meeting early, so that if you experience a problem, you'll have time to call Karen Dickinson (on 07970 179821), and get it sorted out before the talk starts at 19:30. If you are going to attend in person, the doors of the Memorial Hall, are open from 19:10. We look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be another great talk.

Kind regards, Brad Plimmer 20 December, 2022.