

Chapter 9

Getting About in the Past

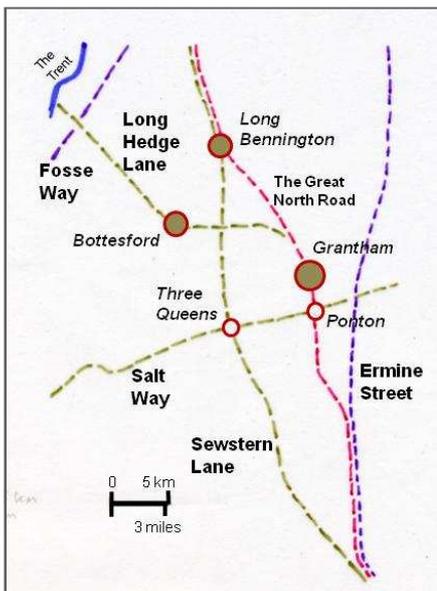
Historic Routeways

Bottesford developed on a ford close to an Iron Age routeway, Long Hedge Lane, which ran from Hazelford Ferry on the Trent, and on towards Grantham. The old track from Bottesford to Allington crossed Sewstern Lane on raised ground between the villages. Sewstern Lane was part of an ancient, Iron Age, route from East Anglia which crossed the Welland at



Sewstern Lane in 2009.

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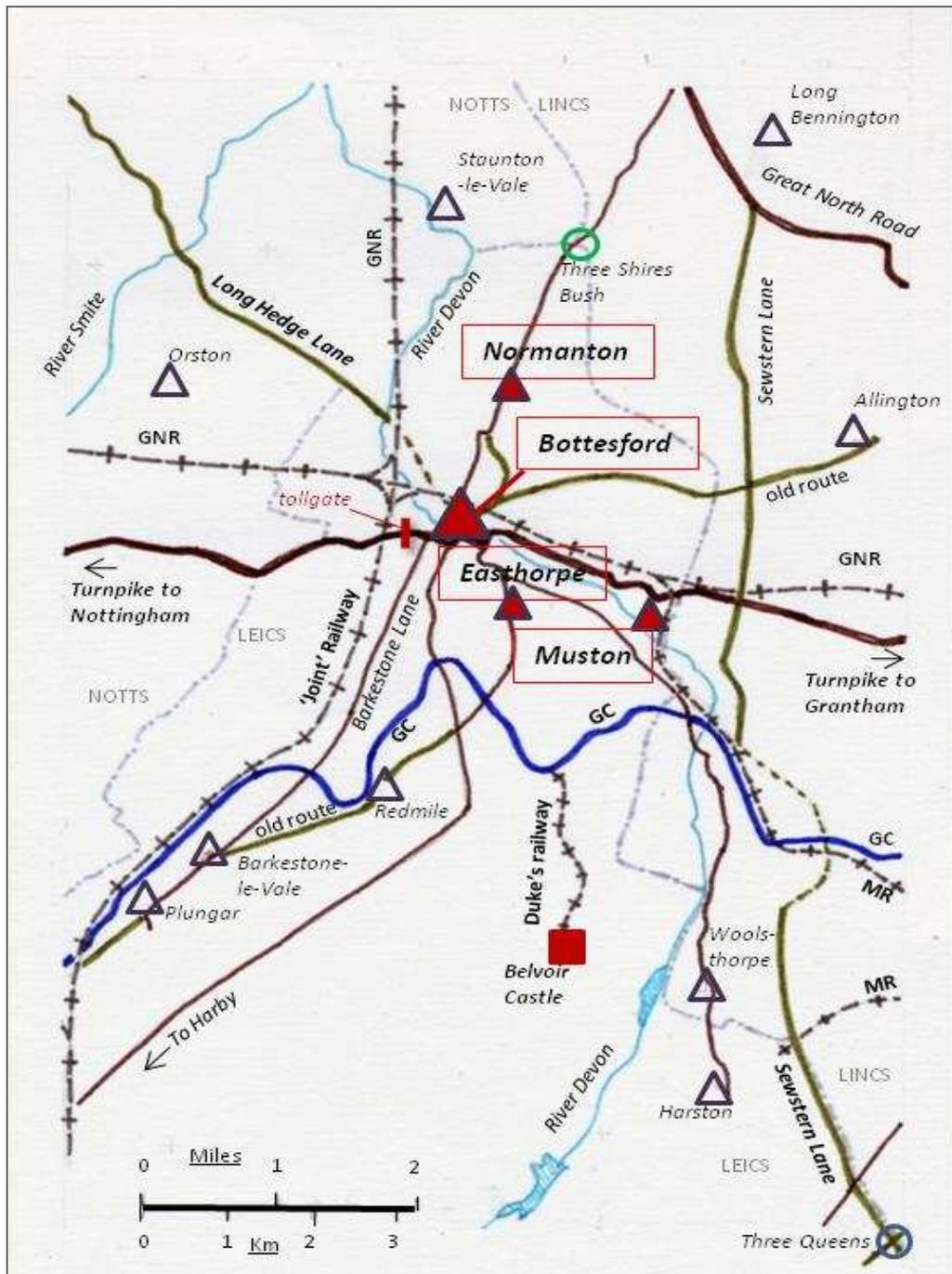


Old routes around Bottesford. API

Stamford, and then ran north-west over the limestone uplands and across the Vale of Belvoir to the Trent at Newark. Today it forms part of the Viking Way long distance path. The development of the Great North Road and the advent of the turnpike reduced the significance of this route, but the track was then used by cattle drovers, ‘drifting’ their herds down to the London market. Long Bennington was a particularly good place to rest a herd of cattle.

The Salt Way was an ancient track from the Fens, crossing the Witham at Saltersford, south of Grantham, and continuing through Croxton Kerrial to ford the Soar at Barrow. Salt from fenland pans, and other goods, were probably carried along this route by packhorses or sleds. The Romans used it to link Ermine Street with the Fosse Way at Six Hills, bridging the Witham at Ponton, an improvement on the Salter’s Ford. The route of the Salt Way is still used by modern roads including the A607 at Croxton, and the B676. The Salt Way and Sewstern Lane cross near Croxton Kerrial, north of King Lud’s entrenchments, an important pre-Roman border. Here stood an 18th Century hostelry “of ill repute”, The Three Queens, frequented by cattle drovers and perhaps footpads. The inn eventually closed when the ancient trackways were replaced by newer roads, and there is nothing at the site now except a muddy track crossing a minor road.

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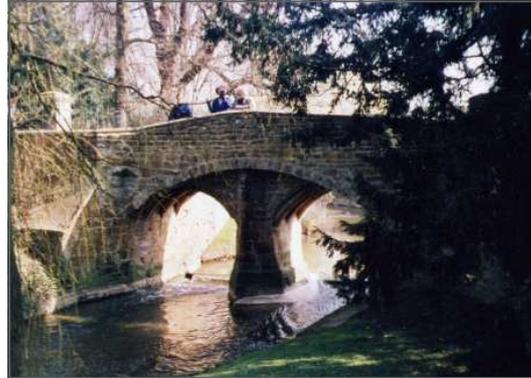


Sketch map of the Bottesford area - showing routeways, roads, the Grantham Canal and railways discussed in this chapter. Rivers and villages are indicated, as are Belvoir Castle, The Three Shires Bush, The Three Queens and the location of the turnpike tollgate at Bottesford. Triangles—villages. Abbreviations: GC—Grantham Canal; GNR—Great Northern Railway; MR—mineral railway. NFO

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Roads

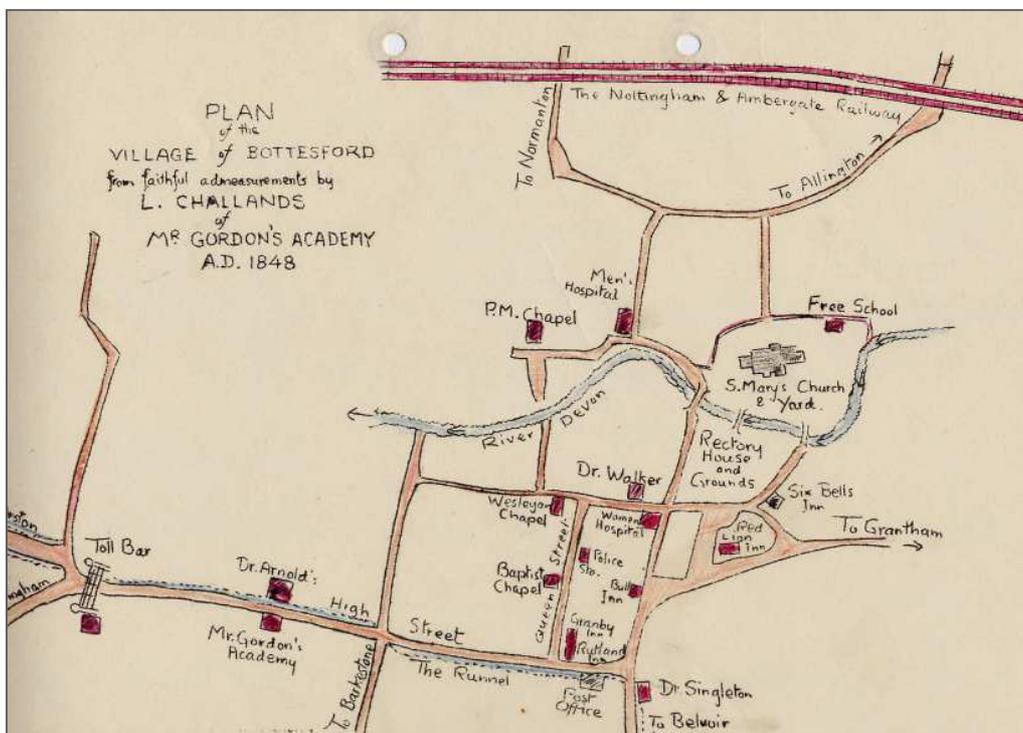
As the settlements grew so a pattern of footpaths and tracks developed. Traditional paths to outlying fields or perhaps to the next village are 'rights of way' today. Local road maintenance became the duty of the Manor Court (Court Leet) which employed the able bodied poor to undertake the work and levied a rate on local voters to meet the cost. Fleming's Bridge, built around 1600 by the Dr Samuel Fleming, gave access to paths north of the Devon.



Fleming's Bridge, Bottesford.

NFO

With time, the majority of journeys changed from north-south (to Belvoir or Newark) to an east-west focus suiting new economic needs. By the 18th Century, stage coaches transported passengers while carts carried goods to and from local markets. From 1758, Bottesford lay on the Nottingham to Grantham turnpike, with tolls to pay for use of the road. People from Muston would reach Bottesford by the lane via Easthorpe rather than take the turnpike past the Wheatsheaf Inn (The Gap Inn). A map drawn in 1848 shows the toll gate at the western end of Bottesford High Street, near the junction of Nottingham Road and Pinfold Lane. The road was no longer a



1848 map of Bottesford, from "The Northeast Corner".

MSA

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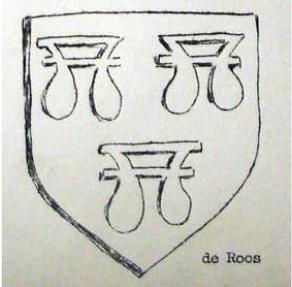
The Market Cross



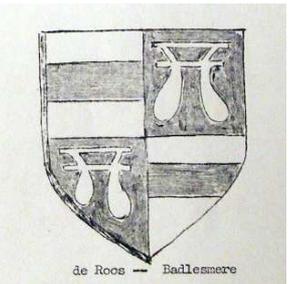
Everyone travelling along the main road through the High Street and Market Street would have seen the Cross and Stocks. The cross's origin is uncertain and only the base is left. The "Northeast Corner" teaching notes by Laurie Dewey, quoting from Nichols (1795), state that the cross was probably erected in about 1400, when Sir William De Roos was a favourite of Henry IV. The right to hold a market was granted by the king, and a cross erected by the grantee, who collected fees from the traders. The top of Bottesford cross had been missing for many years even before 1795. The base was decorated with four heraldic shields, now nearly obliterated. In 1795 they were still decipherable:



1. Three Cart Wheels, the shield of Sir Walter d'Espeç, who founded Kirkham priory, near De Roos lands in Yorkshire, and whose sister Adeline married Peter De Roos.



2. Three Bougets (or leather water bottles), a heraldic crusader symbol. William De Roos went on crusade in Palestine in 1352, and his brother was a crusader in 1364. The bottles are in pairs connected by a cross piece for carrying on horseback in a hot climate. The De Roos arms consisted of three white bougets on a red ground. We still use this old term: the Chancellor of the Exchequer had a budget, or "bouget", being a leather bag in which he carried his accounting records. The De Roos arms can also be seen in the west door of St Mary's Church, Bottesford.



3. Quartered with the arms of De Roos and Badlesmere, indicating that a De Roos had married into the Badlesmere family, and the child of this union could display both arms on his escutcheon.



4. A Lion Rampant, the badge of Charlton, Lord Powys, who held land in Derbyshire at Haddon. A daughter of this family married a second son of the Manners family and eventually inherited Haddon Hall.

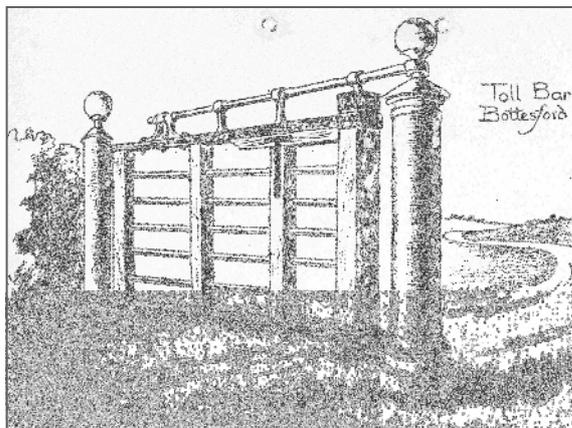
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turnpike after 1876, as the railway had by then taken much of the passenger and goods trade. The map of 1848 also shows the Rundle ditch as an open drain on the south side of the High Street east of Barkestone Lane, then culverted to cross to the north side for the rest of the High Street.

Census records indicate that at this time the name High Street extended east of The Cross, to include part of what is now Grantham Road. The road to Grantham followed what is now Rutland Lane, then turned to cross the Devon at Washdyke Bridge, where there was a sheep dip and associated pinfold. This bridge was replaced in 1936 when the course of the road was straightened to enable greater volumes of A52 traffic to pass through Bottesford. From the 1950s onwards, increasing traffic raised levels of air and noise pollution, and sixteen accidents were recorded on the High Street between 1984 and 1987. This unfortunate situation continued until the bypass was constructed in 1989. High Street was given a 7.5 tonne weight limit restriction in 2006.

The route of the proposed bypass caused some argument in the village. Some favoured a northerly one, even though this would have brought the road close to the village and required costly bridges over the established course of the railway. The three mile route well south of the village

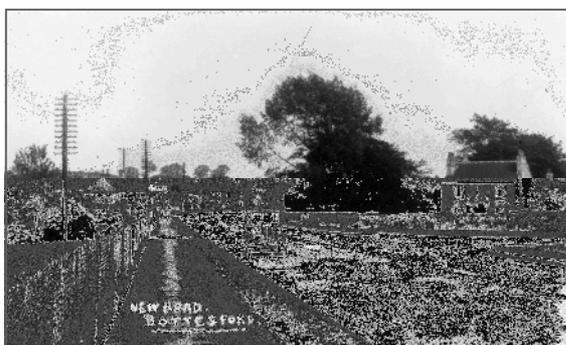
was chosen, even though it crossed valuable arable land and hindered access to farms, Muston and other villages. Bypass traffic noise can still be heard in the village centre. A bridge for riders, cyclists, and walkers was planned, but allegedly insufficient pressure was applied to bring about its construction and the opportunity was lost.



Bottesford toll gate (the "Northeast Corner") MSA



Looking over the old Washdyke Bridge towards the Bunkers Hill Cottages, from an old postcard.



The new Grantham Road,,c.1936.. MSA

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The Grantham canal today



API The Top Mill, circa 1900.

BLHS

The Grantham Canal

Road transport was somewhat limited in the late 1700s, and the price of bulk goods such as coal was prohibitively high. The Grantham Canal was opened fully in 1798 after incorporation by Act of Parliament. It was financed mainly by business interests in Nottingham who wished to improve trade in coal and agricultural commodities to and from the Vale of Belvoir and Grantham. A junction on the River Trent gave access to the main canal network. The engineers designed a meandering “cut” which followed the contours of the land to avoid building expensive locks. Bottesford had a wharf, with a mill nearby, on Toston Hill. There was a busy trade in ground corn, rolled oats, and even malt for local beer. The canal brought in coal, fertilizer (night soil from Nottingham) and building materials.

Few local people could afford shares at £100 each, but the Duke, then a minor, acquired five. Belvoir Castle had its own wharf at Muston Gorse, eventually with a tramway connection to the castle. The canal proved profitable, providing a steady return (13% in some years), but eventually business declined and in 1854 it was bought by its rival, the Ambergate Railway. The canal closed to traffic in 1935, but navigable sections include Grantham A1 to Woolsthorpe



At Muston Gorse Wharf, 1920s. L-R in picture: Lilly Goodson, Mr Marriott, Dorothy Beedham. DBE

under the care of the Grantham Canal Society. Most locks have become little more than weirs, and some of the characteristic bowed bridges have been replaced by flat crossings and culverts. The towpath is used by fishermen, walkers and cyclists, and there are ambitious and costly plans to re-open the canal right through to Nottingham at some future date.

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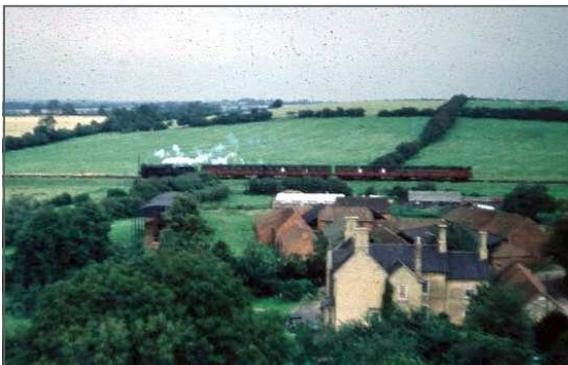
The Nottingham to Grantham Railway

In 1845 it was proposed to construct a railway from Ambergate in Derbyshire to Boston via Nottingham and Grantham, to enable coal and other products to reach an east coast port. The Nottingham-Grantham section opened in 1850 then passed into the control of the Great Northern Railway in 1852, as a means to connect its new east coast mainline with Nottingham. The line passed through “Bottesford for Belvoir”, an important destination. The price of coal in Bottesford fell by 50% following the introduction of a railway goods yard with coal staithes. Cheaper coal allowed steam power to be applied to local industries such as the mill in Queen Street and the Gas Works, which started production in 1866.

The Nottingham-Grantham timetable was published in the Grantham Journal in 1854: 6 trains a day in both directions on weekdays; trains to Grantham from Bottesford from 8.29 am until 10.09 pm, and to Nottingham from

9.18 am until 8.24 pm. Most Grantham journeys took 21 minutes though an express could complete it in 12 minutes. To Nottingham trains usually took 42 minutes, but expresses took only 28 minutes. In 2008, Bottesford had 11 trains per day in either direction, with journey times of 13 minutes to Grantham and 31 minutes to Nottingham, still slower than the express over 150 years ago.

In 1854, the 8.29 am carried passengers to Grantham in time to start work at 9 am or reach London by 12.30 pm. The 6.50 pm from Grantham reached Bottesford at 7.08 pm and the 5 pm from London got you home at 8.24 pm (provided you caught the connection from Grantham!). It was also possible to leave York at 4.10 pm to reach Bottesford at 7.08 pm via Grantham. This compares favourably with the current timetable, with no trains to Grantham between 7.14 and 9.16 in the morning. In 2008, there were loud protests at attempts to de-schedule an important commuter service from Nottingham in the early evening.



A steam train leaving Bottesford, 1958. Photographed by Police Sgt Arthur Bradshaw. © Richard Bradshaw.



Bottesford East station, reproduced from the Ordnance Survey, 1884. © Crown Copyright. MSA

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The Joint Railway crossing Orston Lane at Bottesford, circa 1950.

KGR

In the 1890s, weekend specials brought tourists from Nottingham to visit Belvoir Castle, using horse drawn transport from Bottesford station, taking refreshments in the village. The goods yard handled coal, building materials, animals and parcels, stimulating trade and providing employment. In 1908 the return fare from Nottingham was 1s 6d (equivalent to £5.60 in 2009, allowing for change in the RPI: www.measuringworth.com).

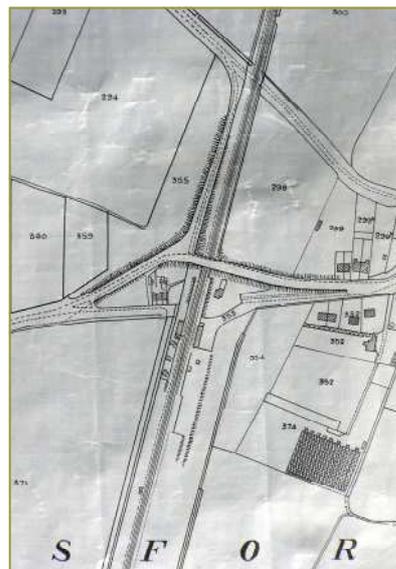
The Great Northern & London North Western Joint Railway

This was the grandiose title of the north-south line, opened in 1879, connecting Bottesford to Melton for Leicester, Market Harborough and Northampton. The GNR alone owned the section on to Newark. A complex junction with the established east-west route allowed services from Leicester and Melton to branch off at Bottesford and reach Grantham.

Transport of ironstone from Leicestershire and coal from Nottinghamshire were more important reasons than passenger services for the construction of this railway. Ironstone was carried north to the West Riding

Bottesford South station, reproduced from the Ordnance Survey, 1884. © Crown Copyright.

JRO



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and Lincolnshire, and coal south to London. Fleeces for Yorkshire woollen mills went north and yarn returned for the hosiery factories of Leicester. Potential revenue overcame early objections by the “fox hunting lobby” in the House of Lords in 1872. The GNR joined with the LNWR to promote the line and counter plans by rival companies. The LNWR gained improved passenger access to Nottingham and a greater share of coal traffic using the loop built from Sthatham to Saxondale via Barnstone.

The joint line had its own station at Bottesford South. In 1880 Bottesford thus had two stations, and four signal boxes serving the junction with the E-W line. Bottesford South was short-lived, closing in 1883 after which Melton-Grantham services stopped at Bottesford East on the E-W line.

The 1887 timetable shows only four trains a day, both north and south, which stopped at Bottesford, though it was possible to “stop” four more by signalling the driver. The 7.49 am reached Melton at 8.19 am and Leicester at 9 am. If you “stopped” the 9.37 am you could reach Melton by 10.04 am, Northampton by 11.08 am, and by a through carriage arrive in London by 1 pm. All trains from the south stopping at Bottesford went on to Grantham. Services to Newark stopped at Redmile then went straight through Bottesford junction. Redmile station had a separate waiting room for the Duke’s family and guests, fitted with fine wooden panelling and other comforts.

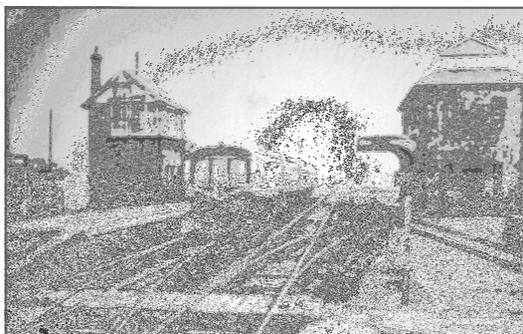
The line was a trainspotter’s treasure trove. In the 1930s, LNWR locomotives for the Nottingham-Melton-Northampton service included Mr Webb’s designs working out their declining years. It was possible to see ‘coal tanks’, ‘cauliflowers’, and



Bottesford East station staff, ca.1910. CHA



A Gresley Pacific at Bottesford East. BSM



A diesel railcar at Bottesford BSM



The “Fenman” pulled by 4472 Flying Scotsman, Bottesford, November, 1984. DMI

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The Three Arch Bridge

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The joint line brought about the construction of this sizeable but handsome brick bridge which carried an old trackway over the Newark section of the railway just north of the village. The course of the Devon was straightened to improve drainage and then ran through one of the arches as well. The bridge, used by walkers, riders and farm vehicles, collapsed suddenly in the summer of 2007 after heavy rain, leaving a large pile of masonry. The abutments can still be seen, and the river crossing is now made via a new steel bridge erected in 2008.

PEG



'jumbos' at work and even the famous Precedent class 'Hardwicke' appeared. The GNR locomotives included Stirling and Ivatt 'singles' and, later, Ivatt 'Atlantics'. Carriages varied from six wheeler 'bumpers' to smoother bogie stock, with some odd mixtures of liveries. Even in the 1950s some exciting locomotives such as a Gresley Pacific made an appearance, and today occasional 'steam specials' encourage enthusiastic photographers.

In early days coal traffic from Doncaster travelled via Newark to Northampton. The GNR ran a daily Newark-Northampton goods service and a Grantham- Leicester service, both via Bottesford. During the Second World War, the north-south line gave access to reach petrol storage facilities near Redmile and at Bottesford. American arms dumps at Great Dalby, south of Melton, and at Bottesford west, were also supplied by this line. This was a matter of great secrecy, but the district still received considerable attention from German bombers.

Passenger traffic was always sparse, since many of the stations were far from the villages they served. Buses became strong competitors in the 1940s and 50s. By 1950, only two trains a day travelled from Leicester to Grantham, and the service was withdrawn in 1962. Villagers relate how, as boys, they visited the

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The Quarry Line



A diesel-hauled train on the mineral line in the 1960s. MTH

with the main line. Sometimes they stalled, and had to run back for a second or even a third attempt. At the rear of the car park at The Gap public house at Muston there is a wide cutting which may have served as a siding with “empties” waiting to be hauled up to the quarries.

A signal box built in 1875 and closed in 1977 controlled this junction, with sidings for shunting on both sides of the main line. Heavy ore trains assembled here for Frodingham required a 2-8-0 locomotive, and Mr Robinson’s famous ROD design (for the Great Central Railway in 1911) often preformed this task into the 1960’s. Some iron stone was carried direct to the Stanton Ironworks at Ilkeston. The signal box was occasionally burgled overnight, and sometimes the axle bearings would be removed from empty wagons awaiting transit.

In 1883 a mineral line was constructed to link iron stone quarries near Denton and Harston to the main east/west line at Muston - also linking to Harlaxton in 1941. Although the line was closed in 1976, it is still a useful part of our heritage as a footpath, cycle track and bridle way. Steam locomotives on this line had to build up speed to haul loaded trains over the bridge across the A52 to a junction



The cutting, for the line and siding, close to the Muston Gap. API

signal boxes in the evenings for a chat and a cup of cocoa with the signalman. It was sometimes possible to get a haircut in the box, when rail traffic was slack. In the 1970s, night time oil tanker trains from the Humber came south via Newark and round to the Bottesford west signal box, where they gave up their “token” to the signalman. Oil freight traffic is still seen on the E-W line at Bottesford.

Excursions and Special Services

Throughout its life the N-S line provided a route for weekend excursions from Leicester via Bottesford to the coast at Skegness, Mablethorpe, and Sutton on Sea. At one time, excursions ran via Newark and Doncaster to Bridlington or Scarborough. Trains comprising fourteen full bogie coaches travelled to the coast

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hauled by a collection of elderly locomotives, sometimes double-headed. In 1954, 20,000 passengers travelled in 72 excursion trains during the season. A typical journey left Leicester at 8.30 am and reached Skegness 2 hours 40 minutes later, returning by 9.16 pm. Some stopped at Bottesford, for instance at 9.39 am, reaching Skegness at 11.10 am. Seasonal holiday trains ceased in 1962 when the north-south line closed.

In the 1930s, there were excursions to football matches and race meetings (The St Leger at Doncaster), starting at Rugby and stopping at many stations on the way. Colwick race course had its own halt. In the 1950s, football specials for "Forest" and "County" matches

stopped at Bottesford to take fans to Nottingham High Level Station where the train waited for its return journey. There were also shopping trips to major towns whose shops stayed open late in the evening.

Buses

There were relatively few cars in the 1950s, but Bottesford was served by a network of bus routes. The Nottingham-Grantham route was shared between Trent (No 79) and Lincolnshire Road Car Co. (No 33c). Departures from Bottesford for Nottingham at 7 am, 7.27 am and 8.25 am called at Whatton, Bingham and Radcliffe, taking an hour for the journey. Small local companies also had routes to and through Bottesford. "Randells" had their coach yard off Market Street, with a petrol pump and three coaches in the yard. Apart from excursions, they ran a service to Grantham through local villages and to Newark on Saturday and Wednesday for the market. There was a regular Barton service to Melton. Skinners of Saltby ran to Bottesford via Croxton, Knipton and Belvoir,



Bottesford Station, 1958. Photographed by Police Sgt. Arthur Bradshaw, © Richard Bradshaw.



Passenger train at Bottesford. Courtesy of David Tinkler

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Villagers at the Wheatsheaf, Muston, joining a coach excursion to Skegness, 1947. DWR

but Gilbert's Taxi service was required for journeys to Orston, Alverton and Staunton. In some cases, husband and wife were driver and conductor, especially on the school buses.

Newspapers were delivered by van. The Nottingham Evening Post and its rival, the Evening News, were dropped outside the Rutland Inn by the van, which then rushed on to other villages.

Flexibility of timing enabled buses to make good connections with the railway, and cater for functions such as the dances at Whatton Village Hall on Saturday nights. Typically, the last bus to Nottingham left Grantham at 9 pm, reaching Bottesford by 9.30 pm and Nottingham at 10.25 pm. The 10.30 pm return reached Bottesford at 11.30 pm and Grantham at midnight. The last train for Bottesford left Nottingham Victoria at 11 pm, taking 40 minutes for its journey.

Early morning workmen's buses were another feature. Departing from Bottesford at 6.45 am, a bus went to Redmile, Belvoir, Woolsthorpe, Denton, Harlaxton, and then into Grantham, dropping off passengers at their places of work, such as Aveling Barford or Ruston & Hornsby. Another service from Grantham via Muston, Barrowby and Dysart Road collected workers for the Freeman Hardy & Willis shoe factory.

An apocryphal story concerns a little used evening service through local villages to Bottesford, which would stop at a lonely farmhouse for the driver's girl friend to get on board. The conductor would then drive the bus on to Bottesford, while the driver and his girl were engaged in 'earnest conversation' on the back seat.

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School Buses



A car and Randell's coach outside the Bull.

BSM

Children from outlying villages have long been 'bussed' to school in Bottesford, sometimes despite inclement weather. School log books show disruption to the service by heavy winter snow in 1940, and again in 1944 (not to mention 2009!). Scholars for Grantham and Nottingham schools had to use the service bus, but a school service went to Melton from Bottesford, gathering children from villages on its way. In the

1950s the buses in use were nearing the end of their working life, and becoming unreliable. Former pupils speak of an ex 'Royal Blue' Dennis and a Leyland Cub. One coach hit a wall in Scalford, and its wooden body work crumpled "like match wood". There are stories of scholars helping to push the bus over icy patches, and of boys helping to pump fuel to the engine when an auto-vac system failed. On one very snowy afternoon the driver would not risk the hill down into Stathern, so



Christmas & Chorlton's garage on Bottesford High Street, 1930s.

AMA

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The ford on the River Devon at Rectory Lane, Bottesford.
Photograph belonging to the late Miss Violet Hind.

PEG

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.
CORONATION DAY.
On **TUESDAY, 28th JUNE,**
A CHEAP DAY TRIP
To LONDON
WILL RUN AS UNDER :-

| FROM | Times of Departure and Arrival. | FARES TO KING'S CROSS AND BACK. | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----|-------------|----|
| | | a.m. | | Cov. Carrs. | |
| | | s. | d. | s. | d. |
| LINCOLN dep. | 3 40 | 14 07 0 | | | |
| HARMSTON " | 3 52 | | | | |
| NAVENBY " | 3 58 | | | | |
| LEADENHAM " | 4 5 | | | | |
| CAYTHORPE " | 4 12 | | | | |
| HONINGTON " | 4 19 | 12 06 0 | | | |
| NOTTINGHAM (London Rd. Stop.) | 3 50 | | | | |
| BINGHAM " | 4 5 | | | | |
| BOTTESFORD " | 4 15 | | | | |
| GRANTHAM " | 4 35 | | | | |
| LONDON (KING'S CROSS) arr. abt. | 8 20 | | | | |

Returning from London (King's Cross), the same day only, at 8.35 p.m.

Children under Three Years of age, Free; above Three and under Twelve, Half-fares. Tickets not Transferable, and the Company will not be responsible for Luggage.

An early application for Tickets is requested.

Landed, King's Cross Station, June, 1911. SEYMOUR CLARKE, General Manager.
Waberley and Sons, Printers, Carpenters' Hall, London Wall.

the children walked into the village to be sheltered in the village hall. Eventually a tractor and trailer arrived from Bottesford to collect them, but it was past 10 pm before some arrived home.

Nowadays we forget the difficulties of getting about in the past, but some remember as children getting a lift in a Land Rover driven by the Duke or Mr John Manners when the weather was bad. What would we do today without our motor cars?

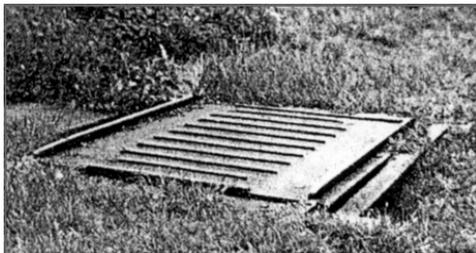
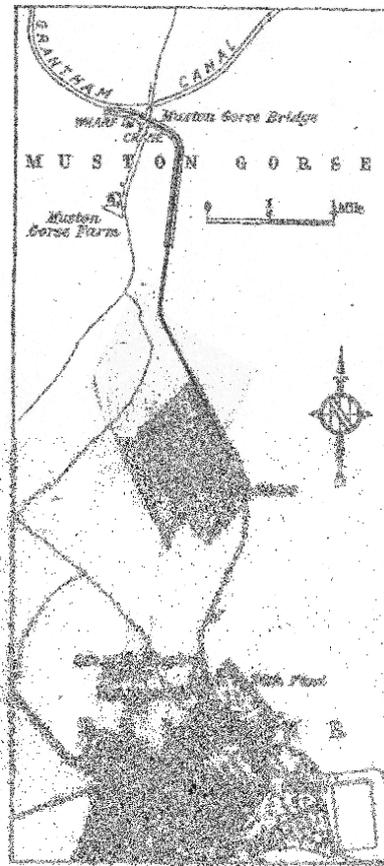
GNR Coronation Day excursion timetable, probably June, 1911 (King George V). RSP

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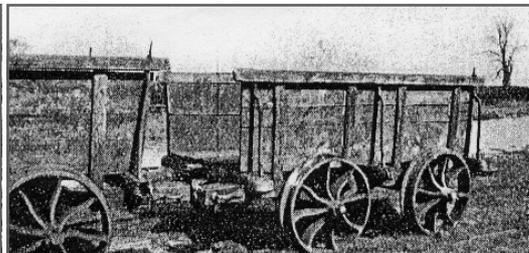
The Duke's Railway

A bill, preserved in the Belvoir Castle estate office, shows that a horse drawn railway was built in 1815 by the Butterley Ironworks Company from the castle to the Grantham Canal. An original plan for a canal spur to the castle was not viable, but a canal wharf was constructed at Muston Gorse to serve the castle, with a crane, weighbridge and warehouse. From here the line was 2 miles long, with half a mile of sidings. Flanged wheeled vehicles ran on a 4ft 4½" gauge track, constructed from cast iron fishbellied rails 3 feet long, spiked to stone block sleepers. The railway entered the castle cellars, where a sliding winch raised goods to the working level of the building. Remarkably, the line remained in use until 1918. (Originally published in an article by Charles E Lee in "The Railway Magazine" of June, 1938. The photograph of the wagons is by M.W. Earley)

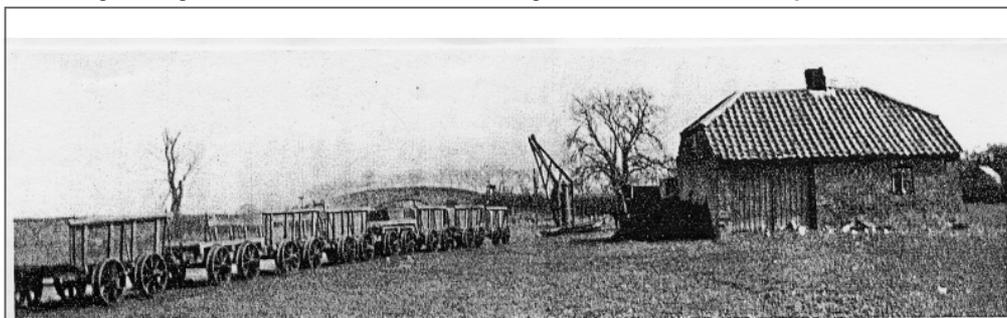
The map illustrates the route, and the pictures show the four wheeled springless wagons with cast iron, flanged, 8 spoked wheels. Some of the rails remained in use for 100 years, but the bowed bridge has now been replaced by a canal culvert.



The weigh bridge at Muston Gorse



Wagons on the castle railway



Wagons at the Muston Gorse terminus, the old canal bridge in the background.