

HARDWICK (GCR) STATION

Many of our regular customers will have witnessed the very early development days of the present day station building. This then is some of the background to the current station that our visitors will first encounter at the Great Cockcrow Railway.

Since initially opening the railway in 1968 for many years we used a variety of ‘constructions’ to provide a ticket office for the Great Cockcrow Railway. The first one was a small wooden cabin, located on the passenger side of Platform 1. Later one of our old railway containers, previously used to store picks and shovels, was adapted to replace the rather earlier old dilapidated one. Our Chairman, Ian Allan, managed to secure an old London Transport ticket office that was being replaced at Ravenscourt Park station. After a new weatherproof roof was made this then remained in situ as our ‘ticket business’ centre for many years!

Porta-loo type toilets provided an essential role for many years as did a number of other converted ‘buildings’ providing modest refreshments, these included a garden shed, even an old display caravan and lastly an equally aged porta-cabin, that we initially used as a signal relay-room and finally modified into a Tea-bar.

At the same time the railway itself was also developing, with an extension to Cockcrow Hill and then two further loop lines lengthening our network considerably. This clearly met with public approval as the number of visitors increased. Ever conscious that people not only came to travel on our ‘Main Line Miniature Railway’ but that they equally wanted better facilities, we considered what we might possibly provide to meet such demand, something that would equally prove suitable and moreover in keeping with the theme of the railway.



As a result a sketch of a likely style of building was created in order to establish what we wanted both visually and functionally. In essence the building was going to replicate an old, disused country station, one that perhaps time had left behind, forgotten. Closed to passengers many years ago, it's branch line tracks long removed, but like a time capsule leaving behind a wealth of railway history no longer a part of modern day life.

In principle the artist impression that was produced met with overall approval of the Chairman and the railway's Managing Committee, but now we had a mountain to climb, planning permission! Drawings detailing all the station building dimensions were produced and subsequent meetings with Planning Officials at Runnymede Council took place and finally, following much debate, we had the required agreement. Despite some early financial setbacks during the recession we continued developing the internal features that have proved to be appreciated by our customers.



Well our old tea-bars of yesteryear are gone now, replaced with a fine 'Station Buffet', also with a dedicated seating railway viewing area for patrons just outside. It is being professionally run, we are proud to announce, under the stewardship of 'Loseley Bakery'. Equally another greatly improved important facility is that of our pristine, white tiled Ladies and Gentlemen's toilets, available at your convenience. A baby-changing facility is also now available.



The old London Transport ticket office has now gone to a good home, namely the Epping & Ongar Railway, which specialises in replicating the former Underground Railway operation in that area of Essex. Now when you buy your ticket to travel on the GCR you will enter our dedicated Ticket Office, thoughtfully designed and created by our own specialist team, taking you back to another time of travelling.



Whilst just outside the ticket office, at the end of the platform, is our 120 year-old 'Midland Railway' semaphore Distant signal. It once indicated to locomotive footplate enginemmen of that time whether the line ahead was clear or would caution them to slow down and observe the line and prepare to stop!



In fact many years ago, after its railway use was over, it once fittingly stood beside Ian Allan's offices at Shepperton, indeed since being fully restored it now represents almost fifty years of our long proud association with our patron's company.

We are always striving to improve this main line miniature railway experience and we do trust that you enjoy your visit when you come along?

During this development we are pleased to have been associated with the following companies who have assisted us in providing this rather unique station facility.

Chiltern - Construction & Property Maintenance Ltd.

Day (Aggregates) Group - Sponsors.

Chandlers Building Supplies (Chertsey)

Neil Hillier – Plastering & Dry Lining.

JDF (Tiling) Contractors.

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