

DERWENT & WYE VALLEY RAILWAY TRUST

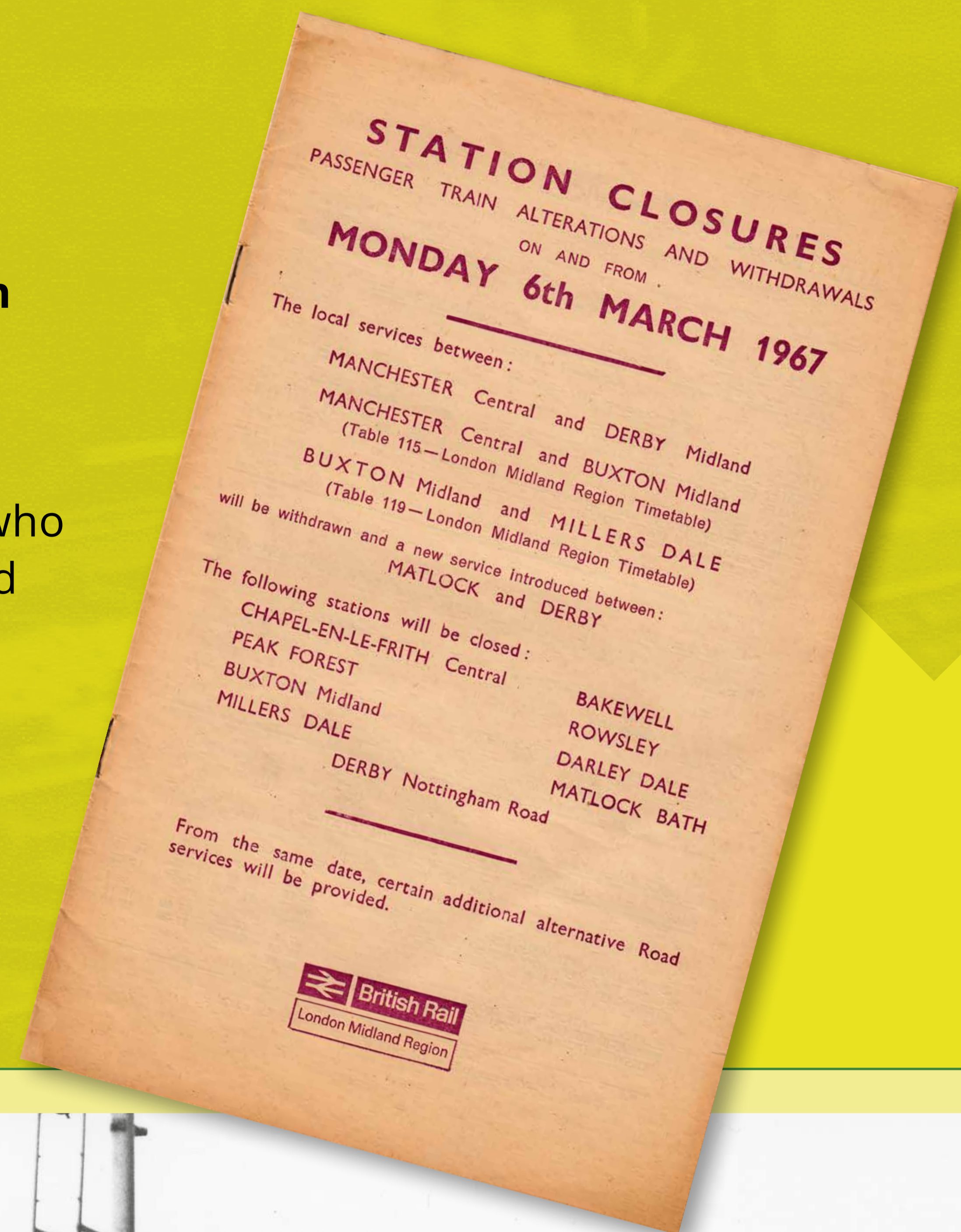
Tracking Our Heritage

Sharing stories about the former railway between Matlock and Rowsley

The Midland line through the Peak District connected London to Manchester and was one of the most scenic routes in the country. Operating for over 120 years, the railway was once a busy line with freight and passenger traffic until it closed in 1968.

Today, part of the line is still in operation for a distance of 3.5 miles between Rowsley South Station and Matlock Platform 2 run by Peak Rail. Alongside the track, there is a multi user trail for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

This exhibition is a collation of stories and memories of those who worked on, lived by and travelled on the railway between Matlock and Rowsley.



The stations

Matlock station was originally called "Matlock Bridge" and was opened in 1849, renamed Matlock on 1st July 1905. The station buildings were designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, who also designed other stations along the line from Ambergate. The station was busy with Victorian and Edwardian visitors coming to Matlock as tourists and for its famous water treatments at the numerous 'hydros' on Matlock Bank.

The Darley Dale station you see today is actually the second station to be built there. In 1873 the impressive neo-gothic style station was

built on the down platform and a smaller matching waiting room on up side. There was once a footbridge over the line to connect each platform and provide access from Station Road.

The original station in Rowsley was opened in 1849 and formed a terminus for the Manchester, Buxton, Matlock and Midlands Junction Railway line from Ambergate. Goods facilities were provided in the same area from this date. A new passenger station was built on the Buxton extension, and opened to Hassop on 1st August 1862



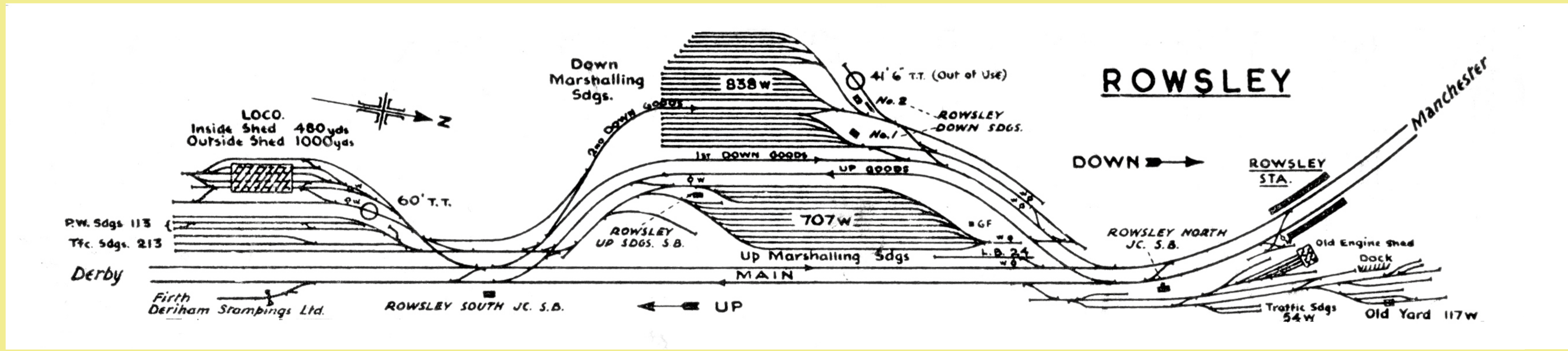
A busy line

Rowsley Sidings was very important to the line. It was a busy marshalling yard with goods such as coal, limestone, iron ore and livestock all passing through. Milk was always conveyed on passenger trains, initially in churns in the guard's van, and later in tanks attached to the rear of specific stopping trains.

One person remembered her grandparent's laundry on Darley Hillside in the 1920s where her grandfather

collected and returned laundry from London to Darley Dale station. Laundry was transported to the station in a little horse and cart. She recalled the hard work involved ironing with flat irons.

Express trains between London and Manchester passed over the line, many of which called at Matlock (and earlier at Matlock Bath). Many people travelled from stations on the railway to work in Derby and other locations on the line.



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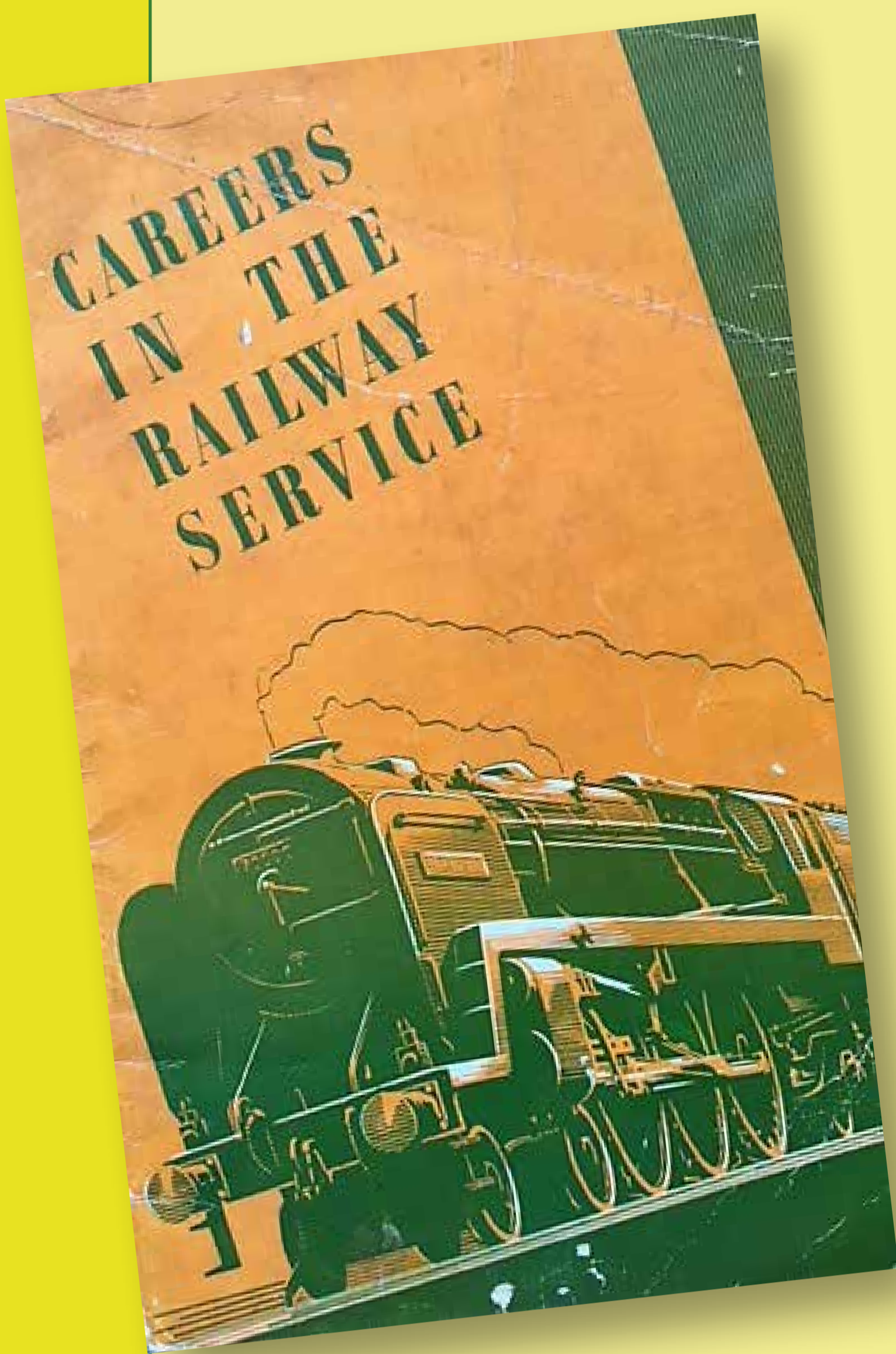
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Working on the railway



From cleaners to drivers and porters, generations of families worked on the railway or were associated with it.

Many railway workers started their careers when they left school at 15 or 16. Locomotive crew started out as 'cleaners' and then onto being 'bar lads' – that was someone who cleaned the fireboxes in the locomotives. Then promotion was to 'passed cleaner' onto 'fireman' and Passed Fireman, with the ultimate aim of becoming a driver.

There were all sorts of jobs associated with the railway. One job was a 'knocker up', someone who had the duty of getting the drivers up ready for the early shifts. They would knock on windows of the railway workers' houses with poles until a light came on. Not an enviable job.

Many of the railwaymen remember their journeys, not always local. They would drive the trains down to London and would have to stay over in lodgings. Other locations included Birmingham, Derby and Manchester.

Many of the jobs on the railway were male dominated but in the early 1960s, there was a female booking clerk at Rowsley who recalled what her job entailed. This included invoicing for the goods yard; issuing tickets, collecting the rents from the workers who lived in the railway cottages in Rowsley as well as doing all the wages. Women clerks were also employed at Darley Dale and Matlock stations.

During WW2, women were employed on the railway to replace the men who joined the Forces. Jobs included porters and engine cleaners.



Railway community

Around Matlock, Darley Dale and Rowsley there was a real sense of a railway community. The railway created a lot of jobs and with this meant the workers and their families needed housing.

The main areas around Rowsley were three blocks of railway workers cottages on land partly owned by the Duke of Rutland at Chatsworth Road, Rowsley. Cottages were built in phases from 1886 to 1897 to meet demand.

These developments almost doubled the housing stock in Rowsley village in less than 12 years. To this day, the Chatsworth Road developments are known as the "Klondike Cottages"; possibly a reference to the better pay of

railway workers. Gradually railway workers spread to housing in other parts of the valley, and being in relatively secure and well respected jobs; some had little trouble getting mortgages for house purchases. New

houses were built in Northwood Lane, close to Rowsley, in the 1930's. To accommodate the growth, workers also spread to Broadwalk in Darley Dale, and the Darley House and Hooley estates nearer Matlock.

Railway employees

Living on Derwent Avenue and Northwood Avenue Broad Walk, Darley Dale

Named house	1	2 Fletcher (ash pit labourer)	3 Allwood (fireman)	4	5 Haynes (sidings shunter)	6 George Parks (driver) Dennis Parks (fireman)	7	Named house Clements (sidings inspector)
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DERWENT AVENUE

Named house Bark (goods guard)	8	9	10	11 Joe Thraves (driver) Bob Thraves (fireman)	12 Dennis Plant (driver) Malcolm Plant (fireman)	13 Frank Jackson (driver) Ralph Jackson (fireman)	14	Named house
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NORTHWOOD AVENUE

The railway also stimulated pursuits outside of work. Sports featured prominently with football, bowls, cricket

teams and tennis, mostly played on a sports ground which was on land eventually used to build Firth-Derihon during WW2.

Use was also made of local venues like the Northwood Club and the Whitworth Institute for social and musical events.

The railway workers also talked about football games in the sidings at lunchtime. Games of cricket with unconventional balls

and bats (brake sticks) were played.

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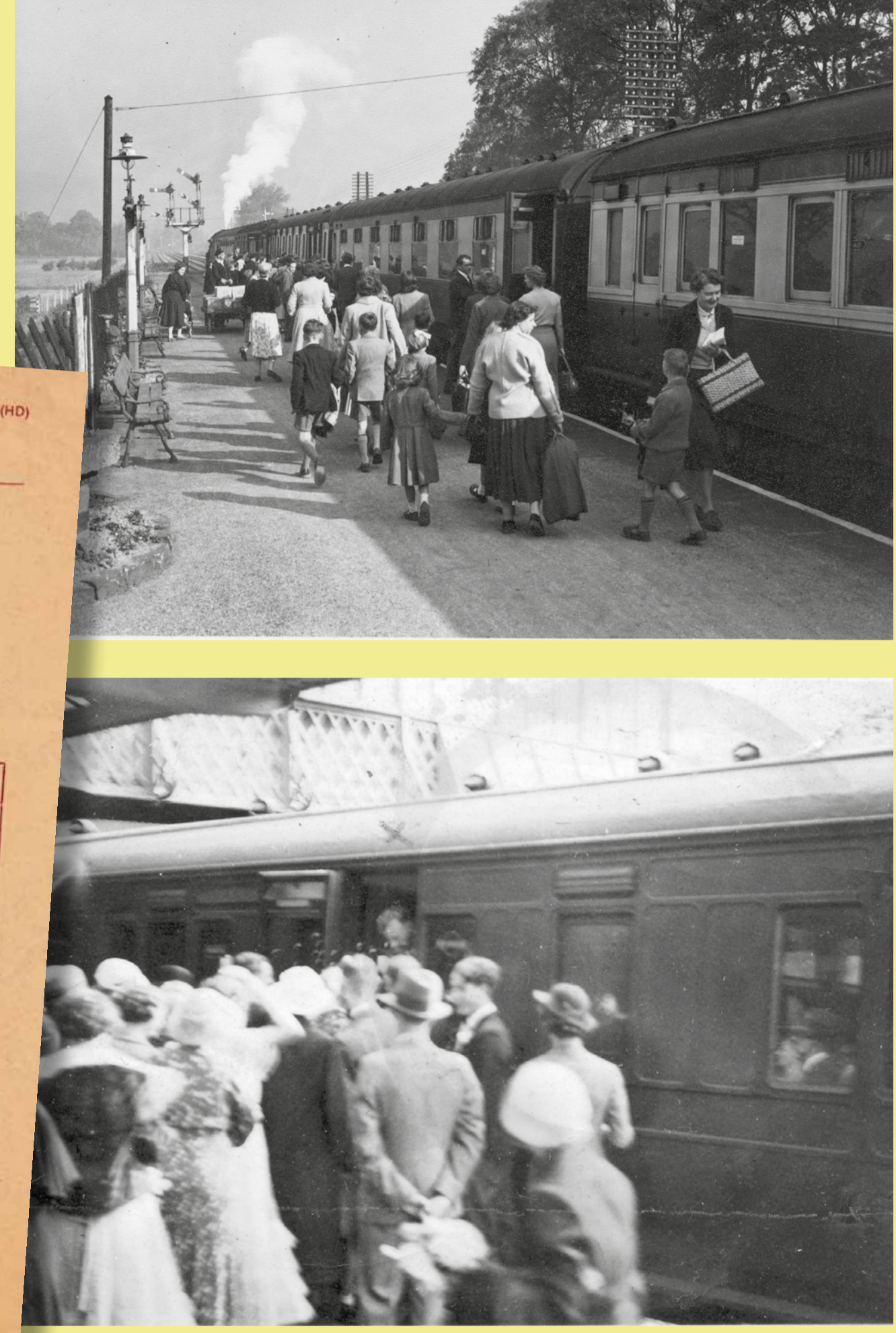
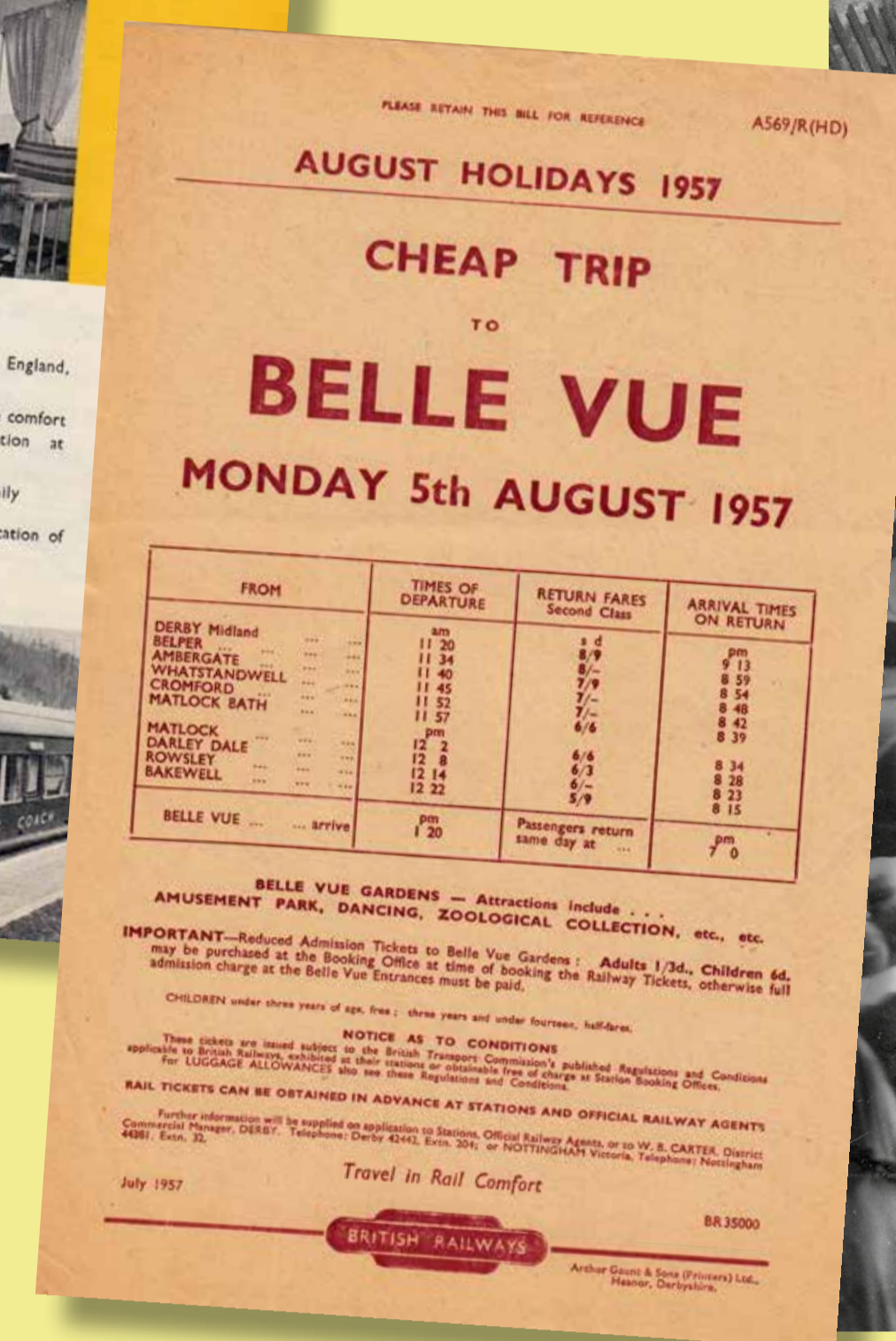
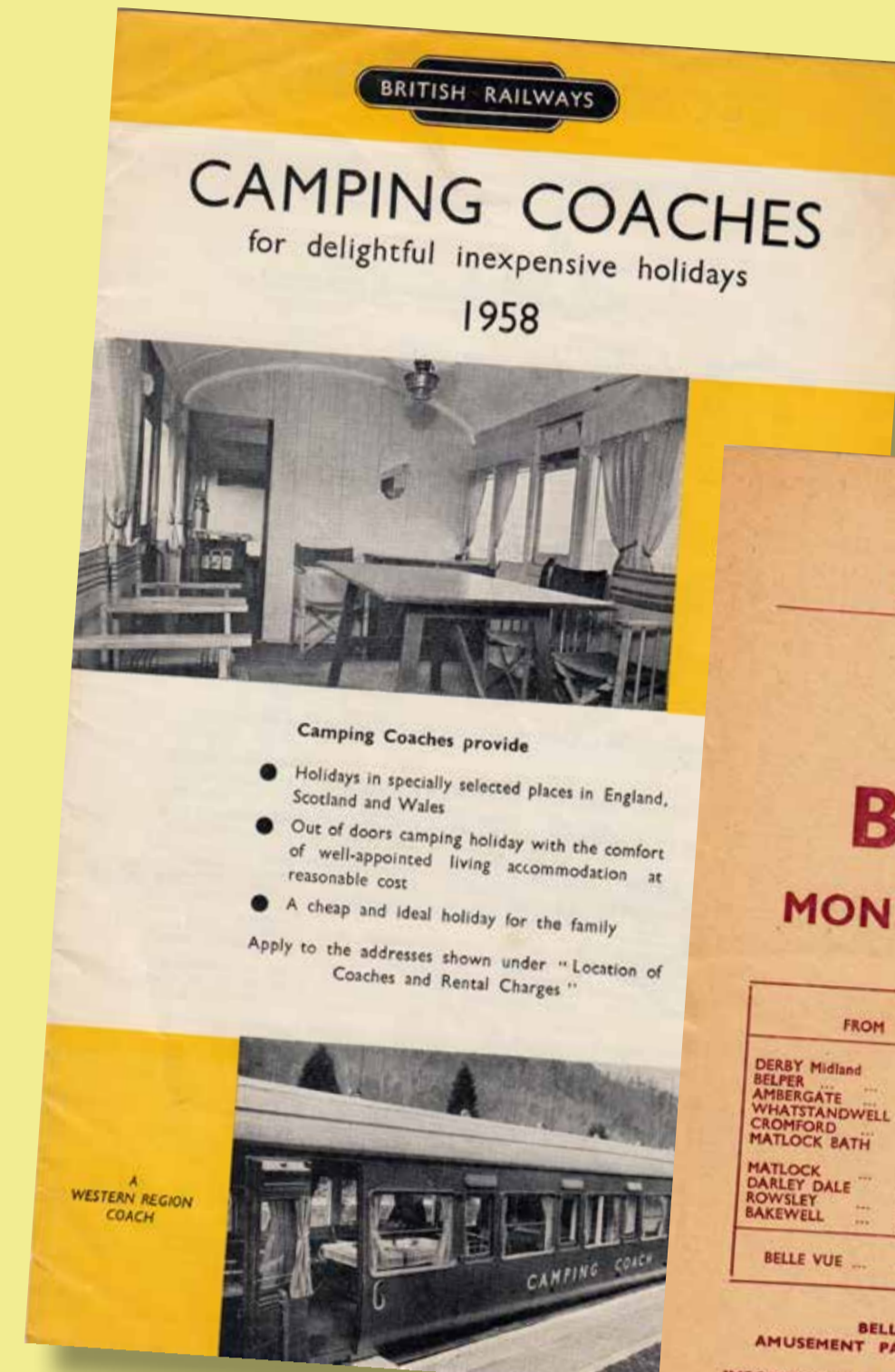
Days out and holidays

There are fond memories of travelling on the railway on days out as well as going on holiday to places such as North Wales, the Lancashire coast and New Brighton.

There were regular day trips to Manchester's Belle Vue, which was a zoo, gardens and amusement park.

Visitors used the line to come to Matlock for days out, enjoying Hall Leys Park as well as the Lido

Holiday makers visited Darley Dale station to stay in a camping coach. A memory of such a holiday came from someone, who at 8 years old, recalls a Whitsun week's holiday in Darley Dale Camping coach in 1957. The family's journey started from Sale then Manchester Central and on to Darley Dale via Millers Dale. Luggage was sent in advance of the passengers and delivered to the camping coach. British Railways provided everything (apart from the food) and was seen as 'excellent value'.



Days out and holidays

The railway sparked many memories from childhood. People remember standing on the footbridge at Darley Dale station waiting for the express train to thunder through. Children even went to school with black faces from the smoke!

Many recall their train spotting days as children and there were fond memories of putting pennies on the track only to be flattened by the trains. Many remember footplate rides, which drivers would do taking their children on the train without the authorities knowing.

Many memories are of catching the 13.06 train down to Derby to watch Derby County play football at The Baseball Ground. Supporters would join at all the stations on the line making it a great atmosphere.



Runaway trains and Rowsley's 'Whisky Galore'!

Not everything ran smoothly on the railway. There are stories of incidents including runaway trains, one whose wheels locked in Haddon Tunnel. The crew had to wind in reverse gear to slow the train, approaching Rowsley station the train picked up speed, but thankfully the crew regained control into Rowsley Sidings.

In 1944, there was theft of cigarettes at Rowsley Sidings destined as Navy rations. This was a serious crime and involved Railway Police Special Branch operating undercover to investigate who was taking the cigarettes. It resulted in six LMS workers goaled for the

thefts, in fact six month hard labour.

Whatever the weather, the trains always seemed to get through. Getting to Buxton was always a challenge in snow. Snowploughs were used on the front of the trains.

With the floods in 1960 and 1965, people recall how Matlock, in particular, was under water. However, the trains suffered minimal disruption even through heavy flooding. They did not run for part of the day on Friday 10th December 1965 due to the height of the water under Bridge 35 on the Darley side of Cawdor Quarry.



Heavy Snow Rowsley, January 30th, 1965.

Station or Sidings	Pointe Unworkable From Signal Due and Signals not available at 9.20am	Time got fixed
Whetstone	All connections	2/30pm
High Peak Junction	Up Distant Signal	11/45am
Graveford Sidings	Down Distant Signal	11/45am
Darley Dale	Up Slow Line	1/0pm
"	Down Slow Line	1/0pm
"	All connections	1/0pm
Olverton Lane	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
Rowsley South Jet.	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Rowsley North Jet.	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
Rowsley South Jet.	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	All connections	1/0pm
Rowsley Down Sidings	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
Matlock Station	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Matlock Sidings	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
Millers Dale Junction	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Millers Dale Jet.	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Millers Dale P.Pet.Jet.	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Millers Dale Buxton Jet.	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Jamwood Dale	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Buxton Gas Sidings	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Mat Jet.	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Mat	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Bux	Up Distant Signal	1/0pm
"	Down Distant Signal	1/0pm
Connections		4/30pm

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Closure and loss of jobs

After operating for almost 120 years, the railway finally closed in 1968. Most people think it was due to the Beeching Report, published in 1963, but in fact British Railways' finances were not in great shape and road networks were rapidly being developed, especially with the advent of the motorways.

However, under the 1962 Transport Act only cases of hardship could be considered as valid reasons for objections to closure, and this could not be proved north of Matlock.

The Peak Line had high operating costs especially with the use of banking engines as a safety requirement over the mainly 1 in 90 gradient between Rowsley and Buxton and Peak Forest. The Hope Valley line was an alternative route from Sheffield to Manchester for freight traffic and became the preferred line.



For those whose lives depended on the railway, closure was a heavy blow. There was a significant loss of jobs; people took redundancy, others who thought a career on the railway was for life,

had to find other work. The community hub once based on the railway dispersed as some people left the area to find work. Some stayed on the railway but moved to other places.



They've handed in their passes . . .

THE redundant railmen of both sections and their womenfolk, over their retired counterparts at an "end of the line" social on October 7th in Northwood Institute, the well-served community centre which has been largely built and equipped by voluntary rail labour.

The indelible apts with which they faced the redundancy problems is well expressed in the words of the following dirty, composed by Mrs. Jane Teeces, a railway guard's daughter. The item, which brought the house down, is being presented in the picture above by an all-rail quartette.

Traveller (J. Stedley)
I'm a traveller, I'm a traveller on the British Rail
And when they closed the stations I began to wail,
But one good thing about all this I couldn't give a cuss
I've handed in my passes and now I go by bus.

Chorus
Join the railway my father said to me,
Join the railway and live in luxury,
So I joined the railway and worked quite willingly,
Now all I've got to show for it, is my redundancy.

Driver (Mrs. Christie Dwyer)
I'm a driver, I'm a driver on a diesel train,
To drive an electric has always been my aim,
But now I've got my notice—it's really got my goat
The only thing that I can do is drive an old milk float.

Fireman (Mrs. Jane Teeces)
I'm a fireman, I'm a fireman shovelling coal all day,
I'm a fireman, shovelling coal all the way,
But now I've got my notice, it's really got me down,
Now I've got to show something the down on Dinkin's farm.

Guard (D. Gannion)
I'm a goods guard, I'm a goods guard sitting in my brake,
Watching all the signals to see if they're a'right,
But now I've got my notice I couldn't give a damn,
So, good luck, Dr. Beeching and all your ruddy clan.

Today's railway

Peak Rail started in 1975 and its aim has always been to reopen the line from Matlock to Buxton to provide heritage rail services through the Peak District National Park.

Its first presence was in Matlock station where parts of the site have been leased since 1977. A base was established on the former Midland Railway goods shed in Buxton in 1980 and this site operated as a steam centre until 1989 when some of the land was sold off

to finance the development of the line from Darley Dale to Matlock

The rebuilding of the line from Darley Dale to Matlock started in August 1987 and the first section for a mile south of Darley Dale was reopened in December 1991. The line through to Matlock Riverside reopened in April 1992. Further extensions to Rowsley South opened in March 1997 and into the national network station at Matlock in July 2011.



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