

The Basingstoke and Wokingham Railway

This is the oddest find so far! In 1895 plans were submitted for this line, with Arthur Chadwick Pain as Engineer. Mr Pain was a prominent engineer of rural railways in the late 19th Century, building the Hemyock and Highworth branches, amongst others. This line left Wokingham station at the north end of the goods yard, and curved sharply to the left, crossing Oxford Road and curving round to run parallel to the Barkham Road. It then ran south west, passing under the Barkham Road at Folly Court and going south of Barkham Hill. It crossed Barkham Ride near the church, a probable site for a station, and then ran on through what is now Arborfield Garrison. The line continued in a SW direction to the west of Eversley to run past Hound Green, Hartley Wespall and Pyotts Green, trailing into the LSW main line east of Basingstoke station. Apparently, it would have been jointly worked by the LSWR and South Eastern Railway, but it is hard to see any benefits for them. The line seems to follow a direct course between the two towns, avoiding most of the few villages in the area, and would have been of limited value as a main line due to the sharp curve and steep gradient out of Wokingham. It was probably proposed – at a time of a ‘mania’ for rural railways to open up agricultural areas – in the forlorn hope of attracting financiers; it was, no doubt, rejected by the 1896 Parliamentary Session.

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