

London, Staines, Ascot and Reading Junction Railway

Part 1

If this line had been built, Bracknell and Wokingham would have been broad gauge GWR stations, and commuter trains would run to Paddington!

The scheme (Ref. OS6/8/370) was published in November 1845 and seems to be a GWR attempt to forestall LSWR plans for a line from Richmond to Reading. It would have left the GW main line about 200 yards west of Paddington station and run in a SW direction, to cross the Thames roughly where the railway bridge at Staines is today. From there it follows the line of the present railway, but slightly to the south, as far as Ascot where it curves north to run very close to Englemere Pond, doubtless to serve the race course. It returns to the alignment of the existing railway at the present day Martins Heron, but where the line curves slightly north to run to Bracknell, the GWR line runs straight ahead.

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Part 2

This takes it through Bracknell about a half mile south of the LSWR line. Its route, in a straight line, is via Harmanswater shops, just south of the Horse and Groom pub, through Brakenhale School, and just south of Bill Hill. It crosses the Crowthorne Road just north of the Green Man pub, probably in a cutting and the pub may have been demolished, and then passes through the site of Wildridings shops. On an embankment, it crosses the Mill Brook valley and passes the northern edge of Mill Pond before entering a cutting through the site of the ICL building on the Southern Industrial area. All of the features which existed in 1845 can be clearly seen on the plans.

From the ICL building, the line continued straight to join the LSWR line at Star Lane crossing, and follow the later route around Wokingham. Unfortunately, Surrey CRO do not have the plans for this line which I hope to inspect soon. This proposal was no doubt rejected by Parliament in the 1846 session and was replaced by a GW Scheme for a line from Acton to Staines and Egham via Brentford, terminating at the foot of Egham Hill on the A30 (Ref. QS6/8/402).

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