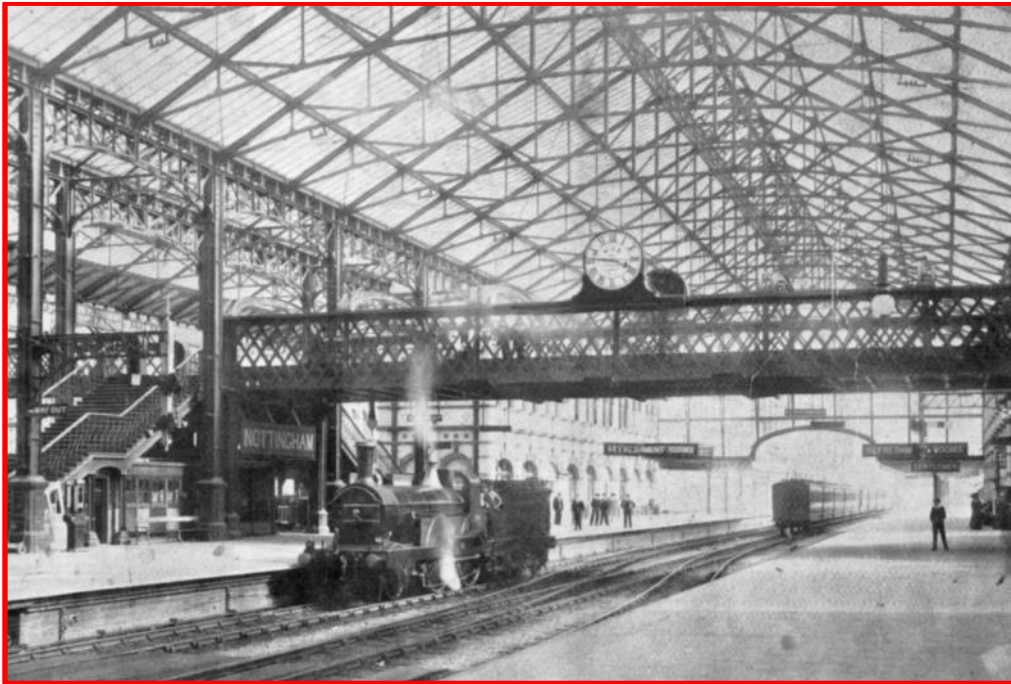


## RAILWAY ENTHUSIASTS 2016

### AUGUST 2016: INAUGURAL MEETING – VICTORIA STATION

The new Railway Enthusiasts Group had a very convivial first meeting on the 2nd August in the bar area of the Richard Herrod where, as planned, we discussed the Great Central Railway and Nottingham Victoria Station.

The GCR never managed to fulfil the expectations of its founder, the late-Victorian entrepreneur Sir Edward Watkin, least of all that it should be part of a network connecting Sheffield to London and then to Paris via a channel tunnel. On the line that was built an imposing station shared with the Great Northern Railway was erected for Nottingham, occupying nearly 13 acres in a previously crowded area of the city. The work involved the excavation of about 600,000 cubic yards of sandstone rock and the demolition of 1,300 houses, a church, 20 public houses and the Union Workhouse, displacing 6,000 people in all, the poorest of whom received little or no compensation.

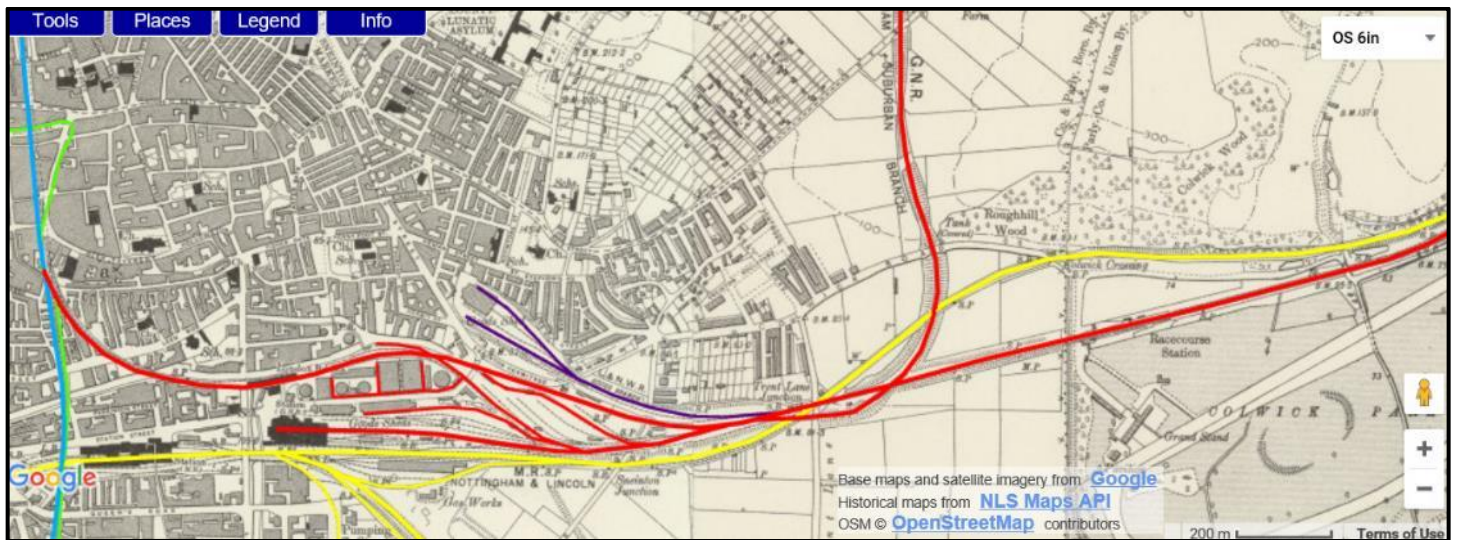


Many of the group still had happy memories of the station, sadly closed in the 1960's along with the GCR line to Marylebone. We discussed how different Nottingham might have been today had had forward-thinking planners integrated the railway lines and tunnels into the redevelopment as part of an urban transport system.



## SEPTEMBER 2016: RAIL IN SNEINTON

The interactions between the Midland, Great Northern, London & North Western and Great Central railway companies in Nottingham were complex as can be seen below where the lines are displayed over an OS map from c.1918, and the current satellite image.



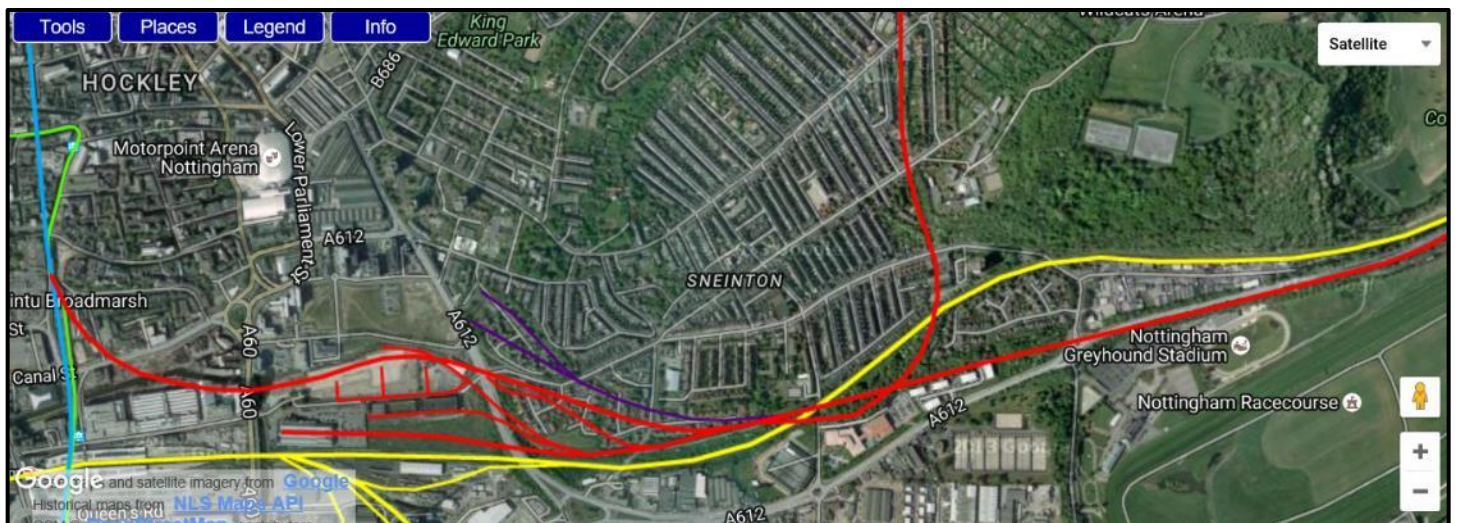
### Key

Midland

Great Northern

London & North Western

Great Central



The Great Northern line from Grantham ran along what is now Daleside Road East, with a station for the racecourse, and a platform for unloading racehorses, still visible by the roadside. From Racecourse Road to Sneinton Hermitage the track has been turned into a green walk, **The Sneinton Greenway**, along which are scattered reminders of its history, especially the brick piers of the bridges which carried the Nottingham Suburban branch northwards over the main lines and at Trent Lane junction where it crossed to the north of the Midland line. It then ran to the Great Northern terminus at London Load, now the Virgin Active gym.

The later collaboration with the Great Central Railway in the building of Nottingham Victoria station required a new branch running on a brick viaduct at high level through London Road High Level station before joining with the GCR at Weekday Cross and running into the tunnel to Victoria Station. The construction of the viaduct caused wholesale destruction of the old houses and cave dwellings at Sneinton Hermitage, well documented in this blog <http://railwaymaniac.com/2016/01/sneinton/>

As will be seen from the maps, much of this area was given over to freight yards, including the London & North Western yards on top of the cliff at Sneinton Hermitage of which some imposing remnants in blue brick can be seen in in Manvers Street and Sneinton Hermitage.



### **OCTOBER 2016: GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY**

In October we changed our regular meeting day to correspond with the Autumn Gala of the Great Central Railway, Loughborough. Fourteen of us joined the railway at Quorn station and spent an enjoyable day travelling up and down the line, drawn by several of the five engines in steam for the day, and stopping to soak up the atmosphere at the four stations along the line. A true nostalgia-fest.



Waiting for the train



Here it is

## **NOVEMBER 2016: FFESTINIOG & WELSH HIGHLAND**

In November we met at the Richard Herrod to watch films of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland railways, both of which run through the beautiful scenery of North Wales.



## **DECEMBER 2016**

In December we met at Gedling Methodist Church for a talk by Mel Chamberlain, a friend of Sue Bates, who started his working life as a British Railways apprentice at the Colwick Yards in the 1960's, working his way up the career ladder to become a second link fireman before the end of steam on the railways.

He had many tales of how the railways operated and the skills necessary to work in this potentially hazardous environment. Also many happy reminiscences of his time on the footplate, from early morning runs through the countryside to late night stops at Nottingham Victoria where the crew were happy to help "clear up" leftover material from the restaurant.

Since those days he has worked as a voluntary driver with his wife as fireman (-woman?) on preservation steam railways, notably the North Norfolk, and he gave us advice about volunteering. Encouragingly he considered our local Great Central Main Line to be one of the best in the country.