

# Wolverton and its Stations

## Why Wolverton?

Wolverton Station wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the shortsightedness of business and civic interests in Northampton in the 1830s. Keen to protect the stage coaching trade they won a court battle to prevent the town being a key destination on the new London to Birmingham railway line.

Accordingly, Wolverton, a healthy spot, many miles from any place of public resort, was selected as a site for a large station, and there the Company have founded a colony of engineers, which is rapidly flourishing while Northampton is going to decay." The Times May 29th 1844



## 1835-38: Building the line

It wasn't until July 1835 that work began on building the line around Wolverton, including the viaduct. There were considerable problems building the embankment outside Wolverton. It kept slipping and to make matters worse, there was some alum shale in part of the embankment which contained sulphate of iron and this decomposed and spontaneous combustion took place, resulting in fifty feet of embankment on fire, sleepers and all. It took three years in all to complete this work.

## 1838: The arrival of the first train at Wolverton Station

COMPLETION OF THE LONDON & BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY  
The continuation of the line of this great railway was opened on Monday morning (17th September). ... Although the trains have run from London to Danby Hall, and from Birmingham to Rugby, the passengers have had to traverse the intervening extent of 33 miles in coaches. The entire railway from London to Birmingham is therefore free and unobstructed throughout the line of 112 1/4 miles Northampton Mercury

The first class fare for one person from London to Birmingham, or back was £1.12s.6d (£1.63p); the second class fare was £1.

## Growth of the town

When the London & Birmingham and later the London North Western Railway Company decided to build their Locomotive and Carriage Works at Wolverton they engaged in the creation of a new community. Wolverton Station as it was first called, the Milton Keynes of its day, was almost certainly the world's first purpose built railway town. They built housing for their workforce and provided funding for a school, the development of St George's and other Churches, as well as a Mechanics' Institute, Isambard Kingdom Brunel visited to get ideas for the design of the railway town of Swindon.



## 1882: The 3rd station

By the 1870s railway traffic were needed and there was tracks for development with was to build a loop line which were drawn up in 1878 and

As Wolverton was no longer a station with refreshment room third station, built in 1882, w

## 1841: The second Wolverton Station and the Refreshment Room

The journey between London and Birmingham took four hours. In the days of corridor-less trains, the passengers needed a place mid-journey where they could descend to 'refresh and relieve' themselves, and the engines needed to be changed or refuelled too.

It was not long therefore before the original Wolverton Station was replaced by what became the first Grand Central Station in the world and one of the most important on the line. The really impressive feature was its Refreshment Room.

## 1991: Loss of Third Station

In 1988 local residents celebrated the 150 years of the railway town of Wolverton. The station was painted up and decorated with hanging baskets. Three years later, scaffolding went up on the station and people were led to believe it was to be refurbished. It was a bitter shock to find it totally demolished overnight, especially as many people had believed it was listed.

## 2012: The new (4th) station

In 1991, after demolition of the old station, plans for a new station were submitted. When local residents saw what was proposed there was uproar. The building was considered to have no merit whatsoever and there was a strong campaign to try and get something better but nothing happened.

In 2002 a Station Steering Group was set up. At that first meeting, the participants were not to know that it would be 10 years before the new station building would become a reality.



Eileen Rogers, booking office clerk at Wolverton Station

Mar 27, 2025 14:33 GMT

# Railway worker uncovers 150 years of family history linked to the rail industry

A railway booking office clerk from Buckinghamshire has spoken about her family's incredible 150-year association with the rail industry on the latest edition of London Northwestern Railway's (LNR) popular "On The Rails" podcast.

Eileen Rogers has worked in the industry for thirty years. Starting out in catering on the first-class carriages for Intercity trains, she grew up just outside of what is now Wolverton Station, where she runs the ticket office.

In the 1870s, Eileen's great grandfather, Robert Johnson, began work as a coach builder at Wolverton Works, which was home to Queen Victoria's royal train. His son Charles - Eileen's grandfather - followed in his father's footsteps with a job at Wolverton Works.

Eileen's father, Douglas David Johnson, joined the rail industry in 1930 and would cycle to Northampton from Wolverton to carry out his training each day. He became foreman at Wolverton Works and rose up the ranks to works manager before he retired at 60.

When Eileen's father retired, his work building trains wasn't done. He went on to join the steam railway club in Newport Pagnell, where he built miniature steam trains for children to enjoy.

Speaking on LNR's "On the Rails" podcast, Eileen describes her family history and its deep roots in the industry, as well as her joy of returning to work at Wolverton station in 2024.

**Eileen Rogers, booking office clerk at Wolverton for LNR, said:** "Growing up just outside of Wolverton Works, I remember waking up to a sea of flat caps outside my window each day. It was my dad who convinced me to start working on the railway.

"He said I had itchy feet as I couldn't seem to find a job I enjoyed, so when a position came up listed in the local paper, he told me to go for it. I've worked in the industry for going on thirty years now, and I've truly loved it. Now, coming back to work at Wolverton, it feels like I've come full circle."

The full podcast episode, which also features other interviews with rail workers with long family histories and a look at future careers in the industry through apprenticeships, is available to stream and download via

## About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, email [press.office@wmtrains.co.uk](mailto:press.office@wmtrains.co.uk)

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

For more information on these services visit [westmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](http://londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk)

If you have been sent this press release, this is because we believe this to be of interest to you.

To sign up for all future releases, visit our newsroom and subscribe to our updates. You can unsubscribe to our releases at any time.

## Contacts



### **Press Office - Media Use Only**

Press Contact

[press.office@wmtrains.co.uk](mailto:press.office@wmtrains.co.uk)

03300 955150