

THE EDEN VALLEY RAILWAY.

INTRODUCTION.

On completion of the construction of the South Durham and Lancashire Union Railway (SDLUR) in 1861 which linked Darlington, Barnard Castle, Kirkby Stephen and Tebay across the Pennines via Stainmore, Royal Assent was given in 1858 for the construction of a 'branch' from Kirkby Stephen to Penrith via Appleby. I stress the word 'branch', because in later years, this was to become the Main Line and the route from Kirkby Stephen to Tebay would be regarded as the Branch.

The Eden Valley Railway (EVR), as the proposed branch was to become known, was to join the Lancaster & Carlisle (later London & North Western Railway) at Clifton, near Penrith at a cost of almost £205,000 and building took four years. As there were no tunnels and only three short viaducts on the route, problems during construction were few.

In April of the year of completion, freight traffic commenced, with passenger trains running two months later in June, 1862. For some inexplicable reason, the connection to the Lancaster & Carlisle necessitated a reversal at Clifton but when the North Eastern Railway took over the line a year later, a spur was built so that through, non-stop running could take place.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE.

Leaving Kirkby Stephen, trains for Penrith left the Tebay line just beyond the station and swung right down a 1 in 186 incline to reach Musgrave some 4 miles distant. After a fairly level mile and a half along the Eden Valley, Warcop was the next station to be reached. Still on level ground, Appleby, the only settlement with 'Town' status and 5½ miles from Warcop usually meant a short halt of a few minutes. Between Kirkby Stephen and Appleby, the EVR ran close to, and often crossed the Midland's Settle and Carlisle Route. There followed many small stations which served the many villages in the area; Kirkby Thore (3½m), Temple Sowerby (2m), Cliburn (1½m), Clifton (3m), then on to Penrith, a further 4 miles distant. Compared with the tortuous Stainmore Route between Barnard Castle and Kirkby Stephen, this was an easy run for the trains. Except for two very short inclines of 1 in 80, the average was 1 in 150 with fairly equal 'ups and downs'. The three viaducts on the line, at Musgrave, Coupland (near Appleby) and Skygarth (near Temple Sowerby) were between 200 and 400 feet long with a height above their respective river-beds of a mere 35 feet.

TRAIN SERVICES.

Initially, there were only two passenger trains a day leaving Darlington which connected at Kirkby Stephen with the EVR trains. Journey time between Darlington

and Penrith was some $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours. By 1922 a timetable was set up which was to remain in a similar form for the next 40 years (except in Wartime). The Tebay section had by now become the Branch - in fact it was to close 10 years before the EVR-and 5 trains per day ran between Kirkby Stephen and Penrith, 4 of these being through workings from Darlington. Details are as follows;

Darlington	0650	-	1238	1457	1703	No Sunday Service.	
Kirkby Stephen	0825	1135	1325	1630	1848		
Appleby	0849	1155	1459	1650	1908		
Penrith	0925	1231	1533	1728	1942		
Penrith	0713	1020	1320	1615	1918	Suns.	1545
Appleby	0747	1051	1351	1654	2001		1625
Kirkby Stephen	0831	1130	1412	1723	2051		1657
Darlington	0953	1255	-	1852	2203		1847

As can be seen, there was little improvement in timings! At the very end of the lines life, workings were reduced to 3 trains per day in each direction. There were other workings on the line, goods, through passenger workings from the north-east to the Lakes and specials, but more of that later.

LOCOMOTIVES AND STOCK.

The line (including the Stainmore Line) was scattered with Engine Sheds. Kirkby Stephen was especially busy as many workings going East required double heading and/or banking over the Stainmore Summit part of the route.

From the lines inception, the first locomotives to be used were 2-2-2 tender engines. These were gradually replaced by Class 1463 locos., known to NER men as Tennants. Various changes took place over the hundred years of the line's existence but the more popular engines included LNER Class D23s (4-4-0) and, of course the most popular of all, the 0-6-0- J21s. It is rare to see a post-war picture of this line and not notice a J21 lurking somewhere! After nationalisation the J21s were gradually replaced by Standard Class 2MT 2-6-0s - the 'Mickey Mouse' or even ex-LMS 2-6-0s. It was only in the dying months of the line that 2-car DMUs appeared and they saw the line out to the bitter end. There were severe restrictions on this line especially due to the Viaducts on the Stainmore Section so heavy locos. were not seen. If extra power was required, two or three J21s could often be seen on a train over at least part of its route. Between 1948 and 1952, restrictions were lifted and almost anything could be seen on the line (including a V2!) but it was no allowed to travel at more than 30 mph. Rolling stock presented a different picture. you could travel

in NE Clerestory non-corridor stock, Gresley Teak coaches, old LMS Stock or what have you. As I have mentioned previously, all this was swept aside when DMUs came to the line in the mid-1950s and 2-car trains were the order of the day.

SIGNALLING.

Signal Boxes in various shapes and sizes existed at Kirkby Stephen, Musgrave, Warcop, Appleby, Kirkby Thore, Temple Sowerby, Cliburn, and Clifton. As the entire line between Kirkby Stephen and Clifton was single line (albeit for passing loops and a short stretch of double track between Appleby Station and Appleby Midland Junction), most of these had been reduced to Ground Frame status by the beginning of the 20th Century.

GENERAL REMARKS/CLOSURE.

I mentioned in a previous paragraph that I would refer to 'other' train services at a later stage. Whilst the Tebay-Kirkby Stephen-Stainmore section of the line was well patronised by heavy goods traffic including vast amounts of Coke, the Eden Valley Railway had a more modest traffic in addition to its timetabled passenger services. Milk Traffic from the Dairy in Appleby formed quite an important part of the goods trade. Because Warcop was the centre of MoD Land, there were several troop specials to be seen on the line even after closure. There were also Excursion Trains. By reversing at Penrith, access could be gained to the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Railway (CKPR) and through workings, especially at peak Summer weekends, were a feature of the line. Starting from the North-East (Newcastle, Durham, Wearside and Tees-side), through trains to the Northern Lakes, e.g. Keswick-On-Derwentwater could be regularly seen. Unusual excursions based on a Circular Route were a rarity but still existed. One example was a tour from Newcastle Central Station to Carlisle via the Tyne Valley, down the West Coast mainline to Penrith and via the Eden Valley Line to Darlington and back to Newcastle. And all without reversing! Examination of timetables also reveals occasional through workings from York to Keswick and King's Cross to Keswick on Summer Saturdays but these did not last long. There were a spate of Station closures in the 1950s when Musgrave (1952), Kirkby Thore (1953), Temple Sowerby (1953), and Cliburn (1956) all fell. The remaining stations stayed open till the end which arrived on 22nd January, 1962. The line, however, did not close completely. By leaving the Carlisle-Settle line at Appleby Midland Junction, trains could access the Eden Valley Line. Traffic continued for some years in the shape of freight as far as Kirkby Stephen and for weekend troop trains to Warcop. By the end of the 1970s, only the Warcop to Appleby section remained and this too fell to closure on 28th March, 1989 when the 'Last Train' ran organised by an enthusiast's organisation. The track still remains in place between Appleby and Warcop and there have been rumours about preservation. Whatever happens, there is now no Trans-Pennine Link between the Newcastle-Carlisle Route and the Leeds-Manchester.

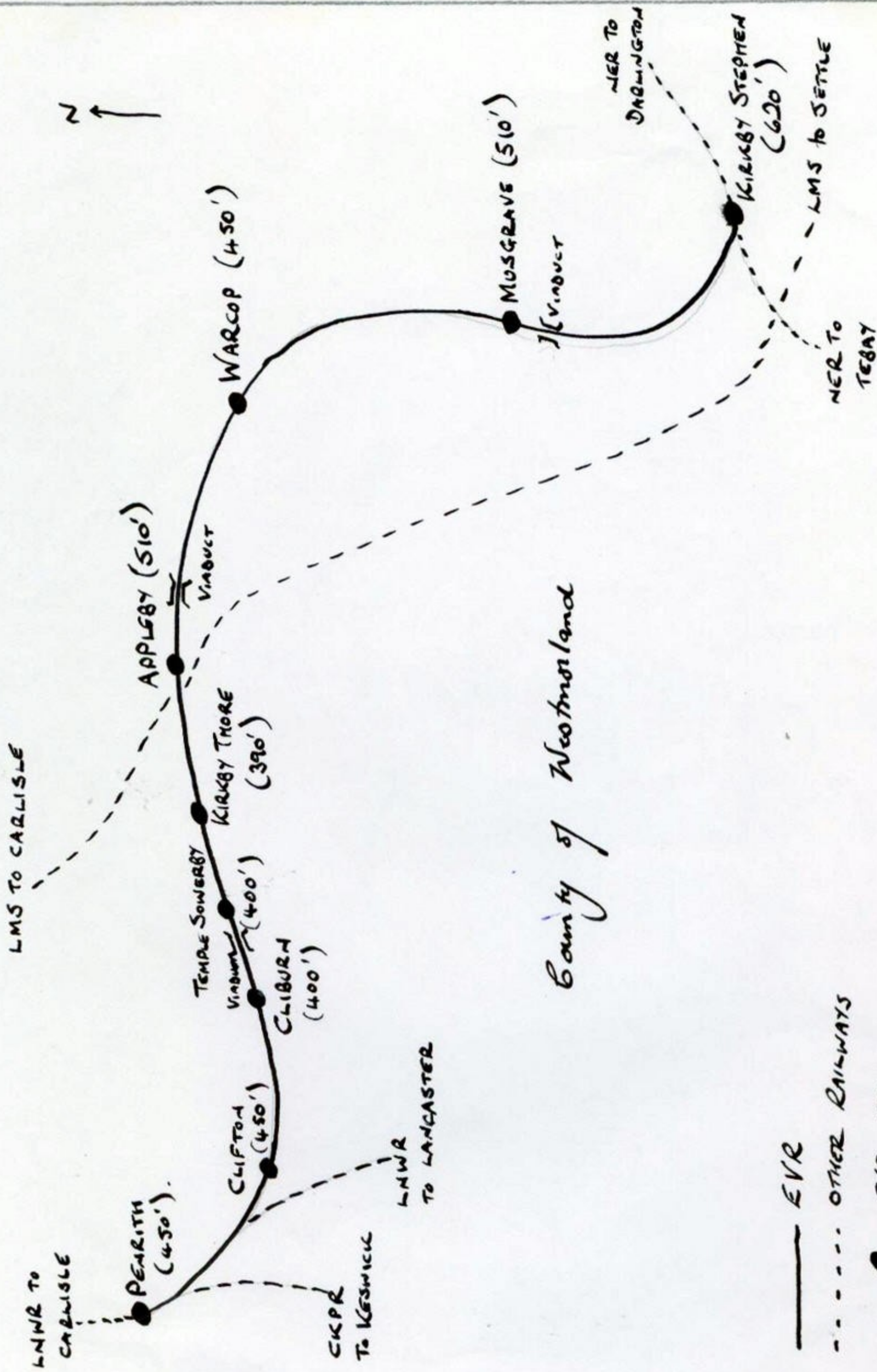
LAST WORDS.

That then, was a description of the line and its services. In future articles, and with the Editor's permission, I would like to discuss in detail the actual Stations and their history as follows:

1. Kirkby Stephen & Musgrave.
2. Appleby & Warcop.
3. The rest of the Line to Penrith.


Alan Dick.

// August, 1992.



EDEN VALLEY RAILWAY (Not to Scale).