



Proposed Swindon, Marlborough and Andover Railway

A meeting in connection with the above scheme was held in the Corn Exchange, Swindon, on Tuesday afternoon. The line is intended to connect the Great Western and South-Western lines, and thereby give a direct route of transit between Manchester, Liverpool, and the north generally, together with the important towns of Southampton and Portsmouth. The line is to be 26 miles in length, and the cost is estimated at about £300,000. Mr. A. L. Goddard, who presided at the meeting, said he believed the undertaking would be of great utility, and would prove a great benefit both commercially and financially. There were no engineering difficulties to contend with, and the gradients would be very easy. It was proposed to join the Great Western main line a little to the east of Swindon station, and proceed by way of a tunnel under Old Swindon, where there would be a station to Chiseldon and Ogbourne; then over the five miles of line now laid between Marlborough and Burbage, and then on to Weyhill and Andover, where it would join the South-Western. The gradients at any point would be not more than one in ninety. If another short line were made from Kemble station, on the Great Western Railway, to Cheltenham, the communication between Manchester and Southampton would be the shortest possible. Mr. Shopland, the engineer, explained the proposed line with the aid of a large map suspended in the room, by which it was shown that the line would open up a most direct communication between the manufacturing districts of the north and the coal fields of South Wales, as well as the important port of Southampton. The preliminary expenses were estimated at £2,000, whilst the cost of construction would not exceed £10,000 a mile. Resolutions were unanimously carried approving of the scheme, and appointing a committee to solicit subscriptions to meet expenses, towards which a sum of £500 was subscribed in the room. The town of Marlborough has also subscribed £1200 for the same purpose.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal and General Advertiser, 21 December 1872

OPC Notes: [Source Wikipedia](#)

The Swindon, Marlborough and Andover Railway

Original plans for railways in the Marlborough area had focused on a scheme for a north-south line to link Swindon with Andover, passing through Marlborough. Though the GWR branch line got to Marlborough first, the north-south plans were revived with an Act in 1873, and the Swindon, Marlborough and Andover Railway was built in two halves. The northern section, from Swindon Town south to Marlborough, was opened in July 1881; the southern section, from Andover Junction north to Grafton and Burbage, opened the following year, 1882. The new Marlborough station opened as a terminus just to the east of the existing GWR station. It had a station building on the up platform (towards Swindon) with a huge canopy. There was a goods yard behind the up platform to the north west of the passenger station with a large goods shed.

Links to the GWR

Having built its lines from the north and the south, the financially strapped SM&AR then found that it could not join them, being unable to afford to persuade landowners to sell their property to build the missing link. Instead, it built a short link within Marlborough to the GWR branch line just south of Marlborough GWR station and another link from the GWR's Berks and Hants Extension Railway just east of Savernake station southwards to Grafton and Burbage station. From February 1883, SM&AR through trains used the GWR Marlborough branch and a short section of the B&HER main line, including Savernake station. A condition of the GWR lease was that passengers wanting to change at Savernake to other GWR services had to use the GWR trains from Marlborough.