

## = Wolverton to Newport Pagnell Line =

The Wolverton to Newport Pagnell Line was a railway branch line in Buckinghamshire , United Kingdom running from Wolverton on the London and North Western Railway ( LNWR ) ( today 's West Coast Main Line ) to Newport Pagnell . The line fully opened to passengers in 1867 , with an extension to Olney planned in 1865 , but this scheme was abandoned after partial construction . Earthworks along the route of the extension still exist in Bury field , and plaques exist detailing the history of the failed project .

Competition from road traffic starting in the early twentieth century put pressure on the railway , and it was later a victim of the Beeching axe in 1962 . The line was seen as unprofitable , and it closed to passengers in 1964 , and to goods traffic in 1967 . Part of the trackbed today provides a section of the Milton Keynes redway system .

## = Background =

The Newport Pagnell Canal had opened in 1817 between the Grand Junction Canal at Great Linford and Newport Pagnell . The canal carried a reasonable level of traffic , but in 1845 , the LNWR attempted to buy the canal , using it for a potential railway line . The offer was refused for two decades , until 1862 , when the LNWR was able to purchase the canal for £ 9000 . The canal closed in 1864 . Despite this , the railway when built did not run on the line of the old canal .

Two earlier proposals had been made in 1845 and 1846 for a railway serving Newport Pagnell , both schemes failing to attract sufficient capital .

## = Construction and operation =

Permission to build the 4 @-@ mile ( 6 @.@ 4 km ) long single line branch railway was obtained on 16 June 1863 . The line opened for goods in 1866 , with passenger services commencing on 2 September 1867 . The line was officially absorbed by the LNWR in 1875 . The one engine that worked the single track branch was later nicknamed Newport Nobby .

In 1865 , powers were granted to extend the line from Newport Pagnell to Olney and then on to meet the Northampton and Peterborough Railway at Wellingborough . Construction was underway , and a bridge had been completed when the extension was abandoned in 1871 . Olney was later served by a station on the Midland Railway 's Bedford to Northampton Line from 1872 , that line closing in 1962 .

In 1900 a spur connecting the branch to the up slow line of the West Coast Main Line was constructed . The water supply for locomotives at Wolverton was insufficient , so a water column was built at the intermediate station in Bradwell . Water came from the town 's own source , with many houses losing their supply . On Mondays , housewives were known to shake their fists at engine drivers when their weekly wash was interrupted . Eventually drivers were forbidden from taking water from Bradwell on Mondays .

In 1898 , the first motor bus service in Buckinghamshire began running between Newport Pagnell and Olney , followed by numerous other routes , which took traffic away from the railway line . Despite this , the LNWR considered electrification of the line in 1904 , believing such a scheme would bring about considerable savings , but the idea never materialised .

## = Closure =

The branch was included in the Beeching report of 1963 which concluded that , since 30 % of the railway network carried less than 1 % of the total passenger traffic , much of it should be closed . The residents of Newport Pagnell resisted the closure , demanding an enquiry which took place on 7 June 1964 . Despite many objections , it was determined that the line would close . The last passenger service was the 5 : 34 pm train from Newport Pagnell on 5 September 1964 , just under a century after the line opened to passengers . The mourning of the line was so great that a bucket of

water was poured over a double dressed as Richard Beeching , the man commonly associated with the closure of over 4 @, @ 000 miles of the British railway network . The crowd cheered as this happened , a mark of the public 's feelings about the closure .

The line was finally closed to freight traffic in 1967 , after which the tracks were lifted . Part of the trackbed is now used by the Milton Keynes redway system , the network of cycle and pedestrian routes that serves the Milton Keynes urban area .