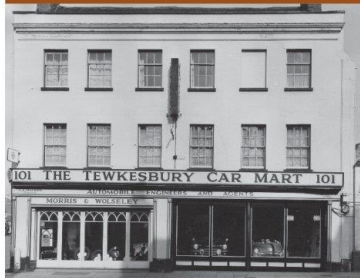


THE MAIN PHOTOGRAPH

THIS photograph of the station is unique – and it is not certain exactly when or why the photograph was taken.

Allowing a steam engine into the High Street broke the law but one can see that the arch was gouged to allow passage for the funnel. Also the engine is rather more powerful than the branch line required. The dress suggests mid 19th century and so it could have been taken about 1864 – when the station was eclipsed by the building of a new line and station to the north of the town.

THE MANUFACTORY



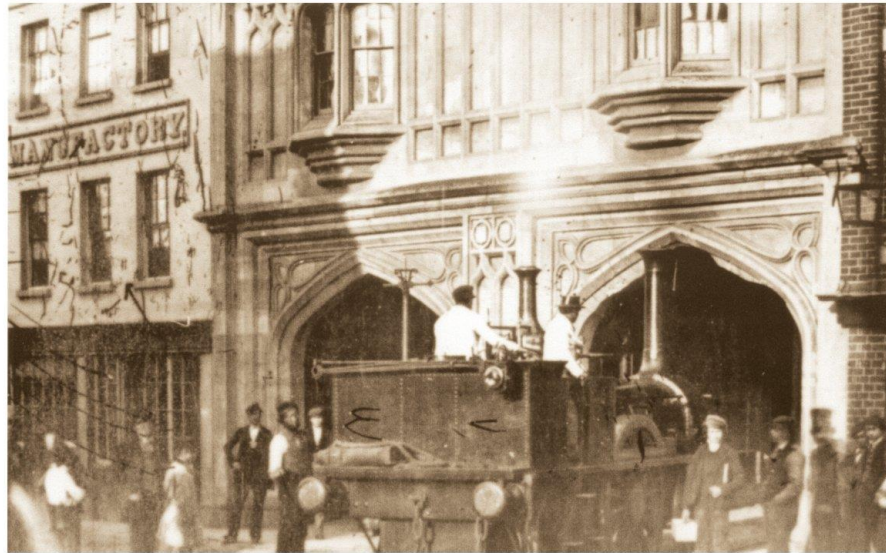
Photograph from 1958 [MOD-TBC]

The 'Manufactory' to the left of the station belonged to *Sharpe and Sheward, Coach makers*, who bought the *Plume of Feathers Public House* in 1839. They built their new factory at the same time as the new station. It closed in 1918 and was converted into a garage, *Tewkesbury Car Mart*, owned firstly by *Abel Jordan* and then by *Vic Watson*.

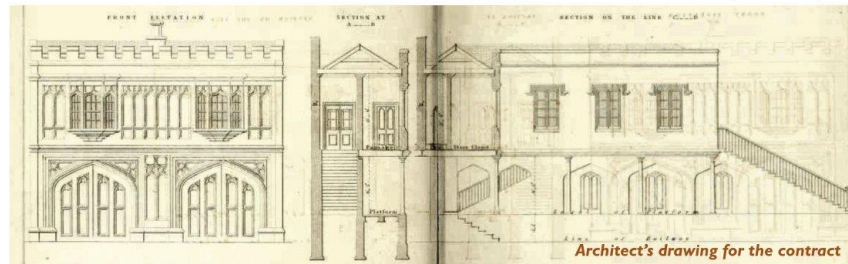


[Images of England] This is the only other photograph which has been found - an aerial photo from 1928, taken just before demolition in 1929.

Tewkesbury's Railway Station High Street, built 1838



Courtesy of Severn Valley Railway



Architect's drawing for the contract

The builder was local stone mason, *Thomas Holder*, but at the time of opening on 1 December 1840: "suddenly, aged 64, ... formerly a respectable stonemason ... He went to bed in perfect health at night and was a corpse early in the morning".

(Drawing: www.tewkesburyhistory.com)

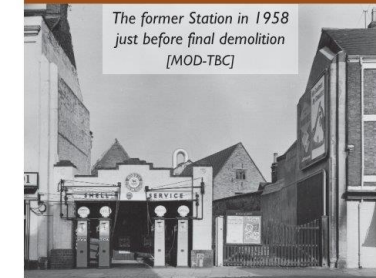
TCS/THS/TRS are grateful for the cooperation of the owners and Mr. Hayward of the "Cookshop", Wendy Snarey & Severn Valley Railway Museum.

AFTER THE 1860s

From 1864 onwards the station was used in a variety of ways. After World War I, it was used "by the British Legion Club, since when [1926] it has been more or less derelict". The fate of the building was a mystery as nothing was reported in the *Tewkesbury press*. It was the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 9 March 1929 which revealed that:

"One of the familiar landmarks in the old Borough is in process of being removed. One alludes to the Old Railway Station in High Street. This the Railway Company is taking down so as to enable taller wagons to pass to the Quay."

FROM THE 1930s



The former Station in 1958 just before final demolition [MOD-TBC]

In 1933 *Abel Jordan* "gained permission to erect 4 x 500 gallon petrol tanks on land facing the High Street, formerly the property of the railway company, with swing arms over the pavement".

The whole area was demolished in the 1970s to build the shopping precinct.

The site in 2013 - mysteriously the limestone column was not demolished and stands as a reminder of our first Gothic Railway Station, that *Bradshaw* never witnessed!



James Bennett, *Tewkesbury Register*

"The station-house, which faces the High Street, is built of Postlip free stone, and is thirty eight feet in length and thirty four feet in height. It has a fine Gothic screen front with oriel windows and battlements. In the centre of the building are two well-proportioned gateways, each twelve feet high and twelve feet six inches wide, one of which is designed for railway passengers, and the other for carriages and goods. There are suitable offices on the ground floor, with cellaring underneath; and four airy upper rooms, forming a comfortable residence."

Vol. I page 440, 1839

James Bennett, *Tewkesbury Register*

"An accident, which might have been attended with very disastrous consequences, happened at the Railway Station-house. The engine-driver, through some error of applying the brake, suffered the passenger carriage, in which several persons were seated, to get disengaged from the engine and it was propelled with great force through the doors, which, happening to be shut at that time, it shivered to pieces. The carriage then proceeded rapidly across the High Street and down the Quay Lane, but was luckily stopped before it reached the river. The passengers were so much alarmed that some of them jumped out of the carriage before it had entirely stopped, but no one was seriously injured, though several sustained some inconvenience from falling into the mire in the Quay Lane."

Vol. II; 17 Nov. 1846

The Architectural Wonder that Bradshaw Missed!

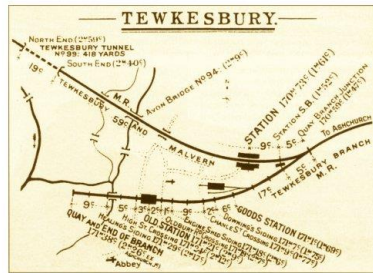


Diagram of 1864-1961 Railway Layout in Tewkesbury
[S. Mourton]

By the 1830s Tewkesbury was enjoying 50 years of prosperity. This was based mainly upon the domestic textile industry which manufactured stockings (gentlemen's hose) in houses and workshops in the town.

In addition Tewkesbury was a major stage on the national coaching route following the improvements under the Turnpike Acts. The Town boasted luxurious Hotels such as the *Swan* and the *Hop Pole* which offered food, drink and accommodation, celebrated by Dickens in the *Pickwick Papers*.

One problem was the width of the River Severn, but this was solved in 1823 by the building of the Mythe Bridge which was part designed by Thomas Telford. After that, 30 coaches a day were passing through Tewkesbury.

The only, possibly insoluble, problem on the horizon was the increasing popularity of the building of railways, which would quickly threaten the coaching industry. It was realised that the Bristol to Birmingham Railway would by-pass Tewkesbury, with its vulnerability to flooding, in favour of the booming educational spa town of Cheltenham. So the Corporation used all its influence to change that decision.

When this failed, they managed to have an Act of Parliament passed which permitted the building of a branch line from Ashchurch to Tewkesbury, with an extension subsequently to Tewkesbury Quay where the Severn and Avon met.

However, as the three level crossings were planned in the centre of Tewkesbury, Parliament also ruled that, in order to protect the public, locomotives should be prohibited from using the branch to the Quay.

On 24 June 1840 the Birmingham to Bristol line was opened, followed in July by the Tewkesbury branch line. In 1844 the extension to the Quay was completed.

Before that, however, a station was opened in 1839 at a right-angle to the High Street. It was built from 'Postlip' limestone and, because of the Parliamentary ruling, it was the terminus for steam traction. Trucks destined for the docks were therefore sent by gravity across the High Street, down Quay Street to the Quay. They



The 'New' Railway Station, 1864-1961
[R. Ross]

were then hauled back to the station by Shire Horses, replaced by a motor tractor in c1923. In 1864 the High Street Station was redundant with the building of the railway extension to Malvern. This required the building of a new station, north of the town in Station Road. The whole line was closed to passenger traffic on 12 August 1961.

Written by John Dixon, designed by Sam Eedle, Printed by Fleet Graphics, Tewkesbury.

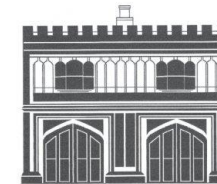
~1838~

The Civic, Historical & Railway Societies of Tewkesbury are proud to have unveiled a plaque commemorating Tewkesbury's First and Forgotten Railway Station in the High Street.



Tewkesbury's First Railway Station

"This Limestone column is the remains of Tewkesbury's first Railway Station, built in 1839, terminating the branch line from Ashchurch. Locomotives were forbidden to pass through its doors. It was redundant after the 1864 opening of the Upton line, a new station being built off Station Road. The building, subsequently used as meeting rooms, was demolished in 1929, leaving track and platform, until the Shopping Precinct was built by 1972."



~2013~