

The railway lines around Great Ayton were constructed primarily to transport ironstone from Guisborough and Rosedale. Although accessible from the stations at Pinchinthorpe and Ingleby Greenhow, Ayton did not have its own line until 1864. The line from Battersby to Morton Carr was opened in 1864 to shorten the distance travelled by Rosedale ironstone on its way to Middlesbrough. It was a further four years before passenger services began, the station at Ayton having been completed in 1867. By now the railway was part of the North Eastern Railway Company.

Passenger services increased in frequency until the First World War, with seven trains a day in each direction. After the war the service deteriorated, including the loss of the late night train back from Middlesbrough. Large numbers of



1896 William and Helen Thistlewaite



1897 Possibly preparing for the 1897 Jubilee procession through the village

pupils from the North of England Agricultural School (later the Friends' School) used the train to travel home. Goods services were also well used, with a goods yard equipped with a hand-operated crane. Coal was sold from the station yard, a perk of the station master's job.

After the Second World War steam was replaced by diesel and, perhaps surprisingly, passenger services survived the Beeching axe and continue to this day. The station, however, became an unmanned halt. Goods services ceased, and coal for sale arrived at the station by road

transport. In the 1980s the Royal Train, with Prince Charles on board, stayed overnight just to the south of Ayton.

There are links to pages that chronicle how the railway arrived at Ayton, and what effect it had on the village life. There are also interviews with Maurice Scarth, the son of the last stationmaster, and with Joan Taylor, who worked at the station during the Second World War. An article by Tom Knox recalls George Scarth, the last stationmaster, as does a transcription of a press article by Peter Ridley.



Visitors arriving at Ayton station by train Whit Monday 1905



1955 Great Ayton Station



1955 George Scarth & wife

1 The last Stationmaster of Hildale and Great Ayton Railway Stations.

Today at Great Ayton Railway Station yard, stands forlorn in ruinous state the former station masters business. The weigh house, now roofless stands at the end of eight coal cells which were stockpiled up from the track spur above.

The last station master of Great Ayton Mr George Scarth was born December 17th 1897 at Castleton, deep in the North Yorkshire moors, at the age of 16 George started work for the L.N.E.R at Boosbeck Railway Station as a sampler/porter, soon after in teenage years he served as a corporal machine gunner with the East Yorkshire Regiment in Flanders.

Re starting his Railway career after the First world war he gained promotion to signaller status at Darby Railway Station. In a reserved occupation during the 1939-45 war, he served as Stationmaster at Moulton, Richmond on the strategic troops/munitions branch line serving Catterick camp. He also saw railway service at Dinsdale near to RAF Goosepool, now Teeside airport. Wanting to return to the moor after the war, George took charge of the lesser station at Hildale complete with coal business in 1949.

2 and daughter was on the move again - this time to Great Ayton Station. In the early sixties when George retired from British Railways employment as a station master the Beeching axe deemed the station an unstaffed halt.

My own memories are of George as a happy genial gentleman who had time for everyone in a warm open coal fired waiting room.

In 1960 son "Maurice" joined father in the coal business eventually taking over the business in 1964.

Soon after the coal was delivered to the station depot by lorry. The business continued until "Maurice" retired and moved out of the former station masters house in 1987 age 65 retiring to Stokesley.

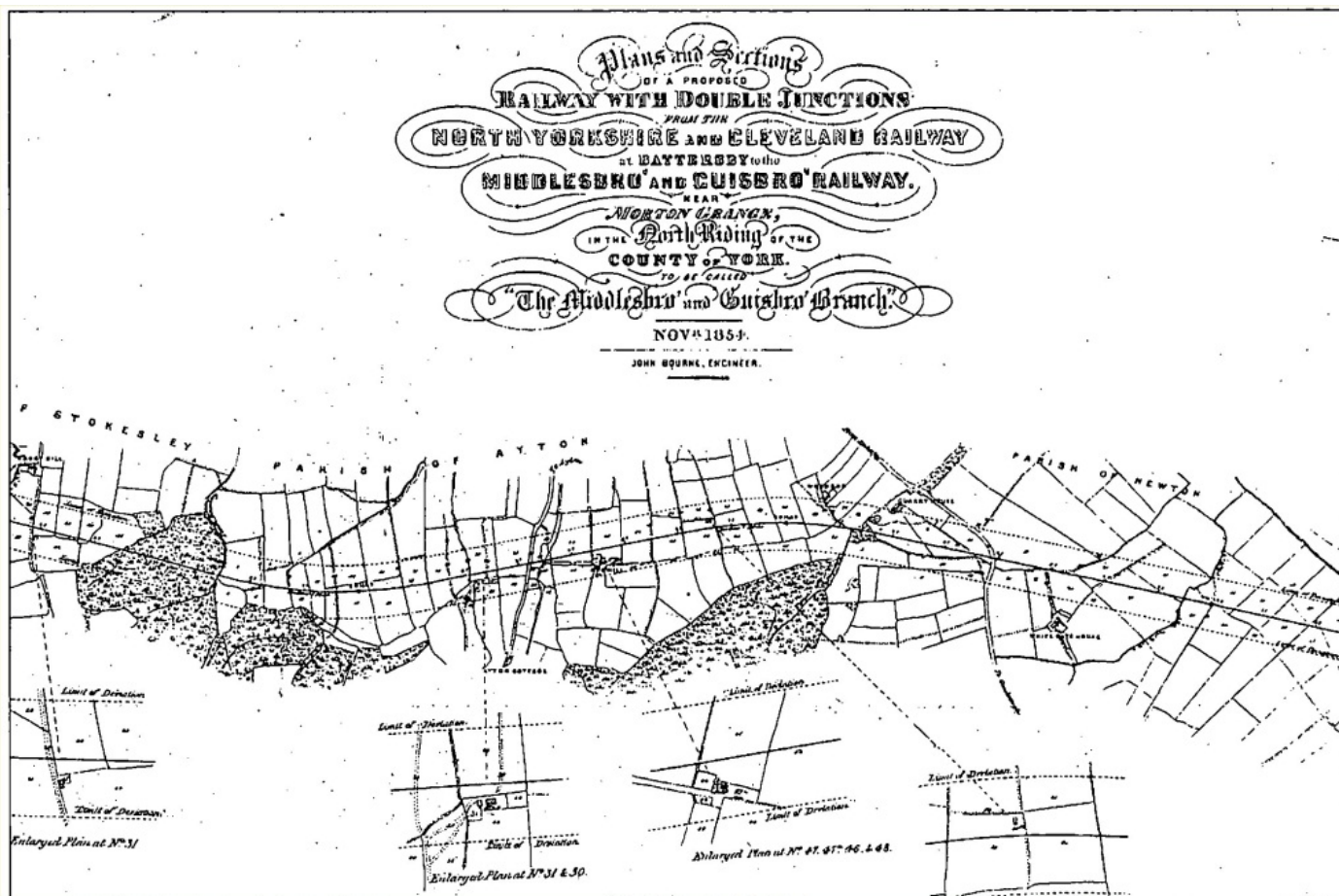
George died age 74 in 1972.

Grand daughter "Elaine" now lives opposite Great Ayton Railway Station with its reminder of a previous age

Coal weigh engineering
manufacture

H Pooley and Sons Ltd
Birmingham and London 1940.

T Knosc
48 Roseberry road
Great Ayton



Railway Line 1854