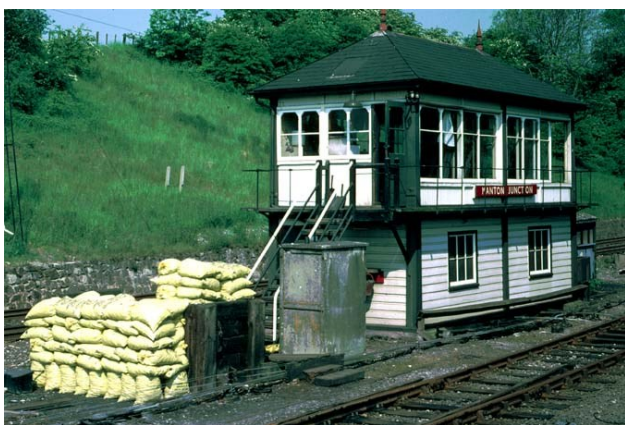


Saturday 25 March

RAILWAY 61

Derby		0702	via Corby
Wellingborough	0839	0856	
Bedford Midland	0910	0926	
Wellingborough	0942	1003	via Corby
East Midlands Pway	1140	1205	
Derby	1218		£30.15

A main line diversion via the Harringworth Viaduct and then the local trains are going via Sharnbrook Tunnel - will I get up and go (or has my got up and go got up and went?). I awoke about 0515, had a doze, and decided to move. 20 minutes door to station. Costa opens at 7, so I'll get coffee on the train. Fat chance! A full five carriage train, so the trolley never came.



Down to Leicester, then we reversed and went along through Melton Mowbray and Oakham - there are some lovely signal boxes (photos off the web). Through Manton Junction and over the viaduct. (The Manton photo is taken from the website [http://ukrailways1970tilltoday.me.uk/Maiton\\_junction\\_signal\\_box.htm](http://ukrailways1970tilltoday.me.uk/Maiton_junction_signal_box.htm). This site a lot of information about all these boxes.

At 1,275 yards (1.166 km) long and with 82 arches, each of which has a 40 feet (12 metre) span, Harringworth is the longest masonry viaduct in the United Kingdom. Built 1876 to 1878. More details at <https://www.harringworth.org/history/the-railway-viaduct/>. You can't see much from the train! I blogged about it at <http://www.northernvicar.co.uk/2017/02/10/harringworth-northamptonshire-st-john-the-baptist/> and found this kneeler in church.





Corby, Kettering and into Wellingborough. There is a small café on platform one, so I purchased breakfast to eat on the local train south. The purpose of this bit of the journey is to do the freight line through Sharnbrook Tunnel - the Wymington Deviation, to give it its correct name. The original line was opened in 1857, with a ruling gradient of 1 in 119 gradient south taking the line to 340 feet above sea level. Around 1880, the line was quadrupled, with the new goods tracks taken through 1,800 yd (1,600 m) long Sharnbrook Tunnel. Following this, in 1884, a long curve, the Wymington Deviation allowed the ruling gradient on the slow/goods lines to be reduced to 1 in 200. We headed Up to London along the main line, I was not amused.



15 minutes at Bedford. The Vivarail train to Bletchley is no longer running as the company has gone bust (just buses now, is that legal?). I cannot get used to watching 12 car trains leave for Brighton - in my book the Midland stops at St Pancras! I debated going on to Luton to try the new link to the airport (a cable-hauled railway), but it doesn't open until Monday.



Back north, and we stayed on the main line for so long I assumed I had wasted my time, but then we zoomed right and joined the line



through the tunnel. That is the bit marked as a separate route in *Baker*, so (in the words of my eldest son) “achievement unlocked”.



Another change at Wellingborough, with time to take some photos, then the next north bound train was a seven car train to Nottingham - also well loaded. I joined a table of teachers en route to the football, put on a podcast about the Lindisfarne Gospels (they did not say it weighed the same as an adult badger), and dozed. I changed at East Midlands Parkway, as desolate as normal and did the final route into Derby. I wish all train chasing was as easy as this!

