

NEW RAILWAY HALT  
FESTIVITIES TO CELEBRATE ITS OPENING

Monday was a red-letter day at Leire, when the opening of the new railway halt took place. The first train to stop was the 7-50 a.m. to Leicester, and this was greeted by cheers and many flags. The train when it started away resembled a school excursion, and a band accompanied the train to Leicester. At 12-40 a special train was run to Leicester, and this conveyed the school children, who were treated to the pictures and a tea in town. This was contributed to by two or three well-known persons of the village. Upon the children coming home a huge bonfire was lit, which was followed by a firework display.

Later on in the evening a social and dance was held in the schoolroom. Mr. C. W. Spriggs was M.C., and the music for dancing was supplied by Mr. E. Matthews of Broughton Astley. Songs were sung by the Misses Knight and Pawley, and the Rev. A. E. Kimpton.

The rector, in a brief outline as to what had led up to the provision of the halt, said that it was discussed for the first time at the Church Council on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1923. In the meantime, the Railway Company had made three refusals. At the present it was for passenger use only, but would doubtless be utilised for goods eventually.

During our research we found material, which was not directly relevant to Leire but by way of a snippet may be of interest.

One of the early directors and eventually chairman of the Midland Counties Railway was Thomas Edward Dicey of Claybrooke Hall. In St Peter's Church at Claybrooke there are memorial plaques to the Dicey family.

It was resolved at a board meeting of the company that a free ticket be given to  
George Stephenson Esquire the 'Father of Railways'.

Thomas Cook's first trip was in June 1841, when he persuaded the Midland Counties Railway to put on a special train, at half fare, to take a party of people from Leicester to a Temperance meeting in Loughborough. This historic event was the first advertised excursion train in England, if not the world.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our findings and if you have any memories or material you would like to share with us please let us know (Sue and Ian Burns 1 Eaglesfield End, Leire, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 5FG. Telephone number 01455 202607). During our research we have found records and received comments from people, which will hopefully go towards a further booklet sometime in the future.

#### REFERENCES

- The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland  
Marriage and burial fiche  
Leicester Journal and Midland Counties Advertiser  
Leicester Mercury  
Minute Book for the Leire Halt Committee  
Deposited Railway plans  
Derby Railway History Group *The Midland Counties Railway*  
Midland Counties Railway Contracts  
Midland Counties Railway Minute Book  
The Guardian and South Leicestershire Advertiser  
Max Wade-Mathews *Grave Matters*