

A HISTORY OF “THE RAILWAY INN”, GELSMOOR

(PRE CONVERSION TO “THE GELSMOOR”)



BY SAMUEL T STEWART – February 2020
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PREFACE

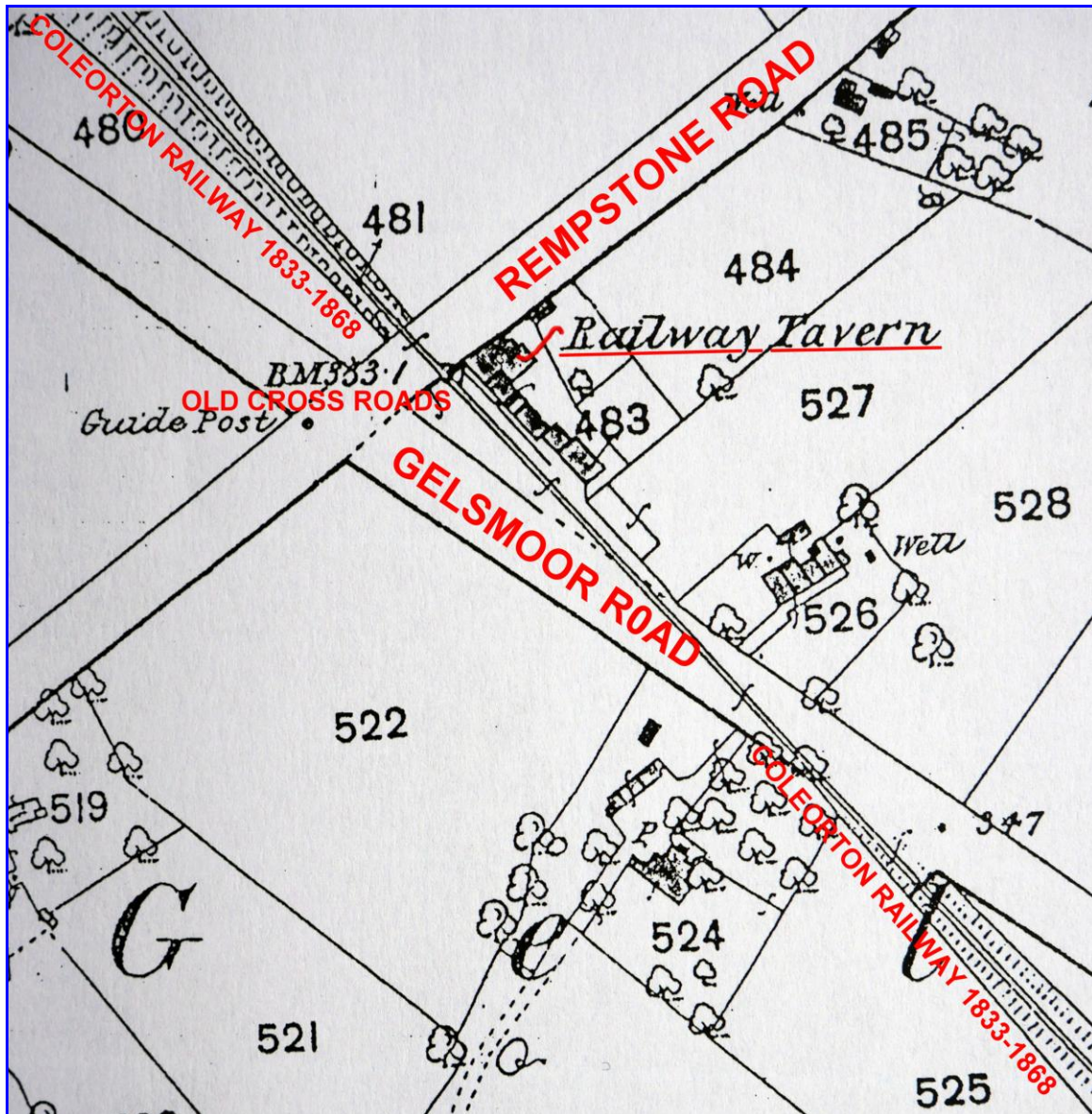
The author hopes that this history of a once focal meeting point of the Gelsmoor locality will evoke some memories for the more senior readers. Hopefully it will act as a catalyst to dig out those old photographs of meetings at the Railway Inn, which the author would be delighted to receive and include in an updated version.



Date of photograph unknown but thought to be c. 1936 when the inn had fallen into private ownership and the frontage had undergone major structural changes

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1882 O/S Map showing the location of the *Railway Tavern*

The structure of the building as shown in the front cover photograph comprises of building work of two distinct periods; that part on the south-east (right hand side in the photograph) is the original *Railway Tavern* which the author's research has established would have been constructed / opened in 1843. This is shown on the preceding 1882 25 inch O/S map with what appear to be a frontage on to the Rempstone Road. The Inn was built on land owned by the *Beaumont Estate* so it is assumed that it was funded by Sir George Howland Willoughby Beaumont, 8th baronet.

Throughout its history (pre *The Gelsmoor*) the Inn had two different names – the *Railway Tavern* & the *Railway Inn*. The name was changed to the *Railway Inn* sometime after 1936.

The *Coleorton Railway* was opened in 1833, and had been constructed under pressure from Sir George Howland Willoughby Beaumont for the purpose of connecting his coal mines in the Smoile near Lount with the new **steam engine driven** Leicester to Swannington Stephenson railway at Swannington Incline where it was transhipped into L&S. R. wagons after being weighed on the L&S.R. company weighbridge at the incline.

Although the line was the standard 4 feet 8 ½ inch gauge, and used edge rails, it was worked by horse drawn wagons with flanged wheels, and there is no documentary evidence to suggest that steam engines were ever used on the *Coleorton Railway*. The railway crossed the Rempstone Road on the level at Gelsmoor, adjacent to the *Railway Tavern* on its left hand side. It carried coal from Beaumont's collieries in the, Smoile and limestone and burnt lime from Cloud Hill.

The railway had a wharf at Gelsmoor, adjacent with the Rempstone turnpike road which was run by the licensee of the *Railway Tavern* George Crabtree, and would have operated a storage and transshipping facility for coal, and limestone etc., bearing in mind that "Cylinder Pit" which was located in the valley just north of the *Railway Tavern* was in operation from c.1835 to c.1860, This did not have a branch line to the Coleorton Railway so the pit could have utilised the wharf facilities to tranship coal onto the horse pulled wagons there.

There is no factual evidence of passengers being carried on the Coleorton railway, however, hand me down hearsay has it that the Railway Tavern was once a ticket office where passengers destined for Swannington, Coalville and Leicester etc purchased their tickets whilst waiting for the train (*horse driven carriages?*). The author is not convinced of this, but it was common practice for Inns to be used as ticket offices on the Leicester to Swannington section of the railway.

The following landlords are given in the Worthington licensing records for the Railway Tavern:-

George Crabtree -	1843 to 1889
Silas Hill -	1890 to 1895
William Hill -	1896 and 1897
William Crabtree -	1905
George Henry Spencer -	1906 & 1907
Eli White -	1908 to 1916
Amelia White -	1917 to 1936
William Berkin Jnr	1941

One would deduce from the above that the Inn opened in 1843 and nothing has been found in licensing records to suggest that it was opened prior to that date. This is supported by the fact that there is no mention of the Railway Tavern in the 1841 census. However, the 1841 census infers that there was a wooden cabin at the site of the *Railway Tavern* from which traffic on the railway over the Rempstone Turnpike road was controlled; this was known as *Wooden Box*.

By 1848, the Post Office Directory shows George Crabtree (joiner) as the landlord of the *Railway Hotel*, as does the 1851 census. The author believes this was a mistake and the licensing records never recorded it as a hotel. From 1843 to 1936 the licensing records list its name as the *Railway Tavern* and at some later point it became known as the *Railway Inn*.

The cross-roads adjacent to the Railway Inn was notorious for car accidents and they were always known as *Whites cross roads*, taken from the landlords name of course. Due to the accidents there, the road through to Newbold and Lount was closed and it became a T junction. Another link road through to Newbold and Lount was constructed to the west of *White's cross roads*.

The Beaumont estate started to disintegrate post 1914 when the 10th baronet, Sir George Howland William Beaumont died and his son began to sell off property to fund his horse racing activities. By 1933, when Sir George Arthur Hamilton Beaumont, 11th baronet died, a large proportion of the Coleorton estate had been sold and the decline continued until the late 1960s when the Trustees disposed of the remainder of the estate land and properties.

It is fairly certain that by 1936 the property had passed into private hands and had undergone major structural alterations including a new frontage. Efforts to establish when the "Marston Brewery" acquired the building has failed to come up with anything since the owners (Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries PLC) sold it on to "Inspired Group Ltd" in 2000 and neither companies had this on record at the time. However, it is quite likely that the Brewery Company saw the potential for future trade on this busy road in the 1930s with the additional custom generated by the industrial development at and around Newbold and the expansion of residential properties in the locality generally.

Before 1924, Newbold was an agricultural hamlet served by a small ale house, the *Cross Keys*, on the Worthington side of the community, and after the closure of the Coleorton Railway c.1872, the *Railway Tavern* would have had to rely on passing trade and local custom from the inhabitants in and around Gelsmoor, bearing in mind that there was significant competition from other Inns only a stones throw away like the *Waggon & Horses* and the *New Inn*. Thus, the establishment of the *New Lount Colliery* in 1924 and the expansion of the Newbold Pipeworks would have been a welcome turn of events for this business.

Following the closure of New Lount colliery in 1968 the Railway inn's trade declined and it changed ownership and by 2005 had become a dingy and depressing watering hole.