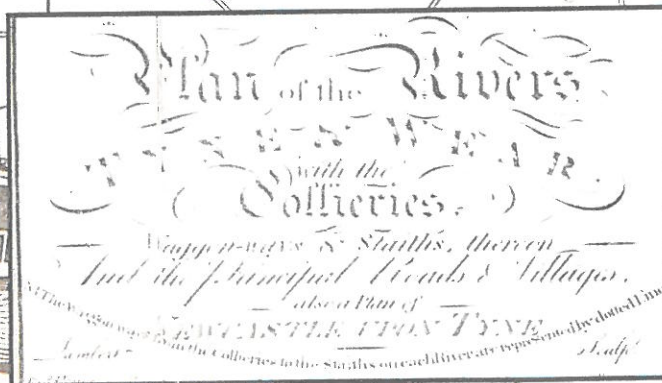


MATTHEW KIRTLEY

A Biography

Locomotive Superintendent of the Midland Railway



Don Asher



Matthew Kirtley - Dates, Age & 'likely' Location

The text in bold print are known dates in Matthew Kirtley's life.

By cross checking the opening dates, of various railways that Matthew Kirtley is said to have worked on, an approximation of the year & his age can be 'guesstimated':- When & Where he was employed?

1813 born **6th February 1813** **Clough Dene, Tanfield, Co. Durham.** Father, Henry Kirtley, born 1768, died 13th Dec 1843 Clough Dene, Tanfield. Mother, Margaret Kirtley (nee Pace).

1826 Age 13? Employed on Stockton to Darlington Rly., which opened in 1825.
Locomotives & horses used the same tracks until 1828 when horses were banned.

1829 Aged 16? Witnessed the Rainhill Trials? MK could have been working on steam loco's for Timothy Hackworth &/or George & Robert Stephenson?

1829/30? Age 16/17? Employed Liverpool & Manchester Rly as fireman/driver - Opened 1830

1831/2? Age 18/19? Employed fireman /driver, Warrington to Newton Rly opened 1832
Vulcan Foundry opened 1832. R Stephenson was a partner. First loco's only delivered 1834.

1832? Age 19? Employed driver Leeds & Selby Railway. A fitter was promoted to foreman above him.
MK refused to work under the man & organised a strike. He was dismissed.

1832/3? Age 19/20? Employed at London & Birmingham Rly., to look after a stationary engine at Kensal Green & at a temporary engine shed at Watford. Here he maintained ballast trains.
The line partially opened 1833. John Birkinshaw, Robert Stephenson's assistant, was nominally the line engineer when Robert Stephenson was absent.

1836 Age 23. Married on June 2nd 1836 to Ann Pelham at Walford in London

1839 Age 26. Employed Locomotive Foreman at Hampton, Birmingham & Derby Junction Rly.
John Birkinshaw appointed Engineer of the Line

1842 Age 29. Appointed Locomotive Superintendent, B&DJR. Moved to Birmingham

1844 Age 31. Appointed Locomotive Superintendent, Midland Railway Derby

1873 died 24th May, age 60 at home at Litchurch Grange Derby.

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Don Asher

Newton Abbot

March 2018

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Preface

Being a Midland Railway aficionado I have for many years been intrigued by Matthew Kirtley. Why is so little known about him personally & what sort of man was he? Retirement gave me the time to start researching Matthew Kirtley & where better place to start than his birthplace in Tanfield. The Tanfield Railway suggested that I should contact a Mr John Earl who had written an article for their House Magazine.

John Earl very kindly sent me a copy of his article & very generously said I could use his work; followed by good luck! This was an excellent start but after reading John's work I wondered what else I could possibly discover. It appeared that John had already done the job I had set out to do.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained, I retraced John's research leads and, like him, frequently ran into a dead end. I started scouring the internet for books on the Midland Railway. I also contacted various sites on the web that gave information on Matthew Kirtley. I asked where the information came from about him being tailor bred. A reply listed three possibilities, one being Charles Stretton. He wrote a book, "The History of the Midland Railway" published 1901.

In Newton Abbot my local library has a Railway Studies Collection. The book collection is second only to that of the NRM. The Stretton book was in the library & contained some new information.

I emailed my contact to tell him I had solved the mystery of the provenance of the 'tailor bred' story. The reply totally deflated me. Charles Stretton had had a big falling out with the editor of the Railway Magazine. Apparently Mr Stretton's work was not to be trusted. What he didn't know he allegedly made up. Nothing daunted the quest went on.

The Midland Railway Trust kindly sent me some notes from their files. This told me that the Kirtley & Allport families had shared a station house at Hampton in Arden. This led on to another book which had information regarding a letter writer using the name, 'Veritas Vincit'. He had written vitriolic letters about many railway managers.

Another piece of luck was to find on the web an original 1847 copy of the letters published by V. V. It gives a lot of opinionated information about railway management of the early 19th century. It is very informative & quite scurrilous but useful as it was written at the time of the events it describes. It also gives valuable information on Mathew Kirtley's life before 1844.

V.V. unfairly criticises his actions of imposing wage reductions of staff, while increasing his own salary, forcing acceptably long hours on drivers & firemen. These actions would have been dictated by the Directors of the company. He would have had no option but carry out their demands on wages & working hours. He could not have increased his own salary. He had been promoted from foreman to Locomotive Superintendent. It would be expected that he would receive a pay rise due to the additional responsibility. This must have been an extremely difficult time for Matthew Kirtley. His subsequent actions in the care & welfare of his men show how he won their hearts & minds.

An original source states that Matthew Kirtley had reported to the Directors that he had dismissed 12 painters. No doubt the directors had come to hear of the misdemeanours & instructed him to dismiss them. The J. B. Radford story of how he dealt with the Derby boiler foreman's dishonesty is a good example of how he looked after & supported his staff.

My research has found that in fact quite a lot has been published about Matthew Kirtley. However, generally, only as an aside to details about his locomotives. This short biography fills in some gaps & explains or perhaps even lays to rest some myths. Readers can come to their own conclusions.

MATTHEW KIRTLEY ~ LOCOMOTIVE SUPERINTENDENT MIDLAND RAILWAY ~ A BIOGRAPHY

Early days

Matthew Kirtley was born & bred in Co Durham, the cradle of railways where the Stephenson's & others such as Hackworth & Gooch, developed locomotives to drive forward the Victorian industrial revolution. His involvement in British railway history goes back to the beginning of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Incredibly locomotives, he designed & built for the Midland Railway, were taken into British Railway stock at Nationalisation in 1947.

His part in the story of railway history is often just a footnote. It has never been celebrated in the area where he was born, or received the general accord that should be his due.

Matthew Kirtley was born on 6th February 1813 in the hamlet of Clough Dene near Tanfield Co. Durham, the youngest of 11 children born to Henry Kirtley & Margaret Kirtley (nee Pace). Clough Dene is a walk across a field to the colliery of Tanfield Moor. His father's death is also recorded as at Clough Dene. (or Dean). For historical context Matthew's birth was just two years before the battle of Waterloo. His older brothers William & Thomas also became locomotive firemen & drivers. Thomas will appear again later in the Kirtley story.

Matthew's Baptism record, from St Margaret's Church Tanfield, tells us his father, Henry was a colliery Overman. (Senior Foreman) He was nothing so grand as a colliery Owner or a Viewer (Manager) as is invariably reported. These humble beginnings can only add gloss to Matthew's eventual achievements. George Stephenson was born in similar circumstances at Wylam some ten miles from Tanfield. Wylam is also where Timothy Hackworth was born & where both he & William Hedley worked.

In his formative years Matthew would have seen the latest, state of the art steam technology of the time. Stationary engines & first generation locomotives would have been instrumental in setting him on the road to his future life's work.

He was obviously a gifted boy & part of the reason we know so little about his early life appear to be his own personal modesty. The Derby & Chesterfield Reporter of May 30th 1873 says that "he was particularly averse to his gifts being made known".

During the development of locomotives, in the early Victorian period, steam engineering was completely unstructured. Local personal networking was virtually the only method information being shared among blacksmiths & drivers working on locomotives & steam engines.

It can be imagined that Matthew & his two elder brothers, William & Thomas could have spent the long winter evenings discussing all the latest developments in the new technology that was emerging.

There is no information on the schooling that the Kirtley children received. Although even if self-taught, Thomas & Matthew at least must have had in their formative years a fine education in the design & maintenance of machinery.

Stockton & Darlington Railway

Matthew Kirtley was said to have joined the Stockton & Darlington Railway aged thirteen in 1826.

This was as a pupil or an apprentice to the Stephensons & Timothy Hackworth. The distinctions would be different from today's descriptions. Certainly it is very likely he would have witnessed the Rainhill Trials.

His abilities must have been observed early on by the Stephensons as Matthew was soon working on the Manchester to Liverpool Railway as a fireman. This was where he would have improved his 'old school

Education' and thoroughly mastered all details by personal experience in the managing & running of steam engines.

The Stephenson family played a very large part in Matthew's fortunes. On every railway he worked for, the Stephenson's were involved, one way or another.

During these early days locomotives were still very unreliable. They were likely to break down on the road where many repairs had to be made in situ to enable the train to proceed. The driver had to be much more of a fitter on the early locomotives. Manufacturers had next to no experience of how their products performed in service.

It was usual for drivers to have a 'shed day' once a week. The driver & his fireman would be responsible for servicing & repairing any faults & keeping their engine in good order. This was invaluable experience for Matthew Kirtley in his future career as a locomotive engineer.

Warrington & Newton Rly - Leeds & Selby Rly

Information on his next moves are sparse. However from the given opening dates of railways it is possible to make some assumptions on where Matthew Kirtley was located and his age at the time.

Matthew is reported by EG Barnes as follows :-

Young Matthew soon became a fireman on the neighbouring tiny though highly important Warrington & Newton Railway. From Lancashire he migrated eastward into Yorkshire to become a driver on the Leeds & Selby. Thereafter his movements are rather obscure (something of an understatement) but he is credited with having driven the first London & Birmingham train into Euston.

More information on this period of his life comes to light later in the story.

London & Birmingham Railway

The statement regarding Matthew Kirtley driving the first train into Euston is often treated with some scepticism. An obituary published by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers states the following:-

.....He was next engaged under Mr Robert Stephenson at the London end of the London & Birmingham railway, and was stationed at Watford, and drove the first locomotive which entered London

The main L & B locomotive works were at Camden. Matthew Kirtley was employed at a temporary engine shed at Watford looking after a stationary engine & locomotives for ballast trains. The fact that engines for ballast trains are mentioned indicates that the line was still being built. At the opening of the line from Euston trains were being cable hauled up Camden bank. Matthew was responsible to John Birkinshaw, assistant to Robert Stephenson. John Birkinshaw was two years younger than Matthew & originated from Bedlington in Northumberland. John Birkinshaw was to remain Matthew's superintendent during their next move to the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway.

It is on public record that :- at St Peter's Church, Walworth Mathew Kirtley of this Parish, Batchelor and Ann Pelham of this Parish, Spinster were married in this Church on this second day of June in the year 1836. The Church is not far from the Elephant & Castle in London.

At the age of 23 he must have felt secure in his job prospects to have married Ann.

Virtually every biography mentions Matthew Kirtley driving the first train into Euston Station, London. It might very well be true but the opening of the line into London was plagued with delays.

The London to Birmingham Railway was opened in stages. The line had been planned to open at the same time as the Grand Junction Railway which entered Birmingham from the North.

However great difficulty in constructing the Kilsby tunnel in Northamptonshire delayed the opening. The first part of the line between Euston station & Boxmoor (Hemel Hempstead) opened on 20th July 1837.

Robert Stephenson had built one engine for the construction of the line. The Directors were concerned that Stephenson would have a monopoly. Edward Bury was therefore contracted to build a first batch of Locomotives in 1836. The contract specified that he would supply not only the locomotives but also the footplate crews of driver & fireman.

The evidence is that it was unlikely that Matthew Kirtley drove the first 'passenger' train into Euston.

The Line was not finished in time for Queen Victoria's coronation on the 28th June 1838.

Aware of the lucrative traffic the event would generate, the company opened the north end of the line, between Birmingham & Rugby & the south end from London to a temporary station at Denbigh Hall, just north of Bletchley. A stage coach shuttle service was provided, linking the two parts to allow through journeys. The line was officially fully opened on 17th September 1838 with the first passenger trains from London & Birmingham arriving that day. The Journey took 5.1/2 hours.

It is conceivable that as Matthew was looking after ballast engines at Watford he did indeed drive the first 'works' train down the Camden bank into Euston. Matthew could have remarked jokingly:-
"I can claim to have driven the first train into Euston" & the story has passed into history.

Robert Stephenson was, officially, the Engineer of the London & Birmingham Railway. With all his other commitments he could not possibly be on site at all times. He had his very capable assistant John Birkinshaw to look after the railway line in his absence. As mentioned earlier Edward Bury was contracted to supply & look after the Locomotives with the crews. This proved to be unworkable so the original contract was ended & Edward Bury appointed as Locomotive Superintendent of the L&B Rly. It would seem that John Birkinshaw & Matthew Kirtley were employed by Robert Stephenson as the Civil Engineers looking after the infrastructure of the line. There were Stationary steam engines to look after at Camden & Kensal Green & locomotives for works trains at Watford, so plenty for Matthew to do.

In the early days an 'Engineer' looked after surveying, earth works, bridge building, tunnels, track & etc. With the coming of the industrial revolution machinery became part of the Engineers remit. Most of the early locomotive pioneers were not considered to be engineers. Thomas Newcomen was an iron monger, Richard Trevithick from a mining family, James Watt an instrument maker & chemist, Timothy Hackworth a blacksmith. George Stephenson an engine wright. The term engineer is applied loosely in Britain whereas on the continent they would have been called Technicians. When George Stephenson's name was put forward to be elected as a member of 'The Engineers' he was blackballed due to his lack of formal education. This caused some consternation & the upshot was that a Mechanical Engineers Institution was formed in 1847 with George Stephenson elected as its first President. Matthew Kirtley was one of the founder members.

There is no doubt that young Matthew had in his first 10 years established an excellent reputation with some very influential people in the railway world. Another of his gifts, that it will become apparent during his time at Derby, is as an excellent man manager.

Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway

Matthew Kirtley's next move was in 1839 aged 26 to the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway This was part of the empire of the Railway King, George Hudson & was one of the three railway companies that were eventually amalgamated to form the new Midland Railway.

Again Robert Stephenson was involved & recommended his assistant John Birkinshaw as the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway Engineer & Matthew Kirtley for the job of Locomotive foreman Birkinshaw & Kirtley must have made a good team as they had worked together for the previous 6 or 7 years at the L & B Rly.

George Hudson totally trusted the Stephensons judgement, thus the appointments were confirmed.

From here on we know, with some confidence, details of Matthew Kirtley's rise to prominence as the eventual Superintendent Engineer of the Midland Railway.

The Kirtley family were accommodated in the Birmingham & Derby Junction houses on the station site at Hampton in Arden. Also accommodated in the house was a young clerk named James J Allport from Birmingham with his family. James Allport was another great railwayman becoming Sir James Allport & eventually a Director of the Midland Railway.

This was the start of a rewarding relationship lasting 34 years

The Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway connected at Derby with the Midland Counties Railway & the larger North Midland Railway who were already well established in Derby in what became known as the Tri Junction Station. The line now forms part of the main route between the West Country & the Northeast.

1842 saw John Birkinshaw move on & Matthew was promoted to Locomotive Superintendent. When the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway gained direct access to Birmingham at Whitacre Junction the seven mile line to Hampton in Arden became a backwater. New more convenient workshops were erected at a site at Lawley Street in Birmingham.

It was during his time at the Birmingham to Derby Jct. Rly that Matthew Kirtley came to the attention of a letter writer to The Railway Times who signed his letters as 'Veritas Vincit'. These letters raised criticisms of railway staff on all sorts of short comings in safety, state of track, etc. This gentleman was very well informed. The editor of the Railway Times, a John Robertson, seized upon these letters & took great delight in publishing them. By coincidence when John Robertson moved to the new Publication The Railway Record, Mr Veritas Vincit also sent his letters to the new publication. So important did Mr Veritas Vincit think of his letters that he had some of them published privately in August 1847. His Preface to the book really leaves little doubt that Veritas Vincit & Mr John Robertson are one & the same person.

During the summer of 1843 he accused Matthew Kirtley of;- imposing wage reductions to staff while increasing his own salary, forcing acceptably long hours on drivers & firemen, instructing an employee to write contradictory letters & using the company's errand boy for his personal business. Finally he questioned his upbringing & right to hold the post of Locomotive superintendent.

Matthew Kirtley could no longer ignore the criticism. In August he wrote:-

Sir, In yours of the 15th inst., "Veritus (sic) Vincit" writing on locomotive management, states that Mr Kirtley of the Birmingham & Derby railway was bred a tailor. I beg to state distinctly that such was not the case; such a business for me was never contemplated. I am not ashamed of my origin, & have no wish to conceal it. I was born in Tanfield, county of Durham, where V.V. can have full particulars.

I am Sir, Yours &c., M Kirtley, Locomotive Superintendent Birmingham & Junction Railway.

The misspelling of Veritas" caused V.V. some amusement. The next letter from V.V. was as follows:-

Birmingham August 14th 1843

Sir- In my last letter I mentioned that Mr Matthew Kirtley, Superintendent of the Birmingham & Derby Railway, had employed one of his clerks to write to you a letter in contradiction of something I had advanced & my information on this point, as on most others connected with Railway Management turned out to be correct. When I read Mr Kirtley's letter I was certainly not a little surprised for it disclosed nothing save that I had hurt his pride. He must not however blame me for the exposure; it was your correspondent "M" that called it forth. Although surprised, I at the same time, had much cause to feel flattered for his letter went to corroborate the fact, that except as to the tailoring business, all I had stated was the *truth*,.....

The letter continues at some length:-

As to the allegations that Mr Kirtley had been originally a tailor my informant may or may not be correct. I have seen him again & he tells me that it was Mr Kirtley himself that informed him when they were fellow- labourers at the Vulcan Foundry, that he tried the tailor trade but found it would not suit him. No doubt he committed an error in saying he had been *bred* a tailor for the word "bred" would infer that he had served seven years apprenticeship; & for that matter he was never bred to anything, certainly not to be a fit superintendent of the Birmingham & Derby Railway! He recommends me to go to the county of Durham for the particulars of his infant history. With that I and the public have nothing to do; but as to his history from his commencement on the railways, I am of opinion I can give *that* much better than anyone in the county of Durham, & I will try; but first of all, I wish it to be clearly understood that I have, & can have, no personal feeling against Mr. Matthew Kirtley, whose pretensions I am desirous of analysing, simply because he is a fair specimen of a class now getting somewhat numerous.

Was V.V. alluding to George Stephenson? With his broad Geordie accent on one occasion, when addressing Parliament, George was asked if he was English.

The London centric metropolitan elite also existed in the 19th century.

The 'tailor' story, allegedly from 'M' who is described by V.V. as a fellow labourer at the Vulcan Foundry, is rather implausible. The Vulcan Foundry at Newton Le Willows may have had dealings with the Warrington to Newton Railway. It was founded in 1832 at the same time as the W & N Rly was opened. However there is no reason to believe that Matthew Kirtley was employed at Newton Foundry as a labourer. It is highly unlikely that as a skilled engine man he would have accepted, or been employed in this capacity. Evidence in support of this is Matthew Kirtley organising a strike at the Leeds & Selby Rly.,

which resulted in him being dismissed. Vulcan Foundry at this time were bridge builders. Locomotives were not built until 1834

Furthermore V.V. also accused Matthew's elder brother, Thomas Kirtley as being 'Bred a Shoemaker'. These slanders & defamations of the Kirtley's are in the realms of fantasy. (Did 'M' even exist? He might very well have been another 'nom de plume' of V.V.)

Now V.V. continues & sheds some light on another mystery which is not denied:-

The circumstances connected with his dismissal from the Leeds & Selby Railway afford another proof how the difference of situations alters men's minds. At the same time there was a very steady engine-driver of the name Robson and being possessed of considerable abilities, he was raised to be a foreman in the shed. This gave offence to Mr Matthew Kirtley, who said (his own words) "I shall never submit to be lorded over by one of my equals" and the consequence was that a strike was agreed upon, if Robson were to continue their superior. The names of those that "struck" were Kirtley, Kirkup & Hesketh; the other engineman, Isdale would not join them. Mr Kirtley & his then fireman went to all the other firemen, & begged them not to take an engine, for they were determined to stand out until Robson should be "reduced" again. After this the three **strikers** deputed Isdale to wait upon Mr Smith, Civil engineer of the line to say (I will give you the exact words of what passed) that Kirtley, Kirkup & Hesketh, would strike if Robson were continued foreman. Mr Smith answered "Go tell Kirtley, Kirkup & Hesketh to go to **** if they choose." Mr Smith went & ordered their instant dismissal!

The character assassination continued & James Allport was also attacked on his performance. Veritas Vincit had another vitriolic letter published after Queen Victoria had traversed the line on her way to Birmingham.

Birmingham December 12 1843

Of first sight I have no doubt you will say, What has the Queens Visit to do with locomotive management? But it gives a beautiful illustration of some of my former allegations against certain parties, as to their unfitness for the important offices they hold. When it was announced that her majesty was to be at Watford on a certain day, Mr Bury Locomotive Superintendent of the London & Birmingham Railway did not find it necessary to order any particular engine to be put in the shed, to undergo a special repair to convey Royalty down the line. That gentleman manages to have his engines kept in such a thorough state of repair that I would believe it would matter little as to safety what engine might be fixed upon. There is no doubt a difference in some of them with regard to power, but not as to being in an efficient state. When the news reached the Birmingham & Derby, Mr. Matthew Kirtley was "put upon his pins."

He ordered the *Burton* engine to be taken into the shed, and completely overhauled, in case she might break down, for he had not confidence in any of his stock to convey Royalty. When his brother, Mr Thomas Kirtley, of the North Midland, heard the news, he was also obliged to resort to the same expedient as his brother Mr Matthew. He ordered No 20 into the shed & that engine went under repair.

But when Mr Josiah Kearsley, Locomotive Superintendent on the Midland Counties, he was like Mr Bury, quite prepared; for he keeps the whole of his engines in such perfect order, that he is ready to convey Royalty at a moment's notice any day.

If there be an honour in conducting an engine when Royalty is on the train, then certainly Mr. Kearsley can claim that honour above all other Superintendents in the Kingdom. He was not like Mr. M. Kirtley who had with him on the foot-plate an experienced engineman & one or two others & yet gave it out to be the Editors of the papers that he conducted the engine, when it was no such thing. Mr Thomas Kirtley, of the North Midland did the same. Mr Kearsley on the two occasions drove her Majesty & suite.

He took a fireman on the on the footplate with him & put on a jacket & conducted the engine himself; thereby showing, as I formerly stated, that he is truly a practical as well as theoretical Superintendent.

In spite of Veritas Vincit/ John Robertson, young Matthew was to be vindicated shortly afterwards when he received his next appointment.

The North Midland was suffering financial problems & the Midland Counties Railway was in dispute with the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway. A price war on rates & fares was leading both smaller companies on the way to insolvency. At length George Hudson took control of the North Midland & adopted Robert Stephenson's suggestion that the three lines should merge.



Matthew Kirtley, centre front in the light suit, with the Locomotive Department Staff c.1860
Midland Railway Society / Kidderminster Rly Museum

The Midland Railway

There were three candidates for Locomotive, Carriage & Wagon Superintendent from the constituent companies to choose from. The eldest & most senior was Josiah Kearsley of the Midland Counties Rly. with 47 locomotives. Next senior was Thomas Kirtley. He would have seemed to be a logical choice. The North Midland was by far the largest of the three companies with 49 Stephenson built locomotives. The North Midland was already established with extensive workshops & a large round house adjacent at the Tri Station in Derby. However Thomas Kirtley had only been appointed as Loco Superintendent of the North Midland Rly twelve months previously. The North Midland had had Robert Stephenson as Manager of Locomotive Power from 1839 to 1842. One might speculate that Robert Stephenson had a word in Mr Hudson's ear. Matthew Kirtley must have been very surprised to be appointed. At the age of 31 he was the youngest & least experienced. It turned out to be a very good choice.

Josiah Kearsley of the Midland Counties Railway expected, as the senior man, to be shoehorned into the new position. George Hudson had different ideas. One wonders what Veritas Vincit made of that decision. Kearsley took the decision very badly & refused to work under Matthew. He had a contract of employment with 2.1/2 years to run. The Midland Railway bought him out with the sum of £750.

Thomas Kirtley

Thomas Kirtley had an unlucky life. He began his career on the Liverpool & Manchester Rly where he progressed to engine driver. He then struck out on his own & in 1837 & started the firm of Thomas Kirtley & Co. in Warrington. He was building locomotives until 1841 when due to a slump & lack of orders the company went into liquidation. He then joined the Warrington & Newton Railway until he was appointed Locomotive Superintendent of the North Midland Railway in April 1843. His tenure did not last long when his younger brother, Matthew was appointed over him to the top Midland Railway post. He accepted a position on the Midland Railway as an Inspector working for his brother. He stayed in this job until 1845 when he left to work on the Trent Valley Railway under Thomas Brassey. In February 1847. His fortunes appeared to be on the up when he was appointed Locomotive Superintendent of the London. Brighton & South Coast Railway. He died of a brain tumour in the November, just 9 months into the job. Matthew supported his brother's family. In 1854 William, the son of Thomas, went to work for his uncle Matthew at the Derby Loco dept. as a pupil, eventually being employed as Derby Workshop Superintendent.

The Move to Derby

Matthew Kirtley's appointment as the Locomotive & Carriage Superintendent for the Midland Railway must have been something of a relief for him as the underdog. Not only the youngest candidate but from the smallest out of the three railway companies. He was immediately given a pay rise of £50. His salary was now £250.

No doubt he was expected to earn this money as he inherited a motley collection of 95 locomotives, 282 carriages & 1,256 waggons. These were the products of a variety of builders. Many of the Locomotives were totally unsuitable for the work required on new Midland Railway, which in 1844, with 179 main line route miles was the longest railway in the country. To make matter worse the new Midland Railway was short of money. There would have been a period of make do & mend.

The North Midland Railway had by 1842 built a number of cottages in an area just south of the station entrance. There was an opinion that the Railway Terrace houses were always reserved for employees of higher status. In the North Midland & early Midland Railway days this was certainly incorrect. The ranges of occupations of the early householders was extremely varied including:-

Engine drivers, firemen, engine cleaners, guards, porters, switchmen/pointsmen, smiths, fitters, coppersmiths, sawyers, painters, joiners, engine & coach inspectors, warehousemen, book-keepers, station master, labourers & locomotive superintendent.

Matthew Kirtley, his wife Ann & two daughters, Elizabeth Ann & Emily were allocated an end of terrace house No. 22 Railway Terrace. Their nearest neighbours in 1851 were at No. 21, Edward Walker, a cheese labourer & at No. 20, Joseph Sunter, a foreman in the locomotive dept.

The Kirtley family living among the railway community with the workers in Derby must have made quite an impression & had a great deal to do with the affection felt for him & his family in his last years.

Matthew Kirtley, following his appointment as Locomotive Superintendent, was faced with a huge task of bringing some order to the myriad types of locomotive from the three companies. He had excellent experience of the inherent design faults in small four wheeled 2-2-0 locomotives from the time he worked on the London & Birmingham Railway. Small engines from the Midland Counties Railway were rapidly side-lined, disposed of or broken up. Likewise some of the other locomotives that were no longer fit for purpose were removed from stock as soon as suitable replacements could be ordered & were available to keep the railway operating.

The experience gained from working on other railways had instilled in him that the 2-2-0 wheel arrangement was no longer suitable for main line work. In the immediate future, six wheeled locomotives were the way forward. For Passenger engines the 2-4-0 wheel arrangement became standard with some 2-2-2 singles built for the London services via Bedford & Hitchin to King's Cross. For goods engines the 0-6-0 wheel arrangement was standardised & lasted to the end of steam on British Railways. This wheel arrangement being ideal for the coal & freight traffic, the *raison d'être*, of most early railways & particularly for the Midland Railway goods traffic from the Midlands coalfields.

The locomotive problems were not improved during negotiations to acquire the Sheffield & Rotherham Railway in May 1844. George Hudson made an arrangement to send their locomotives for repair to Derby works.

Hamilton Ellis imagined that:-

'Mr Kirtley looked at them & sighed and decided that it would be a good thing if they faded away as soon as possible'.

A belt driven 2-2-2 locomotive named '*Sheffield*' was sent to the Derby workshops with the instruction:- "forthwith to be put into thorough repair" The engineering oddity had a belt drive. It was designed & patented by the chairman of the Sheffield & Rotherham Railway Company. Hamilton Ellis concluded:- 'an awful warning to all locomotive superintendents who let the chairman tinker with the engines'.

The next company to come into the Midland Railway fold in 1845 was the venerable Leicester & Swannington Railway. This railway was formed in July 1832 & is often credited as being the oldest Midland Railway constituent company. Its ten locomotives were added to the Midland Railway stock. The oldest constituent of the Midland Railway Company is actually the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway. It was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1817. It was taken over by the Midland Railway in 1847 & the line completely rebuilt.

The rapid expansion of the Midland Railway & the absorption of even more unsuitable stock must have been a nightmare for the Locomotive Superintendent.

In August 1846 the Birmingham & Gloucester Railway was absorbed. This brought another collection of locomotives built by eleven different manufacturers.

The North Midland Railway had established a substantial polygon roundhouse with 16 sides with adjacent workshops behind Derby station. The Midland Counties Railway had a large multi-track single-storey engine shed plus a locomotive repair workshop with a two-storey carriage shed built on the end. The poor relation, Birmingham & Derby Railway, had a smaller engine shed 150 ft X 48 ft brick engine shed with a smith's workshop & some office accommodation.

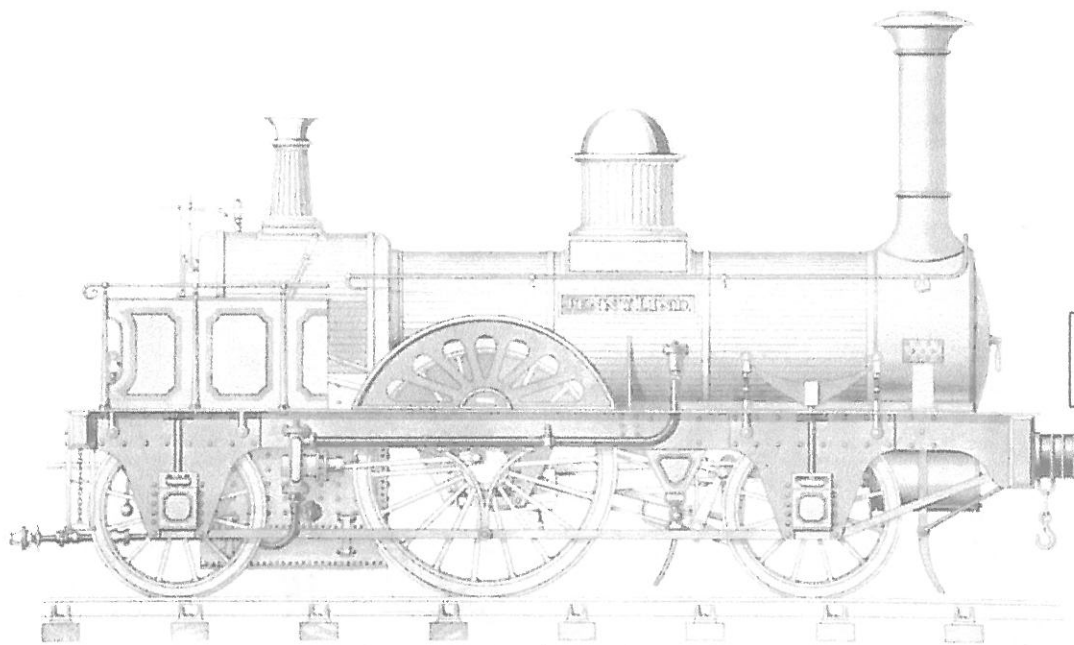
The existing workshops of the three original companies & their staff needed to be rationalised. At the same time as the works were being re organised the problems of maintaining so many different manufacturers engines was not possible in the existing workshops. The facilities available to maintain & repair locomotives were totally inadequate.

As the workshops at Derby were being re organised consent was received from the Board to order a number of new 2-2-2 designs with outside frames. These were ordered from Robert Stephenson & Sharp Stuart. Also a number of *Jenny Lind* type loco's from E.B. Wilson of Leeds.

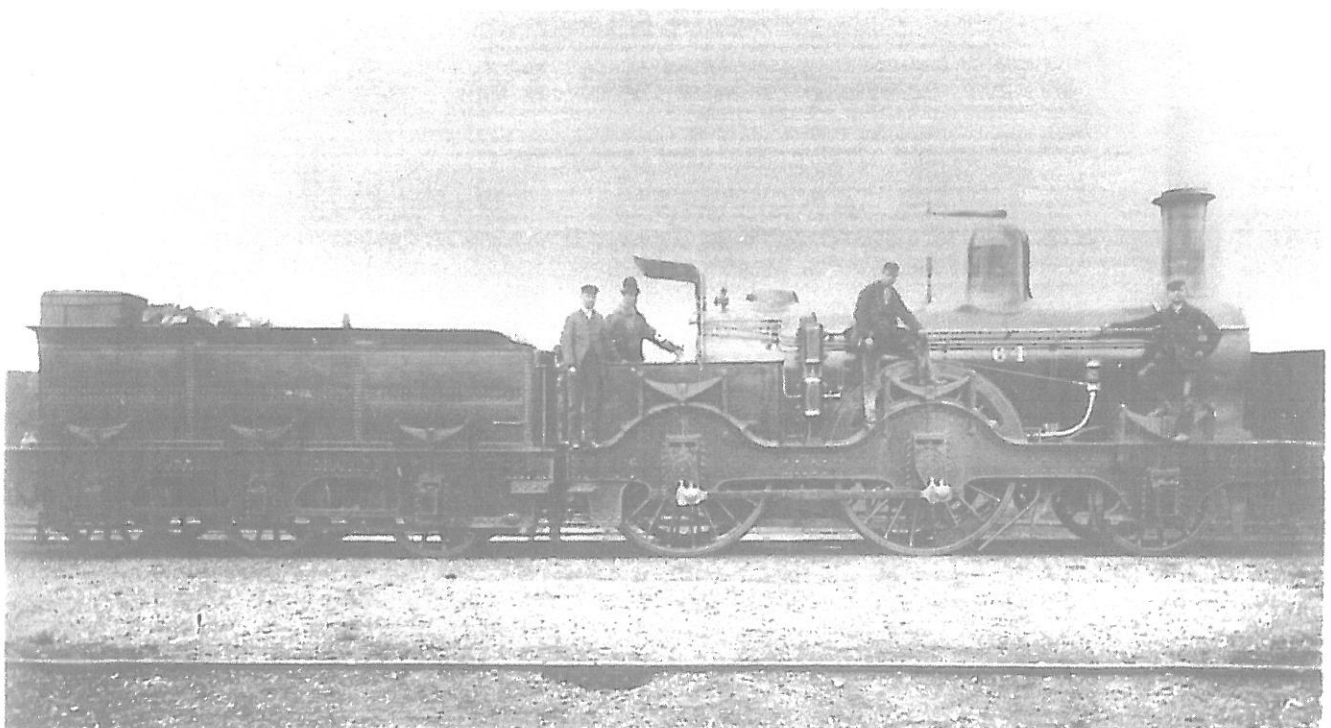
With so many unreliable locomotives on the stock book, breakdowns were frequent. When engines were out of service there were often expensive delays. This was caused by time being taken to obtain spare parts for minor repairs. Or in more serious cases, where engines had to be returned to the builder, due to Derby workshops already having too many loco's under repair. Engines fit for traffic were frequently being overloaded hauling the heavier trains, thus increasing the maintenance time & cost. In these difficult early days Matthew Kirtley was authorised to accept an offer from Henry Wright of Birmingham to obtain up to twelve engines, complete with drivers, firemen & cleaners to work trains between Birmingham & Derby.

Misdemeanours were rare in these early days but those that offended were sternly disciplined & frequently lost their jobs. In 1849 Kirtley reported that he had discharged 12 painters. Had it come to the notice of management that a number of local dwellings had recently had the doors painted in the company's locomotive green?

Matthew Kirtley very quickly realised that standardization had to be implemented as a priority. Where engines were being built by outside contractors they were very soon to Matthew Kirtley's design. Derby workshops needed to be extended & capable of dealing with all repairs & building new locomotives. By 1851 Derby was able to build its own locomotives. Standardisation of machining components in the workshops followed in 1858.

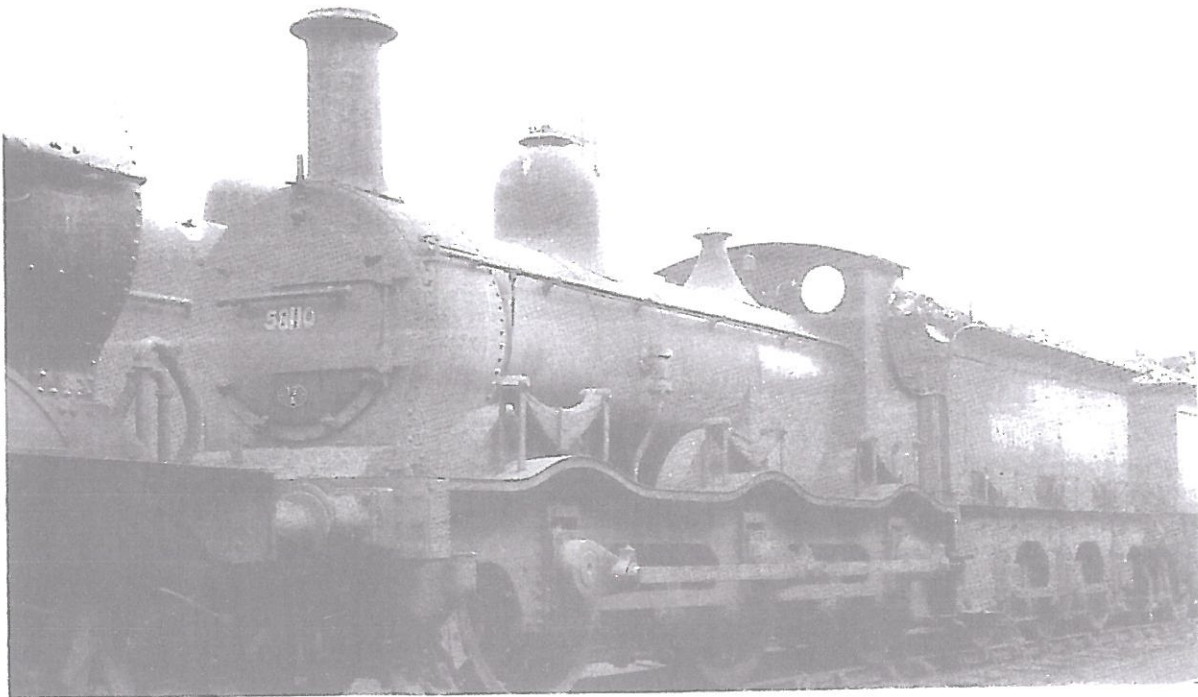


The 'Jenny Lind' class of Locomotive manufactured by E.B. Wilson of Leeds. Matthew Kirtley initially bought these engines to cope with increasing traffic & later developed his own version. *L&GRP*

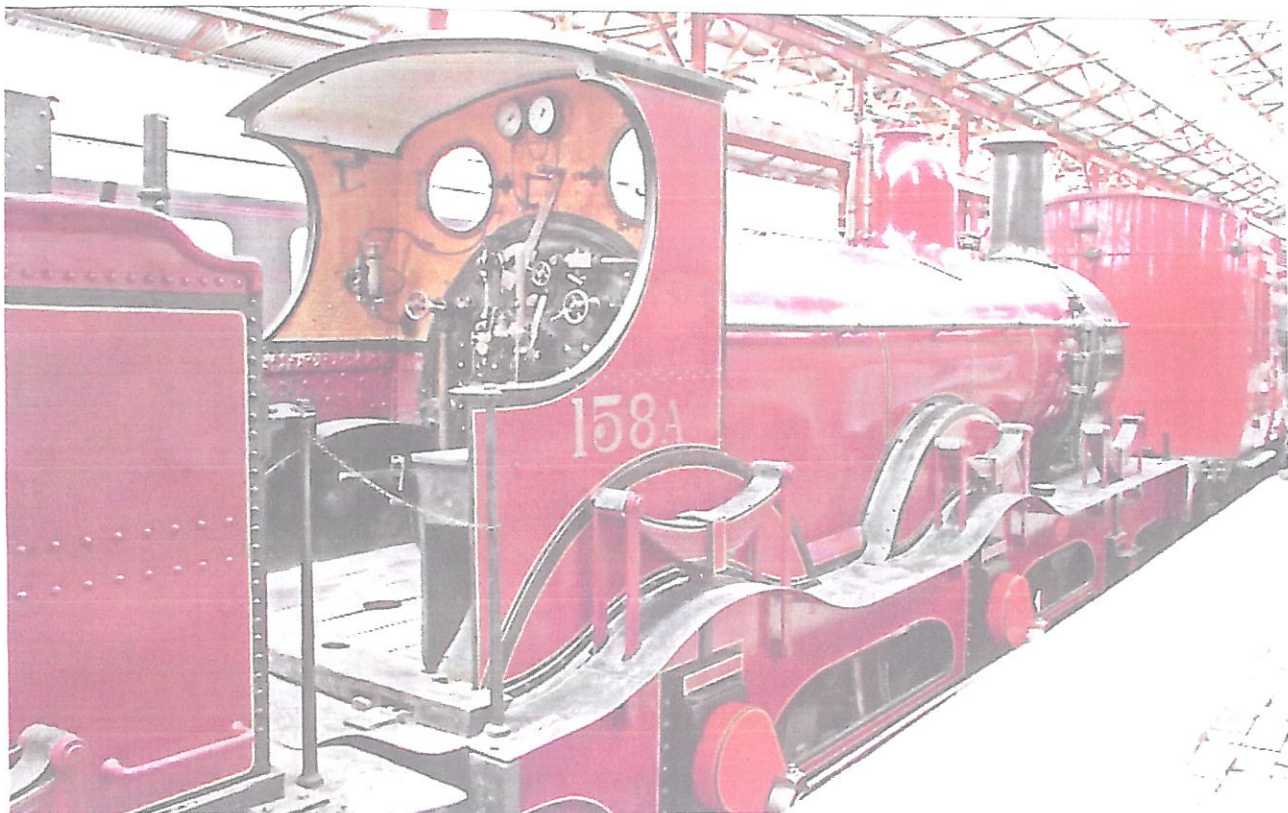


Matthew Kirtley's '800 class' the penultimate design of Express Passenger engine. The later '890 class' were a modern version with a full cab instead of a weather shield

R. J. Essery



No 58110 at Derby in July 1951. The last Matthew Kirtley locomotive in service. This 0-6-0 Goods engine was built in 1870. Unfortunately it was scrapped. *L.W. Good*



Kirtley 2-4-0 class 156 passenger engine No 158A, built in 1866. Preserved at the Midland Railway Centre Butterley. Part of the NRM collection. After 81 years in service it ended its working days in 1947 as the station Pilot at Nottingham station. *Rail Co.UK*

The Firebox Brick Arch

Many European & American Locomotive engineers experimented with different ways of decreasing smoke pollution when burning coal & or wood. It was usual in Britain for a condition to be included in the authorisation for a railway that locomotives were not to make smoke, hence expensive coke was used by all the railways that followed in Britain.

It is sometimes recorded that Matthew Kirtley, & /or, Charles Markham, the Outdoor Locomotive Superintendent, invented the firebox brick arch to enable coal to be used instead of coke.

As with many inventions it was a combination of ideas by different people that was made to work.

The statement needs some clarification:-

As early as 1841 Samuel Hall of Nottingham conducted the experiments on burning coal on a Midland Counties locomotive supplied by the Butterley Company in Ripley. A brick arch was used but the trials were not a success & the loco was returned to the Butterley Company.

Thomas Yarrow is said to have used a Brick arch c 1857 on the Scottish North Eastern Railway loco.

Early in 1858 a firehole deflector plate, to assist combustion in the firebox, was first applied by G K Douglas on the Birkenhead, Lancashire & Cheshire Junction Railway.

In the meantime Charles Markham conducted experiments to reduce smoke from burning coal, under the direction of Matthew Kirtley.

The solution was found by using the combination of a brick arch & a deflector plate inside the fire hole, coupled with a sliding firebox door. By adjusting the air flow by means of the firebox door & the firebox/ash pan dampers the temperature in the firebox could be adjusted to improved the combustion of the offending gasses & particles given off by burning coal. This arrangement was adopted by the Midland Railway in 1859.

The Kirtley/ Markham arrangement was adopted on steam locomotives worldwide.

Markham was assisted during the experiments by Matthew Kirtley's nephew, William Kirtley son of Thomas Kirtley.

Maturity

Matthew Kirtley matured at Derby after his unexpected appointment as Locomotive Superintendent at Derby at the age of 31. Possibly his dismissal from the Leeds & Selby Rly., when he would have been in his late teens, had 'enlightened' him on man management. J B Radford tells the following story. The head foreman boiler maker had a contract for producing a certain number of new boilers. The work was done by men paid directly by himself, he receiving payment from the Midland Railway for the boilers made. A clerk was sent to check a contract detail. He was given some evasive answers by the foreman which aroused suspicion & prompted further investigation.

It transpired that the foreman had no men of his own. They were all on the Midland Railway's payroll.

The railway was paying the foreman & his men. The works manager, John Fernie, took the bad news to his superintendent. Matthew Kirtley had the foreman sent to his office. When the foreman arrived he was told that his boiler contract was being terminated. The foreman started to argue & bluster but rapidly realising that he had been found out, agreed to take a payoff & departed. What could have been a very awkward incident for the staff, leading to dismissals was quietly smoothed over.

Matthew Kirtley looked after his staff. It explains how he attracted good men to work for him & who looked up to him throughout the ranks. Charles Markham & John Fernie being typical examples of two senior managers whom he could totally rely on.

Sagacity

Matthew Kirtley's level-headedness & 'sagacity' as the newspapers were fond of calling it, was what led to his being asked on more than one occasion to act as 'referee' for other railways in judgements over operations & materials. In 1850 he was asked to pronounce on the price of trucks, carriages & engines being sold from the Llanelli Railway & Dock Company to old friends Thomas Hackworth & William Bouch, on the Stockton & Darlington. There had been a disagreement on their value. It says much for his integrity that the Llanelli Company were quite satisfied with his acting in the capacity of referee.

Standardisation

In 1858 John Fernie was tasked with introducing standardisation into the workshops based on the Whitworth system. The Midland Rly was becoming more self-reliant in manufacturing its own locomotives & parts for servicing. This made enormous savings in costs & time. Spare parts could be held in stock at Derby & sent to any of the loco sheds in the Midland Railway system knowing that these parts were interchangeable & could confidently be attached to engines without any fettling. Where locomotives were ordered from outside contractors they were built to Midland Railway drawings & had to be erected using the same Midland standard clearances & tolerances. The Derby Workshops were a world leader in what was to become standard practice.

First Works Expansion & Moving House

The Derby works site by 1866 had expanded massively from the year the Midland Railway came into being. At the north end the old Midland Counties Railway repair shops had been converted for building carriages & waggons. To the south another Roundhouse & extensive workshops were built.

The Matthew Kirtley family eventually moved from the railway owned No. 22 Railway Terrace, Derby. We know that the final move was to 'Litchurch Grange' a seven bedroom house in eight acres.

It is recorded that the family also moved to 'The Mount' on Burton Road. Also at one time the family is said to have lived at No 2 Temple Grove, St. Werburghs. The Kirtley's also lived in Mickelover, in a leased mansion, which was advertised for auction in July 1867. The lease expired in 1871.

Sadly Litchurch Grange was demolished in 1907. It would have been a good candidate for a Blue Plaque.

Community Involvement

Matthew Kirtley took an active part in the wellbeing of the workforce. He was vice President of the Railway Literary Institute. Although he was born an Anglican he was very supportive of the local Free Church's, which the majority of the workforce supported.

As an illustration of his liberality he was one of the principal, if not the largest contributor towards the erection of Victoria Street Congregational Church of which he was one of the trustees.

He was a promoter & Senior Elder of the London Road, Wesleyan Church. His involvement with the Free Church's was possibly due to the time he spent in his formative years at the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Timothy Hackworth was also born an Anglican but was also a staunch supporter of Methodism. James Allport was a Wesleyan & a strong supporter of the Liberal party.

At that time there was no Anglican Church in the vicinity of the Derby works, which was also a factor. It is recorded that the Church of England in Derby rather looked down on the rough workmen on the other side of the tracks. It has been said that:- 'the Church of England is the Conservative party at

prayer'. That was very much the case in the politics of the time & the Liberal Party was the great supporter of the working classes.

Matthew Kirtley appeared on the platform supporting two Liberal candidates at an election hustings.

Michael Bass, the head of the large Burton Brewing firm, was the MP for Derby from 1848 to 1882.

He was noted as a model employer. The Brewing Company was also very good customer of the Midland Railway. The pillars in the undercroft at soon to be built St Pancras Station, which supported the trains & platforms above, were spaced to the dimensions of the barrels of beer from Burton on Trent.

Also on the platform was the reforming the Liberal MP Samuel Plimsoll. He was another supporter of the working man due to promoting legislation in Parliament to prevent merchant seaman being sent to sea in overloaded coffin ships. His legacy is still in use as the 'Plimsoll line', marked on the hull, at the waterline, on all merchant vessels to this day.

The 9 Hours Movement Dispute,

In 1871 the Derby works became embroiled in the national dispute on working hours. It was eventually resolved but the Midland Railway Directors decided that the working day would start at 8 am with the normal working day finishing at 5.30 pm. The Derby Mercury dated Nov 8th 1871 reported as follows:-

The agitation for the adoption of the "Nine hours system" began twenty-three weeks ago, when it will be remembered, a large number of men were on strike at Sunderland (North Eastern Railwaymen) and the working men of Derby were asked to support them in their agitation to obtain a reduction in the hours of labour. After a considerable time the movement was successful.....

After a very long & wordy piece in the newspaper it goes on to report that about 2,200 men assembled adjacent Derby station & marched with the Derby works fire engine at the head of the procession, pulled by four 'greys' with mounted postilions, four brass bands & the Rifle Corps drum & fife band. The procession stopped at The Grange, Matthew Kirtley's home. Matthew Kirtley received the committee in his courtyard where they presented to him the address shown in Appendix 1 & 2

Mr. Kirtley in reply said:- Permit me in accepting that address to return you my very sincere thanks for the kind expressions it contains towards me. There is no doubt that to a man who has been so long before you as I have been, the esteem of so large a body of intelligent men is very gratifying, and on behalf of the directors of the Midland Railway Company, I tender you my sincere thanks.

The speech continued. After several, Hear Hears & Three Cheers for Mr & Mrs Kirtley the procession reformed & move off.

Although the 9 hours agreement was ratified by the Directors of the Midland Railway Company, the workmen did not have their wish granted to finish work at 5pm.

The Directors, no doubt, considered that with shorter working hours there was no reason why the Mutual Improvement classes could not be re scheduled by 30 minutes & continue as before. What was the problem? Unfortunately some of the men went on strike again but most gradually drifted back to work.

Notwithstanding that, has a Locomotive Superintendent of any other railway ever received such an accolade & been held in such high regard by the workforce?

Last Years

As J B Radford writes in his book Derby Works & Midland locomotives:-

On the amalgamation of 1844 there had been only a miscellaneous selection of about 100 odd locomotives, whereas at the time of his death 1,050 were on the books, comprising many fine classes which, through various rebuilding's by his successors were to run for the better part of a century.

He was one of those who elevate themselves through the ranks from the workshops floor to attain the highest position in their respective department, yet in spite of, or perhaps because of this he retained an urbane manner, ever ready to advise or sympathise with both officials and workmen alike over whom he had control. Nevertheless, despite his kindly manner, his influence never lessened for want of firmness and decisiveness when called for.

The last years of Matthew Kirtley were perhaps his finest. There is no doubt that the men in the Locomotive Department held him in great esteem right from his Chief Foreman down to the lowest paid messenger boy, and he demanded and got the fullest co-operation from his staff. So far as the works were concerned, his initial reorganisation & expansion plan had been completed to a major degree by 1866 & although there were other minor additions, it was not until shortly before his death that he masterminded the planning of yet another large extension to the workshops area, which he unfortunately never saw built in his lifetime.

The great scheme of reorganisation was prompted by the decision to separate the Locomotive Works from the carriage and Wagon Works entirely and to establish the latter on a completely new site on the other side of London Road.

Carriage Reform

Although Matthew Kirtley designed & built strong, reliable, long lasting locomotives, the carriages on the Midland Railway were somewhat lacking in creature comfort compared with some of the competition. James Allport, the Midland General Manager was anxious to redress this. Matthew was in failing health, more than likely due to overwork. New Locomotives had been designed & built for the London extension from Bedford to St Pancras & others were being designed for arduous gradients over the soon to be completed Settle to Carlisle Line. At the same time, 'Old Matt' was in charge of the second complete reorganisation of the Derby workshops. The pressures on a sick man must have been overwhelming. It would be easy to understand that Matthew was amenable & probably grateful when James Allport, a colleague & friend for over 34 years, proposed that it would be a good time to relieve him of some of the pressure.

It was mutually agreed that the new separate carriage works would be in the charge of a new superintendent. Certainly the decision was made before Matthew's untimely death.

James Allport had visited North America in 1872. He travelled many miles in Pullman cars & met George Pullman. New comfortable carriages would shortly be introduced & bring acclaim to the Midland.

The End of an Era

Matthew Kirtley died at home in Litchurch Grange, 24th May 1873. The Derby Mercury, reported on 4th June as follows:-

The Funeral of the late Mr. Matthew Kirtley, Locomotive Superintendent of the Midland Railway, took place on Thursday afternoon. The men at the works met early in the week and requested permission to follow their old master's remains to the grave, expressing a strong desire "to see the last of him". This request it was impossible to refuse and the works were closed at eight o'clock in the morning. Some of the oldest foremen were selected as bearers, several having been with him since 1840 [at the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway] All the foremen of running engines from the out stations, and those from the works at Derby were present, as were also the other representatives from the different locomotive departments extending from the Midland system, and nearly 800 workmen. The new chairman of the Midland (Mr. Ellis) was present. The pall bearers were Mr. Allport, general manager of the Midland; Mr. J. Williams, secretary; Mr. J. Noble, assistant manager; Mr. Charles Markham, of Staveley works (formerly in the locomotive department at Derby); Mr. Newcombe, goods manager and Mr Pettifor. The Mayor of Derby (. Smith Esq.) followed in his private carriage. The internment took place at the Old Cemetery, Uttoxeter New-road and the Procession left Litchurch Grange, the residence of the deceased, shortly after half-past one o'clock.

In front of the Hearse there were seven carriages. The first containing three reverends & one Mr. Following the hearse were two carriages carrying immediate Family. After the family came Private Carriages containing Friends; Friends walking; Out stations & Derby Foremen; Clerks; Engine -drivers & Firemen; Workmen. The Newspaper report continued:-

The Funeral was perhaps the largest that has ever taken place in Derby. The whole length of the route was lined with people and at most of the shops and private houses the windows were darkened and the shutters raised as a mark of respect for the memory of one whose loss will be deeply felt in this town. In the morning the minute bell at St. Peters and other churches was tolled.

On arriving at the Cemetery the mourners entered the chapel, and the former part of the solemn service was read by the Rev Lester, and the concluding portion by the Rev W. Crosbie, Congregational minister. The body was then conveyed to its last resting place at the upper end of the Cemetery, where a crowd had already collected. The remainder of the ceremony was performed by the Rev. A. Oliver, incumbent of St. James Church. A wreath of white camellias, & also a wreath of forget-me-nots were placed on the coffin as it was lowered into the grave. The solemn service having been bought to a close nearly all present took a last look at the coffin and then left the Cemetery.

So Ended an Era.

Monument of Affection

The Local Newspaper reported:-

After the death of Mr Kirtley, who was of the Superintendent of the Locomotive & Carriage Departments of the Midland Railway Company for nearly 30 years, there was a general desire on the part of those who had worked under him to erect a monument on his grave in testimony of their affectionate remembrance of him. A committee was formed for the purpose of carrying out this object, consisting of Mr C.H. Jones, treasurer; Mr. Geo. Mellor, secretary, and the following delegates from the Locomotive and Carriage Departments – Messrs. Blake, Needham, Saltow, Eaves, Norman, Bregazzi, Chambers, Curran, Benfield, Goodall, Hilliard, Scotton and Middleton.

In a very short time, and without any solicitation, a considerable sum was subscribed. There were upwards of 2,000 contributors from the whole of the Locomotive and Carriage Departments on the line, viz., Derby, Kentish Town, Lancaster, Carnforth, Bradford, Leeds, Normanton, Liverpool, Manchester, Buxton, Sheffield, Staveley, Clay Cross, Toton, Nottingham, Lincoln, Burton, Birmingham, Bromsgrove, Worcester, Brecon, Gloucester, Bristol, Peterboro', Leicester, Rugby, Kettering, Wellingborough & Bedford.

The amount collected would no doubt have been much greater, for many friends asked to be allowed to subscribe, but it was thought better that the work should be done entirely by Mr Kirtley's own staff.

It is now erected in the Derby Old Cemetery, Uttoxeter-road with the inscription:-

Matthew Kirtley. Born February 6th 1813, Died May 24th 1873. Locomotive Superintendent of the Midland Railway Company From 1844 to the time of his death. This monument was erected by the employees of the Locomotive and Carriage Department as a token of their affection.

"The way of the just is uprightness – Isaiah, 26 c., 7 v.

A year after his death the Locomotive & Engineering Staff presented Mrs Ann Kirtley & daughters, Elizabeth Anne & Emily with an illuminated address of condolence, bound on vellum, expressing sympathy. It contained the words:-

Such was our confidence in the late Mr Kirtley that we could trust our lives in his hands, for we know our interests were very near to his heart"

Mrs Kirtley's response said:-

"Mr Kirtley always had a keen sense of the jeopardy in which every one of them placed in their lives, and considered that the hazardous nature of their duties demanded from him special attention to their well-being"

The illuminated address was so popular that Messrs' Bemrose, the Derby printers produced a facsimile as so many people wanted a copy. Unfortunately none appear to have survived.

It is pleasing to report that the grave in the Old Cemetery, Uttoxeter New Road, is well maintained & kept in good order in 2017.

Aftermath

Four Matthew Kirtley 0-6-0 goods locomotives survived, albeit much re-built by Samuel Johnson, to be taken into British Railways stock in 1948. These Locomotives, LMS No's:- 22630; 22846; 22853 & 22863 were all allocated BR No's. The oldest engine, LMS No 22630, renumbered by BR as No. 58110, lasted until 1951. The other three engines were scrapped before receiving their new numbers.

Another Kirtley 2-4-0 locomotive also survived in service until 1947. It is part of the National Railway Museum Collection & is presently on permanent loan to the Midland Railway Trust at the Midland Railway Centre, Butterley in Derbyshire.

The Locomotive is kept in the appropriately named Matthew Kirtley Building.

Midland Railway Class 156, No 158A, with a 2-4-0 wheel arrangement, was designed 1866, & built for express passenger workings to Kings Cross. This was the then London terminus of the Midland Railway. Locomotive No 158A ended her days at Nottingham as station pilot after 81 years in service.

When Samuel Johnson was appointed Locomotive Superintendent he continued building Matthew Kirtley designed locomotives & painting the engines the rather sombre Kirtley Green. A lighter shade of green was used in 1876.

No 158A is painted in the famous Midland Red, Crimson Lake as the engine is in the condition as re-built by Samuel Johnson. The Midland red was introduced by Johnson sometime after 1883.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Matthew Kirtley could never have claimed to have built beautiful locomotives. They were of their time. However when Johnson rebuilt them they have a certain attractive quirkiness about them, particularly the 'Kirtley Curley Frame' engines.

There is an engineering saying, 'If it looks right it is right' & Kirtley's locomotive certainly did what they were designed to do. Of the Kirtley class 156, locomotives in service, E. L. Ahrons, the doyen of locomotive practice & performance of the period wrote:-

"For their size there are no better engines in the country today"

And of the later larger class 800 engines that followed in 1870 :-

"..... one of the most celebrated classes of express engines that ever ran in this country".

Samuel Johnson is acknowledged to have designed & built what are undoubtedly some of the handsomest locomotives ever to have graced a railway. He was not only a first class Locomotive engineer but also an engineering artist.

Thomas Clayton (or James Clayton. Accounts vary), was appointed 1873 as the new carriage designer. He was another excellent choice. The Midland became famous for its comfortable carriages. Due its longer journey times it may not have been the fastest but James Allport marketed the Midland Railway as:- 'The best way'. It was & still is the most scenic way to Scotland over the famous Settle & Carlisle line

Appendix 1

**TO MATTHEW KIRTLEY Esq
Superintendent of the Locomotive Department
Midland Railway Derby**

Sir

We the Employees of the Midland Railway Company desire to express our deep gratitude to you for the great and unvarying kindness and consideration which you have ever displayed in all that relates to the convenience, comfort and privileges of the various grades of men serving under you; kindness manifested not in isolated and remote instances but uniformly and without intermission.

You have now, Sir, been the Head of the Locomotive Department for more than a quarter of a century, and during the whole of that of that extensive period we rejoice to remember that there has never been a serious dispute or difference between us; for whenever we have had a complaint to offer, or a favour to solicit, we have not been met with cutting rebukes or harsh denials, but with a dignity, a generosity, and an appreciative sympathy that has won our highest regard and truest respect. And we heartily congratulate ourselves upon having at our head a Gentleman of such practical wisdom, enlarged experience, courteous demeanour and broad sympathies; and that the period of your Superintendence has been marked by such steady, continuous, and rapid development and prosperity of the Company's business.

In the important business which has brought us here to-day, a matter deeply affecting us both in our health, our domestic comfort, and our social and mental improvement, we know that you have been our sincere, disinterested (sic?) and earnest friend; and we know that you will still support our cause with all the weight and authority of your office and character.

To the Board of Directors our sincere and hearty thanks are also due for their kindness in granting us a reduction of the hours of labour; and we earnestly hope that as they have generously acceded to our request for shorter hours, they will not mar their gift with a condition that would practically make it almost valueless to us, and be in effect offering a premium for indolence and sloth; and that is, asking us to commence work at 8 o'clock on Monday morning. Some of us wish to attend the Evening Art and Science Classes, and others to improve themselves by reading & study, and those aims and objects would be far better served by our working the time we requested, namely from 6 a.m., until 5 p.m.

We therefore trust that the Board of directors will see fit to grant our request, and that the Board of Directors will see fit to grant our request, and that you Sir, will kindly be our friend and spokesman for that purpose.

And now Sir, wishing you, together with your beloved Wife and Family, Health and prosperity, thanking you for all past kindness, and trusting that our future relations may be as happy and agreeable as the past.

We subscribe ourselves,

Your Humble and obedient Servants,

Signed on behalf of the whole of the Workmen.

WILLIAM HILSON, Erector
ROBERT HILLIARD, Fitter
JOHN BOOTH, Erector
JOHN ALLCOCK, Erector
ABRAHAM BAILEY, Erector
WILLIAM NORMAN, Smith
JOHN R TETLEY, Joiner
JOHN MATTHEWS, Boiler Maker

CHARLES RILEY, Turner
WILLOWS WRIGHT, Spring Smith
JOHN GADSEY, Millwright
JOHN SMITH, Carriage Department
JOHN BANCROFT.
JOHN FORD.
GEO. THOMPSON.
WILLIAM ILLSLEY.

To MATTHEW KIRTLEY, Esq.,

Superintendent of the Locomotive Department,

MIDLAND RAILWAY, DERBY.

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You have now, Sir, been the Head of the Locomotive Department for more than a quarter of a century, and during the whole of that extensive period we rejoice to remember that there has never been a serious dispute or difference between us; for whenever we have had a complaint to offer, or a favour to solicit, we have not been met with cutting rebukes or harsh denials, but with a dignity, a generosity, and an appreciative sympathy that has won our highest regard and truest respect. And we heartily congratulate ourselves upon having at our head a Gentleman of such practical wisdom, enlarged experience, courteous demeanour, and broad sympathies; and that the period of your Superintendence has been marked by such steady, continuous, and rapid development and prosperity of the Company's business.

In the important matter which has brought us here to-day, a matter deeply affecting us both in our health, our domestic comfort, and our social and mental improvement, we know that you have been our sincere, disinterested, and earnest friend; and we know that you will still support our cause with all the weight and authority of your office and character.

To the Board of Directors our sincere and hearty thanks are also due for their kindness in granting us a reduction of the hours of labour; and we earnestly hope that as they have generously acceded to our request for shorter hours, they will not mar their gift with a condition that would practically make it almost valueless to us, and be in effect offering a premium for indolence and sloth; and that is, asking us to commence work at 6 o'clock on Monday morning. Some of us wish to attend the Evening Art and Science Classes, and others to improve themselves by reading and study, and these aims and objects would be far better served by our working the time as we requested, namely, from 6 a.m., until 5 p.m.

We therefore trust that the Board of Directors will see fit to grant our request, and that you, Sir, will kindly be our friend and spokesman for that purpose.

And now, Sir, wishing you, together with your beloved Wife and Family, health and prosperity, thanking you for all past kindness, and trusting that our future relations may be as happy and agreeable as the past,

We subscribe ourselves,

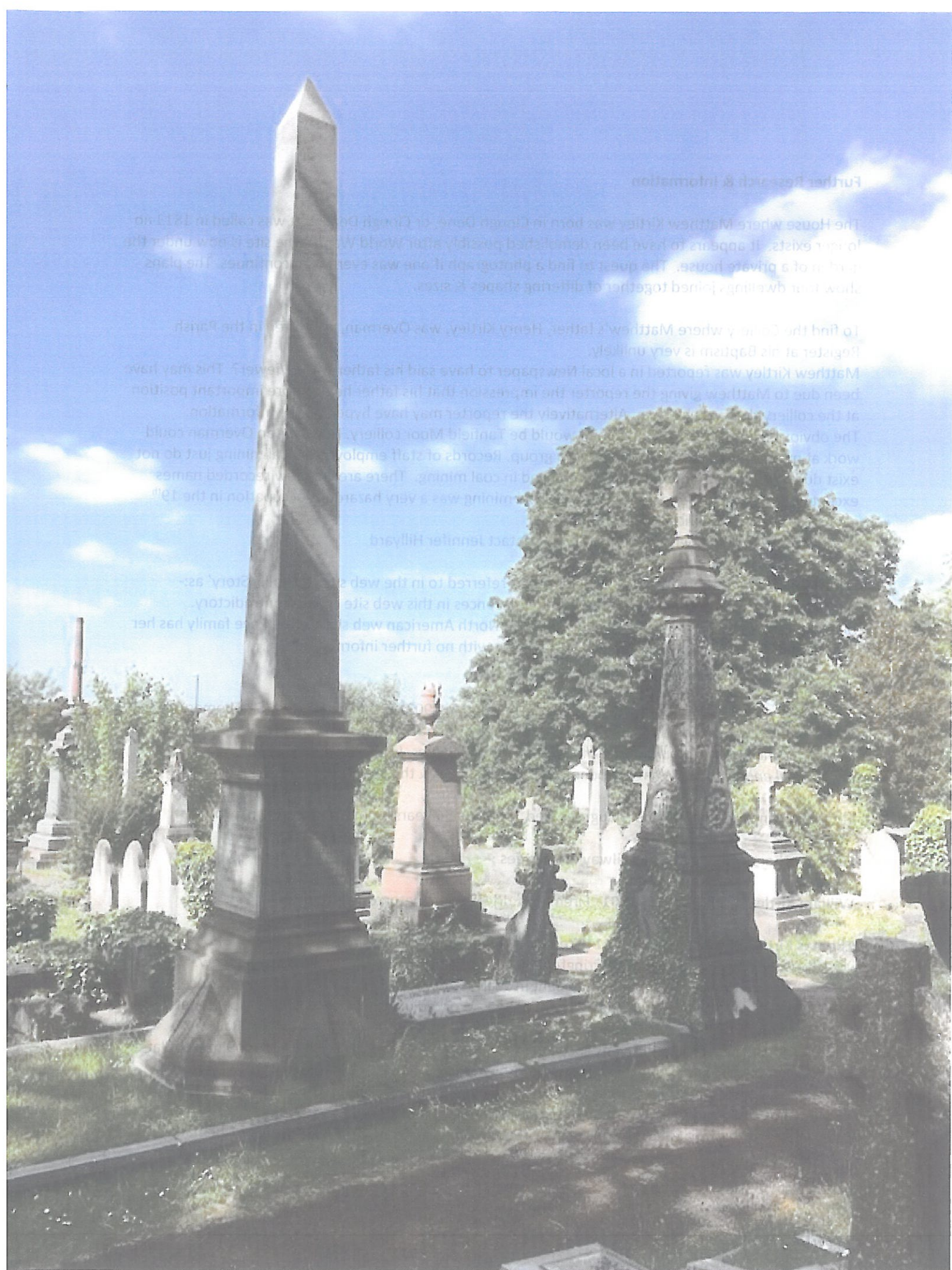
Your humble and obedient Servants,

Signed in behalf of the whole of the Workmen.

WILLIAM HILSON, Erector.
ROBERT HILLIARD, Fitter.
JOHN BOOTH, Erector.
JOHN ALLOOCK, Erector.
ABRAHAM BAILEY, Erector.
WILLIAM NORMAN, Smith.
JOHN R. TITLEY, Joiner.
JOHN MATTHEWS, Bellor Maker.

CHARLES HILEY, Turner.
WILLOWS WRIGHT, Spring Smith.
JOHN CADSBY, Millwright.
JOHN SMITH, Carriage Department.
JOHN BANGROFT.
JOHN FORD.
GEO. THOMPSON.
WILLIAM HALLLEY.





Further Research & Information

The House where Matthew Kirtley was born in Clough Dene, or Clough Dean as it was called in 1813 no longer exists. It appears to have been demolished possibly after World War II. The site is now under the garden of a private house. The quest to find a photograph if one was ever taken continues. The plans show four dwellings joined together of differing shapes & sizes.

To find the Colliery where Matthew's father, Henry Kirtley, was Overman, as written in the Parish Register at his Baptism is very unlikely.

Matthew Kirtley was reported in a local Newspaper to have said his father was a Viewer? This may have been due to Matthew giving the reporter the impression that his father held a more important position at the colliery than was his due. Alternatively the reporter may have hyped up the information. The obvious & most likely starting point would be Tanfield Moor colliery. However an Overman could work at more than one colliery owned by a group. Records of staff employed in coal mining just do not exist due to the vast numbers of men employed in coal mining. There are very few recorded names except where there have been fatalities. As coal mining was a very hazardous occupation in the 19th century the list of fatalities is a long one.

See:- < librarian@mininginstitute.org.uk > Contact Jennifer Hillyard

Matthew's mother, Margaret Kirtley, nee Pace, is referred to in the web site 'A Family Story' as:- Married Henry Kirtley & Death before 1843? References in this web site can be contradictory. Matthew's mother has proved difficult to trace. A North American web site for the Pace family has her listed as possibly married to two Henry Kirtley's but with no further information.

< www.pacefamilyhistory.info >

Emily Kirtley, Matthew's younger daughter was married in 1903, at the age of 58 to Sir Thomas Roe MP age 71 years old. Emily died in 1909 aged 64. Among her bequests was *£5000 to the Governors of Owens College, Manchester for founding a scholarship, or scholarships, in connexion with some branch of mechanical engineering.* What happened to Owens College & the Matthew Kirtley scholarships?

Elizabeth Anne Kirtley, the elder daughter died 1898 age 54 years, unmarried at Ventnor IoW.

Elder brothers who were also Railway employees ;-

William Kirtley, born 4th Sept 1801 Fireman & driver, Warrington & Newton Rly

Thomas Kirtley, born 20th Feb 1811 Fireman & driver, Liverpool & Manchester.

Driver & fireman on the Warrington & Newton Rly with brothers William & Matthew.

Set up own loco manufacturing plant in Warrington from 1837 to 1841. Went into receivership Loco Supt North Midland Railway until 1844. Worked under Matthew as an Inspector at Derby Works until 1845 when he left to work for Thomas Brassey on the Trent Valley Railway.

In 1847 he was appointed as Loco Supt of the LBSCR. He died of a brain tumour 9 months later.

His son William Kirtley was a pupil at Derby works.

Nephew in Railway Service:- Matthews brother John had a son who was the London Area Superintendent based at Paddington on the Great Western Railway. To confuse matters he had another Henry Kirtley working for him as a fitter.

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