

Track plans for the M&SWJR - Part 2 – Wiltshire

Stations in Wiltshire

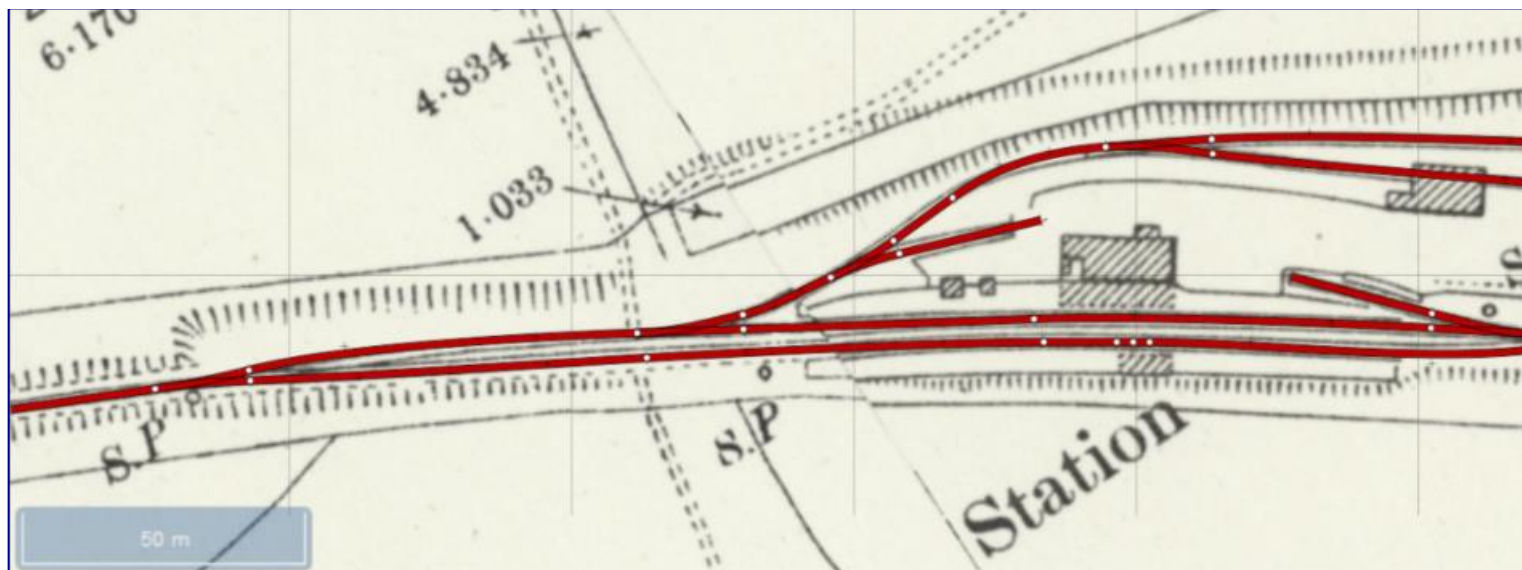
- Cricklade
- Blunsdon
- Moredon Halt
- Rushey Platt
- Swindon Town
- Chiseldon
- Chisledon Camp Halt (Or Draycot Halt)
- Ogbourne St.George
- Marlborough
- Savernake Forest sidings
- Savernake
- Wolfhall Junction
- Grafton and Burbage
- Collingbourne
- Ludgershall
- Tidworth branch
- Andover Junction

Cricklade

After South Cerney, we cross the border into Wiltshire, where we find most of the M&SWJR. The first station we reach is Cricklade.

Cricklade station was on the southern edge of the town of Cricklade, and was a passing place on the M&SWJR line, which was mostly single track. It was one of the busier stations on the line with both passengers and freight traffic, and there was a large volume of milk traffic.

Ref https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cricklade_railway_station

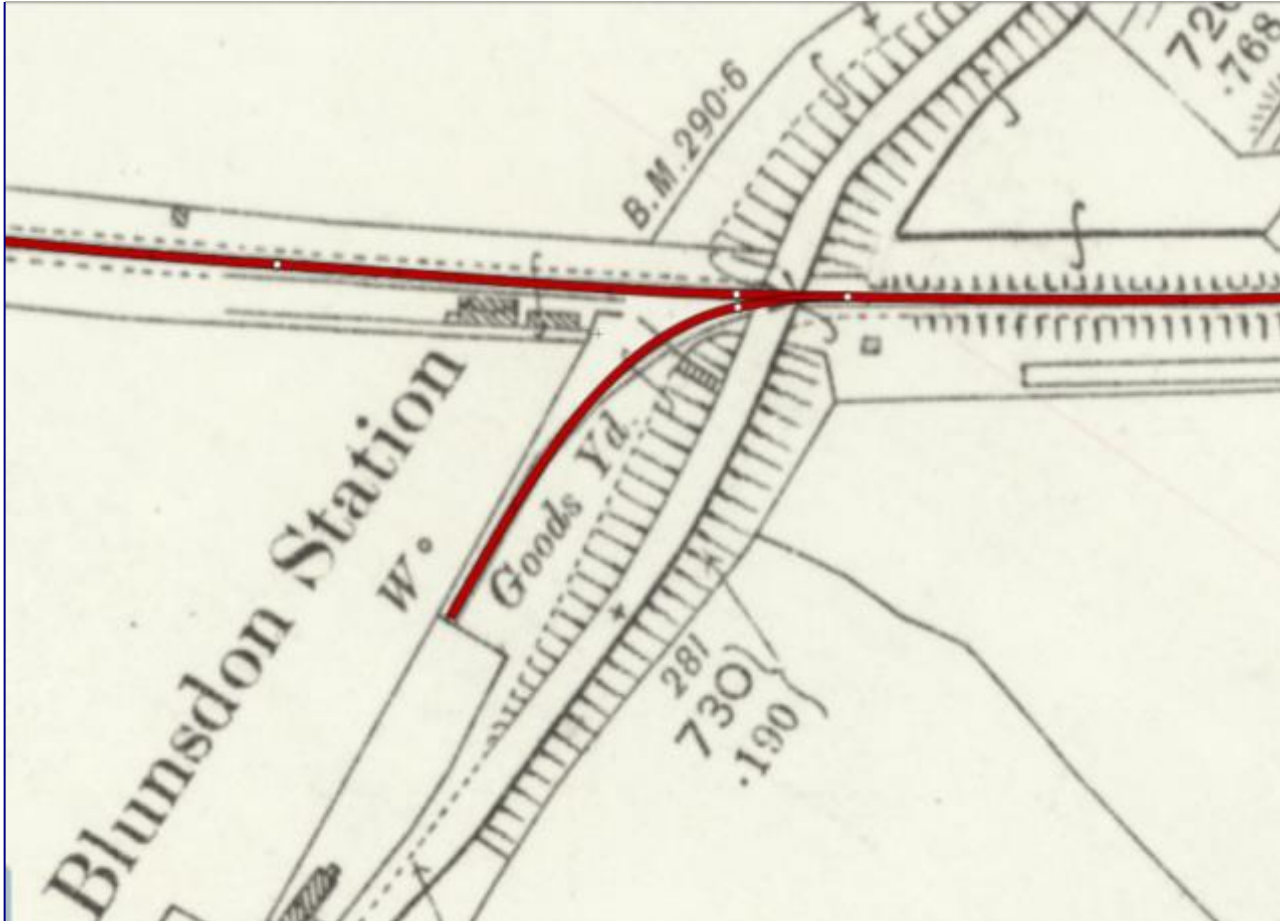


For modellers, a more interesting station. We can see the passing loop, two station sidings with what look like loading bays, and then the two longer sidings with a shed of some kind and the cattle pens. I'm wondering where the "large volume of milk traffic" was handled. Perhaps it was the classic story of milk churns on a Syphon wagon and then, or six-wheel milk wagons.

Blunsdon

Blunsdon was one of the last stations to be opened by the Midland and South Western Junction Railway in 1895 on a railway that had opened in 1883. It was little more than a single-platform halt, and milk was the main traffic. It also had a single siding, used for such traffic as fertiliser and other agricultural requirements.

What wagons did they use for fertiliser?



Moredon Halt

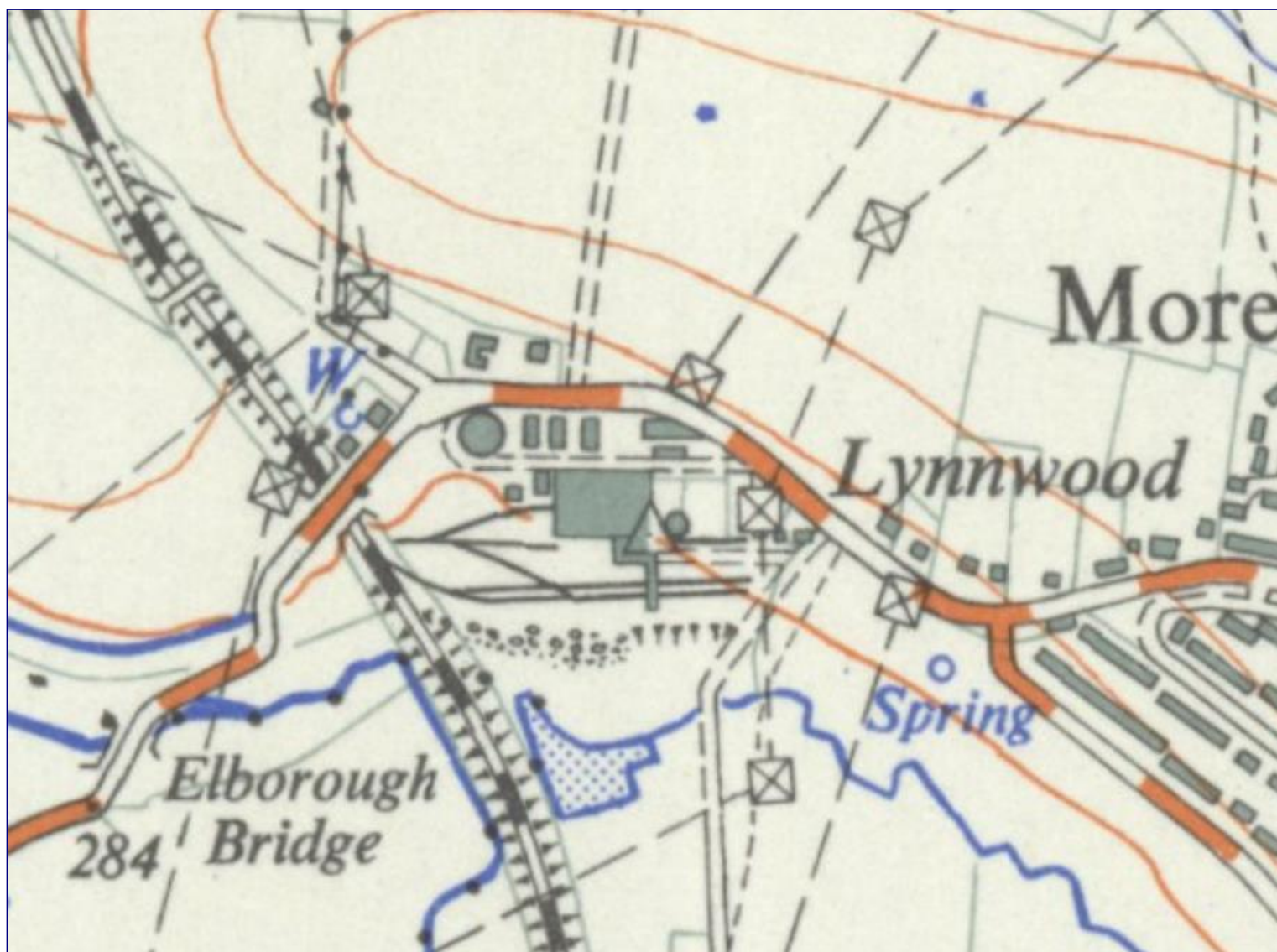
Moredon Halt was built primarily for milk traffic and passenger services were not advertised, though it appears to have been used by infrequent passengers throughout its short life. It officially closed in September 1924 but the Oakley book referred to below indicates that passenger receipts were still recorded up to 1935.

The single-platform station faced a siding that led to Moredon power station and up 100 coal wagons arrived each day. The M&SWJR line as a whole closed to passengers in 1961, but coal deliveries to the power station remained until 1969.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moredon_Halt_railway_station

None of the OS maps I can find online show much detail of the power station sidings or how coal was handled. Does anyone know where the coal came from?

This is from the 60-year-old OS 1:10,560 (1949-1970) series



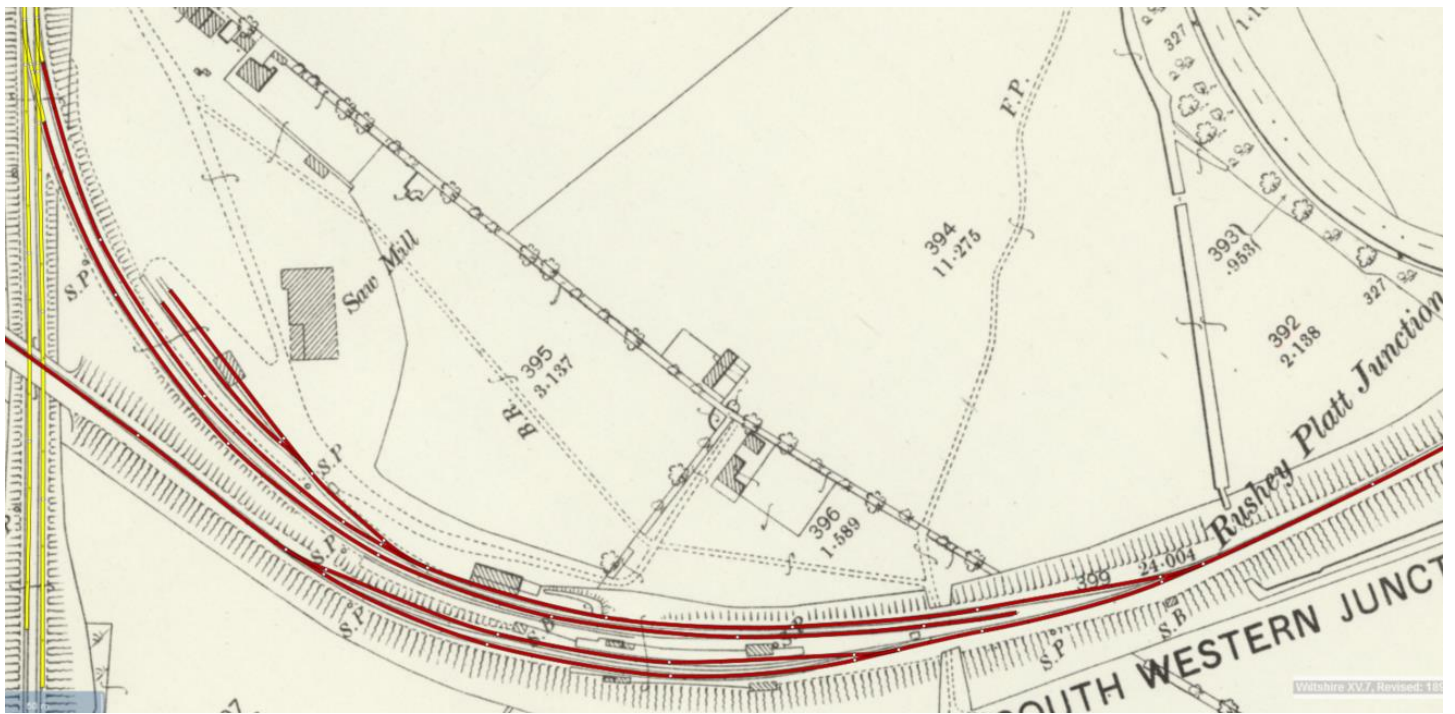
Ref <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17&lat=51.58589&lon=-1.82799&layers=193&b=1>

Rushey Platt

Rushey Platt was at the junction where the 1883 S&CER line branched off from the SM&AR link line between Swindon Town railway station and the main Great Western Railway station at Swindon. It had platforms on both the through S&CER line and the link, but the service between the two Swindon stations ceased after March 1885 because of the high fees the GWR charged the M&SWJR to run over its tracks, and that part of the station closed only 15 months after it had opened.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rushey_Platt_railway_station

More goods and milk.



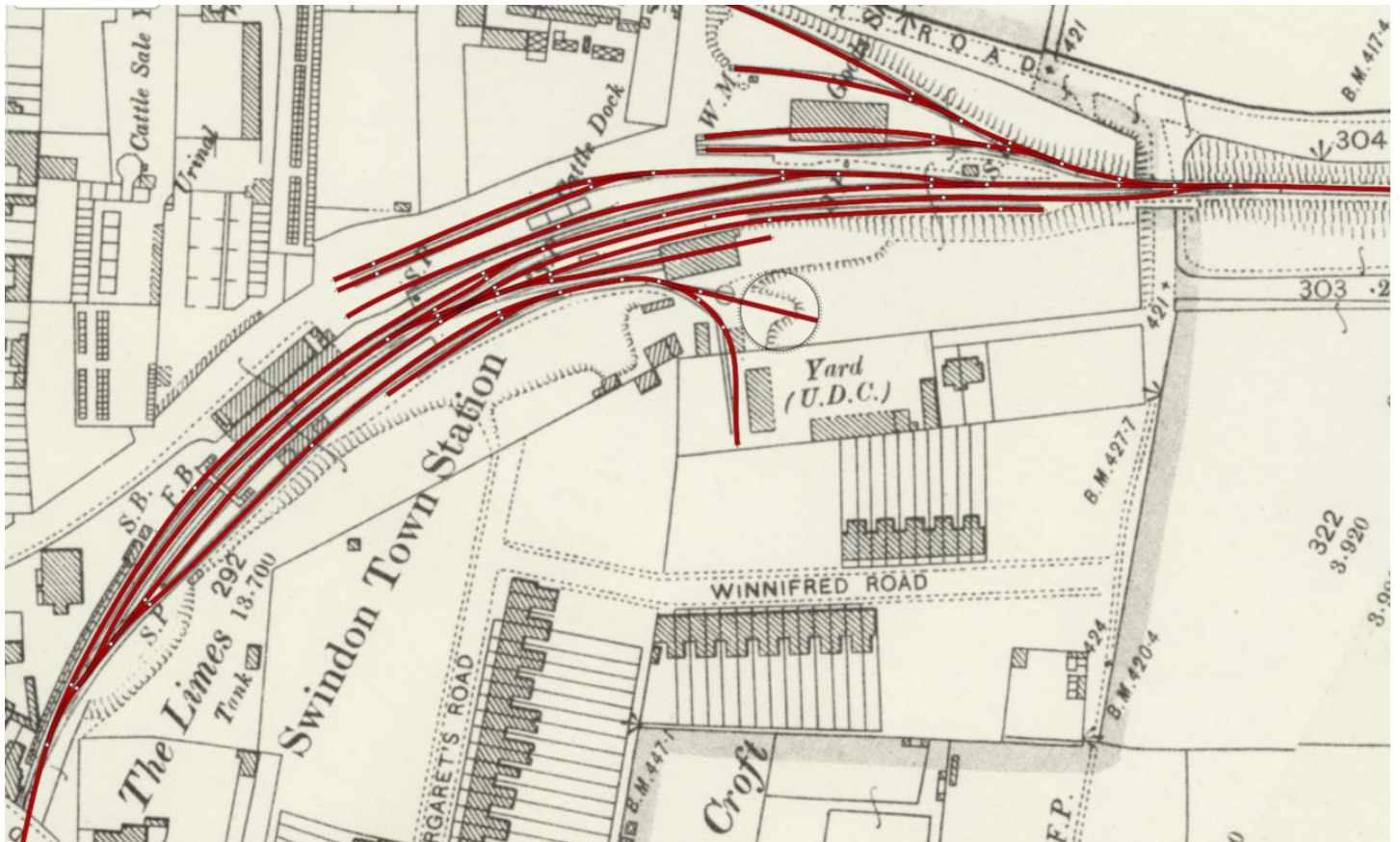
For modelling, it might make a nice corner-of-a-room layout.

The railway path itself is still there, and in use, as the Swindon "Southern Flyer" cycle path (NCN 45)

Swindon Town

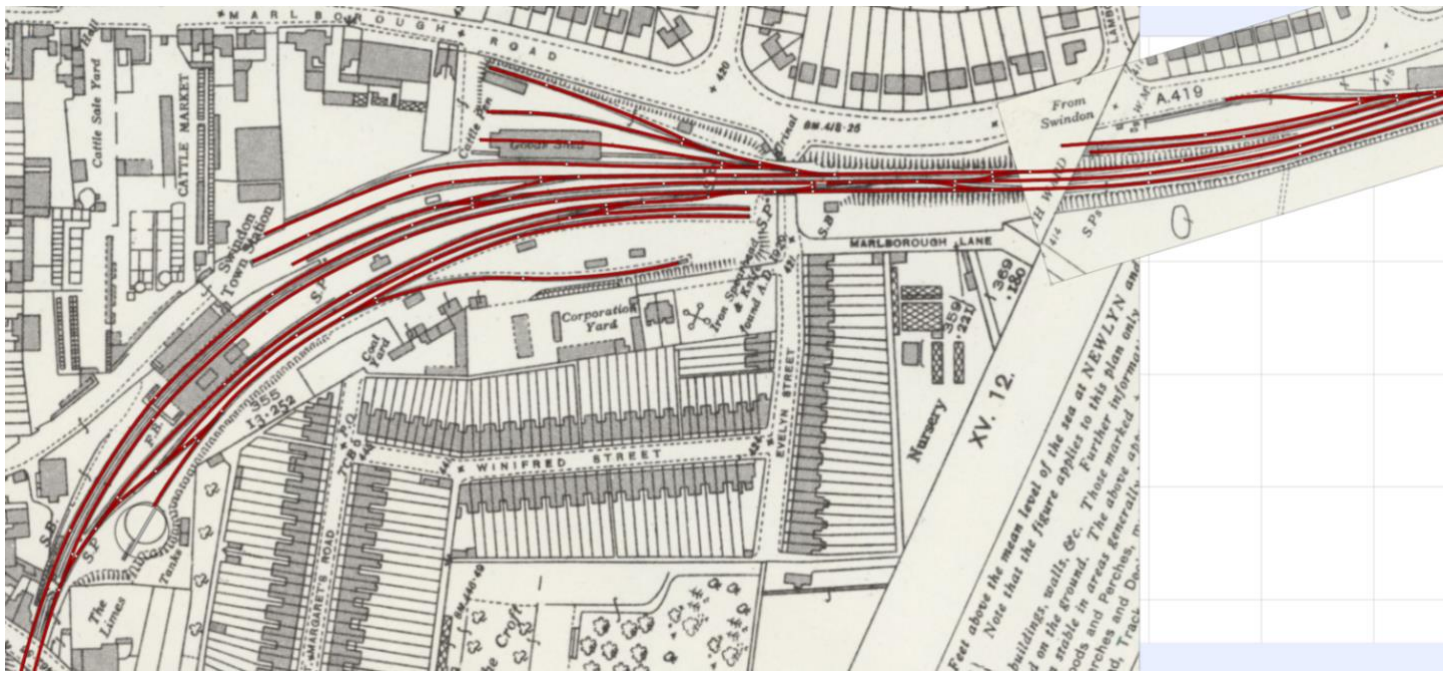
Swindon Town was seen as the most important station on the line, and housed the M&SWJR's offices. There was a loop line, a locomotive turntable and a loco shed at the site. The loop line platform was used for the shuttle services to Swindon's GWR station when these were reinstated following the takeover of the M&SWJR by the GWR at the Grouping in 1923.

Ref https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swindon_Town_railway_station



Another possible corner-of-the-room layout. Might need a large room though.

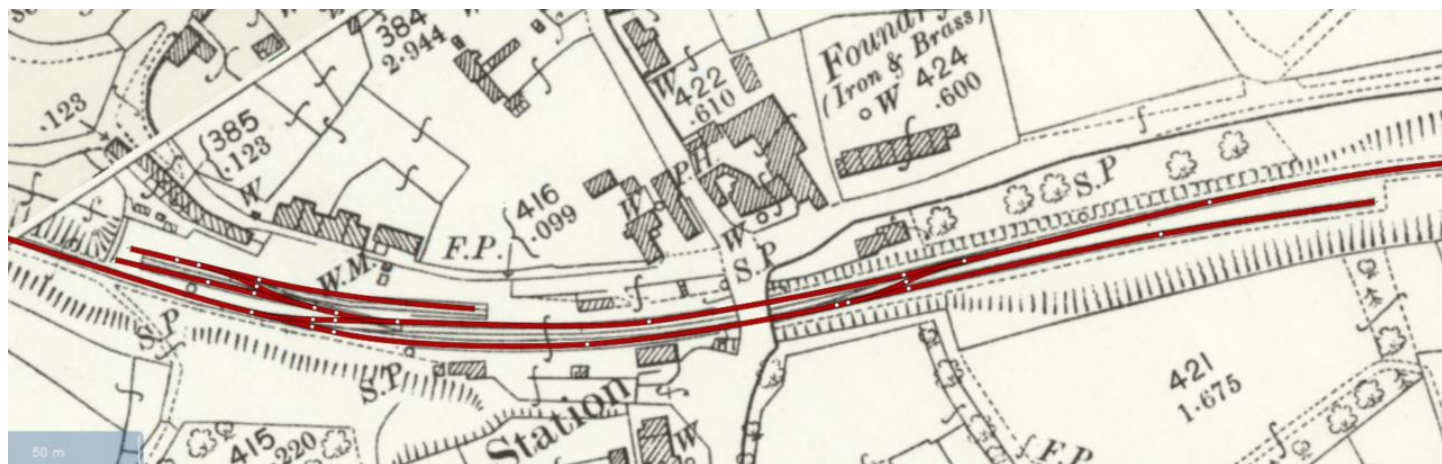
For anyone keener on the GWR / BR(W) era for modelling, I've found the 1942 edition of the same 25-inch OS map, and revised the track plan. If anyone would like the AnyRail files, drop me a PM. Your choice of turntable may vary. The presence of more sidings might have been because there was a lot of military traffic up & down the M&SWJR in this period.



Chiseldon

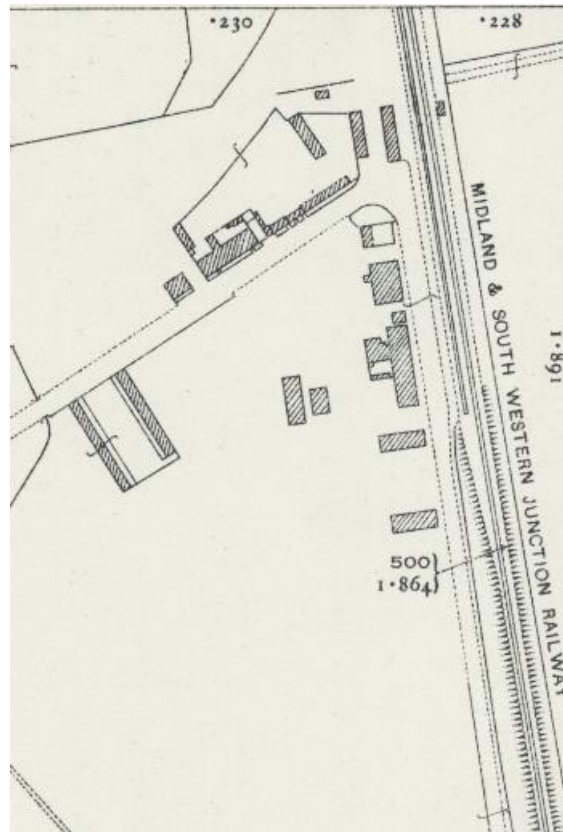
Chiseldon was sited on a curved section of track in the middle of the village of Chiseldon, and was for many years busy with both goods traffic, primarily agricultural, and passengers.

Ref https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiseldon_railway_station



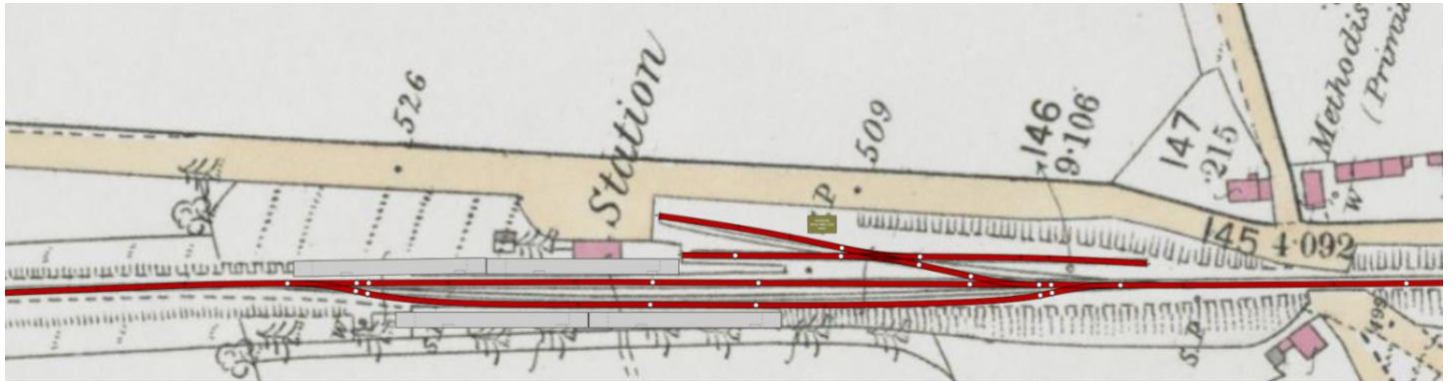
A passing-loop and a few sidings. That "*goods traffic, primarily agricultural*" might mean more fertiliser and some cattle wagons. There was an iron and brass foundry close to the station (visible on the map above). Not sure if it contributed to the goods traffic though.

Chisledon Camp Halt (Or Draycot Halt)



Ogbourne St. George

A nice passing loop, with platforms on both sides, plus a few short sidings, for the usual agricultural goods, some cattle and milk traffic. Some people still living in the village recall seeing cows being herded down the High Street to be put on a cattle wagon bound for Swindon Market.

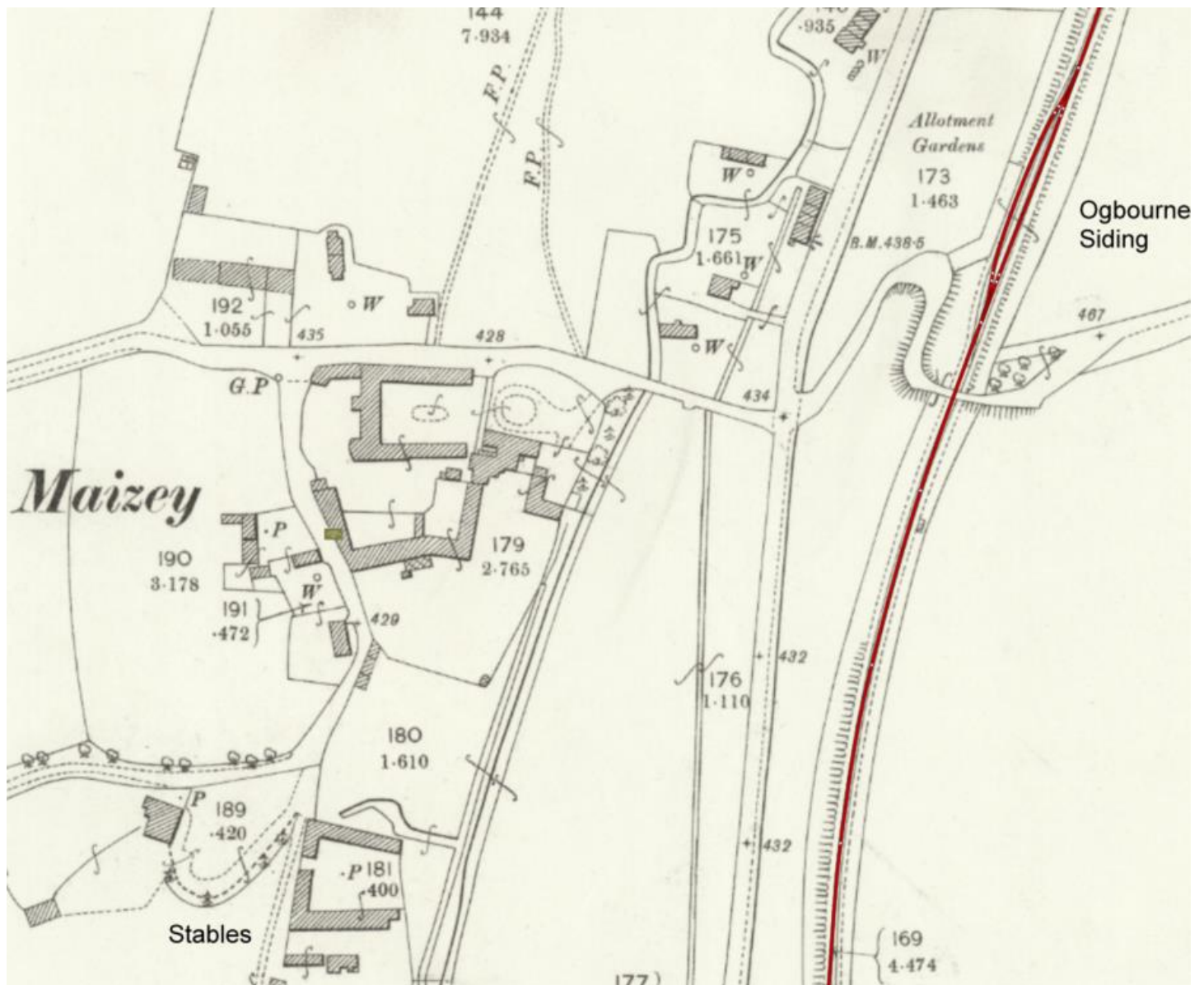


Ogbourne siding

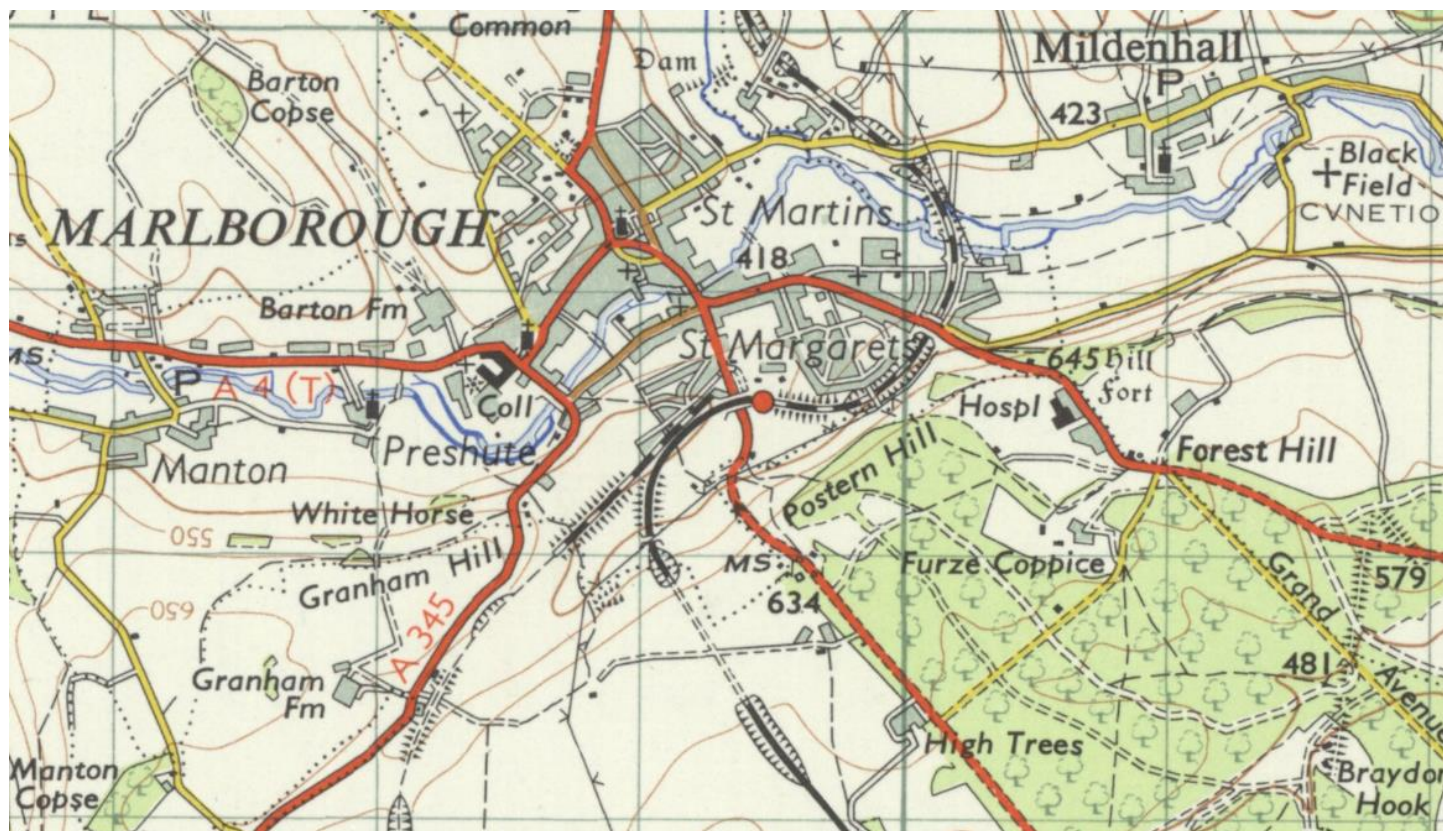
Ogbourne St. George, as a two-street village, was fortunate to have a station. The even-smaller villages of Ogbourne St. Andrew and Ogbourne Maizey didn't get stations. Probably too close to Marlborough anyway. But in some Wiltshire and Berkshire villages, there's something more valuable than passengers - that's horses. Ogbourne Maizey had its very own horsebox siding.

"Ogbourne Siding" was actually in Ogbourne St. Andrew; the stables were in Ogbourne Maizey on the other side of what is now the A345 main road. What was shown as "Allotment Gardens" is now a row of houses, and the track bed of the siding is still there, being used for car parking at the rear of the houses. The main user was Major Edward's horse-box, based at Ogbourne St Andrew siding, c.1902.

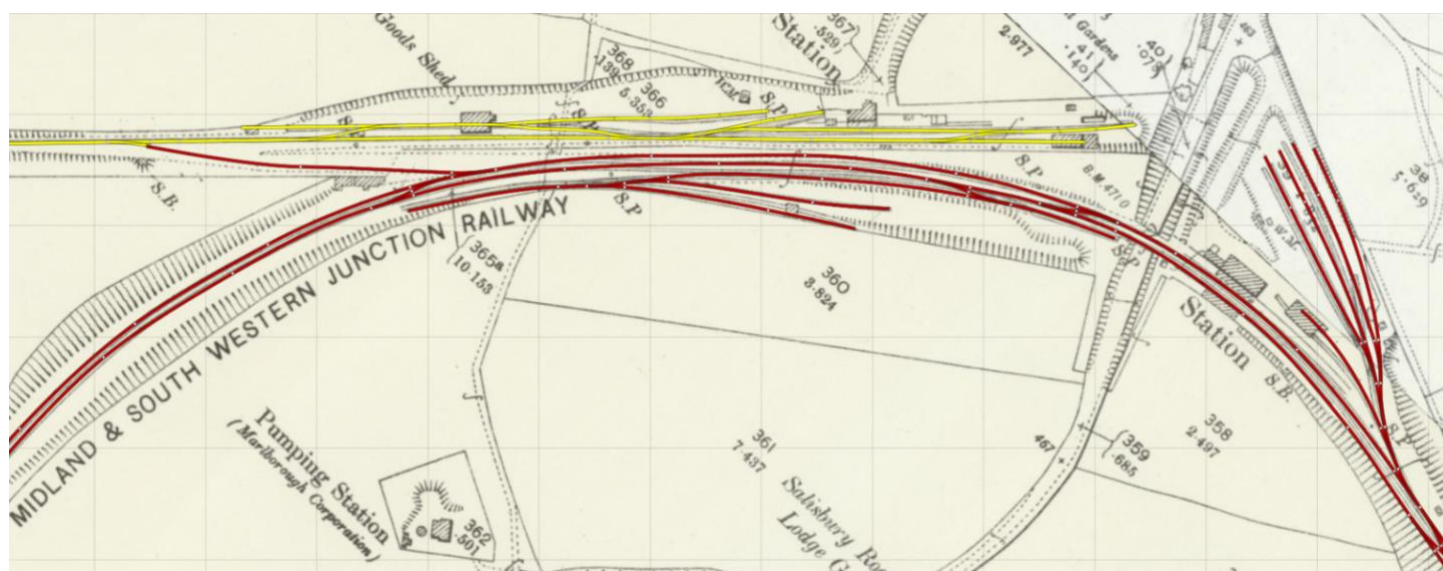
The Ogbourne Siding was configured as a double-ended siding, not just a short stub siding with a loading dock.



Marlborough – with two stations



The railway path runs in a semi-circle round the east end of the town alongside the foot of Postern Hill before splitting into the separate GWR and M&SWJR tracks.



Savernake Forest sidings

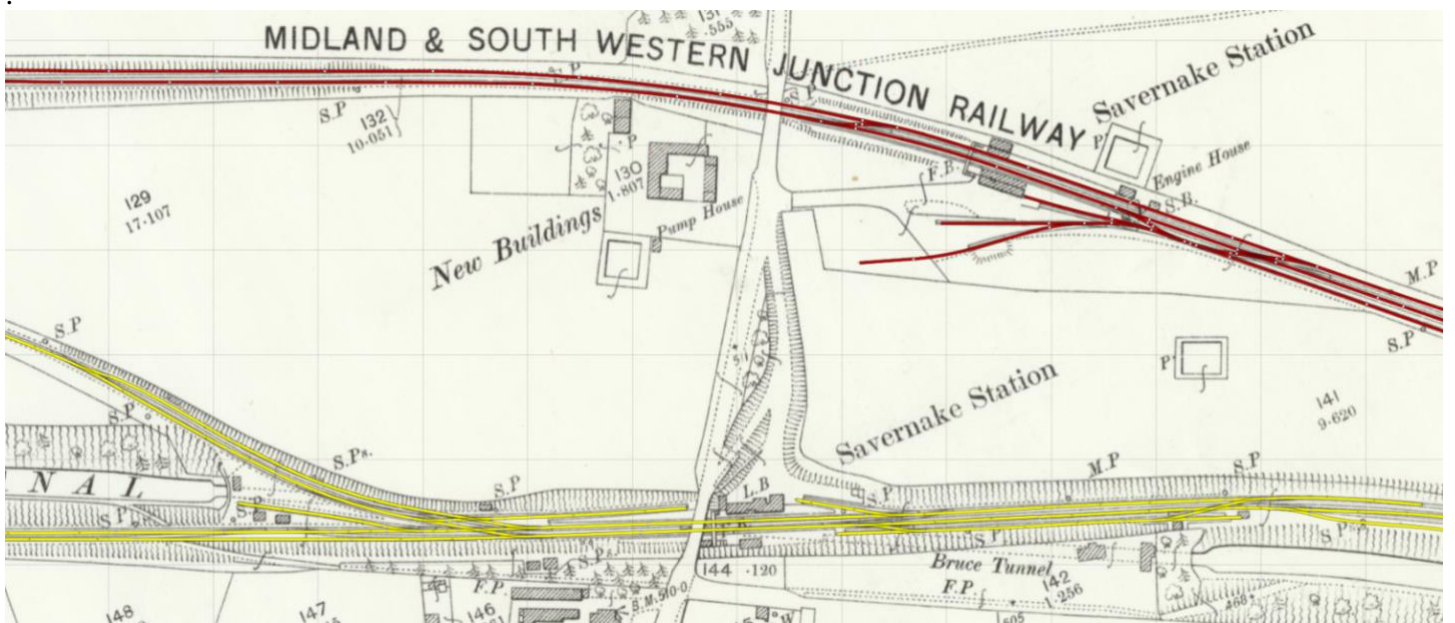
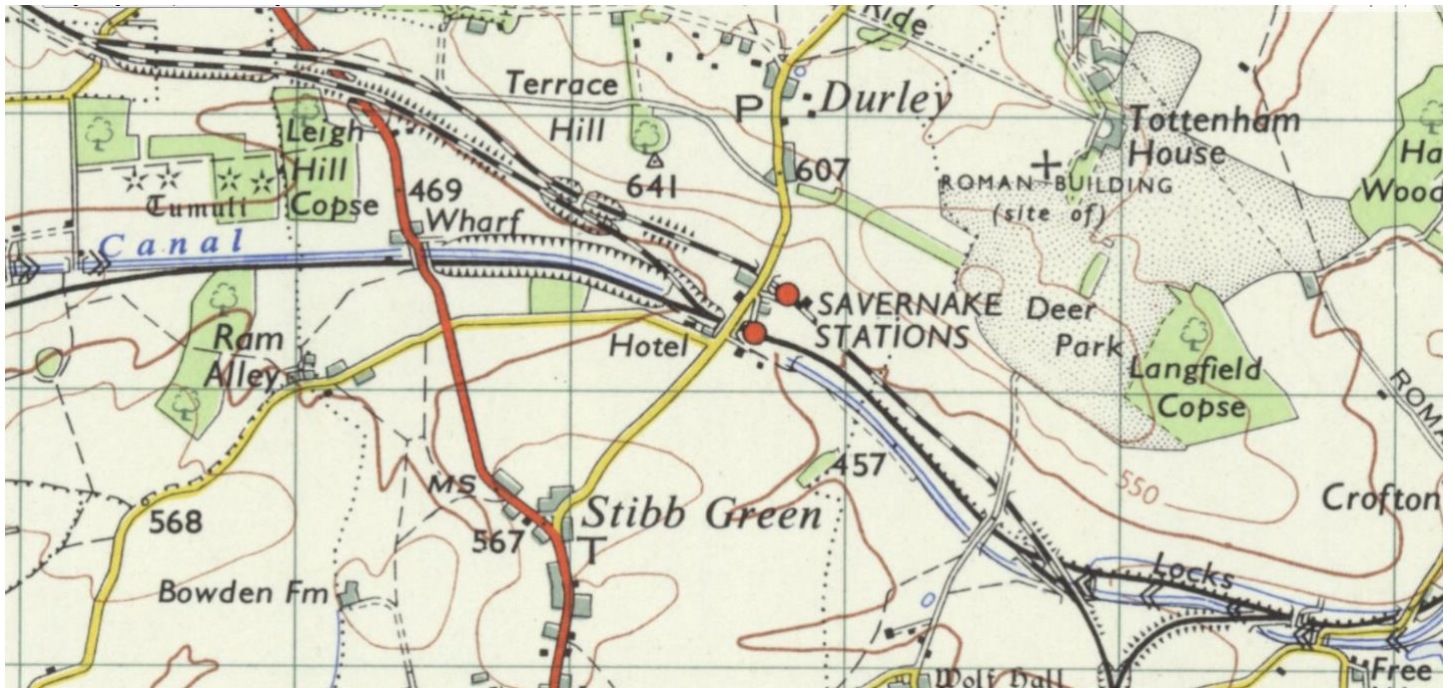
Until the summer of 1943, all military supplies, equipment and the ammunition stores were transported by rail to Marlborough (Savernake Low Level) Station or to Savernake High Level Station on the M&SWJR to the south of the forest. From there everything was transported by lorry into the forest. This was inconvenient to say the least and Marlborough goods yard was becoming inadequate for handling the increasing volume of ammunition destined for Savernake. A dedicated spur (North Savernake Mileage Sidings) off the existing M&SWJR was opened in August 1943 enabling rapid transit of ammunition onto waiting trucks to be transported the short distance into the adjacent forest

More here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20160917145403/http://services.english-heritage.org.uk/ResearchReportsPdfs/029_2009_WEB.pdf

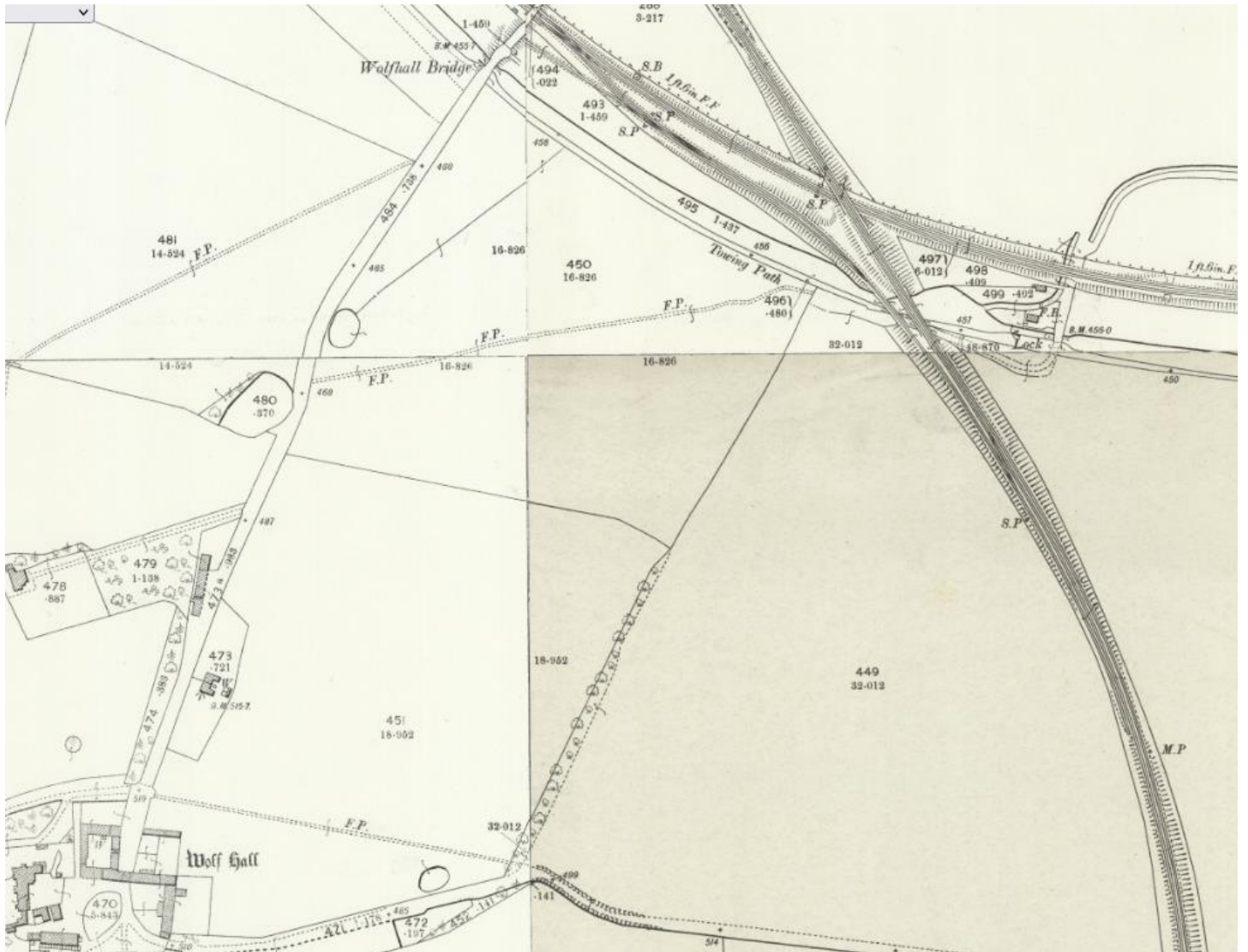
Savernake

Low-level (GWR) and high-level (M&SWJR) stations.



Wolfhall Junction

Continuing southwards, one mile from the Savernake stations is Wolfhall Junction.



Grafton and Burbage

Grafton and Burbage station was sited at West Grafton on a double-track section of the line. It had a small main building on the down platform (towards Andover), with a large signal box that controlled what had become a complex junction. The up platform had a wooden shelter. There was a small goods yard to the north of the station. Station signs on the platforms referred to it as "Grafton" station; in timetables and on other printed material, however, it always appeared as "Grafton and Burbage". As a whole, traffic on the M&SWJR fell steeply after the Second World War and the line closed to passengers in 1961

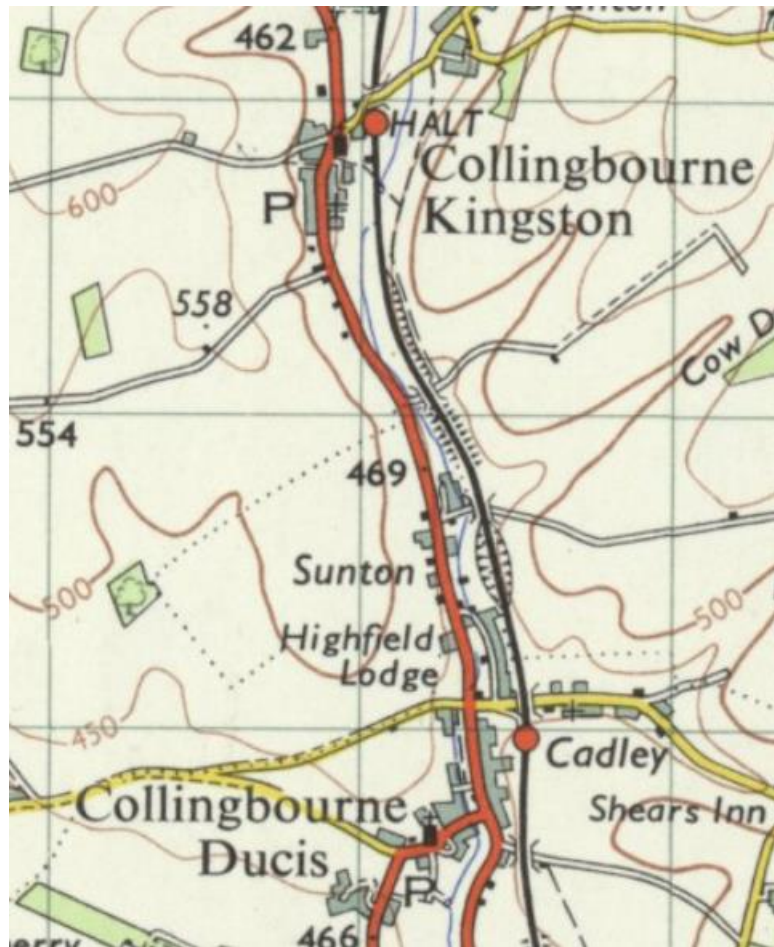
Ref https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grafton_and_Burbage_railway_station

It looks like it had a small goods yard with a shed. Perhaps it was used for the usual M&SWJR traffic, coal, agricultural (cattle wagons) and milk.



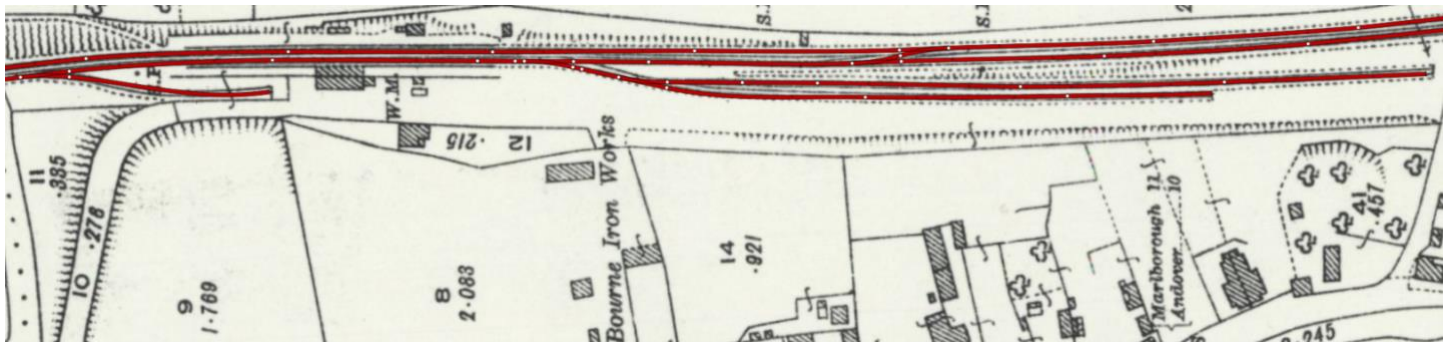
Collingbourne

Two stations, a little over a mile apart.

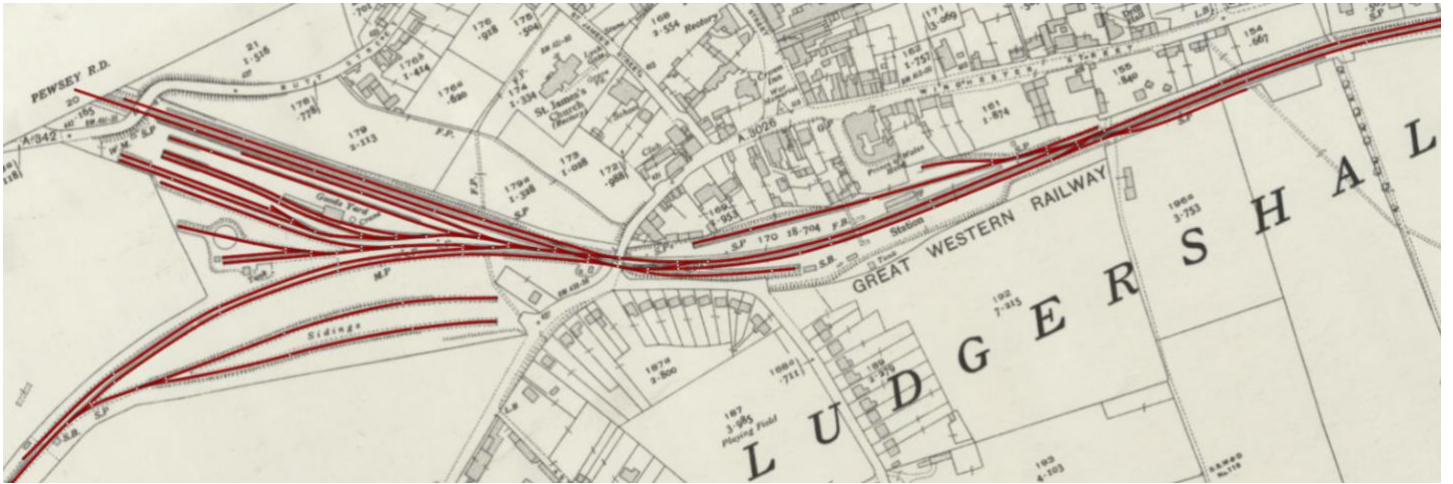


Collingbourne Kingston was just a Halt with no passing loop or sidings.

Collingbourne Ducis did have a passing loop, a horse dock and two sidings. But why such long sidings? I have read a suggestion it was for a layby or overflow from Ludgershall during military exercises.



Ludgershall, based on the 1936 map.
<https://maps.nls.uk/view/106030699>



Top left (where it says Pewsey RD) is the main line north to Swindon. Bottom left is the Tidworth branch. Top right is the main line to Andover.

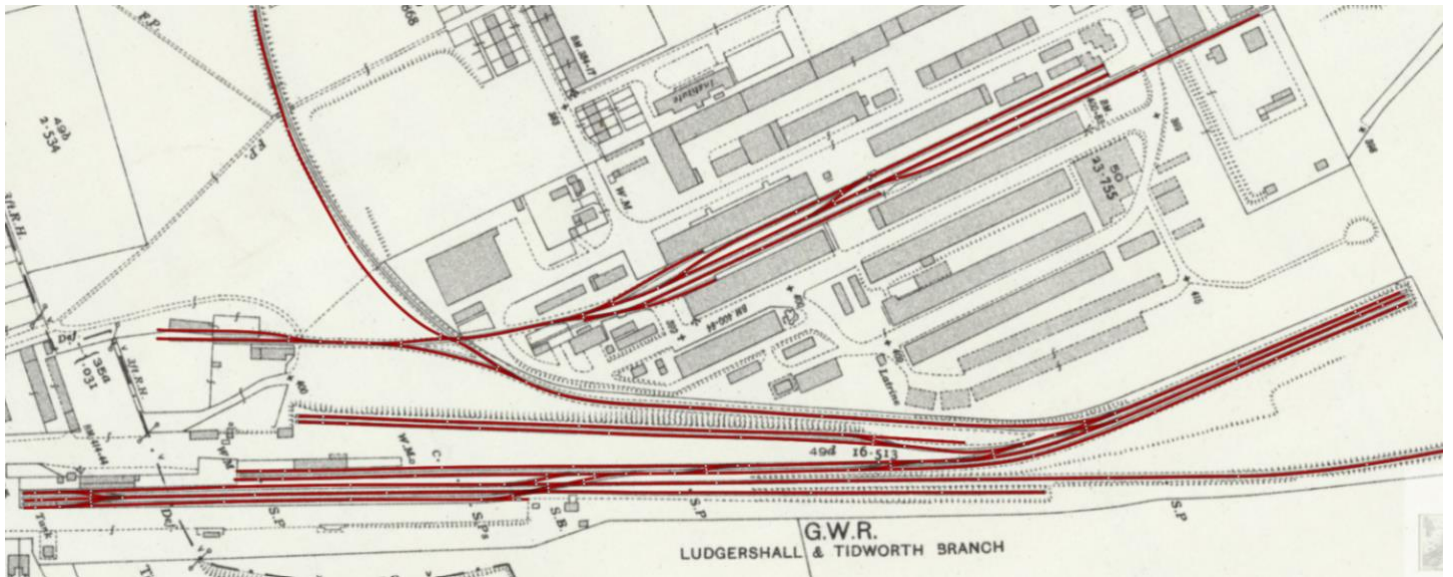
Tidworth branch

Such was the volume of traffic associated with the military that the station became the "senior" station on the M&SWJR system, with annual receipts exceeding those on the entire remainder of the system together.

Ref https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midland_and_South_Western_Junction_Railway#Tidworth

This is according to the 1936 map, so might easily have changed.

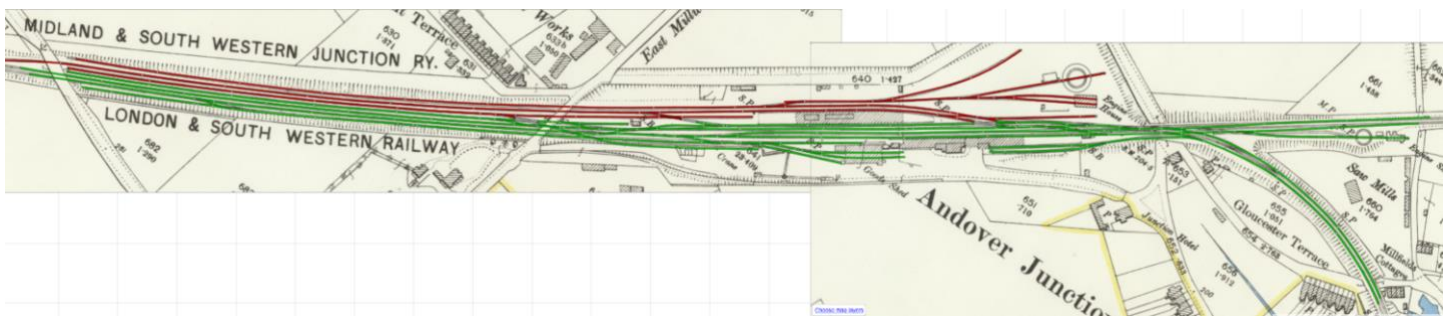
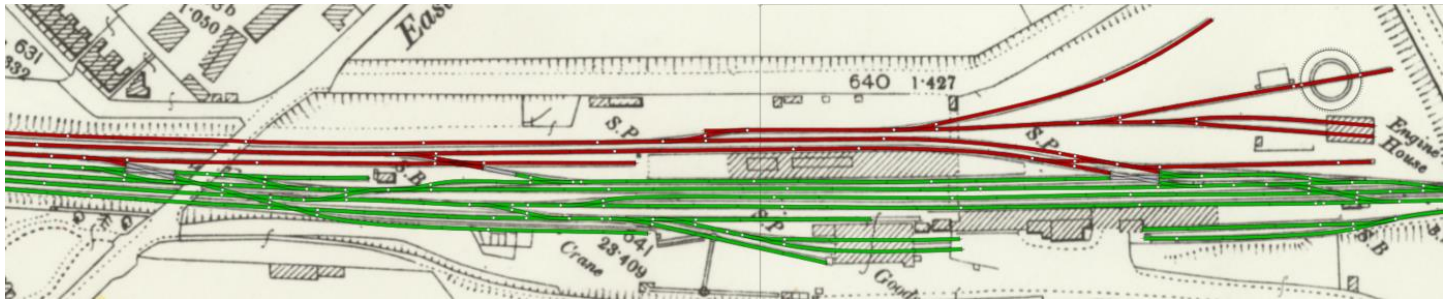
<https://maps.nls.uk/view/106030729>



Lots of zig-zag sidings, presumably to cope with the difference in height between Tidworth camp and the branch line.

Andover Junction

Leaving Wiltshire, M&SWJR terminates at Andover Junction. Through trains to Winchester and Southampton would continue over the London and South Western Railway (Southern) tracks.



<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17&lat=51.21160&lon=-1.49430&layers=168&b=1>