

Extract from WILLIAM WEAVER TOMLINSON. The North Eastern Railway: its Rise and Development 1915, page 659

What we have called the modern period of our history opened with an agitation amongst several sections of the Company's servants for higher wages and improved conditions of service. In the latter part of 1871 the signalmen at the more important junctions on the railway secured a reduction of their standard hours. In January, 1872, the standard hours of certain engine-drivers and firemen were reduced and, two months later, improved scales of wages were granted to signalmen, guards, porters, ticket-collectors, shunters, horse-drivers and policemen. This period also opened with the improvement of the East Coast route by the substitution of the Team Valley branch, a portion of the Bishop Auckland branch and the Ferryhill extension line for the old series of lines between Gateshead and Ferryhill, the East Coast express trains beginning to run by way of Durham instead of Leamside on the 15th of January, 1872; the works, however, were not completed at that time, the final opening of the Ferryhill extension line (6½ miles) as well as of the additional sets of rails between Newton Junction and Durham station, and between Hoggersgate Junction and Ferryhill station, taking place on the 1st of March. The works comprised a deep cutting through a bed of sandstone at Croxdale Bank, and two lattice-girder viaducts, one over the Wear near Croxdale and the other over the Dearness Valley at Langley Moor. The Pelaw and Jarrow branch, giving direct communication between Newcastle and South Shields, was also opened on the 1st of March. Great difficulty had been experienced in forming the embankment which carried the railway over the estuary of the river Don. Only by depositing a vast quantity of ballast on this unstable site did the engineers succeed in obtaining a firm foundation for the line. To the list of lines opened in 1872 must be added the Newbiggin extension of the Blyth and Tyne Railway (3½ miles), which was opened on the 1st of March.