Middlesbrough's early stations

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Peter Holmes's *Passenger Traffic on the Stockton & Darlington Railway* (author, 2000) records (page 9) that what appears to be the first passenger station **building** at Middlesbrough - a "coach shed" for the horse drawn service with Stockton - was commissioned in spring 1832. The location given by Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway – Its rise and development* (page 413) is "behind … Watson's Wharf". To locate that wharf see https://maps.nls.uk/view/125623120 (1893 survey). This would put the first Middlesbrough "stopping place" and the 1832 building ("coach station") at the coal depot at the corner of Commercial Street, Depot Road and Stockton Street (approx grid ref NZ494213), which would be compatible with Holmes's statement (page 9), referring to the situation in 1831: "Mr Harris's *[the rail coach contractor]* house in Commercial Street served as a booking office" – Commercial Street went no further west than that. This must cast very considerable doubt on the **location** for the first stopping place shown on Bill Fawcett's erstwhile webpage and on the plan at *Branch Line News* 1275.393.

Tomlinson (page 413) is presumably the source of the date of 1837 for the extension to a passenger terminus at what on what is shown on https://maps.nls.uk/view/102344164 (1853 survey) as the Goods station, a little further along Commercial Street (later subsumed by a timber yard - approx grid ref NZ496212). Of this 1837 relocation, Fawcett states that there was no passenger **building** at the new site (what he dubs the second station) until a temporary shed was provided in Nov 1838, followed by a permanent building in 1839 but that does not square with advertisements in the *Durham County Advertiser* and *Durham Chronicle* in August 1837

MIDDLESBROUGH.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

At the house of Mrs Logan, the Commercial Inn, in Middlesbrough, in the County of York, on Saturday, the 19th day of August, 1837, at three o'clock in the afternoon,

Mr William Crow, Auctioneer.

THE following very desirable LOTS of BUILDING GROUND:—

Lot 1. A PIECE or PARCEL of GROUND, containing by admeasurement one hundred and fifty-five square yards, or thereabouts, situate in Commercial Street, in Middlesbrough aforesaid.

Lot 2. A PIECE or PARCEL of GROUND, containing by admeasurement two hundred and fifty-seven square yards, or thereabouts, also situate in Commercial-Street aforesaid, and adjoining Lot 1 on the West.

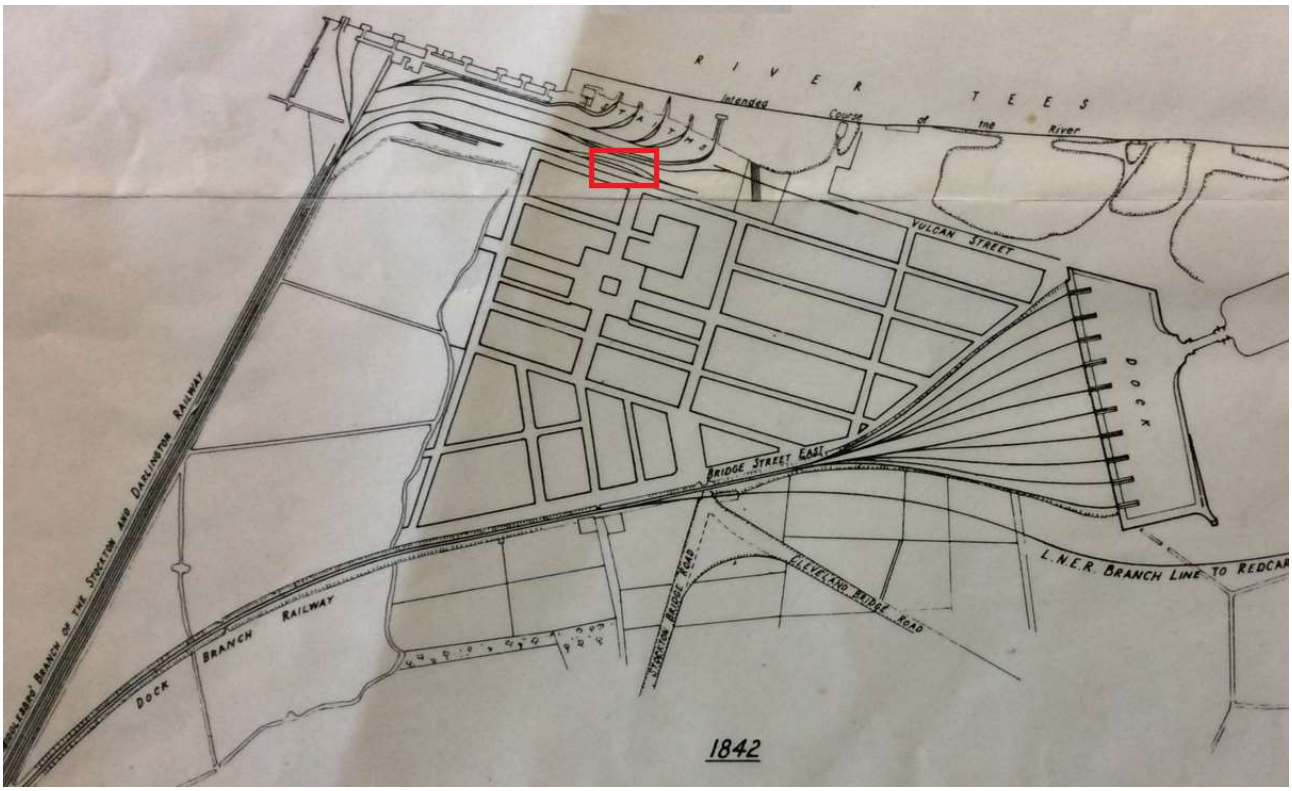
The Property now offered for sale is situated in the most improving and best part of Middlesbrough—it immediately adjoins a splendid building called the Middlesbrough Exchange and Hotel—it is also within a very short distance from the Wharf to which the Steam-Boats ply between Middlesbrough and London, and between the former place and Newcastle, Sunderland, &c. In addition to the above advantages, the coach station of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company, from whence the passenger Trains start for Stockton, Darlington, and Auckland, is immediately in front of the above very valuable Property.

Plans of the above Property may be seen on application to Mr GEORGE BURLISON, Architect, Darlington; and at the offices of Mr JOHN COATES, Solicitor, Darlington and Middlesbrough.

Darlington, 3rd August, 1837.

which make clear that the "coach station" at Middlesbrough had *already* moved to the new site in Commercial Street, and with the strong implication that there was *already* a building there at that date. For the plaque commemorating the 1837station at Commercial Street (opposite North Street) see https://co-curate.ncl.ac.uk/resources/view/39720/

On this LNER plan of Middlesbrough in 1842 (albeit with the Redcar line added!) a red square has been superimposed to indicate what is believed to be the locality of the 1837 passenger station:



Of the newspapers available on line for that period, none mentioned the inevitable relocation of Middlesbrough station from Commercial Street to a temporary station on the new line in consequence of the opening to Redcar - that line's ceremonial opening was on Thursday 4 Jun 1846 (reported in *York Herald* 6 Jun 1846) – not the date given by Fawcett at this webpage – and included a VIP special and a fare-paying public excursion. However, the company's return to Board of Trade gave start of regular public service as 5 Jun, so the latter date presumably also represents the closure of the Commercial Street station. Likewise, there is no available report of transfer in 1847 [26 July (Fawcett) or August (Quick – "minutes contradictory over exact date")] to the permanent station east of Sussex Street. So far as that permanent passenger station is concerned, the 1853 OS plan shows it as *east* of Sussex Street (between that and Albert Road). However, Station Road heads *west* from Sussex Street (on the south side of the line) which would rather suggest that the 1846 station was down that street, *west* of Sussex Street.

The 1847 station site was swallowed up by the 1877 station. To facilitate the latter's construction, the 1847 station had to be removed and a temporary replacement provided – a station which has not been recorded by *Private & Untimetabled Railway Stations* (Croughton *et al.*), *Clinker's Register,* J V G Butt's compilation, nor Michael Quick's (unless an amendment somewhere along the line has been overlooked). Reporting the letting of contracts, the *Daily Gazette for*

> **As we indicated some days ago, the contracts have now been finally settled for the new Railway Station at Middlesbrough. The reduced tender of Messrs Shaftoe and Barry, of York, amounting to £40,761 has been accepted for the whole of the work except the iron work, which has been let to Messrs Handyside and Co., of Derby, for the sum of £21,222. The passenger station will be temporarily removed to Wood-street, while the alterations are being carried on. This temporary structure will cost £6,000 or £7,000.**

Middlesbrough, Stockton & District of 15 Nov 1873 implied that it would only subsist for the period of construction of the permanent station but the same paper's issue of 2 Nov 1874, which carried

a full description *(see foot of this article)*, referred to it as a new "excursion" station at Wood Street which would be "ready for occupation" on "Monday next" – this *appears* to contradict the 1873 report that the Wood Street station would only be temporary. A one-liner in the *Gazette* of 16 Nov 1874 advised that "The new station in Wood-street was opened on Sunday" (i.e. 15 Nov 1874). This was all that paper deigned to report! However, *Newcastle Courant* of 20 Nov was more forthcoming:

MIDDLESBROUGH RAILWAY STATION.—The North-Eastern Railway Company has commenced to use the new station erected for use during the demolition and re-building of the present Zetland Road Station. The temporary station is intended to be afterwards used for passengers. It has been built by Messrs Shafto and Barry, of York, at a cost of near y £8,000. The booking office is divided into three compartments to avoid crowding, and it and the waiting rooms are brick-built with stone facings, and are neatly fitted up. The platforms are 614 feet long.

This confirms Tomlinson's date of 15 Nov 1874. It perhaps confirms that delays on engineering projects are not a new phenomenon. While Tomlinson (page 671) had the correct opening date, once again Fawcett in his erstwhile Middlesbrough webpages has the opening date wrong.

We should not, however, jump to the conclusion that its predecessor closed from the same date, for the *Gazette's* issue of 4 Dec 1874 carried a report of proceedings in the Langbaurgh Police Court (Middlesbrough) of an incident on Saturday 21 Nov when a miner, returning (no doubt after a bibulous evening) to Eston endeavoured to do so by the last ordinary train with a ticket intended for use only on the special trains run for Bolckow's workers on pay Saturdays.

THE NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY AND THE PUBLIC. — SHOCKING 'OFFENCE' BY A MINER,—John Anderson, miner, Eston, was charged by Superintendent Armstrong with travelling in a train other than that for which he had purchased a ticket. Superintendent Armstrong said that defendant had obtained a ticket to travel by a train which was run for the special accommodation of Messrs Bolckow and Co.'s workmen, and no one had a right to travel by an ordinary train with a ticket for the special train. The defendant must have known that he was doing wrong, as the special train ran to the excursion platform near to Sussex-street, and started from there. Defendant had gone by a second-class train from the Middlesbrough station to Eston. He then called P.C. Harris, a railway constable, who collects the tickets at Eston station, who stated that on the 21st of November he was collecting the tickets as the last train from Middlesbrough came in, and defendant made two rushes to get through the door. Witness asked him to produce his ticket. At first he said he had not got one, but afterwards produced the ticket for the special train. He also gave a false name and address. Supt. Armstrong pressed the case, and defendant, who did not appear, was fined £1 3s including costs.

The case rested on the fact that the special on which he had arrived in Middlesbrough had run "to the excursion platform near to Sussex Street" and so the train on which he was entitled to return to Eston would have returned from there; instead, he had returned "by an ordinary train…from the Middlesbrough station to Eston." Two scenarios seem possible:
(1) when normal services had still been using the 1847 station just east of Sussex Street, Bolckows specials had used a *different* station *(perhaps the 1846 temporary station west of Sussex Street?) and were still doing so*, or
(2) while normal services were now using the new Wood Street station, Bolckow specials were still using the 1847 station at Sussex Street.
So *either*
(a) there is a previously unrecorded station used by Bolckow trains at Middlesbrough, *or*
(b) the 1847 station continued in use until an unrecorded date solely to handle Bolckow trains (although this cannot have been for long as the site was required for the new station). Is it

possible that Fawcett's date of 16 Dec 1874 represents the last use of the 1847 station by Bolckow's workers' trains?

On 6 Nov 1877, the *Gazette* reported that Maj-Gen Hutchinson, the government's inspecting officer of railways, had that day visited and approved the new station and related works. The opening date of 1 Dec 1877 for the present station - used by most modern secondary sources with their usual circularity (Fawcett played safe with simply "Dec 1877") - seems to derive from Tomlinson (page 682); unusually for him, no provenance is given – and that date proves to be wrong. The trusty *Gazette* carried the following two reports in its issues of 1 and 3 Dec 1877, respectively:

MIDDLESBROUGH NEW PASSENGER STATION.

During the past 48 hours the officials and servants connected with the old passenger station at Middlesbrough have been busily engaged in "removing" to the premises of the new station of the North-Eastern Railway Company, which has been so far completed as to be ready for opening for traffic. It has been arranged that the first passenger train to leave the new station will be that shortly after six o'clock to-morrow (Sunday) evening, going southward. As we have already stated, the splendid new station has been built at a cost of about £100,000. The architect has been Mr Peachey, of Darlington, and the contractors were Messrs Shafto and Barry, York. A full descriptive account of the work has already been given in the *Gazette*.

THE MIDDLESBROUGH NEW PASSENGER STATION.

On Saturday placards were distributed over Middlesbrough announcing that the new passenger station would be opened for general traffic this (Monday) morning. It had been arranged that the first train should depart from the tation on Sunday evening at 6·10 for the south. At dusk the lamps surrounding the station were lighted, which caused a deal of attention to concentrate on the building, and many people having learned what the arrangements in regard to opening were, crowds of persons visited the station as six o'clock approached, with the object of seeing the beautiful structure by gas-light, and witnessing the first train depart. The train from Redcar and Saltburn steamed into the station soon after the time at which it was due, and the explosion of fog signals as the engine passed the front of the platform attracted general attention, and announced that the first load of passengers was about to be landed upon it. A large number of persons booked by the train, apparently seeming anxious to have the honour of taking a practical part in the opening of the station. The thoroughfares on either side of the Sussex-street crossing were thronged with persons, from whom there was a general cheer as the signals again exploded, and the train came steaming from the platform. The general arrangements appertaining to the working of the new station are being ably superintended by Mr Pearson, the station-master, and in a very short time every department will be placed upon a thoroughly practical and satisfactory basis.

These explain that the new station opened on the evening of **Sunday 2** Dec 1877, the first train being the 1810 (6.10 pm) for the south, with "general traffic" the following day. Confirmation – were it needed – was provided by *York Herald* of 3 Dec 1877:

MIDDLESBRO'.

OPENING OF THE NEW PASSENGER STATION.—Yeste day evening. the new passenger station of the Nortl Eastern Railway Company was opened for passeng traffic. A large number of persons were prese admiring the excellent arrangements and charm with the novelty. The station, which was brilliant lighted, presented a handsome appearance. It probable that to day some formal notice will be take of the opening of the station, which is an event considerable importance in the history of Middlesbr An architectural and structural description of t station has been previously given.

Thus both stations were in use on that Sunday, with Wood Street ceasing to be used for "general traffic" from Monday 3 Dec 1877. However, it is not known what use (if any) Wood Street had thereafter - there does not *appear* to be any trace of the station on the next available online OS plan, dated 1893 – so a definitive closure date for it is still required.

[*,*] The *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough* (later *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*) was founded in 1869 - https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/daily-gazette-for-middlesbrough - so earlier press references would have to be sought in other papers circulating in that area.

A digitized original version of William Weaver Tomlinson's ***The North Eastern Railway : its rise and development*** (Andrew Reid & Co., 1914) is available at https://archive.org/details/northeasternrail00tomluoft

From *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough, Stockton & District* - 2 November 1874:

THE NEW EXCURSION STATION, MIDDLESBROUGH.

The new extension station which is to be used for general passengers until the magnificent new station in Zetland-road is completed, is now almost ready for use. The North-Eastern Railway Company have at last recognised the importance and growing traffic of Middlesbrough, and as far as present indications can be relied upon, the new station will be, to use the words of Mr Isaac Wilson, one of the directors of the company, "as imposing, and handsome a structure as any station on the lines of the company." In the meantime, the erection in Wood-street is a splendid earnest of what is to come. It is intended ultimately to be used only for excursions, and is in many ways adapted for that purpose. Apparently, the great drawback which will stand in the way of its utility as a temporary station for general purposes, is the unprotected position in which it stands. The two platforms face north and south respectively, and are exposed to the biting winds which seem to make Middlesbrough their abiding place during the winter. When it is devoted to its ultimate purpose, however, its position will rather be favourable to its utility than otherwise, as the cool, pleasant winds of summer will have full play all round it,—no doubt to the extreme gratification of hot and hurried pleasure-seekers. One great advantage, which is sufficient to cover a multitude of defects, is the wise provision of two platforms, one for the down trains and the other for the up trains. The station is certainly a short distance removed from the centre of the town, as compared to the old station, but the fact that trains can proceed in and out without waiting for the line to be cleared, will more than compensate for this. The works have been carried out from the designs of Mr W. Peachey, architect, Darlington, by Messrs Shafto and Barry, of York, under the superintendence of Mr A. Taylor and Mr Carbert, as clerks of works. It is expected that the station will be ready for occupation by Monday next, when the work of demolition at the old station will be at once commenced. The platforms are 614 feet long, and proportionately wide, and are made of Wilkinson's granite-faced cement. The waiting-rooms, booking-office, and other offices are built of red brick, with stone facings, and are spacious and lofty in their construction. The booking hall is constructed on an improved method, which will, in a great measure, obviate the unseemly crushing and crowding, and sometimes violence that takes place at the booking window in the old station. It is built in the form of a semi-circle, the bow of the circle looking southwards, It is approached by several doors from the south side, and is divided into compartments. Passengers will pass up one side of the compartment to the booking window, and make their egress down the other side of the compartment. There are seven booking windows, and directions will be given in some conspicuous place to passengers informing them at which window to apply for a ticket for a particular place. The dimensions of the booking hall are 57 feet long and 29 feet deep. The general waiting room, which is at the east end of the platform, is 29 feet long by 18 feet wide, and is about 14 feet high. It is provided with benches, which run round the sides of the room. The first and second class ladies' and gentlemen's waiting rooms are at the west end of the platform, and are very commodious and comfortably fitted up. The left luggage and parcels offices will be at the extreme west end of the platform, and the porters' room and lamp room will be on the east side. The roof of the platform is covered with Messrs Brady's patent zinc, and is supported by iron pillars supplied by Messrs Handyside, of Derby. The plumber's work has been done by Mr Hall, of Leeds, and the painting and decorating by Mr Bakes, of York. The stone used in the contract was supplied from Messrs Thompson's quarry. The sanitary arrangements are very complete, and by means of Messrs Dennett's patent arching the gas water and sanitary pipes can be approached with great facility. The station is approached by a subway from Wood-street, and one flight of steps is provided for passengers entering the station, and another for those departing from it. The steps are of rough unpolished granite, supplied by Messrs Newry, from the Besbrook quarries. The urinals and conveniences are very neatly fitted up. A good deal of the mortar of the Cleveland Slag Working Company, Limited, has been used for the foundations, and has been found generally very good. One shortcoming in the station is apparent. There is no provision for refreshment rooms. Perhaps in an excursion station the lack of such provision is not of a great consequence, but in a station intended for general passenger traffic the wants of the respectable portion of the community ought to be studied without the prejudices of the directors being pushed down everybody's throats. The station will cost close upon £8,000.

Richard Maund

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