



Carter's Siding (left), looking south west along the remains of the S&D's Wimborne loop towards Corfe Mullen Junction, 24th April 1965. Note the transshipment shed, loading dock and entrance gate with notice saying: 'ENGINES MUST NOT PASS THIS BOARD'. *Colin Caddy*

Carter's conundrum

The tale of another unusual dead-end S&D working.
Compiled by **Peter Russell**

As with the story of the Branksome Pottery trip working in T41 (pp.38–40), we've assembled this feature with vital factual inputs from ex-S&D Firemen Peter Smith and Aubrey Punter (both Branksome Loco), and ex-BR (SR) Fireman Owen Fripp of Bournemouth Loco, all of whom worked the short trip to Carter's Clay Siding at Corfe Mullen in the late 1950s. However, responsibility for presentation rests with the compiler.

The siding, opened in 1903, lay alongside the S&D's original main line west of Wimborne (at 61m 17ch), which went into decline with the opening of the Corfe Mullen to Broadstone cut-off in 1886–86. After closure of the Wimborne loop to through traffic in 1933, only a spur to Carter's remained, and clay was the only traffic until production ceased in September 1959. As the track plan shows, the dead-end siding had a trailing

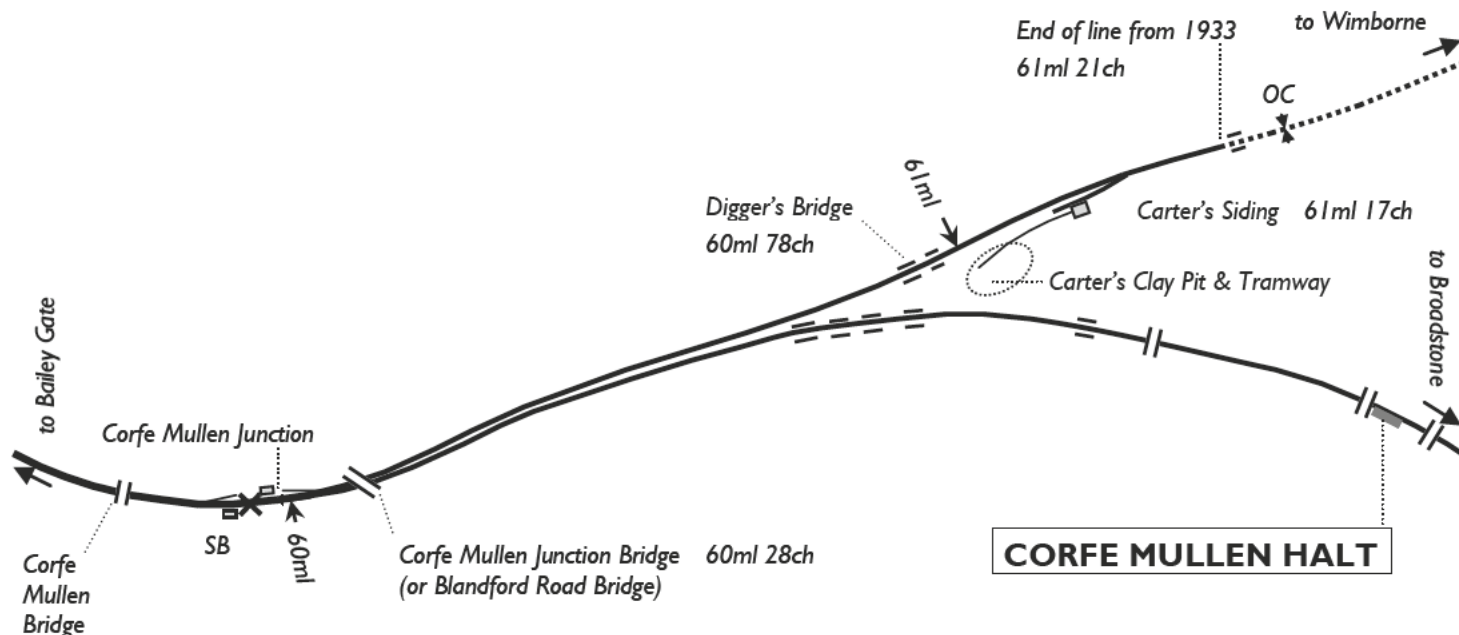
lead facing Wimborne and could only be accessed by reversing into it from the headshunt beyond.

Primary sources

While researching my series on the S&D at Wimborne for this journal (published in T32–T34), I became intrigued by how trains worked in and out of Carter's Siding. My speculation had raised several queries about the operational logistics and a number of matching hypotheses. Without sight of the working timetable instructions or hearing the personal recollections of those who worked the trip, I lacked sufficient evidence to crack my conundrum. I had assumed (correctly, as it turns out) that full wagons were taken out of the siding after empties were returned, but as there was never any passing loop on the running

line here, this conjured up complex shunting manoeuvres that didn't seem feasible. I then wondered if full and empty wagons were moved in separate trips, but this seemed operationally inefficient.

In his book *Mendips Engineman* (OPC 1972, pp.12–13), Peter Smith mentioned working the siding with the 6.35 a.m. Evercreech Junction-Poole Down goods, without describing the exact shunting movements. Aubrey Punter recalled working the same train and calling at Carter's Siding if necessary, after completing shunting at Bailey Gate about late morning. Further discussions with Peter, Keith Barrett and Owen Fripp, finally provided what should be the definitive answer. This proved to be a reminder, if needed, that it's best to go to the primary sources wherever possible!



Step by step

The working permutations I imagined seemed wonderfully over-the-top for the limited traffic offering from the siding in its last days, and my attempted amateur deductions were duly over-ridden by getting the definitive procedure from Peter Smith.

Peter states that Carter's Siding was always worked by a Down freight and this was noted in the S&D Appendix. He confirmed that the train was always the 6.35 a.m. from Evercreech Junction – the one that normally conveyed a Brake Van at each end. He recalls that he always took two empties in and two full wagons out, generally about twice a week in the following stages.

1. The train moved across Corfe Mullen Junction and ran forward onto the truncated Wimborne line far enough to clear the dummy that protected the exit.
2. The guard set the brake in the rear Brake Van and unhooked the inbound empties plus front Brake Van from the remainder of the train.
3. The loco took these forward about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to just beyond the Carter's trailing point.
4. The guard set the road (by this time there was just a lever on the point, not a ground frame) and the loco backed the empties into the siding. (Author's note: beside the gate across the siding was a red wooden board with white lettering stating: "ENGINES MUST NOT PASS THIS NOTICE BOARD".)
5. The guard hooked the empties onto the outbound loadeds and the ensemble moved forwards out to the branch.
6. This was set back towards Corfe Mullen until beyond the point and the Guard unhooked the loadeds (after brake setting).



The divergence of the Wimborne line (left) and Broadstone line, looking east from Corfe Mullen Junction Bridge, 24th April 1965. The goods train serving Carter's Siding would have initially pulled up on this section of the Wimborne loop clear of the junction and ground signal, before uncoupling the portion to be shunted to the siding. *Colin Caddy*

7. The empties were taken forward again in advance of the point and the guard set the road for the clay siding.
8. The loco backed the empties into the siding, positioning them against the loading dock as directed by Carter's staff.
9. After unhooking, the loco (now with just the Brake Van) moved back out to the branch, and the guard re-set the road.
10. The loco and Brake Van set back onto the empties, hooked on, then reversed along the line to join the remainder of the train.
11. On arrival, the guard coupled the two loaded wagons of clay and Brake Van to the main train, whereupon the driver sounded a long whistle to alert the Corfe

- Mullen signalman that the train was ready to reverse back onto the main line.
12. If traffic conditions permitted, the signalman pulled off the protecting dummy.
13. The guard would hear the 'clonk', then indicate to the loco crew with a whistle that they had been 'given the road'.
14. The whole train would set back onto the main line beyond the junction signal, ready to continue as normal when the signalman reset the road and pulled off the main line Down Starter.

I suspect that this must be the most unusual working arrangement for a dead-end siding on the S&D or related lines, and is certainly on a par with the Branksome Pottery trip. ▶

Carter's Clay Siding



The lead into Carter's Siding (left) from the erstwhile Wimborne loop, looking south west, 24th April 1965. A former ground frame had been replaced in the 1930s by the single point lever (right foreground). The headshunt continued for about four chains behind the camera. Nature is quickly reclaiming its own. *Colin Caddy*

Back story

To put this in its longer historical context, the S&D had discussed the closure of the Wimborne loop after the end of World War I through the Redhead Commission's report on potential economies on the S&D. The original intention was to close the whole loop to all traffic, including ceasing to carry the clay traffic by rail, and leaving only two sidings accessed from Wimborne Junction (which would cease to be a junction). After Carter's claimed this

would be detrimental to its business, the S&D reneged and initially intended to operate the trips from the Wimborne end. This seems contrary to the whole point of economising, as the length of remaining track would be much longer than leaving a stub from the Corfe Mullen end. In the end, the latter solution was agreed.

Passenger services are officially recorded as ending on 11th July 1920, although published timetables suggest that a basic service continued until October 1922. Goods services continued

until 1932, dwindling to the point of mainly comprising the milk traffic from Bailey Gate headed for London via Wimborne yard. Henceforth, the milk traffic travelled via Templecombe, and the only revenue-earning traffic on the stub of the Wimborne loop was then the clay traffic. The stub thereafter accommodated stored wagons on occasions up until 1965 and then slipped into disuse, becoming overgrown and eventually being lifted in Summer 1968.

And now . . .

In 2013, the trackbed of the stub can be followed closely on foot from Corfe Mullen Crossing as far as Digger's Bridge, where only the western abutment wall remains. A short section of embankment survives beyond that, but the site of Carter's Siding and the rest of the stub end have been absorbed into a camping site. The transshipment shed on the loading dock disappeared in the early 1970s. The clay pit itself was occupied until recently by a metal recycling firm, Simms, but is now closed.

Sadly, I know of no photographs of a train working the clay trip up the spur from the junction or shunting the siding. I would love to discover that one exists out there somewhere! For now I have to be content with Colin Caddy's 1960s images taken "after the horse had bolted". ●



The stub end of the erstwhile Wimborne loop, looking north on 17th April 1949. This formed the headshunt for working Carter's Siding. The loop had been cut back to the buffer stop (61ml 21ch from Bath Junction) in 1933. *Unknown; courtesy R. K. Blencowe Collection, ref 19963.*