

Canford Manor's "splendid archway under the South-Western Railway", ca 1844–55[‡]

Colin Divall

A commemorative plaque, the remnants of an embankment, plus a few lengths of point rodding and signal wire are all that is left of the station in Wimborne Minster, a pleasant market town on the River Stour in east Dorset. But walk down Station Road a couple of hundred yards to what was once the Poole turnpike, cross the river on the early-nineteenth-century Canford Bridge, and in a short while you will come to a striking lodge guarding the entrance to a track heading east, once a private carriage drive to Canford Manor, a mile away. The Manor is now a private school but the drive is part of the Castleman Trailway, named after the local solicitor who promoted Dorset's first main line, the Southampton and Dorchester Railway. So we can continue along the quiet, tree-lined track for another couple of hundred yards until we meet an extraordinary arch, prosaically known to the railway authorities as Bridge 77, now popularly called the Lady Wimborne (or Lady Wimborne's) Bridge.



Fig. 1 Bridge 77 (2010). Photo: C. Divall.

In engineering terms neither the bridge's span of 17 feet 6 inches nor the headway of 19 feet is particularly impressive. Architecturally though matters are very different. Gordon Biddle describes it as "a remarkable bridge... which for decorative effect at the behest of a landowner is equalled only by the Lichfield Drive bridge at Shugborough".¹ Historic England's official entry (the bridge was listed in 1991, fourteen years after the railway's complete closure) spells out the detail:

Four-centre double-wave moulded arch to each side of bridge has spandrels carved with scrolls, foliage and coat of arms surrounded by a splayed reveal and

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surmounted by a corbel table with five corbels carved with shields on foliage; splayed coping above surmounted by stone coat of arms and capped by double-ogee moulded coping. Each end of the bridge parapet terminated by carved pinnacles. Flanking abutments terminate with carved stone coats of arms on galleted piers.²



Fig. 2 Details of Bridge 77 (2016-18). Photos: C. Divall.

The heraldry is that of the Dowlais ironmaster Sir (Josiah) John Guest, who bought Canford Manor in 1846, when the railway was still being built, and, along with his extraordinary wife Charlotte, had it remodelled in 1848-51 by Charles (from 1852, Sir Charles) Barry, architect of the Houses of Parliament. Barry also designed the bridge, to look something like the triumphal arches which often guarded grand country estates, impressing on visitors and passers-by the owner's wealth and rank.³ The structure certainly commanded attention at the time – one newspaper report in 1856 waxed about “the splendid archway under the South-Western Railway lately erected on the [Canford] estate by Sir Charles Barry.”⁴

At first glance this looks like a straightforward case of the “transformation of Dowlais iron into Dorset aristocracy”,⁵ with the new ‘lord’ of the manor forcing the local railway company to bend to his desire for social grand-standing. Biddle’s use of the term ‘behest’ allows a little wriggle room – a behest might be an earnest request rather than an authoritative order – but he is less circumspect in his most recent book, characterizing the bridge as “[o]ne of the most elaborate examples” of the “special treatment” for which powerful landowners “often bargained” in return for allowing a railway to cross their land. Writing in 1992, Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith were blunter still, seeing Bridge 77 as an instance of landowners’ “outrageous demands regarding the ornamentation of bridges on their estate.”⁶

What is wrong with such accounts? Simply that they lack evidence: decades of comparative obscurity have allowed speculation about the bridge to flourish based upon unacknowledged assumptions and half-truths. After the initial flurry of public interest, Bridge 77 seems to have largely disappeared, metaphorically if not always literally – the bridge's full splendour was seen mostly by Canford's visitors, with perhaps the occasional passenger glimpsing the parapets' ornate pinnacles as their train laboured up the bank from Wimborne. Once Canford School opened in 1923 the carriage drive probably reverted to something like its pre-railway status as a farm track and unofficial footpath; as a local teenage railway enthusiast in the 1970s I was scarcely aware of the bridge, and not at all of its significance. Nor did it register with what we might now call the heritage movement, absent from both the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments' survey of Dorset (1970), which did include entries on both Canford Manor and the Southampton and Dorchester, and the first (1972) edition of Pevsner. While the 2018 edition does list the bridge, there is still a good deal that is troubling about current accounts.⁷

Even the official listing (revised in December 2017) gives pause for thought. The name itself is worrying for a structure dated 1853, since the title Lady Wimborne did not exist until 1880! It is also curious that Sir Joseph [sic] Guest and the Southampton and Dorchester Railway are given as the clients, since the former died in November 1852 and the latter had ceased to exist as a corporate entity in 1848, taken over by the London & South Western. Still these are comparatively trivial issues: it might be that Sir John secured the bridge's construction before his death, while railway historians are well aware that the LSWR and its successors, as well as the Ordnance Survey, continued to refer to the 'Southampton and Dorchester' well into the last century. But any suggestion that Guest *forced* the LSWR to build the bridge simply lacks evidence. To be clear, I am not saying that Canford's owners put no pressure on the railway company. As Philip Brown has pointed out, the bridge was mixed up with the tortured story of how best to maintain access from the house to the Wimborne to Poole turnpike, resulting in a level crossing a few hundred yards south of the later carriage drive, at Oakley. The gatekeeper's lodge there was architecturally a cut above the rather mean design usually found elsewhere, and was clearly a sop to the manor.⁸ But while Bridge 77 undoubtedly symbolized the Guests' enormous wealth, its story is a good deal more nuanced than a simple tale of would-be aristocrats overcoming the railways' corporate might. Indeed, without spoiling the ending too much, I suggest the bridge was a consolation prize, the resolution of an almost decade-long struggle to connect the house with that most modern form of transport, the railway.

A bridge for an aristocrat

The story starts before the Guests' arrival in Dorset, around 1844 when Charles Castleman started promoting the idea of a railway connecting with the LSWR at Southampton. The scheme needed the support of prominent local landowners, among

whom was William Ponsonby, owner by marriage since 1814 of the large Canford estate, through which the railway would partly run.

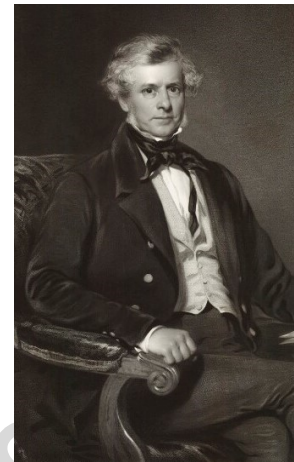
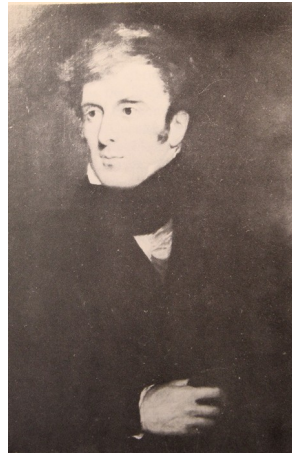


Fig. 3 Key players: Charles Castleman, William Ponsonby, William Chaplin.
Castleman image: Courtesy of B. Garnsworthy.

A Whig politician, he has been elevated to the Lords in 1838 as the first Baron De Mauley. However Ponsonby was not among the brighter minds of his generation; nor was he noted for personal diplomacy – shortcomings which soon became obvious when in July 1845 he was elected chairman of the newly formed Southampton and Dorchester Railway's board. Apart from Ponsonby there were seven local directors, plus four nominees from the LSWR, the line's main financial backers, including William Chaplin, the LSWR's chairman and a very significant investor in his own right.⁹

The Southampton and Dorchester's act authorized the level crossing mentioned above, with the parish road between the house and the turnpike.¹⁰ However Ponsonby was not happy, presumably because the crossing gates would normally have been across the road and therefore represented an impediment – surely more symbolic than practical – to him and his visitors. Indeed, despite being a promoter he had threatened in the spring of 1845 to object to the Southampton and Dorchester's bill in the Lords, securing from his fellow investors a promise that the level crossing would be replaced by a bridge (probably under the railway) at the same location. In August the board instructed their engineer (Captain William Scarth Moorsom) to build the bridge “notwithstanding the additional expense” of around £1650.¹¹ Round one to the aristocracy, even though it was fighting itself wearing a different hat.

Moving the station

Ponsonby must quickly have calculated he could do even better, because by early November 1845 the board (which he still chaired) had, with the LSWR's acquiescence, agreed to move the site of Wimborne station from immediately north of the River Stour to a spot adjacent to the Oakley crossing, about a mile from the house. Under the circumstances Ponsonby agreed the bridge could be abandoned, “the objection to a level

crossing being obviated by the nearness of the station".¹² In short, the Canford estate stood to gain a very handy facility – but not one so close to the house as to be a nuisance.

Not surprisingly, the decision caused uproar in and around Wimborne: the original site, while a good three-quarters of a mile from the town centre, did not require wagons or travellers to labour nearly another half a mile, up the fairly stiff climb to Oakley; it was also better located for the turnpikes serving the hinterland. Opposition was swift, with a Mr Fryer – probably Frederick William Fryer, a local landowner and business man well-connected to Castleman¹³ – organizing in quick succession a public meeting, a deputation to the board, and – when it refused to back down – letters to both sets of directors: all initially to no avail. But by late December the LSWR was having second thoughts, sending a representative to Wimborne to meet the protestors and then, in a now-lost letter from Chaplin, apparently accusing Ponsonby of acting purely in his own interest. Stung, Ponsonby rejected the charge in the press, although his attempted rebuttal fell on deaf ears locally. In April 1846, with the Southampton and Dorchester's board still apparently unrepentant, the newly published *Poole and Dorsetshire Herald's* Wimborne correspondent – very likely Fryer – was still condemning the "private interests" working to usurp "public benefit".¹⁴

Why did the two boards of directors initially think the move a good idea, particularly since the uproar in Wimborne could hardly have come as a surprise?¹⁵ Economy was a factor, although probably something of an afterthought. The new site (from 1860, the junction with the Dorset Central, later the Somerset and Dorset Railway) did not require the original location's heavy earthworks; Peto, the contractor, was offered half the saving. Abandoning the bridge would also save money, although perhaps as little as £300 if dedicated gatekeepers and their accommodation were still needed. We can only speculate what other considerations were at play. Perhaps Ponsonby's fellow landowners were willing to play along in case they too wished to modify the parliamentary plans to their personal advantage. And perhaps the LSWR – whose nominees were largely absent from the Southampton and Dorchester board's discussions – really had thought at first that the local directors were best placed to decide on the station site, as Ponsonby claimed in his letter to the papers.

The wider politics of the railway mania very likely also played a part. The Southampton and Dorchester's close association with the LSWR had briefly foundered in the autumn of 1844 in favour of the Great Western, and had only been secured in January 1845 through the Board of Trade's intervention. By October 1845 the relationship was again heading for trouble as the LSWR considered promoting a line west of Salisbury in competition with the GWR, contrary to what the Southampton and Dorchester considered to be a cast-iron agreement. Ill-feeling between the two boards, and between Ponsonby and Chaplin, grew throughout the autumn and into the winter, until on 28 February 1846 the LSWR took control of the Southampton and Dorchester's board; Guest was elected for the LSWR, with Ponsonby, still in the chair, remaining as one of just four local directors.¹⁶

It is plausible that in the early stages of this dispute, around November, the LSWR board was either too wrapped up in its wider battles to care one way or the other about the station, or more positively that Chaplin saw a tactical advantage in acceding to Ponsonby's wishes, as a way of currying favour in what must have been a tense, but not yet irredeemable, situation.

Whatever the truth, early in 1846 the Southampton and Dorchester's original board started to have second thoughts. It is even possible that Ponsonby was losing interest – he had been thinking for some time about selling the Canford estate, and by September 1845 it was on the market. He was not going to benefit personally from the station moving, and perhaps his motivation had always been to make the estate more attractive to potential buyers. The Guests' early, keen interest – they had viewed the land in April 1845, first visited the house the following January and took possession on 12 March 1846 – reduced the pressure on Ponsonby to follow through.¹⁷ In any case, by the end of January 1846 no station buildings had been erected, and despite pressure from Moorsom, in the middle of February the remaining directors, reluctant to make a decision without Ponsonby or the LSWR's nominees present, delayed work for a fortnight. Matters were clearly in flux. A week later, days before the LSWR's takeover, the board gathered at Nine Elms, at the heart of the LSWR's territory, this time with both Ponsonby and Chaplin attending: it instructed Moorsom and Joseph Locke, the LSWR's engineer, to “immediately meet and decide on the spot for the Wimborne Station”.¹⁸



Fig. 4 Sir John and Lady Charlotte Guest.

Thereafter, and with the LSWR fully in charge, matters might have been expected to move swiftly, and indeed on 14 March, just two days after Charlotte Guest had moved into Canford, the new board chased Moorsom for his and Locke's recommendation. But it apparently took Moorsom until early May to submit a proposal to the board, although we cannot be sure as the minute book is incomplete. If there was any discussion it was all in secret, as in late April the *Poole and Dorsetshire Herald* was complaining about the lack of news.¹⁹ The fresh delay – if delay it was – was probably due to thoughts about promoting a branch from Wimborne, initially to Blandford some ten miles to the north west. Understandably the board wanted a single station to serve both the town and the junction, and once it had definitely decided this on 21 May the pace quickened

considerably: within a fortnight the station site was once again north of the Stour, with the proposed branch curving away immediately to the south of the viaduct over the river.²⁰

There is no reason to think this decision was driven by anything other than commercial, operational and engineering factors. Unfortunately Moorsom's report is missing, but of the three sites he suggested it seems highly likely that at least one would have been south of the river, at Oakley. But given the engineering constraints on any railway approaching Wimborne along the valley from the north west, it must have been readily apparent that a station at the tightly curved junction would have been difficult to operate. Moreover there is no evidence that Guest was opposed to the station's original site. Indeed given that his move to Canford was partly motivated by the railway's imminent arrival, it is just possible that he was keen to see the Blandford line built as a first step in improving connections with his business in South Wales – although against this, at this point Guest was expecting to lose the Dowlais lease and, being in poor health, retire to Dorset.²¹

One level crossing, several bridges

Guest's acquiescence over the station did not mean he was much happier than Ponsonby about the level crossing at Oakley. With the line's construction well under way, the board was keen to resolve the matter. Between early August and late October 1846 it entered into an increasingly fractious correspondence with Guest (who was, of course, still a director, although during these weeks rarely attending) about whether he would accept the level crossing plus other railway facilities for the estate in lieu of the bridge, which the board still felt bound to provide.

The company was not trying to save money, but Guest could not make up his mind; although we might allow him some latitude given his illness and the tortuous negotiations over the Dowlais plant. Indeed so debilitating was Guest's condition that it is quite possible that while he remained the Canford estate's public face it was Charlotte, his wife, who doing most of the thinking about access.²² In any case, at first Guest seemed amenable to the board's suggestion, and on 24 September the board agreed to spend the £300 difference between its estimates for the bridge and crossing on "the erection of an arch as desired by Sir John Guest's letter", with any balance going on private sidings at Oakley.²³ The precise nature of this arch (which was not a replacement for the crossing) has puzzled historians, and we shall return to it shortly. Understandably – not least because the contractor, Peto, was chasing a bonus for timely completion – the board's offer was conditional on there being no further delay. However a fortnight later the board considered a letter from Guest rejecting the deal. Guest was present at this poorly attended meeting (Ponsonby was in the chair), and we can only imagine the irritation that his fellow directors felt at this about-turn. They nonetheless agreed to honour the promise made to Ponsonby but replacing, at Guest's request, the proposed (under)bridge with an overbridge located some yards south.²⁴ This offer was not only conditional on no

further delay but also on Guest agreeing to buy the gatekeeper's lodge, which presumably had already been built. However Guest was not ready to start on the works needed on his estate to make use of the overbridge, and on 22 October the board warned him that their continued agreement was subject to there being no interference with Peto's engineering trains, nor any delay to the line's opening. The work never took place, although as we shall see planning for it continued into 1847. When the railway opened in June that year, the parish road crossed the railway on the level, probably guarded by the aesthetically rather superior lodge that survived until closure to passenger trains.



Fig. 5 Gatekeeper's lodge, Oakley Crossing, in the C20th.
Photo: Courtesy of Priest's House Museum Collections Trust

An "Arch"

What has all this to do with Bridge 77? The 1844 deposited sections show a bridge over the track or "Private Foot Path" that eventually became the carriage drive. Unfortunately we do not know when the track was upgraded, but it seems highly unlikely, given Guest's continued interest in a bridge at Oakley, that it was before the line opened. Moreover, as Philip Brown has argued, given an approximate date of 1853–55 for the surviving Bridge 77, its predecessor was probably a simple timber span, like most of the line's underbridges. But this still leaves open the possibility that in August 1846 the Guests were thinking about making a private carriage drive, with the proposed "arch" standing as a grand prelude to the estate. We shall probably never know for sure unless evidence survives in the estate papers, most of which are inaccessible.

However two factors count against this interpretation, although admittedly neither is decisive. First, if the arch was intended as a replacement for a more utilitarian underbridge it was odd for the board to specify, as it did, that its engineer should supervise construction. For who else could have been responsible for a railway structure? Perhaps the board was adopting a belt and braces approach: although Barry had not yet been appointed, any hint of an architect's involvement (Thomas Hopper was briefly the Guests' choice prior to Barry) might well have encouraged a pre-emptive move, emphasizing the company's authority and thus preventing delay.²⁵ Nevertheless we

ought to entertain the possibility that the board's proviso reflected circumstances where their engineer's remit would not have been so clear – I shall shortly suggest what this might have been.

Secondly, the junction with the Blandford line would have made it very difficult – if not impossible – to build a single archway over a carriage drive. Indeed the deposited sections of November 1846 show that the intention was to take the branch over what was now described as an 'Occupation Road' with a bridge some yards west of the one on the main line. This *might* have been avoided but only by moving the junction south and making the diverging curve even tighter than the already severe 12½ chains proposed; otherwise the line would have gone outside the parliamentary limit of deviation.²⁶ Would Guest have been aware of these constraints as he was considering his options that summer? Possibly. The board did not order Moorsom to prepare the parliamentary survey for the Blandford branch until 24 September 1846, when Guest was not present. On the other hand the broad details of the plan would have emerged over the summer, once the board had agreed in June to adopt Moorsom's recommendations about the junction; Guest, as an affected landowner as well as board member, must have been aware of what was being proposed.²⁷ Given all this, it is hard – but not impossible – to believe that the repeated reference in the minutes of 24 September to "an" arch – in the singular – can have referred to the kind of elegant structure that was eventually built. The best that I can envisage is something more like a short tunnel, or two bridges in quick succession: neither of these arrangements would have been easy to treat architecturally as a grand entrance to a country estate. Nevertheless, we must allow the possibility that Guest *did* have a single arch over a new carriage drive in mind over the summer, and then changed his mind when he realized the practicalities.

There is yet another possibility, which becomes more plausible once we free ourselves from the understandable tendency to interpret the 1846 correspondence in the light of what happened in the 1850s: that the "arch" was just that – not a bridge but a ceremonial archway constructed over the parish road at Oakley to mark the approach to the house. As I have already argued, it was quite likely that the gatekeeper's lodge had been built by October, and even if it was still under construction in the summer, its position immediately adjacent to the level-crossing gates could easily have fired in Guest's imagination (or that of Charlotte) the prospect of combining the three elements – arch, lodge and gates – into an ensemble rather like the main entrance to the house, further east, that *was* built around 1850. Although this is all speculation, it is consistent with the board's insistence that its engineer supervise the arch's construction, even though it would not have been, strictly speaking, a railway structure. It also fits with the budget of £300 or less, which seems optimistic for a functional bridge but perhaps more realistic for a lighter, purely decorative structure.

Finally, the suggestion that the arch was part of a plan to improve the entrance to the estate at Oakley is consistent with Guest's actions over that autumn and winter. As we

have seen, the arch and level crossing were quickly abandoned in favour of a repositioned bridge. This in turn was a key part of Guest's plan to close several parish roads on the estate, including that from the turnpike towards Canford village and the manor. They were to be replaced by new roads, built at Guest's expense, slightly shorter than the originals and using the new bridge to rejoin the turnpike a little south of the existing junction. Although Guest only gave formal notice to the parish's highway surveyors in January 1847, it is clear independently of his correspondence with the board that he was thinking about the practical details no later than the previous October. This strongly suggests that this new scheme was a refinement of the one involving the arch. Although the surviving papers do not give a complete picture, the public benefit from the new roads was rather slight.²⁸ But the scheme's rationale – and Guest's outlay – are readily understood when we note that closing the road towards the manor would have allowed Guest to convert it into a private drive to a point very near the new overbridge. This, I suggest, was intended to be the manor's access to Wimborne station.

Later developments

The LSWR, which operated the Southampton and Dorchester from the start and absorbed it in July 1848, wished to replace as many level crossings as possible with bridges. While this accorded with the Guests' desire to improve access to the station, the arrangements at Oakley were never altered, initially no doubt because of the lack of money after the collapse of the mania.

It is not known when Guest abandoned his plan for new roads and a bridge. It is possible, probable even, that this was the scheme referred by the LSWR's Ways and Works Committee in December 1849 when it refused to fund a bridge on the estate, on the grounds that the railway had already spent £406 on "the lodge".²⁹ The latter could only have been the one at Oakley, although the cost had gone up by some 170 per cent since the 1846 estimate; the design had probably been enhanced, perhaps after the line opened. While the close connection between this lodge and the overbridge persuades me that Guest's plan of 1846–47 was still alive in 1849, it is of course possible that by the latter date he was angling for a replacement for the timber bridge over a prospective carriage drive. However this does not seem so likely, given the immediately subsequent history of the manor's entrance lodges. The grandest (designed by Barry, and mentioned above) went up around 1850, north-west of the house; this served the parish road I have suggested Guest had in mind to convert to a private drive. It also gave access to the occupation road: however if this had already been converted into a carriage drive it is odd that Wimborne Lodge, guarding the junction at the far end with the turnpike, was not built until around 1853, contemporaneously with the new Bridge 77.³⁰ While we cannot rule out the possibility that the carriage drive was being planned in 1849 and then built in stages, it seems more likely that it conceived – or at least more enthusiastically pursued – by Charlotte Guest after her husband's death in November 1852.



Fig. 6 The north-western lodge, Canford Manor, ca 1910.



Fig. 7. Wimborne Lodge (2016). Photo: C. Divall.

Although we are on firmer ground with the surviving Bridge 77 there are still discrepancies between some modern accounts and the primary sources. In the first place it was probably not built until 1854 or even early 1855, given that the LSWR did not pay its contractor, Thomas Brassey, for the work until March 1855.³¹ Moreover the drawing in the RIBA collection, dated 13 May 1853, to which the official listing and Gordon Biddle refer, differs in numerous details from the bridge as built, almost certainly to save money.³² There is even a lack of clarity over the attribution: contrary to today's authorities, the drawing is not signed, and the most recent edition of Pevsner (perhaps taking its lead from the original listing) credits the design to the partnership between Barry's son, Charles (1823–1900) and Robert Banks. This is highly unlikely: Charlotte Guest continued to work with the senior Barry after her husband's death, while as we have seen contemporary newspapers were unequivocal in naming Sir Charles as the designer.³³

Far more significantly, Charlotte Guest had agreed to refund the LSWR the money it had paid Brassey. The sum involved, £450, seems on the low side for such an ornate

structure: a utilitarian design for a nearby cast-iron and masonry, single-track underbridge of comparable dimensions was estimated in 1846 to cost virtually as much, although prices had probably edged down a little a decade later.³⁴ It is therefore likely that the intricately carved stonework was ordered and paid for separately by the estate, with Brassey's charges covering construction of the basic, double-track brick arch plus placement of the ornamentation. In any case, the LSWR must have been delighted for it was under a statutory obligation eventually to double the line: this was one fewer bridge it had to rebuild when this happened, in 1863. In any case, once built, the arch quickly gained legal protection. The Dorset Central Railway Act, 1856, prohibited that company from any interference with the "new Bridge", carriageway or any ancillary works without the permission of Canford Manor's owners.³⁵

Landowners, railways and "the splendid archway"

To state the obvious, this story of Bridge 77 involves much speculation. But even if we cannot be sure of all the detail, what happened over the decade from 1844 shows that Canford's aristocratic owners did not always get their way. In the final reckoning the railway companies probably spent little more on accommodating the Canford estate than that needed to meet statutory responsibilities. As the level crossing at Oakley was public, by law it had to be staffed although there was no general obligation until 1863 to provide gatekeepers with shelter. However the Southampton and Dorchester did build lodges at most public crossings, and would almost certainly have done so at Oakley whatever the wider circumstances. Yes, the lodge was aesthetically a cut above the ordinary, but the difference between the 1846 estimate and what the LSWR said it had spent three years later was only £259: even at 1840s prices, not a huge sum to have bought off a very wealthy landowner, especially when that individual was a director. Of course in the long-term the LSWR would almost certainly have been better off if it had bridged the line, but this was hardly the most egregious instance of Victorian railway investment failing to deliver an optimal outcome.

And the Guests? They eventually got a bridge befitting their wealth – but they paid for it! It was presumably a price the family thought worthwhile, part of the "sound social investment" marking their elevation into the aristocracy.³⁶ Sir John might well have balked at the final cost: he was deeply unhappy about the £30 000 his wife had spent by 1851 on remodelling the house, which is perhaps part of the reason why nothing was done about the bridge in his lifetime. Nor did Charlotte stay at Canford long enough to get much direct benefit; she left in September 1856, very shortly after her eldest son, Ivor Bertie, assumed ownership upon reaching his majority. Socially and politically ambitious, he became Baron Wimborne in 1880 on the recommendation of Disraeli, an early suitor of Charlotte's, with Ivor's wife, Cornelia Churchill, becoming the first Lady Wimborne. In the following decades countless personages must have enjoyed the convenience of being whisked along the carriage drive on their way to or from the railway station: it is easy to

imagine that the impressive bridge through which they passed might have become known as 'Lady Wimborne's' well before 1914, when Ivor died and the motor car was starting to replace not only the horse and carriage but also the train. But lacking any firm evidence for such historical usage, 'Lady Guest's' would seem a more appropriate name for Bridge 77, acknowledging the true progenitor of the LSWR's "splendid archway".

Acknowledgement

Although much remains obscure about Bridge 77, my story would be much poorer without help from: Philip Brown, Barbara Garnsworthy, Karen Hunt, Tom Maude, Chris Osment, Cleaves Palmer, Peter Russell and Richard Sims; Jenny Barnard, Sam Johnston and the other staff at the Dorset History Centre.

eastdorsetrailways.org

- 1 Gordon Biddle, *Britain's Historic Railway Buildings* (Ian Allan, 2nd edn 2011), pp.200–201.
- 2 'Lady Wimborne's Bridge'. historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1266681, accessed 19 Oct. 2018.
- 3 Tim Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *Trumpet at a Distant Gate* (Waterstone, 1985).
- 4 *Salisbury & Wiltshire Journal*, 6 Sept. 1856. See also *ibid.*, 3 Nov. 1860.
- 5 F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1963), p34, 40–41, 238–268, quote at p.40.
- 6 Gordon Biddle, *Railways in the Landscape* (Pen & Sword Transport, 2016), pp.24–26; Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith, *Branch Lines around Wimborne* (Middleton Press, 1992), photo 106, caption.
- 7 Royal Commission on Historic Buildings (England), *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset Vol. 2 South-East, Pt 2* (HMSO, 1970), pp.209–212, 416–417; John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Dorset* (Penguin, 1972), p126–129; and, with Michael Hill, 2nd edn (Yale University Press, 2018), p.178.
- 8 Philip A. Brown, *Many and Great Inconveniences* (South Western Circle, 2003), pp.21–22. See also his 'Many and Great Inconveniences – a Postscript (Part 1)', *The South Western Circular* Vol. 13, Oct. 2005, pp.254–256.
- 9 John G. Cox, *Castleman's Corkscrew* (City of Southampton, 2nd edn, 1985), pp.1–3, 8, 13; Southampton & Dorchester Railway Act, 8 & 9 Vic cap. 93. (21 Jul. 1845), cl. 11.
- 10 Plans and Book of Reference Southampton and Dorchester Railway (Nov. 1844), Dorset History Centre [DHC] Q/D/P(M)/R3/9; Southampton & Dorchester Railway Act, cl. 45.
- 11 Minutes of the Southampton and Dorchester Railway Company (1844–48) [hereafter MinSDR], 2 Aug. 1845, Southampton City Archives D/Z 416. It is not certain that the original intention was to take the railway over the parish road, but this seems the more likely option given the local geography and the description in the minutes of 8 Oct. 1846 to "the Bridge ... across the road". It should be remembered however that it was not uncommon in the 1840s for railways to be called [rail]roads, so the opposite interpretation cannot be ruled out.
- 12 MinSDR, 6 Nov. 1845.
- 13 booty.org.uk/booty.weather/musings/Fryer_family.htm, accessed 29 Oct. 2018.
- 14 MinSDR, 20 Nov. 1845, 4 Dec. 1845, 18 Feb. 1846; *Hampshire Advertiser* 17 Jan. 1846; *Poole and Dorsetshire Herald* [hereafter *P&DH*], 23 Apr. 1846. 'F.W.F' was identified as a "frequent correspondent" from Wimborne in the edition of 4 Mar. 1847.
- 15 Others have noted the proposed move but have missed the LSWR's initial support. Cox, *Corkscrew*, pp.29, 38–39; B. L. Jackson, *Castleman's Corkscrew including the Railways of Bournemouth & Associated Lines* Vol.1 (Oakwood Press, 2007), p.45.
- 16 R. A. Williams, *The London & South Western Railway* Vol. 1 (David & Charles, 1968), pp.57–60, 67–69; Cox, *Corkscrew*, pp.14–16.
- 17 Thompson, *Landed Society*, pp.40–42; Edgar Jones, *A History of GKN* vol. 1 (Macmillan, 1987), p112; Revel Guest and Angela V. John, *Lady Charlotte* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), pp.143–145. The sale was not completed until Oct. 1846 owing to legal complications.

- 18 MinSDR, 25 Feb. 1846.
- 19 *P&DH*, 23 Apr. 1846. It seems quite likely that Castleman, as the Southampton and Dorchester's secretary, would have let Fryer know in confidence what was happening.
- 20 MinSDR, 21 May 1846, 4 Jun. 1846; Williams, *LSWR*, pp.64–65; Cox, *Corkscrew*, p.32.
- 21 Revel and John, *Lady Charlotte*, pp.132–133, 137–138, 143; Jones, *GKN*, pp.112–114. The Guests' eldest son later backed the Dorset Central Railway for this reason.
- 22 Jones, *GKN*, pp.110–114; Revel and John, *Lady Charlotte*, pp.120–140.
- 23 MinSDR, 24 Sep. 1846.
- 24 MinSDR, 8 Oct. 1846.
- 25 Revel and John, *Lady Charlotte*, p.146. I owe this point to Philip Brown.
- 26 Plans and Books of Reference, Southampton & Dorchester (Blandford Branch) (Nov. 1846), DHC Q/D/P(M)/R/3/32.
- 27 MinSDR, 24 Sep. 1846. It is impossible to say whether Guest was at the board meeting on 4 Jun. 1846, but he did attend the following meeting when the minutes were approved. He was also present at five of the nine subsequent meetings, including that when his letter rejecting the arch was read.
- 28 'Notice to Churchwardens, Parish of Great Canford, Dorset' (Jan. 1847), DHC D-WIM/JO-1449A; Letter, Edward Castleman to Sir John Guest (26 Oct. 1846), DHC D-WIM/JO-1319; 'Plan and particulars of the proposed alterations to the roads by Sir J.J. Guest, Bart' [ca Jan. 1847], DHC D-WIM/JO-144B.
- 29 Quoted in Brown, *Inconveniences*, p.22.
- 30 RCHM, *Dorset*, p.212; Hill et al, *Dorset*, p.178. Another lodge, built to the south of the manor in 1850, had nothing to do with access to the station.
- 31 LSWR Accounts Journal (21 Mar. 1855), TNA RAIL 411/566; Brown, *Inconveniences*, p.22; 'Postscript', p.254.
- 32 'Canford Manor, Dorset: Working drawings and sketches ca 1851–54', Sir Charles Barry collection, RIBA SA76/2, drawing 29. The drawing is stamped 'Improved' by the engravers and printers Waterlow & Sons, although whether this meant it had been superseded or was itself a development of an earlier design is not known.
- 33 Biddle, *Railway Buildings*, pp.200–201; Hill et al, *Dorset*, p.178; Revel and John, *Lady Charlotte*, p.147. Until amended in 2017 the official listing also attributed the son.
- 34 Brown, 'Postscript', p.254; Plans, sections and elevations of Turnpike Road bridge, No 11, Wimborne Minster (14 Feb. 1846), DHC D-611/5. As Brown suggests, parts of the original bridge might survive entombed in the later structure.
- 35 Dorset Central Railway Act, 1856, sections 19, 23. The Dorset Central Railway Act, 1857, section 56, repeated the injunction.
- 36 Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p.40.