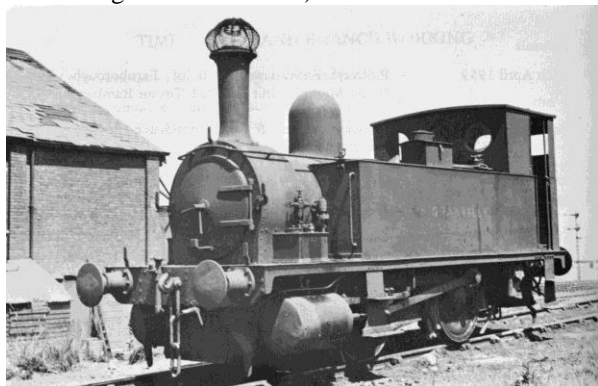


Cattewater Branch

Heritage Group member Arthur Westington worked for the Southern railway from 1944 as a cleaner/fireman becoming a driver in 1960. Arthur recalls his time working the Cattewater and Turnchapple branches.

The Cattewater branch was connected with the Turnchapple branch at Cattewater junction. This was worked as a shunting yard with one or more engines permitted at any one time. Engines had to move cautiously and at low speed owing to the curvature of the line and the several level crossings that must be clear before moving on.

My first firing turn on the Cattewater branch was June 1944, my last was as a driver in 1990. Traffic ceased on the branch in 2009, the rails soon became rusted and were lifted the following year. The engines that used to work the branch were the 'Bugs', ex LSWR B4 class 0-4-0 tanks designed Adams in 1891 and built at Nine Elms at a cost of £1,500 each. The first three came to Friary new the regular allocation was 30084, 30091, 30094, 30102. Ten of the class had names owing to their association with Southampton docks (the only LSWR engines to be named).



Class B4 Granville at Friary circa 1949 later 30102

The only brake was a hand brake worked by the fireman; this was fitted with ball bearings for quicker application (on and off). After a month on the Cattewater link 'pumping iron' there was no need to visit the gym.



One of Arthur's locos in May 1952 at Friary, the loco was built in 1894

Coal was carried in the form of a wall on the footplate, the locos also sported lobster pot baskets attached to

the chimney to act as spark arresters because the locos worked in fuel depots and Bayly's Timber Yard, Orteston. Bayly's had the contract to supply sleepers to the GWR for track renewing west of Newton Abbot

Loads

Friary to Cattewater	60 wagons
Cattewater to Friary	30 wagons
Friary to Laira	30 wagons
Laira to Friary	30 wagons

Sidings and Crossings

Prince Rock crossing - was protected by gates across the 4' 6" Lee Moor Tramway where clay wagons were pulled by horses.

Plymouth Corporation Siding – used during the war to load 'Mayflower Pie'. Potato peelings and other vegetable matter collected from households, hotels and restaurants, this was boiled and sold for pig food.

Electric works open crossing and points to the long siding.

Shell Petroleum and Lomas Gelatine Works – Shell and also Esso loaded rail cars to supply petrol all over Devon and Cornwall.

Lomas Bone Works Siding – you could smell this siding a long time before arriving. Wagons would come by train from meat processers all over the West Country to be unloaded, you can imagine with all the flies in hot weather the maggots on the sleepers were a living mass. Because of the rats that were attracted to the siding the crew of the first train in the morning had the job of going round the five sets of points and flushing them out from under the step boards with boiling water from the injectors so the shunter could hit them with his pole.

"Moppo" was the nickname of a shunter based at Friary and known as a character with an evil sense of humour which often got him into trouble. When Princess Margaret was visiting Plymouth and the Royal Train was stabled at Friary Moppo put the Cattewater goods with two wagons of bones in the next road. The phones were soon red hot, Chief Inspector Paye was not amused.

Passage House Crossing or Maxwell Road – One of the busiest and east located at the end of Cattedown Wharves.

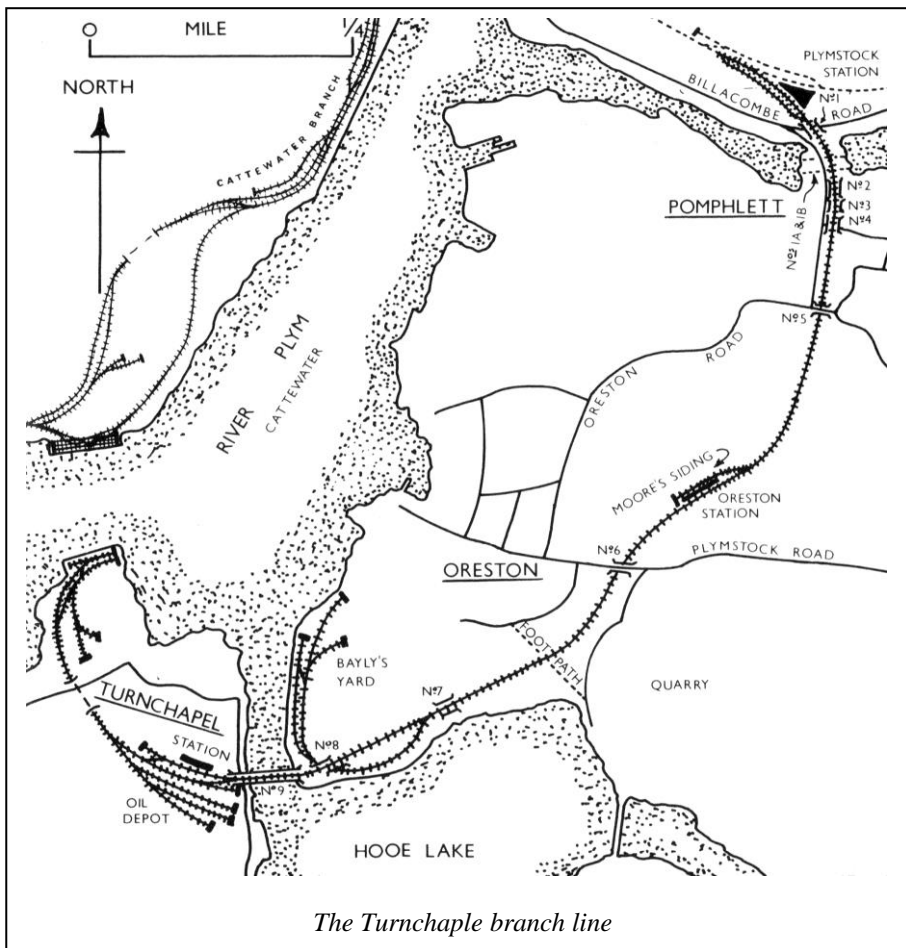
Blight and Whites Engineering

Cattedown Tunnel – the only engines allowed through the tunnel were the B4 class, others were only allowed over the Long Siding points. 02s would creep as far as the water column.

Bogie Bolsters were not to be coupled to another vehicle owing to the curve.

Sidings

Bernards	12 wagons
Bank	6 wagons
Cattedown Bank	6 wagons



empties were taken out of the west end of Tar Works Siding boundary gate.

Esso Petroleum Depot – situated in the old FJ Moores quarry and lime kilns, access was through a large hole cut of the rock face and being on a sharp right hand curve shunting had to be carried out with upmost care when coupled to the rail tanks as the shunt was mostly out of sight. When the 350HP diesel shunters were introduced the hole was enlarges by 1ft to comply with their loading gauge.

There were two turns in the Cattedwater link were 9.15am and 1.40pm

Bayly's Timber Yard, Oreston was situated on the single line between Plymstock and Turnchapel. When picking up sleepers for the GWR they used their own wagons called 'crocks', the Southern charged the GWR a cartage fee for towing them between Oreston and Laira Yard. Entry to

During the so called manure season Fisons loaded over 60 wagons a day using these three roads, women were employed to take the bags of manure from the factory to the rail wagons with sack trucks.

A shell siding for incoming loaded tanks of paraffin etc.

On the Cattedown Bank were two ex LSWR grounded luggage vans, one for office staff – an inspector, 2 clerks, porter, 6 shunters and a number taker. The other was used as a staff mess room. BR later built an amenity block on the site of the old Freemasons Public House.

Cattedown Wharf Crossing – used by traffic on and off the docks, mainly manure and timber were loaded. To load timber and manure by rail around 10 wagons at a time were placed on the wharf and taken out loaded via the Passage House end ready for Friary. This saved a lot of shunting as the bay loop could only run around 4 wagons at a time.

By the River Plym, Dead Mans Bay – between Turnchapel and Cattedown, no locos were allowed inside the gates because of tankers discharging Tar Works siding – South Western Tar Distilleries had there own wagons and a tractor for shunting.

Up the slope was Coast Lines Ltd and Esso Petroleum sidings.

Coast Line Ltd or Victoria Wharf – took mostly container traffic, clay for export and Westcotts coal.

Known as 'Under the Wall', and partly covered by a wire mesh to stop rocks falling on stabled wagons, shunting was carried out by their own diesel loco,

Bayly's siding was by 'Annetts Key' released from Plymstock signal box, because of the 1-50 gradient during fog the porter at Oreston, who assisted the guard during shunting was required to place 2 detonators 100 yards from the station to warn the drivers that they were approaching the siding. The guard also had to carry out incline instructions because of the Hooe Lake swing bridge, when in possession of the key and not with the single line token as the bridge bolt was locked electronically from Plymstock box. The load was not to exceed 10 wagons.



Bayly's siding unloading chairs

After returning from Bayly's on the 1.40pm and going on shed for coal and water you were rostered to work trains in from Cattedown, sometimes three in an evening. After working two a trip to Laira yard would be organised to relieve the congestion in Friary. In the 1950s a wagon took three days to get from Friary to

Truro, management complained that lorries were taking all the traffic.

The shunters at Laira would save time by shouting 'Run them off', that meant a fly shunt. Everyone had to be on the ball or it was a trip for the little red vans (breakdown gang). Once, two wagons ended up in the tide at Cattewater.

During busy times there were long waits between trains so you so you got to know every hostelry within 5 minuets of Friary Yard in case you were wanted in a

hurry. Most nights it was nearly midnight before you got on shed.

All the drivers were close to retirement, being wartime two were allowed to stay on so did not take kindly to having 16 year old passed cleaners as firemen.

In 1944 the head shunters at Cattewater were George Wright and Bill Redstone who Bere Alston members may recall.

Extract from the Southern Railway Working Timetable

TURNCHAPEL BRANCH.

Working of pull and push trains without a Guard.—A junior Porter will accompany the train between Lucas Terrace Halt and Turnchapel to issue and collect tickets as may be necessary, and to perform the work of a platform Porter at Lucas Terrace Halt and at those stations where the train is booked to call but no platform staff are on duty. The junior Porter will also be responsible at Lucas Terrace Halt and such stations for giving the signal to the Driver to indicate that the platform work is completed and all is right for the train to proceed. He will undertake no responsibility appertaining to the actual running of the train.

Bayly's (Plymouth and Oreston Timber Co.) siding.—The points leading to the siding are facing for down trains. They are fitted with an Annett's lock and key, and the key is kept in the frame in Plymstock signal box, interlocked with the signals and tablet instrument, and cannot be released when a train tablet for the Plymstock-Turnchapel section is out of the instrument.

The Station Master at Plymouth Friary will be responsible for the safe working of this siding, which will be conducted by the Guard of the train, and when any wagons have to be taken there, or brought away, the Signalman at Plymstock station will hand the Annett's key to the Driver. This key, which has a brass plate affixed to it lettered "For Bayly's siding," is the Driver's authority for proceeding on to the single line from Plymstock to Bayly's siding and no further.

The train must come to a stand at a point just on the Turnchapel side of the platform at Oreston station, before reaching the falling gradient, to enable a sufficient number of wagon brakes to be securely applied by the Guard for safely controlling the train down the falling gradients towards and into Bayly's siding. The Guard must inform the Driver the number and class of vehicles forming the train, and agree with him the number of wagon brakes it is necessary to apply in order that the train may be brought to a stand by means of the combined brake power available on any portion of the falling gradients.

The train must stop clear of the siding points where it will be met by the man in charge at Oreston who will take the key from the Driver, release the points, admit the train to the siding relock the points and then return the key to the Driver. He will accompany the train to the Plymouth and Oreston Timber Co's yard, and when it is ready to leave there, he will obtain the key from the Driver, release the points, and after the train has passed on to the single line, re-lock the points and hand the key to the Driver as his authority for returning on the single line to Plymstock.

On the return of the train to Plymstock the Driver will return the key to the Signalman, who must replace it in the locking frame.

In foggy weather, before starting a train from Plymstock for Bayly's siding with the Annett's key, the Signalman at Plymstock must request by telephone the man in charge at Oreston to place two detonators on the rails at 100 and 110 yards respectively from Bayly's siding, on the Plymstock side, to warn the Driver that he is approaching the siding.

Under no circumstances must the Annett's key be replaced in the frame in the signal box until the train for which it was withdrawn has returned to Plymstock station clear of the section.

A brake van must always be the last vehicle of a train going to or returning from the siding.

The Company's engine is prohibited from passing the gantry which is erected alongside, and over, the loop sidings at a point opposite the premises of the Plymouth and Oreston Timber Company.

Only goods vans which are not fitted with a stove must be permitted to work over this siding, as there is insufficient clearance under the gantry referred to in the preceding paragraph for a stove pipe to pass with safety.

Admiralty wharves.—When a train requires to run on to the Admiralty wharves at Turnchapel, the Porter Signalman at Turnchapel must first proceed to the wharves, obtain permission from the Admiralty authorities there for it to do so, and arrange for the gates across the single line, which are situated about 200 yards from the Turnchapel station, to be opened. He will then return to the station and accompany the train to the wharves, taking care that sufficient brake power is applied to safely control it.

Loads of goods trains between Plymstock and Turnchapel.—The load of a goods train between Plymstock and Turnchapel (wharf) must not exceed equal to 12 loaded goods wagons and one van, and between Plymstock and Bayly's siding must not exceed equal to 10 loaded goods wagons and one van.