

Dating the pre-1918 Photos of Alne Station



This well-known photograph is on William Hayes postcard #5 and all we knew originally was that it was pre-1918 as the postage changed from ½d at that time to 1d. But, while researching information on the 1877 boiler explosion, we came across the change in footbridge design between the Ordnance Surveys of 1891 and 1909. These maps are reproduced at the end of this article and it can be seen that the earlier one (1891) is an H-design, the later one (1909) a Z-design as shown. Studying the photo of the station (above) in detail, it can be seen that the footbridge is the H-design and is thus before 1909.



Alne Station 1926 – taken from under the road bridge in the platform bay

Michael Moran, keen NER and Alne railway modeller in Canberra, Australia, has been very helpful in this quest and writes: *“The footbridges were a standard design, probably a kit of parts, so it is possible that the NER thought it did not need the dual flights, so they seem to have modified the footbridge prior to 1909 and used the parts elsewhere”*. The 1926 photo shown at the foot of page 1 (which Michael dates from a caption in a book called *Railways around Harrogate Vol 2 p59*) has been taken from underneath the road bridge in the bay platform; this clearly shows the Z-design of the footbridge at that later time.

Michael goes on to say: *“The original buildings at Alne were designed by G T Andrews and according to Bill Fawcett, who has published both a history of NER architecture and a history of Andrews’ work, it was not a standard design but carried a number of characteristic design features”*.

The National Railway Museum in York have identified the locomotive 730 as *“...an NER class 4CC Atlantic loco (later to be re-designated Class C8 under the LNER). It was built in 1906, and received its post grouping LNER livery in 1925. Based on the lettering style it looks like it is NER – so it would date the photo somewhere between 1906 – 1925”*.

The NER Society archive team are more specific and say:

William Hayes No. 5: This photograph can be no earlier than May 1906, as the locomotive is one of the two Smith four-cylinder compound Atlantics that entered service that month. The locomotive looks to be in extremely good condition, which perhaps suggests that it is recently ex-works?

The information on the engine and the footbridges, taken together, thus put the date of the original William Hayes photo as 1906 – 1909. We know that he was active around this time and would have passed through Alne many times on his various journeys around the area.

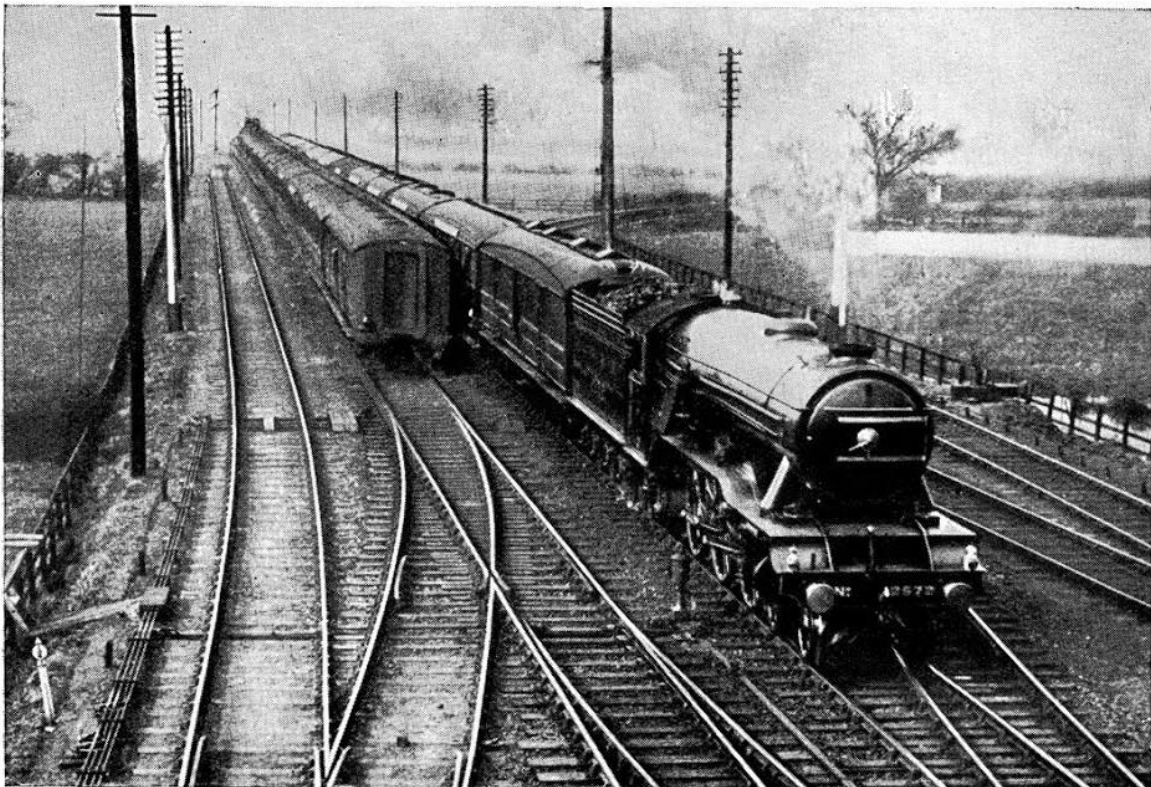


The photo shown at the bottom of page 2 is a similar photo to the one at the start of this article although with different personnel and a dog. The H-design footbridge is still in evidence so it is prior to 1909. Michael Moran writes: *“Clues are in the clothing. The NER uniforms probably did not change much but these look quite old, the waistcoats and buttons seem almost Victorian. I am interested in the camera angle, someone crouching , probably with a small camera, not a professional one, but none the less a good image”*.

Any additional information will be gratefully received.

Robert Brech, Alne brech28@btinternet.com
14-December-2018

And nothing to do with dating the bridges but worthy of inclusion in any article on Alne is the following photo entitled *Flying Scotsmen*, from *Tales of Speed. London & Glasgow: Collins' Clear-Type Press. c1930*. The photographer is on the road bridge just to the north of Alne station and the Easingwold branch can be seen curving away to the right behind the up train.



The “ Flying Scotsman ” says how-d’you-do to his brother by giving a piercing whistle before dashing past him on the vast iron road between London and Edinburgh. This daily greeting of the two giant expresses, which takes place near Alne Station, shows us the marvel of railway timing. [L.N.E.R.]

[Maps courtesy of National Library of Scotland].

