

Chronology for Croft Branch

Date	Event	Source	Comments
16 th century	Hill Top House is reputedly a Tudor House built of brick. It belonged to the Allen Estate but the house was cut off from the rest of the estate by the railway.	Cookson 2003, 75, 124	This is where the Croft branch will leave the S&DR's mainline and heads southwards
1746	The Duke of Cumberland denounced the road to Croft 'through the marshy pastures of Oxenfield' as the worst upon which he had travelled.	Cookson 2003, 45	
1818	George Overton when surveying the proposed route of the S&DR suggested a future extension – this would materialise later as the GNER route to York, built in part on the Croft branch line	Holmes 1975, 29	
4 th September 1818	The S&DR promoters estimated that 10,000 tons of coal p.a. would be conveyed over any future branch line to Croft. The mainline was always expected to carry significant quantities of lime, albeit much less than coal. The 1818 meeting (the 'numerous and respectable Meeting held at Darlington on the 4th of September') heard from the appointed Committee that an assumed 80,000 tons of coal would pass down the line annually and 'at least 15,000 tons' of lime ('this useful article').	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 32	
1821	The S&DR is incorporated by Act of Parliament	Fawcett 2001, 11	
16 August 1822	Report from the engineer to S&DR Committee of a possible branch line to Croft. The Committee agree that it would be of public benefit and should be included in the revised application to Parliament	RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6792	
23 May 1823	The S&DR's Act of Parliament sanctioned a branch line from Hill House	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 32 Holmes 1975, 9, 87	

	to Croft Bridge at an estimated cost of £74,300		
17.5.1824	The Third Act of Parliament is obtained by the S&DR to alter the arrangements for branch railways.	-	
9 September 1825	<p>The land for the Croft branch has been purchased except for a small section belonging to Mr Thomas Trueman. It is recommended that the branch be proceeded with as soon as funds permit as it will be of public benefit and generate revenue. Mr Chaytor made a request to use locomotive engine on the line but the committee thought it improper. The date is fixed for the opening the mainline as it will be ready, bar a few finishing touches. That includes the Yarm and Darlington branches and a small section of the Haggerleases.</p> <p>An application has been made by a deputation from Croft Bridge to the vicinity of Richmond who propose that the Railway Company should extend the Croft branch into Yorkshire for about a mile; but on considering the heavy expense that the company would incur, as proposed, by a bridge across the Tees, and an inclined plane forming part of the works, your committee are decidedly of opinion that the proposition cannot be entertained</p>	<p>RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6811 Jeans 1875, 63</p>	
27.9.1825	The S&DR formally opens including the branch lines to Darlington and Yarm	Fawcett 2001, 11	
30 December 1826	A proposal is published to continue the Croft Branch to York	York Herald	
January 1827	A pamphlet is printed by a 'Practical Farmer' extolling the advantages of the railway in lowering the prices of fuel and	Tomlinson 162	

	facilitating the transport of lime		
July 1827	Little has been done in forwarding the execution of the Croft Branch since the last annual meeting; 7 or 8k pounds have already been purchased on the purchase of land and completing nearly one quarter of the way but shouldn't lose sight of the benefits of this undertaking.	RAIL 667/168	
August 1827	The S&DR Directors decide to finish work on the Croft Branch. Expenditure is incurred 'Righting way at Croft Bridge' money paid to Wm. Tate.	Tomlinson p140 RAIL 667/1519	
September 1827	Balance of accounts for works on New Skerne and Croft Bridge £36.19.4	RAIL 667/1519	
October 1827	New works at Croft Bridge £28-16. Paid to William Walker, Ralph Bell, William Surtees, Thomas Law & Wade, Jo Barwick [and son or horse?]	RAIL 667/1519	
November 1827	Works to Skerne Battery listed in sundry expenses	RAIL 667/1519	
December 1827	Sundry expenses at Croft Branch include covering up conduit, counting bricks for Truman's Bridge, refs to Sowerby's cut and works o Skerne Battery (muck to)	RAIL 667/1519	
23.5.1828	Middlesbrough Branch receives Royal Assent	Proud 1998, 21	
8 July 1828	Croft branch nearing completion and should be ready for the general public to use	RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6819	
11 April 1829	A melancholy and fatal accident happened on Friday last, to a labouring man, named Francis Johnson, who, whilst engaged in excavating clay at the Croft Branch of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, was unfortunately killed by the fall of earth and other materials above him. An inquest was held the same day, before C. Sherwood Esq., Coroner of Darlington Ward, when a verdict was returned of	Durham County Advertiser 11 April 1829	

	“accidental death”. The deceased was a native of Newcastle.		
20 June 1829	Yesterday se’night, a melancholy accident happened on the Croft branch of the Darlington Railway. Robert Brignal, who had commenced working only that morning, had his leg so dreadfully fractured by a waggon passing over it, that he was obliged to have it amputated. He is a way of recovery.	Durham County Advertiser 20 June 1829	
14 July 1829	Croft Branch should be ready for opening in September	RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6827	
14 July 1829	Sales of lime are disappointing due to depressed state of agriculture; this despite the committee doing what they could to their full extent	RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6828	
1 October 1829	Great rejoicings took place at Darlington on Tuesday last, on occasion of the opening of the Croft Branch of the Stockton and Darlington Railway	Durham County Advertiser 31 October 1829	
20 October 1829	The S&DR’s Secretary issued a notice saying that coals from eight separate collieries would be available from the day of opening the Croft Branch. This implies at least 8 coal cells. Witton Park Fire and small coal Old Etherley Fire and small coal New Etherley Fire and small coal Black Boy Fire coal, small coal and lime coal Eldon Fire, small and lime coal Shildon fire, small and lime coal Coundon Fire coal and lime coal Deanery Fire coal and lime coal The Railway Co. assure the Public that no exertion will be waiting on their part to render this improved means of communication	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 35 Durham County Advertiser 24 October 1829 – notice published by Richard Otley	

	with the collieries, Lime Kilns, Stone Quarries etc as beneficial as possible to the southern district of the county of Durham and the north Riding of the county of York. The Railway Co. have appointed Mr. George Langstaff, as their Agent, at Croft; he will reside on the Company's Premises, near the depots, and all communications addressed to him will meet with prompt attention. Croft was also the railhead for the Swaledale lead mines.		
27 October 1829	Croft branch, opened on October 27, 1829 with a ceremonial "cold collation" at the Croft Spa Hotel. Now the coal could branch off the main line at Albert Hill, and travel to Croft, where it was met by pack-horses to carry it into North Yorkshire. The line was single track and 3 ½ miles long. Several proposals to extend the branch further to Richmond or York never came to fruition.	Proud 1998, 21 Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 32	
27 October 1829	A passenger station opened on the Croft branch 27 October 1829	Butt, R. V. J. (1995). The Directory of Railway Stations: details every public and private passenger station, halt, platform and stopping place, past and present (1 st ed.). Sparkford: Patrick Stephens Ltd.	Eh?
October 1829 – October 1835	Account of coal and lime sold at Croft Depot	RAIL 667/1357 DSCN 3882	
1.5.1830	Haggerleases Branch opens as far as Cockfield Fell	Proud 1998, 24	
21 May 1830	The depot agent Thomas Langstaff repudiates allegations from Mr Wharton, a colliery owner, that his sales of coals at the depots are biased in favour of some companies.	Crown Street Local Studies 33085 U 415J	
16 June 1830	Letter repudiating allegations from W.L. Wharton of Dryburn and also published in the Durham Chronicle written by Thomas Langstaff, the	Crown Street Local Studies 33086 U 415J 19 June Durham Chronicle	

	<p>agent at Croft Depot. Wharton complains that his own colliery at Coundon only has 1 cell, but other collieries have more. See lists below. He claimed that the award of cells was based on the amounts allocated at the Darlington depot before the Croft depot was open.</p>		
19 June 1830	<p>Tonnage of coal handled at Croft Depot since its opening was published in the Durham Chronicle. Coal came from collieries at Old Black Boy (4 or 5 cells), Shildon (4 cells), Eldon (3 cells), Old Etherley (3 cells), New Etherley (3 cells), Witton Park (3 cells), Deanery (1 cell) and Coundon (1 cell) with Old Etherley producing by the far the greatest quantity. This suggests that there were 22 cells in use at that time. Some collieries sent three different types of coal – fire coal for household purposes, small coal for the use of manufacturers, splint coal for lime burning. The greatest demand is fire coal, but the three different types have to be kept in separate cells, so cells are allocated on types of coal delivered as well as amounts of coal.</p>	<p>Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 33 Durham Chronicle 19 June 1830 Crown Street Library 33086 U 415J</p>	
13 July 1830	<p>Report to committee that the Croft Branch is producing valuable returns</p>	<p>RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6834</p>	
1 October 1830	<p>Haggerleazes branch opened on October 1, 1830, running 4 ¾ miles from St Helen Auckland</p>		
30 July 1831	<p>Reference to nett gains being small but this as a result of tolls being kept low so 'stimulating the exertions of the coal owners' Also ref to Middlesbrough branch line being opened but accommodation for ships captains and owners had been wanting on</p>	<p>RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6840</p>	

	opening and rendering it less desirable as a station		
1832	Contracts are let to construct a new Merchandise Station Company dividends rose from 2 ½ % in 1826 to 8 % in 1832	Listed building description Whelan's Trade Directory 1897, 453	
Between late June or early July 1832	'eavel deposed person or persons' stole the William 4 th engine from the Croft branch line.	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 33	
1832-3	A bridge on the Croft branch is listed in items of expenditure	S&DR Committee Orders RAIL 667/8 134	
1833	The Merchandise Station (Goods Shed), designed by Thomas Storey is built	Listed building description Fawcett 2001, 17	
27 August 1833	Accounts for previous year include costs at depots at Darlington, Croft, Yarm and Stockton including clerks salaries, labourers wages, repairing windows, letter depots, sundry repairs £976.8.3. Also new depot at Coatham Lane and cast iron arches for improvements at Darlington depots and additions to Darlington weigh house	RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6855	
September 1833	A passenger service was opened on the Croft branch at the end of September 1833 but was not a success and on 13 th September 1833 a decision was made to discontinue it although the actual date of closure is unknown.	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml . Nick Catford.	Dates make no sense
1834	Lime to be used for manuring is to be exempt from road (?) tolls	Durham County Advertiser 18 June 1834	Item doesn't say but this is presumably road tolls
5 th August 1834	A cow house on the Croft branch (Sugar hill?) is listed amongst expenditure for the previous year	RAIL 667/8 IMGP6863-4	
30 June 1835	Accounts for previous year (lime sales down)	RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6873	
12 August 1835	Landsales at depots are increasing except at Croft where they are falling. The committee intend addressing this having received a report on the	RAIL 667/8 IMGP6867-72	

	<p>matter. Problems of coal owners selling at the pits. Lime sales are down due to depressed state of agricultural market and farmers relinquishing the use of lime. The committee to use their powers to 'compound (?) with the lime burners for the dues of the current year from which they hope to be able to report favourable results at a future time' .</p>		
October 1835	<p>In October 1835 Edward Pease's son Joseph proposed a new line between York and Newcastle (from Croft) with the intention of eventually extending the line to London which would open up new markets for the coal that was already being carried by the Stockton & Darlington.</p>	<p>http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml. Nick Catford.</p>	
2 nd November 1835	<p>With local support forthcoming, Pease was keen to open the line as quickly as possible and a start was made on surveying the northern section between the Tyne and Croft on 2nd November 1835.</p>	<p>http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml. Nick Catford.</p>	
1836	<p>The Croft branch was sold to the GNER for £20,000. As the GNER was being promoted as a north bound railway from York via Northallerton, it was felt that much of the traffic from the Croft branch would be won by the GNER instead. The S&DR board were therefore willing to relinquish it to the GNER.</p> <p>The GNER was promoted jointly by S&DR directors under the leadership of Joseph Pease and the management of the York and North Midland Railway. The GNER was the outcome of Overton's original suggestions for subsequent extensions to the S&DR back in 1818.</p>	<p>Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 32 Holmes 1975, 29</p>	

1836	John Harris (a pupil of Storey) takes over as Stockton & Darlington Railway Company's chief engineer	Listed building description	
4 th July 1836	The northern section (revising the Croft branch line) was authorised by Parliament on 4 th July 1836 and on that day the Great North of England Railway was incorporated to run the line.	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml . Nick Catford.	
8 August 1836	In the last year Richard Otley has left the company as manager and been replaced with Samuel Barnard. Increase in landsales and exports of coal, but extraordinary competition so no change to dues recommended. The lime trade and in stones, never very productive, remains without material variation.	RAIL 667/8 IMGP 6874-8	
12 August 1836	Mr Gill applied to run a coach from Black Banks along the Croft branch on Sundays to take his family to church. Agreed subject to costs. Thomas Dodd's contract to be terminated and new tenders obtained for teaming coals at Darlington depot.	RAIL 667/9 IMGP 6563	
24 August 1836	Ref to John Harris being appointed resident engineer for 3 years and Thomas Storey leaving	RAIL 667/9 IMGP 6567-9	
2 nd September 1836	Mr Gill to pay two guineas p.a. for two coaches each Sunday to Croft church from Black Banks.	RAIL 667/ 9 IMGO 6570-1	See later use of private sidings by Black Banks Brick and Tile Works pre 1857
23 rd September 1836	The S&DR Committee to reconsider the disposal of sand from the Croft Branch	RAIL 667/9	
23 December 1836	Bulmer's tender accepted for provision of additional room at the merchandizing warehouse	RAIL 667/9	
1 st February 1837	The Croft branch line reopened to passengers on 1 st February 1837 when William Walton was given a year's contract to run the service.	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml . Nick Catford	

10 March 1837	Burden has stopped leading lead from Croft to Darlington and now owes the company money. Engineers to look at leading coal to Croft by engine	RAIL 667/9	
17 March 1837	John Harris considers it expedient to use locomotive to carry coals to Croft. Also a request to secure and define the company's boundaries at Bank Top.	RAIL 667/9	
31 March 1837	Engineer to take out certain crossings and switches at Croft branch and to provide chairs and sheaves for drawing lead out of that yard. John Harris is instructed to put in boundary stones on the Croft branch	RAIL 667/9	
9 June 1837	The way at Bank Top on the Croft branch is being blocked by wagons	RAIL 667/9	
16 June 1837	Seymours & Co are to be informed that they can be accommodated at Darlington, Croft and Stockton	RAIL 667/9	
30 th June 1837 – 14 th August 1837	The southern section of the new Croft line was authorised on 30 th June 1837 but at a meeting held on 14 th August 1837 a decision was made to stop work on the northern section and to proceed only with the southern section in order to join up with a line between York and the south that was already under construction.	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml . Nick Catford	
1 September 1837	Croft depot to be examined for necessary repairs	RAIL 667/9	
25 th November 1837	Work started near Croft on the new line to York – the first sod was cut.	Hoole 1986, 94	
29 September 1837	Gentlemen appointed to confer with the GNER over Croft	RAIL 667/9	
10 November 1837	The engineer and a committee deputation to look at increasing the capacity of the depots for coal	RAIL 667/9	
24 November 1837	The deputation reported back on increasing the capacity at the station	RAIL 667/9	

	depots. At Darlington they suggested rationalising the coal depots with some collieries losing some but they also suggested gravel depot being given up for coal . Collieries also had to relinquish some depots at Croft. Also a report on the Croft branch re GNER. Tree planting to take place on waste ground.		
15 December 1837	Engineer to provide stones to repair Croft Yard	RAIL 667/9	
22 December 1837	Report to committee on Croft branch	RAIL 667/9	
1838	A clock tower is planned for the Merchandise station.	Listed building description	
January 19 1838	Report to committee on Croft branch. Tate and Carter renewed contract to team coals at Darlington depot. Robt Saxton and George Robson to team coals at Croft on trial for a month. A proposition to P Tulley for weighing coals at Darlington with an assistant	RAIL 667/9	
2 February 1838	Engineer to help value the Croft branch. P Tulley and Edward Towns sign contract	RAIL 667/9	
9 March 1838	Sand on the Croft branch to be sold to Robert Gill. Also reference to land on either side of Croft branch which is rented out and what the company should retain. Value of the Croft branch, the costs of creating it and the price to sell to GNER also discussed	RAIL 667/9	
16 March 1838	William Walton to run the coach to Croft four times a day in summer he paying the taxes and regular dues on Sundays.	RAIL 667/9	
17.4.1838	GNER make two alternative offers for the Croft Branch Line to the S&DR of either £10k or £15k depending on what buildings are included.	RAIL 667/1108 DSCN 4268	
1839-40	The Goods Shed is doubled in floor area by	Listed building description Fawcett 2001, 19	

	John Harris and the clock tower added		
March 1839	In March 1839 the GNER company agreed to buy the Croft branch from the Stockton & Darlington for £20,000 although the GNER only used about half of the three mile branch for the course of its new line, the southern end of the line from Parkgate Junction being retained for coal traffic. Lead traffic was lost when a new railhead was established at Cowton on the GNER.	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml . Nick Catford Hoole 1986, 95	
1839	Plans show the coal and lime depot	Thomas Dixon 1839 RAIL 1037/456	
17 January 1840	Contract agreed with William Walton for leading coals on the Croft branch by horse to Croft, Black Banks, Polam and Bank Top. The secretary reported on the differences in expense between leading coals to Croft by horse or engine. It has cost an additional £62-10-3 since using horse. His information to be given to the GNER	RAIL 667/11	
25 th November 1840	The new Croft (York) line was due to open on 25 th November 1840 but work was not completed on time.	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml . Nick Catford Hoole 1986, 95	
1 January 1841	The GNER announced that coals from Durham coalfield would be available for sale from the 4 th January at Croft. In order to prevent fraud purchasers were urged to collect a ticket from the depot certifying the name and description of the coals, and the date and time of day they were filled at the depot.	Durham County Advertiser 1 January 1841	
4 th January 1841	The GNER York line using part of the Croft branch eventually opened on 4 th January 1841. It wasn't ready to carry passengers. The company apologised that the station had to be built on the south side of town thus necessitating a	Durham County Advertiser 1 Jan 1841 Hoole 1986, 95	

	journey through town. The new station at York opened which the GNER would share with the Y&NM, but the GNER delivered no passengers until March		
30 March 1841	The new GNER Croft line opened for passengers	Hoole 1986, 95	
31 st March 1841	A new station at Croft was opened on 31 st March 1841 replacing the original S & D terminus which remained in use as a goods depot.	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_spa/index0.shtml . Nick Catford	
1841	S&DR Company dividends rose to 15 %	Whelan's Trade Directory 1897, 453	
Sept 1841	John Harris, the S&D resident engineer from 1836 to 1847, was instructed to design a new station at North Road in Darlington and contracts were let in September 1841 for its construction; completion probably being around April 1842.	AE 2014, 14	
1842	By 1842 there were extensive buildings on the site of the present Bank Top station, designed by John Green jnr., with coal depots and a large railway shed nearby.	Cookson 2003, 69	
April 1842	North Road Station is complete	AE 2014, 14	
19.4.1842	The Shildon Tunnel is opened		
1846	The opening of the Richmond branch resulted in a decline of traffic on the Croft branch. The GNER amalgamated with the Newcastle and Junction Railway line to become the York and Newcastle Railway.	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 35 Cookson 2003, 68	
1848	St John the Evangelist was consecrated, also known as the Railwayman's church	Cookson 2003, 69	
1853 (or before)	Modest extensions were designed to North Road Station by Joseph Sparkes in 1853 and constructed by John Harris.	Fawcett 2001, 116	Tulip pillars are similar on the North Road ext to Lime cells
Before 1857	A private siding was located half way along the Croft branch line used by	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 35	See Mr Gill's request in September 1836

	the Black Banks Brick and Tile Works. When this works closed at an unknown date, the site was occupied by the Black Banks Chemical Works		to use the line on Sundays from Black Banks to Croft church
1857	The S&DR acquire a building north of the main line from GNE and the site of this was subsequently developed as Hopetown Goods Station.	Listed building description	
January 1858	Gas works were established at Hurworth Place. Some coal cells were demolished to make way for them.	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 35 quoting The Durham Chronicle reporting the second annual general meeting of the Croft & Hurworth Gas Co on the 31 January 1859.	
1863	The Stockton & Darlington Railway amalgamated with North Eastern Railway on 13 th July 1863 on generous terms. This became part of London & North Eastern Railway in 1922.	http://www.engineering-timelines.com/scripts/engineeringItem.asp?id=1136 [accessed 110813]	
1867	Work starts on building Victoria Road	Cookson 2003, 86	
1887	The new station at Bank Top opened and Victoria Road became the new approach		
1896	Spa was added to the name of the station at Croft	Hoole 1986, 95	
1899	The Parkgate approach to Bank Top station was widened after many complaints about it being too narrow		
Late 1950s	Croft Depot also served a tar distillery until the late 1950's	http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_sp/index0.shtml . Nick Catford	
27 April 1964	British Railways closed the Croft Depot Branch	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 35 http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/croft_sp/index0.shtml . Nick Catford	
1 May 1964	Photographs show the remaining cells were served by two tracks allowing significant quantities of coal to be deposited in each cell. A third track served the gas works.	Coulthard and Teasdale et al 2018, 35	
March 1969	The Croft Spa line closed. Latterly it had only been served by Richmond branch trains	Hoole 1986, 95	