

The line from Palace Gates to Seven Sisters

Noel Park Station



Ian Baker Collection

Non-railway enthusiasts might get rather confused about which railway this walk is describing because there have been three railway lines near Alexandra Palace. When the Palace opened in 1873 there was already the Great Northern Railway (GNR) main line which had the nearby station then called Wood Green (it is now called Alexandra Palace). This is the only railway still remaining.

In the same year the Palace opened, the GNR opened a branch from its 'Northern Heights' line at Highgate to Alexandra Palace, terminating right by the palace entrance which was then on the northern side of the Palace. The old station building

Courtesy of Mervyn Askew



The old West Green Station building on West Green Road

is still in use at the top of The Avenue as CUFOS (Community Use for the Old Station). The line closed in 1954 and is now part of the Parklands Walk.

The Palace immediately attracted large numbers of visitors so the Great Eastern Railway (GER) wanted to get a share of the action. Their line is the one we are following. It ran from a junction with their existing line at Seven Sisters and ended at a station called, optimistically, Palace Gates. The passenger service was initially to Liverpool Street although later also to North Woolwich, a destination assuming particular importance during the First World War taking workers to the munitions factories in Woolwich.

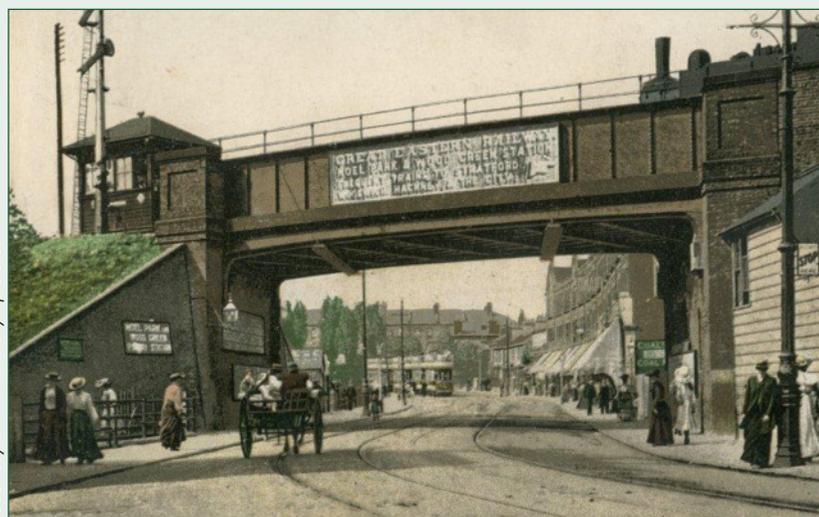
The line never attracted the hoped for passengers and the line eventually closed to passengers in 1963 at which time the only service consisted of a few peak hour trains to North Woolwich.

As you can see from the map the line had four stations: Palace Gates, Noel Park, West Green and Seven Sisters. There were goods yards at Noel Park and West Green. The footprint of the line widened at these points and these areas can still be discerned as you will see during the walk. Coal was the main goods handled but, until the Second World War, race horses were loaded and unloaded at Palace Gates destined for the race course in the park. In 1958 a grand exhibition of railway rolling stock was held at the Noel Park goods yard. Amongst the visiting locomotives was Mallard, the streamlined LNER Pacific which broke the speed record for steam in 1938, achieving 126 mph on Stoke Bank near Peterborough.



Thanks to www.tottenham-summerhillroad.com

Above: Mallard on show at the grand exhibition of rolling stock held at Noel Park goods yard



Courtesy of www.historyinpictures.com

Above: The old bridge where the railway crossed Wood Green High Road, where Wood Green shopping centre is now

If you are interested to find out more information about this little line one of the best sources, an article by Richard Matz, can be found at the following website:
<http://www.bowesandbounds.org/forum/topics/palace-gates-to-seven-sisters-the-lost-railway-line-of-bounds>
 More photos of the line as it was can be found at Alan Swain's excellent website:
http://tottenham-summerhillroad.com/early_railways_of_tottenham.htm

