

In July 1908 Harold Lofts, age 18, started work at the station as a porter. The next day he was knocked down by a train and killed.



In November 1901 Black Bank Drove was surveyed and a report on the state of the road said there was much heavy traffic to Black Bank Station. It was recommended that the drove be adopted by the County Council and widened to 12 feet.

In 1929 the LNER decided to introduce a best kept stations award. Black Bank was inspected in July. Porter W.E. Crane was highly complimented on the splendid condition of the lamps and signalman Goodchild was congratulated on a beautifully clean signal box.

Also in 1929 proposals were made for a new reception line on the up side between Black Bank and Chettisham stations. This meant that slow goods and coal trains could be run into the reception line at Black Bank to allow passenger and express goods trains to pass along the main line.

GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY.			
A DAY AT THE SEASIDE.			
ON MONDAY next, 19th September, a SPECIAL CHEAP EXCURSION TRAIN to YARMOUTH and BACK will run as under:—			
FROM	Train at	FARES TO YARMOUTH AND BACK.	
		First Class.	Covered Cars.
PETERBOROUGH	8.30		
WHITTLESEY	8.45		
EASTHA	8.55		
MARCH	9.10		
STONEA	9.25		
MARZA	9.40		
BLACK BANK	9.55	7s. 6d.	2s. 6d.
CHETTISHAM	10.10		
YARMOUTH	10.45		

Returning from Yarmouth at 5.45 p.m.

The Tickets may be obtained at the Stations from FRIDAY, 16th of September, and will be available only by the Special Train as above. No luggage allowed, except a small bag or Parcel carried by the Owner.
By Order, J. B. OWEN, Secretary.
London, September, 1884.

Station Masters

The names of early station masters are difficult to find. John James Deninson was station master in 1861, John Harker 1861, William Barker between 1875 to 1883 and William Bullock in 1892. The station master was deemed sufficiently important to be listed in street directories and to have their appointment recorded in the local newspaper. The station master at Blank Bank was also responsible for Chettisham and Pymoor Sidings.

Frederick Ward: Unknown - 1899



Frederick Ward later became station master at Histon.

Alfred Porter: 1899 - 1927 won the deep regard of the inhabitants of the district, among whom he resided upon his retirement. He entered railway service at Audley End as a telegraph clerk at 5s a week. After four years he was transferred to Newmarket at 15s a week. In May 1886 he moved to Cambridge parcels office, then to Kings Lynn and then Bishops Stortford. In 1896 he went to Peterborough where the days were long, starting with the 6 a.m. Midland train out and finishing with the 10:20 p.m. Great Eastern mail.



His promotion to station master at Blank Bank in 1899. During his time there the sidings at Pymoor were constructed and Black Bank station yard was improved and expanded. Formerly it was so narrow that the heads of horses hung over the fence when loading against the trucks. Sugar beet traffic also made big demands upon the station and to cope with this traffic a new siding was constructed in 1926 to hold 29 trucks.

E E Simson: 1927 - 1929

Mr Simson's promotion to Blank Bank was his third promotion as station master. He started as a clerk at Hilgay and then at several other stations. He was appointed station master at Foxton in 1924, Lakenheath in 1925 and then to Black Bank. In 1929 he was again promoted to Noel Park in London and was presented with a cherry wood pipe and pouch filled with his favourite tobacco on his departure. In 1932 he was again promoted.

Mr Jolly: 1929 - 1931

Mr Jolly was promoted from Blank Bank to become district relief stationmaster for the Cambridge district based at Kings Lynn.

A Gladwin: 1931 - 1937



Mr Gladwin started his career as a junior clerk at Hilgay in 1898, where his father was station master. He eventually made the grade of station master at Stonea in 1930. It was said that "By the unfailing kindness, patience and courtesy which he extended to traders, the general public and staff alike, Mr Gladwin has acquired a host of friends in the district.

He was promoted to stationmaster at Elsenham.

W A Cox: 1937 - 1943

Mr Cox started his railway career at in 1913 at Dunmow and then served in the first war returning to work at Donington. He went on to work at Marylebone, Cambridge and Swavesey before arriving at Black Bank. He was promoted to Histon.

R A Sell: 1943 - 1948

Mr Sell started as a clerk at Dunmow in 1916 and then went on to Audley End and Ely. In 1922 he was appointed Cambridge District relief clerk, chief clerk at Shippea Hill then Littleport. In 1944 he was appointed station master at Hilgay and then to Black Bank. He left Black Bank to be station master at Elsenham. On his departure he was presented with a cake stand.

T Dawson: 1948 - Unknown

Denis Avery Winn 1958-1959



Denis started as a clerk in Doncaster and ended up at Cambridge before becoming a relief station master in 1952. He became station master at Godmanchester, King's Cliffe and Nassington and then Black Bank. He went on to Melton Constable.

Arthur James Suckling: 1959 - 1963



Mr Suckling had previously been station master at Six Mile Bottom and Kimbolton. When Black Bank closed he went to Downham Market and then became assistant manager at Ely

As well as the station master there were a number of other people employed at the station: clerks, signalmen, porters and gate keepers and coal merchants. A few of these people are recorded for posterity.

Clerks: Gideon Chapman (1840s and 50s), Frederick Moxon (1880s), Flanders Aspland (1890s), Charles Lister (1890s). John Etches Smith (1900s). Francis Cole (1900s), Len Rose (1920s and 30s), John Denston (1860s).

Porters: Herbert Aspland (1880s), John Moxon (1880s and 90s), Charles Dobson (1890s), Harold Lofts (1908), WE Crane (1920s), Barry Farrant (1930s), Ron Cornwell (1940s).

Gate Keepers: Joyce Smith, Barbara Everson, Maud Crane, and Dolly Day (all 1940s).

Signalmen: William Day (1880s), James Tabcart (1890s), William Brittain (1890s), William Tharby (1890s), Sidney Webb (1900s), Mark Winch (1900s), Mr Goodchild (1920s), Bill Sexton (1940s), Bob Lark (1940s), William Hall (1900s), Doug Bullock (1940s to 1980s).

Herbert Aspland: 23rd September 1932: The retirement of Mr Herbert Thomas Aspland, signalman at Black Bank Station, was an event of exceptional interest to railwaymen in the district, not only because he had



reached the age limit, but because of the length of his service with the railway company. This extended over a period of nearly half a century. He started as a boy porter at Black Bank on 5th August 1886 and then went to Chettisham and Ely. in 1889 he was promoted to signalman at Coldham, then to Stonea and Black Bank where he served under five different station masters. In his time at the station loads of goods and coal trains have increased from 35 to 80 trucks and empty truck trains from 50 to 100 wagons. Block telegraph working has been transformed and the telephone has replaced the single needle instruments. hours of labour have been reduced from 12 to 8, wages have been increased, in

some cases, to more than 100 per cent, and the annual holiday extended from three to six days. On his retirement Mr Aspland was presented with a Westminster chimes clock.

In the 1950s the station was suffering from subsidence and needed rebuilding. The top floor of the station master's house had already been demolished. There were nine trains a day stopping at Black Bank but a



passenger survey was carried out in February 1962 found that passengers joining and alighting from the trains was seven on weekdays and five on Sundays.

The annual saving to the railway if the station were to be closed would be £240. A spokesman said that traffic now using the station will be accommodated by busses.

The Isle of Ely County Council decided not to raise any objections to the withdrawal of passenger and parcel services. There was one written objection to the closure from a member of the public. The passenger services ended on 17th June 1963. Goods facilities were withdrawn in April 1965 amid protests from coal and potato merchants. Ely was designated as the alternative depot for on and off loading of the ware and seed potatoes, coal and raw sugar beet which had formed the principal freight traffic. The signal box, thought to have been built in the mid 19th century, was taken out of use in 1988 and bought by local farmer Les Stevens for his back garden

Robin Pearl