

DISCOVERIES IN POPLAR ROAD

Keith Thomas

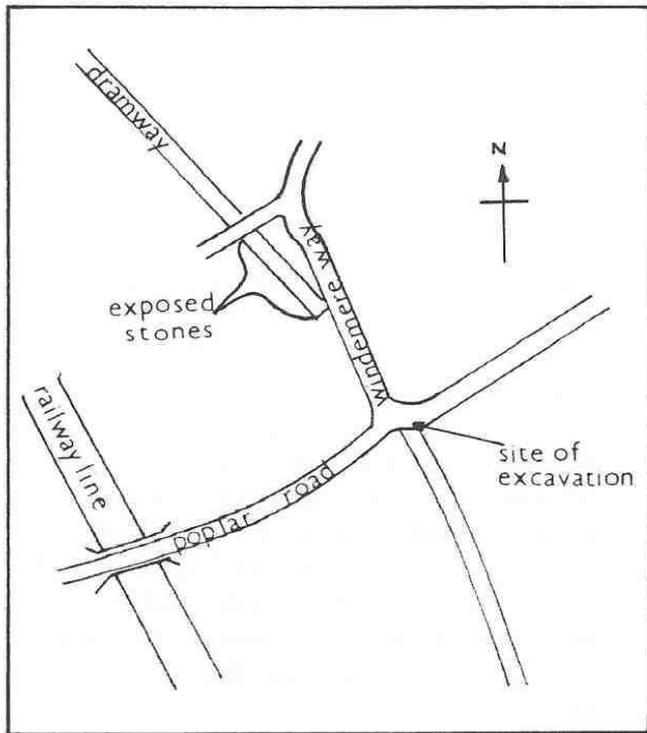
On 19th April 1989 Mr Bowell of Poplar Road, North Common, Warmley, was observing the Gas Board Contractors, who were laying a new gas supply along the Southern side of Poplar Road, when he noticed that they had uncovered part of the old Avon & Gloucestershire Dramway line. He telephoned Dave Sutton, the Kingswood Borough Council Conservation Officer, who in turn alerted B.I.A.S. members through John Cornwell. That evening saw a small group of people photographing and trying to recover the rare Double Chairs which had been revealed. Alan Bryant did manage to free one of the Chairs which unfortunately broke into three pieces in the process.

The following morning the site was visited again, and the Contractors were persuaded not to cover it up until we had a chance to save the remaining Chair. John Cornwall 'phoned the Gas Board and Dave Sutton to enlist their help. Mr Bowell, meanwhile, had managed to get one of the contractors from the building site on the opposite side of the road to cut through the rail on one side with an angle grinder, and another contractor had brought over' an Oxy-

Acetylene Cutter. Watched by a small crowd of enthusiasts, local residents and the Press, the Chair together with two short sections of rail still attached was finally removed.

The two Chairs have been cleaned up and are presently in the Authors keeping, pending future arrangements for public display. Their special design is specifically to carry the line over a road crossing, and so would of course originally have been buried just in the top surfacing. Successive road works have built up over that level by some three feet, permitting this chance survival.

On April 24th we were again contacted by Mr Bowell to say that the building contractors on the North side of Poplar Road, whilst excavating for footpath foundations, had uncovered a whole section of the Dramway stone sleeper blocks. On visiting the site we found that some 150 feet (45m) had been excavated, exposing 50 pairs of limestone blocks still in position and standing about 8 inches (0.2m) proud of the surrounding soil. Two of these blocks had large Ammonite Fossils exposed on their upper surface.

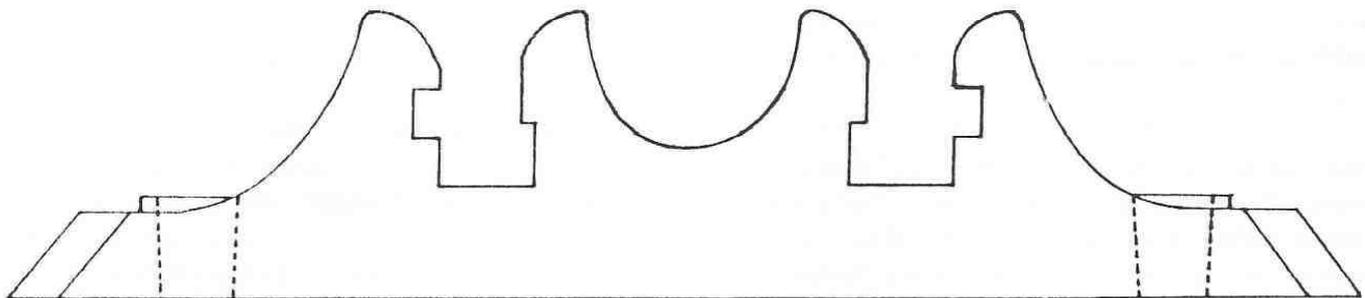


Again tactful negotiations with the builders persuaded them not to tarmac over the path, as they had originally intended, but to lay stone chippings around the blocks as being more in keeping with their original context. Once finished it presented a fine example of how the Dramway may in all probability have looked in its original (1832) state, lacking only rails and chairs, with the new use revealing and respecting the old.

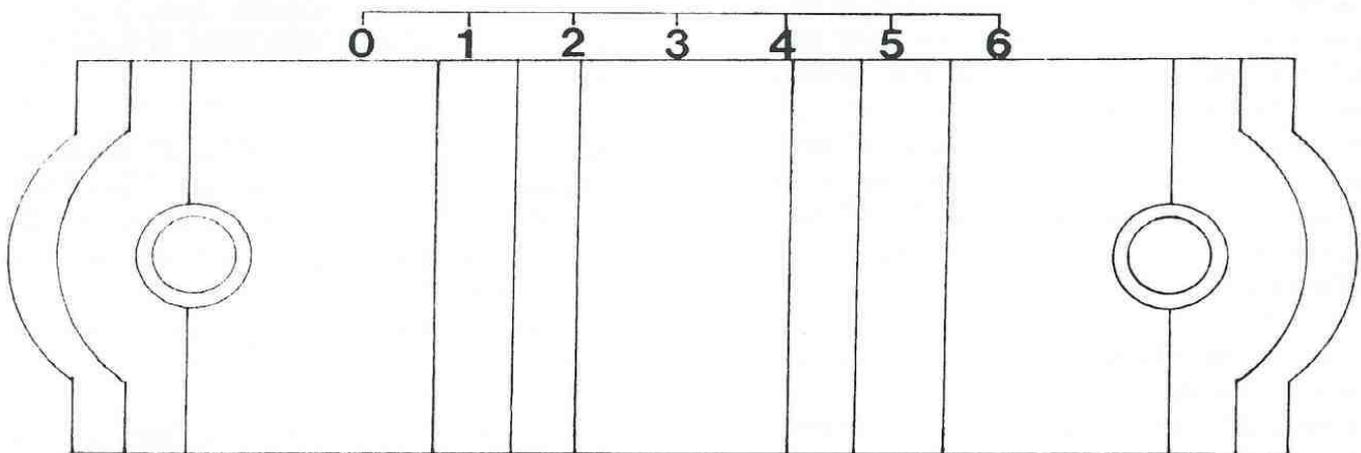
Editors Note

For further details of The Avon and Gloucestershire Dramroad see 'The Avon and Gloucestershire Railway', C R Clinker, BIAS Journal No. 14.

Also 'Waggons on the A & G Dramway', Keith Thomas. BIAS Journal No. 21.



SCALE INCHES



DOUBLE CHAIR AS FOUND

WEIGHT 18 lb

K. THOMAS 1989