

# BATH GREEN PARK

## Some myths dispelled!

In the first part of the story (*RM* August), **Mike Arlett** cleared up the still-perpetuated myth that the Midland Railway had first opened a branch line from Mangotsfield to a temporary terminus in Bath. Far less certainty remains as to the name (or courtesy titles) officially bestowed on the station until BR renamed it as Bath, Green Park post-Nationalisation.

**T**HE Midland Railway terminus at Bath opened to the public on Wednesday, August 4, 1869, and appears – over the decades – to have been referred to by differing names and courtesy titles. But which of these were official?

A trawl through the pages of newspapers published in the 1870s and local to Bath and the surrounding area reveals that, until the arrival of the Somerset & Dorset Railway (S&DR) in 1874, there appears to have been no reference to Queen Square in the station title of the Bath terminus. Until then, the Midland Station appears to have sufficed.

With the publication of some of the earliest S&DR timetables (certainly from 1875), the station was occasionally advertised as Bath Midland Station, Queen Square. This included a few public notices: for example, an

advertisement by the Midland & Somerset & Dorset Railways, which appeared in the *Western Daily Press* on March 25, 1875. Likewise, the *Bath Chronicle*, on May 13, 1875, referred to Bath (Midland Station, Queen Square) in an advert by the Midland, London & South Western and Somerset & Dorset Railways. But such examples were the exception.

### 'One-upmanship'?

Was it a case of 'one-upmanship' by the Midland Railway publicity department using the proximity of the elegant Queen Square (designed and built by John Wood the Elder between 1728 and 1736) that led to the station being referred to by that name?

Of the various local newspapers, the *Shepton Mallet Journal* was an exception. For more than two decades, in advertising

the Somerset & Dorset Railway timetables, it *always* printed the name as Bath, Queen Square, until from its edition dated August 22, 1890, when, for no apparent reason, it abruptly changed it to Bath (Mid.). At least one other newspaper – the *Somerset & West of England Advertiser* – avoided any uncertainty by referring to the station as just plain Bath.

When it came to the Midland Railway's own publications and internal paperwork (including Working Time Tables), there was much more uniformity of title, with, as befits the appropriate periods in time – Bath (Midland Station), later to become Bath (L.M.&S. Station) or sometimes Bath (L.M.S.), but, it seems, never Bath, Queen Square. The same appears to be the case with the public timetable books except, in a 1940 edition of the L.M.S. book of tables, we find Bath (Q Sq) (L.M.S.). I've yet to discover

**On a cold, dull, spring day – April 16, 1949 – Class 2P' 4-4-0 No. 568 sets off with a Bournemouth train, while on the left, Stanier 0-4-4T No. 41902 prepares to leave with a local to Bristol St Philip's. Note the lack of glazing to the train shed. Most was removed as a wartime precautionary measure during the early part of the Second World War. It was a wise decision as high explosive and incendiary bombs severely damaged and destroyed houses on the opposite side of Seymour Street during the Baedeker Air Raids in late-April 1942. Most of the glazing was never replaced.**

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Class '2P' 4-4-0 No. 40563 and BR Class 5 4-6-0 No. 73050, with the Up 'Pines Express' on July 3, 1954, are brought carefully to a stand just short of the buffers. The two rows of white-painted posts at track level are boxed casings protecting water standpipes used for cleaning and servicing coaching stock berthed in the siding adjoining the running line. IVO PETERS, COURTESY JULIAN PETERS. Inset: The 'Paint Date' 4/52 indicated when BR (WR), which had gained commercial control in April 1950, applied the Western Region house colours of brown and cream to the station.

another such instance – which might well exist – but doubt that few beyond Bath and its suburbs will have known what Q.Sq. meant!

The London & South Western Railway, the Midland Railway's partner in the joint leasing of the S&D from 1875, was not averse to the occasional use of Bath, Queen Square in its advertising. For example, in promoting the Paris Exhibition in 1878, and how best to reach the French capital using the L&SW's rail and steamship services, it revealed the last train daily from Bath as leaving Queen Square station at 4.15 (pm).

Bradshaw's, in its railway timetable guides, sometimes sought to avoid confusion by adding unofficial courtesy titles where more than one station existed in the same conurbation. So at Bath, the Great Western station (for which Bath alone had sufficed on the signage, etc) was shown with the suffix 'Manvers Street' (it is located opposite the southern end of that street), whereas the Midland Railway station was suffixed Queen Square. This most certainly must have served to 'popularise' the use of that name, unofficially or otherwise.

Of the many photographs of the station that have been published and seen by this writer, there is no recollection of evidence that the terminus ever displayed nameboards bearing the title Queen Square. Again, plain Bath appears to have sufficed, except for a prominent sign on the front of the *porte cochère* which, for many years, reassured the intending passenger arriving on foot or by carriage that here was the LMS and S&D station.

It took the Nationalisation of the railways to bring about a clarity of titles and their usage. Following the addition of Spa to the



Class '3F' 0-6-0 No. 43441 and '7F' 2-8-0 No. 53806 have arrived with an express from Bournemouth. On the right, 2-6-2T No. 41241 prepares to leave for Bristol Temple Meads. Photographer Ivo Peters took the view from a first-floor window. The gas-cylinder tank wagon was used to refuel the cookers serving the dining cars, and wooden platforms, which covered cellars and stores at basement level. IVO PETERS, COURTESY JULIAN PETERS.