

Tyseley's Ground Frame



Before Holesmouth Junction Signal Box was moved to Tyseley in 1988, there had already been a small timber Signal Cabin on the site. The cabin contained a three lever Ground Frame and a telephone to communicate with the British Railways Signal Box.

Both the cabin and levers came from Little Hereford Crossing, which was located about half a mile west from Easton Station on the Tenbury Railway in Shropshire. This single track railway was built in 1861 from Woofferton to Tenbury Wells and was jointly leased by the Great Western Railway and London North Western Railway. The Tenbury Railway was extended to Bewdley a few years later, where it joined with the Severn Valley Railway. The three lever frame and associated signalling works were most probably manufactured and installed by the McKenzie, Clunes & Holland Company of Vulcan Iron Works, Worcester, as it is known that they supplied the

signalling equipment for this railway. The cabin itself appears to be a Great Western Railway standard type 29 small ground frame hut (5 foot by 7 foot), so this may have been a later addition, or replacement for the original cabin. At Little Hereford Crossing a house was provided for the Gateman and the wooden cabin was located adjacent to the level crossing. The level crossing gates were normally closed across the railway track and from 1885 the telegraph system was used to notify the Gateman when the crossing gates needed to be opened. This sounded a gong and activated a keyless disc instrument, which had three possible indications:

- Down train on Line
- Line Clear
- Up train on Line

On receiving a notification, the level crossing gates would have to be manually closed across the road and then locked in position by the operation of the Ground Frame's central lever. Only once this central lever had been operated and the gates locked, could either of the outer two levers be operated. These two levers operated Stop Signals located on either side of the level crossing. The Stop Signals had semaphore arms which resided in the horizontal (Danger) position until operated.



After a hundred years of operation, the section of railway line between Woofferton and Tenbury Wells (which included Little Hereford Crossing) closed in July 1961.



The redundant cabin and its Ground Frame were brought to Tyseley and positioned in the centre of the site adjacent to the electrical substation. Originally the track layout at Tyseley was fairly simple. The Ground Frame was used to operate a single switch (point) and two Ground Disc Signals. The levers were painted in the conventional colour scheme used by most Railway Companies:

- Black to indicate the lever operates a switch (point)
- Red to indicate the lever operates a Stop Signal

The cabin and ground frame were no longer required after the new Tyseley (Warwick Road) Signal Box was commissioned. Both are now at the Kidderminster Railway Museum, where they intend to display them in their signalling demonstration area.