

## **Fakenham and the Great Western Railway**

It is difficult to imagine a link between Brunel's masterpiece, the GWR, with Fakenham being in Great Eastern country until the Midland and Great Northern competition came along.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wyman and Sons, born out of an ancient company Cox & Wyman, had a contract to supply printing for the GWR. They had a printing works in Reading but needed additional capacity.

About this time Miller, Son & Co in Fakenham were in trouble as a share issue, to finance an expansion, went under-subscribed sending the company into liquidation. Wymans saw this as an opportunity and formed a new company to run the Wharfedale works at Fakenham. This new company used the old name but did not include any former shareholders, directors or the Miller family. It had only a handful of directors and limited capital. Finance was provided by the parent company and the expansion was completed.

As well as producing work for the GWR, books were still being produced with the old imprint on them although with the addition of (Wyman & Sons). This imprint was discontinued in the 1930s following the death of Miller, although he had no connection with the company. At that time the GWR brought all their printing in-house. To help with finances Wymans bought up a number of bookstalls which left Fakenham to continue manufacturing books. In the late 1950s the directors got wind of a fraudster buying up shares from small investors. With the help of the Eagle Star Insurance Co, this was averted, bringing Eagle Star onto the board.

In 1959 there was an agreement with stationers John Menzies who took over Wyman's Bookstalls and sold the printers back and the old company of Cox & Wyman was revived to run them for the next 10 years until they were sold to Thomas Tilling.

After the second world war Wymans bought a printer in Truro - quite why is a mystery. If they were still producing work for the GWR it would have made sense.

It is interesting to note that work produced for the GWR in Fakenham may have begun its journey on the Great Eastern Railway!