

LNWR Research Guide

No.1 - Staff History

Introduction

This guide is aimed at anyone wanting to research their family history where they think that a family member was employed by the LNWR or for researching staff employed in particular departments of the Company. Its scope covers primarily LNWR records, although mention is made of constituent and joint company records and those of the LMS after 1923, but it excludes census and other non-railway records.

The LNWR employed about 80,000 people at its peak, so over its existence from 1846 to 1923 must have employed several hundred thousand staff altogether. It is unlikely therefore that records of all of these employees still exist.

General Guidance

In order to trace a particular employee quickly, you need to know whether he (or she) was salaried or wages staff, and what department they worked for. Just knowing that they worked for the LNWR in Birmingham or in Manchester (for example) may lead to a lengthy and possibly fruitless search.

The LNWR also organised its larger departments (Traffic/Coaching/Goods, Locomotive and Permanent Way) into geographic divisions and districts. However, the divisional structures and areas were not the same in each department and also varied over time as the organisation developed. Appendix 2 attempts to provide a simplified view of these structures.

The upper echelons of LNWR staff were salaried, including senior officers, managers, superintendents, engineers and some inspectors. Some of the more responsible Station Master posts were salaried, lesser ones waged. There was also an army of clerks employed in the headquarters and local offices of each department, in goods offices processing mountains of invoices, consignment notes and delivery notes and in booking offices and parcels offices. Most if not all clerks would be salaried staff. In this category were also a small number of professional and specialist staff such as doctors, vicars, matrons, teachers and chefs.

The majority of LNWR staff were wages staff, paid weekly, including all manual workers. These are best summarised by department. Only a few of the very large number of job titles used by the LNWR are given below as examples.

Station staff, such as stationmasters, porters, parcels porters and ticket collectors, were in the Traffic Department and classified as "coaching". Staff dealing with trains, such as passenger guards, breaksmen (ie goods guards) and shunters, were in the same department but classified as "traffic". Also included were signalmen, gatekeepers and police constables in the category of "police".

There were also many wages staff at goods depots, employed by the Goods Department. These included loaders, checkers, carters, foremen, numbertakers etc. - all the people who actually got their hands dirty with the goods.

Men working on or with engines were employed at engine shed by the Locomotive

Department. They included drivers, firemen and cleaners as well as some labourers and staff maintaining the locomotives. There were also staff in many trades for manufacturing locomotives and many other things based at Crewe Works where the heavier maintenance and repairs were done. Some intermediate levels of repair were also carried out at Rugby. The Electrical Department (from 1910) was a section within the Loco Dept. dealing with all matters electrical.

The Carriage Department and the Wagon Department employed only manufacturing & maintenance staff at their works in Wolverton and Earlestown and some staff at the larger stations, carriage sheds/siding and larger goods yards to deal with cleaning, lubrication and maintenance and repairs to the rolling stock.

All men involved in maintaining and relaying the track, maintaining bridges and other structures were employed by the Permanent Way Department, which employed the platelayers, gangers and a range of building tradesmen. New works were designed and carried out or the contracts supervised by the Engineer's Department. Signal and Telegraph staff were in specialist sections of the Engineer's Department.

There were also smaller departments such as Hotels (Hotels, Refreshment Rooms, Dining Cars and Laundries), Marine, Rolling Stock (distribution), Detective and Stores which employed a mixture of salaried and wages staff. Others such as Secretary's, Cashiers', Accounts, Expenditure, Audit, Estate and Solicitor's employed very few wages staff apart from perhaps a few messengers and cleaners.

Books

The main books on the subject are general guides to researching family history in railway records.

Railway Ancestors. A Guide to Staff Records of Railway Cos. of England & Wales 1822-1947 by D.A.Hawkins published by Alan Sutton Publishing in 1995. ISBN 0-7509-0883-1. This includes a section on the LNWR.

Was Your Grandfather a Railwayman? Directory of archive sources. 4th Ed. by T.Richards published by the Federation of Family History Societies in 2002. ISBN 1-86006-161-3

Railway Records by Cliff Edwards. Contains details of sources of railway history as well as those relating to employees. Available from The National Archives (TNA). ISBN: 1-900336-510-4.

The Society Bibliography of Books can be used to search for books on specific well known LNWR personalities.

Bradshaw published a series of annual 'Handbooks for Railway Shareholders' which list the directors and senior officers.

Magazine Articles

In general unless an employee has done something exceptional or was a senior railway officer, railway magazines will not be a useful source.

The Society Bibliography of Periodicals on the web site can be used to identify magazine and newspaper articles on specific events or senior staff and it has complete sets of 'Railway Magazine' and 'Railway and Travel Monthly'.

However the staff magazines of the railways do contain considerable amounts of information about staff activities, primarily in recreational clubs and at other social events but also on retiring staff and promotions. In the case of the LNWR there is the LNWR Gazette (started as the Premier Railway Athletic Gazette in 1912) which was published between 1913 and 1923.

The Society has an almost complete set of LNWR Gazettes in its collection, all articles and notes from which are listed in the Society Bibliography of Periodicals with many names. During WW1 the Gazette included a monthly Roll of Honour of those killed, wounded, missing and decorated.

The Gazette was followed by the LMS Magazine which continued to report on ex-LNWR employees. There are no indices to help locate specific names.

Sources on the Internet

The LNWR Society web site www.lnwrs.org.uk has a section on Staff with a database of names and information gleaned from various sources including information on individuals, supplied by non-members who have researched their own family history. We are always grateful to receive such information to add to the database.

At many LNWR locations - engine sheds, goods sheds etc. there were memorials to those who lost their lives in WW1. The names and locations of such memorials can be found at:-

www.channel4.com/history/microsites/L/lostgeneration/index.html

Cheshire Record Office has an LNWR staff database on its site at:-

www.cheshire.gov.uk/Recordoffice/recordofficehome.htm

Railway Ancestors Family History Society at:

www.railwayancestors.org.uk

Railway Index of major and minor accident reports of railwaymen at:

www.lightage.demon.co.uk/RAILWAY.htm

Society Archives

The Society does not have a lot of staff records but there are a number of LNWR books containing records of particular groups of employees at specific locations as well as some items on accidents, pay and conditions, insurance societies and schemes for staff travel at reduced cost.

The specific items currently held in the archive are:-

Roll of Honour - staff killed, decorated or mentioned in dispatches in WW1. Information provided is name, forces rank, work location and job. The names can be searched on the Society web site. Copies of pages of the Roll of Honour can be purchased from the Archivist, who also holds a database containing the information from the Roll of Honour which is fully searchable by name, location etc.

Ramsbotton Testimonial - a collection of over 7000 signatures of Locomotive Department employees of the LNWR in 1871. It covers Crewe Works and all Steam (Engine) Sheds throughout the system. The names are grouped by location or in the case of Crewe Works, by the shop they worked in. The information is searchable in a database and copies of the pages can be purchased.

Speke Junction Steam Shed employees register, 1890s to 1910s. Lists the names, start dates, ages, grades, promotion dates, leaving dates and remarks for Enginemen, Firemen and Cleaners.

Liverpool and Birkenhead Area training records of Capstan operators, Shunters and Crane Drivers from about 1900 into LMS and BR periods. Gives date of birth, date of employment, date into current position and training records.

Warwick and Leamington Steam Shed employees register 1910s to early LMS period.

Accident Record Book for a large area centred on Crewe giving the name, location, position and accident details for dates between June 1913 and May 1922.

List of Senior staff, station masters and good agents March 1921.

A few items on particular individuals can be found in the Society Archive database.

The Archivist is building up a database, primarily of more senior staff and directors, for future addition to the web site. This can be searched for specific names on request.

The Society has a number of photographs of groups of LNWR staff, most of whom are unfortunately unidentified, and a few individuals whose names we know.

The archive is continually being expanded so please check with the Archivist for any recent additions.

National Archive at Kew

A large number of LNWR Staff Records can be found in the LNWR series RAIL 410/1797 to 1986.

Constituent companies and Joint company records can also be found under the relevant references in the catalogue on line or listed in the book 'Railway Ancestors' mentioned previously.

The salaried staff - company officers, engineers, draughtsmen, accountants and clerks have their records listed by department giving, generally, date of birth, date of employment, dates and salary changes and date of leaving employment with reasons in a number of volumes. There are frequently references to the Committee minute numbers recording decisions on promotions and salaries.

The wages staff records are similarly organised by Department and then location.

The table below shows the various pieces numbers at the TNA organised by Monthly paid (M) and Weekly paid (W) and then generally in date range order. Some of the date ranges have been verified by looking at the volumes concerned but others are just the catalogue entries which give the earliest date of birth rather than the start of the employment period covered by that volume. Most volumes seem to record a period of ten years or so. See Appendix 2 for outline of the Divisional structures.

Work on the coverage of each volume is ongoing and updates to this guide will be included as more information becomes available. Contributions to this are always welcome.

Date Range Approx. TNA Piece RAIL 410/ Monthly /Wages Index
Piece

Date Range Approx.	TNA Piece RAIL 410/	Monthly /Wages	Index Piece	Departments	Locations
1846-50	1855	M	1865	See Appendix 1	All
1850-61	1856	M	1867	See Appendix 1	All
1851-56	1857	M	?	See Appendix 1	All
1863-78	1854	M	1853	See Appendix 1	All
1880-1897	1850	M	1853	See Appendix 1	All
1897-1914	1848	M	1851/2	See Appendix 1	All
1897-1915	1849	M	1851/2	See Appendix 1	All
1832-56	1869	M		?	Southern Division
1838-45	1870	M		?	North Eastern Div.
1857-63	1871	M	1872	?	S, N, & NE Divs.
1845-78	1837	M		Goods Dept	?
1858-1918	1838	M		Goods Dept	?
1851-1917	1839	M		Goods Dept	?
1856-1918	1840	M		Goods Dept	?
1855-1917	1841	M		Goods Dept	?
1843-97	1842	M		Goods Dept	?
1857-97	1843	M	1853?	Goods Dept	?
1859-78	1844	M		Coaching Dept	All
1900-20	1845	M		Coaching Dept	S, NNP, Central, Shrop, SWales, NUR Divs
1900-17	1846	M		Coaching Dept	N, NE, NWales, Ireland, L&C, West Cumb. Div
1858-97	1847	M	1853?	Coaching Dept	?
1917-26	1890	M		Record cards. ?	?
1917-26	1891	M		Record cards. ?	?
1909-?	1861	M		Traffic	Inc NLR and N&SWJ

1847-52	1858	W	1863	Most	Most
1852-60	1859	W	1864	Most	Most
1866-78	1860	W?	?	Most	Most
1870-76	1798	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Southern Division
1875-90	1797	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Southern Division
1890-1901	1799	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Southern Division
1902-1911	1800	W		Coaching	Southern Division
1902-1911	1801	W		Traffic & Police	Southern Division
1861-19??	1814	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	NN&P Div
19??-1914	1815	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	NN&P Div
1860-71	1805	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Central Division
1872-78	1806	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Central Division
1878-85	1807	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Central Division
1886-93	1808	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Central Division
1894-1902	1803	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Central Division
1903-1910	1804	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Central Division
1907-11	1802	W		Coaching, Traffic, Police	Northern Division
	1828			Traffic - Guards	
1911?-1926	1892	W		Record cards. ?	?
	1873-1874	?		?	?
	1812-1813			Superintendent's Dept.	
	1811			Rolling Stock	Crewe
1861-1913	1893-4			Marine Dept. Ships Crews	
1870s on	1905-14			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works AR series	Chronological list for each surname
1870s on	1915-17			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works AL series	Chronological Arrivals & departures by alphabet

1870s on	1918-28			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works FR series	Chronological arrivals and departures by Foreman
1870s on	1929-45			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works MR series	Chronological arrivals & departures with weekly totals
	1946-51			Locomotive Dept.	
	1952-1953			Locomotive Dept.	Outstations
	1954-1958			Locomotive Dept.	Staff under Foremen
	1963-1970			Locomotive Dept.	Inc. temporary
	1971			Locomotive Dept.	Chester Shed
	1834			Locomotive Dept	Bushbury Shed
	1874-1882			Goods Dept.	Liverpool
	1831			?	Broad St. London
	1830			?	London Rd. Mchr
	1835-1836			?	New St. B'ham
	1832-1833			Police Dept.	
	1816-1827			?	Caution, suspension and punishment books
	1902-1903			?	Engagement Agreements
	1872			?	Register of fines
	1959-1962			Locomotive Dept.	Crewe. Weekly staff statistics
	1986			?	Accident pay
	1893-99			?	Various funds, gradings & bonuses
	1889	M		?	Allowances & gratuities
	1875-1886			?	Salary changes
	1829			?	Conditions of service
1898	2213			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works. Vol.M	Appointments
1899	2214			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works. Vol.N	Appointments

C1904-13	2215-21			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works. Vols.R-X	New entrants
1918-23	2222			Locomotive Dept. Crewe Works. Vol.Z	Appointments

Appendix 1 gives a page index to some of the registers by department.

There is a set of annual LNWR publications 'Roll of Directors and Principal Officers' in two volumes

1852 to 1876 - RAIL 410/1267

1877 to 1923 - RAIL 410/1268

These two volumes contain a series of papers, later in the form of small diaries, listing the Directors with the committees they attended and Principal Officers in each department.

The minutes of various Committees of Directors, each of which managed one or more of the operating departments of the LNWR, frequently contain lists of staff salary changes, promotions and disciplinary actions. However, the indexes, where provided, generally do not give references to staff names so it is a case of searching the minutes for the names required. These minutes can be found in the RAIL 410 series.

There are also similar records for the LNWR constituent and joint companies catalogued under separate RAIL number references. For example the Grand Junction documents are catalogued in the RAIL 210 series.

Staff records for the LMS period (post 1923) are contained in pieces RAIL 426/1 to 15 with Management and Correspondence files mentioning staff in pieces RAIL 1172/176 to 467.

The Railway Inspector's Reports on accidents to trains, passengers and railway staff are held in series RAIL 1053. Other records created by the Railway Inspectorate of the Board of Trade and Ministry of Transport are held in series MT 114. Correspondence and papers relating to railway accidents can be found in series MT 6. RAIL 1053/69 contains Returns of Railway Accidents and casualties and another register of accidents can be found at MT 7/85.

The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers contain reports relating to major and especially fatal accidents and are usually to be found printed in an annual return to Parliament. These may be read in a set of House of Commons' papers in any large reference library and the National Archive library.

The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers contain reports relating to major and especially fatal accidents and are usually to be found printed in an annual return to Parliament. These may be read in a set of House of Commons' papers in any large reference library and the National Archive library.

A members of the North London Railway Historical Society has been cataloguing North London Railway Staff records held at Kew. The first register has now been indexed and is shown in the catalogue - RAIL 529/130 Staff Register (new entrants). To find a name go to the Catalogue <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/>, click 'Search The Catalogue', in 'Word or phrase' type in the name of the person you wish to find and in 'Department or Series Code' type in RAIL 529. Do not try to be helpful by typing in RAIL 529/130, it doesn't work. Post 1909, when the LNWR took over, there is a volume RAIL 410/1861 that contains some NLR staff records.

RAIL 529/130 is not something that can be browsed quickly. With about five hundred and sixty names and only about fifteen names to a page that is upward of forty pages to go through.

RAIL 529/131 Staff Register (Coaching & Police Depts) has been completed and should now be included in the catalogue. RAIL 529/132 Staff Register No 1 is currently being indexed.

County Record Offices

Street directories for towns list the name of each householder and their occupation.

Cheshire Record Office holds 12 volumes (B to E - alpha list of staff in service at Crewe c1890, G to K - chronological appointments, O and P new entrants Sep 1900 to Nov 1902) of staff records for Crewe Works 1854-1902 (it appears that there were five other volumes from that series that they do not have. (M and N are thought to be at Kew as RAIL 410/2213 & 2214, R thru X as RAIL 410/2215 to 2221 and Z RAIL 410/2222), 4 volumes from another series on Crewe Works staff from c1919 to 1928, a volume for Carlisle 1873-1927 and a volume for Rugby 1874-1928.

There are three volumes on the Chester & Holyhead Division (Crewe - Chester - Holyhead and branches), which departments and staff are covered has not been established.

NPR2/27	c1870-91
NPR2/10	1891-1904
NPR2/11	1904-12

The Cheshire RO online database is excellent for finding who was where and when, but for full details, dates of transfer, reasons etc. the actual registers need to be consulted.

Museums

Milton Keynes Museum (McConnell Drive, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5EL) holds some records of Wolverton Works employees.

On-Line Catalogues

National Archives Kew <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Archives Network Wales <http://www.archivesnetworkwales.info>

National Archives of Ireland <http://www.nationalarchives.ie>

Access to Archives <http://www.a2a.org.uk/>

Tracking Railway Archives Project <http://www.trap.org.uk>

County Record Offices in the LNWR area with on-line catalogues

England

Bedfordshire <http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/archive>

Cheshire <http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/Recordoffice/recordofficehome.htm>

Liverpool <http://archive.liverpool.gov.uk/home.html>

Staffordshire <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/live/welcome.asp?id=2836>

Surrey <http://www1.surreycc.gov.uk/shssearch/content/search.asp>

East Riding of Yorkshire <http://www.eastriding.gov.uk/libraries/archives/welcome.html>

West Yorkshire <http://www.dswebhosting.info/WYAS/>

Wales

Ceredigion <http://archifdy-credigion.org.uk/index.html>

Gwynedd <http://hen.gwynedd.gov.uk/adrannau/addysg/archifau/index.english.htm>

Appendix 1 Department Page Indices to some Salaried and Waged Staff Registers in Kew

RAIL 410/1848 (pages 3089 to 3529)

Engineering (Civil & Permanent Way) 3089 - 3135,
Estate 3146 - 3167,
Signalling, Telegraph, Electrical, 3136 - 3145, 3168-3292,
Locomotive 3313 - 3424,
Carriage 3425-3435,
Wagon 3438 - 3440,
Marine 3444 - 3461,
Stores 3462 - 3468,
General Manager 3468 - 3475, 3476 - 3489, 3526 - 3529,
Secretary 3429-3496,
Superintendent of the Line 3476 - 3489, 3520 - 3525,
Cashiers 3502 - 3512,
Transfer 3492 - 3496, 3497 - 3500,
Agents in Paris, Brussels and New York 3490 - 3491.

RAIL 410/1849 (pages 3569 - 4043)

Audit Office 3569 - 3641,
Accounts and Expenditure 3663 - 3671 and 3673 - 3686,
Solicitor 3689 - 3695,
Euston Rates and Fares 3696 - 3697,
Medical, Churches, Schools and Savings Bank 3698 - 3712,
Hotel Accounts 3736, 3748 - 3749,
Retiring Allowances 3745 - 3747,
Hotel Superintendent, Hotels, Refreshment Rooms, Dining Cars, Laundries and stores 3750 - 4012, 4038 - 4039, 4041, 4043,
Euston National Insurance and Insurance, Provident and Pension Societies, and Superannuation 4016 - 4018, 4023,
Shrewsbury GW, North London and Birmingham Canal Navigation 4020 - 4022,
Secretary and General Manager 4024,
Library and Literary Association 4025,
Widows and Orphans Fund 4026,
Allowances for North London services 4028 - 4029,

RAIL 410/1850 (pages 1601 - 2139)

Engineering (Civil & Permanent Way) 1601 - 1670, 1997,
Signal 1671 - 1673,
Signal 1671 - 1673,
Estate 1677 - 1686,
Telegraph 1687 - 1772,
Locomotive 1773 - 1812, 2122 - 2128,
Medical 1807, 1995,
Carriage 1813 - 1818,
Wagon 1819 - 1821,
Holyhead Steamboat 1822 - 1836,
PW, General and Oil & Grease Stores 1837 - 1843, 1981, 1996, 2119,
General Manager 1844 - 1860, 2080,
Secretary 1861 - 1866, 1884, 2080,
Transfer 1867 - 1870,
Cashier 1872 - 1875, 1877 - 1883,

Audit 1888 - 1963,
Accounts and Expenditure 1965 - 1969, 1971 - 1980,
Solicitor 1982 - 1989,
Rates and Taxes 1990,
Land and Estate 1992 - 1944, 1996, 1998 - 2000,
Birmingham Canal Navigation 1995
Superannuation 1997,
Goods 1997,
Hotels, Refreshment Rooms and Laundries 1997, 2001 - 2076, 2083, 2086 - 2111,
Insurance and Provident Societies and Pension Fund 2077 - 2078,
Churches and Schools 2081 - 2082, 2084, 2113 - 2118, 2120,
North London 2079,
Preston Joint Parcels & Coaching 2083,
Euston Library and Savings Bank 2112,
Retiring Allowances 2138.

RAIL 410/1854

General Manager and Traffic Manager 1-2, 37 - 39, 104,
Secretary including Transfer, Cashier and Messengers 3 - 14,
Audit 15 - 29, 40, 132 -139, 115,
Accounts and Expenditure 30 - 31, 139 - 140,
Stores 32, 105 - 107,
Estate and Land 33 - 36, 127,
Engineering (Civil and Permanent Way) 41 - 64,
Locomotive 65 - 90,
Carriage 95 - 99,
Wagon 101 - 103,
Steamboat 109 - 113,
Telegraph and Advertising 115, 141 - 186,
Rates and Taxes 116,
Solicitor 117 - 119,
Medical, Churches and Schools 121, 125 - 126,
Signals 128, 131,
Lancaster and Preston Canal 129,
Insurance and Pension Fund 130,
Hotels, Refreshment Rooms and Laundries 187 - 250,
Coaching Joint staff Kensington, Chelsea and Battersea 241- 244.

RAIL 410/1855

Manager 1 - 2,
Secretary 3 -8,
Superintendent 9,
Superintendent 9,
Branch Lines 10,
Audit and Treasurer 11 - 14,
Engineering (Civil and Permanent Way) 15 - 23,
Camden Coke Ovens 26,
Locomotive 27 - 32,
Coach and Wagon Repairs 33 - 35, 37,
Estate 39 - 40,
Goods 41 - 102
Police 102
Coaching 109 - 206,
Churches, Schools and Town 207.

RAIL 410/1856

The first and last pages provide a more detailed index of departments and locations.

General Manager 1 - 3,
Solicitor 4,
Secretary, Transfer and Cashier 5 - 12,
Church and Schools 14,
Superintendent (inc. Police) 14 - 17,
Audit 19,
Accounts 27,
Engineering and Permanent Way 29 - 31, 35 - 44,
Estate and Rating 34,
Rail Works Crewe 49,
Locomotive 51 - 73,
Coke - Darlington 75,
Coach and Wagon Repairs 78 - 88,
Coaching and Goods 83 - 246,
Canals 248 - 250.

RAIL 410/1857

An index to departments and stations is provided at the front of the volume.

Managers Euston and Liverpool 1-2,
Secretary/Transfer/Cashier/Branch Lines 3-7,
Superintendent 9-10,
Audit and Accounts 11-14,
Engineering 15,
Engineering Chester, Edge Hill, Warrington & Liverpool 17,
Engineering Manchester, Stafford and Tamworth 18,
Rail Works Crewe 20,
Coach Repairs Euston, Saltley and Crewe 31, 37,
Wagon Repairs Camden and Manchester 33-34,
Permanent Way 39,
Locomotive various sites 27-30,
Estate & Rating Euston & Liverpool 35-36,
Church & Schools Wolverton & Crewe 38,
Coaching various locations 41-96,
Police 98,
Huddersfield Canal 139,
Livestock 97,
Goods 99-136.

Appendix 2 Outline of Divisional Structures.

In 1846 when the company was formed there were three Divisions based on the main constituent companies, which were the same for all departments (Traffic, Locomotive and Engineering).

In 1846 when the company was formed there were three Divisions based on the main constituent companies, which were the same for all departments (Traffic, Locomotive and Engineering).

Southern - ex London & Birmingham, basically everything south of Birmingham.

Northern - ex Grand Junction/Liverpool & Manchester and up to Preston.

North Eastern - ex Manchester & Birmingham and lines east of Manchester.

As the organisation grew the various department organisations diverged. The following is a much simplified description.

The traffic part of the business grew into seven divisions (sometimes called districts) generally dealing with timetabling, passenger traffic and stations:

- Southern - lines south of Stafford and to east of the WCML
- Northampton, Nottingham & Peterborough - east of Rugby
- Central - Birmingham area
- Northern - Stafford to Preston, Liverpool, Liverpool-Manchester
- North Eastern - Crewe-Manchester and lines to the east and south of Manchester
- Lancaster & Carlisle - Preston to Carlisle and Cumbria area
- Shropshire Union & South Wales - Crewe-Shrewsbury, Central and South Wales

Within most of these areas there were Goods Districts at the larger traffic centres dealing with goods traffic. e.g. Garston and Leeds.

The Permanent Way Department was re-organised gradually into ten divisions by 1909.

- Southern - lines south of Rugby
- Rugby - Rugby, Northampton and lines to the east and the LNWR & GNR Joint
- Birmingham - Birmingham area
- Central - Stafford-Crewe, Crewe- Shrewsbury, Crewe-Stockport, Crewe-Warrington
- Chester & Holyhead - Crewe-Chester and all of North Wales
- Western - Liverpool, Liverpool-Manchester, Warrington-Boars Head, Bolton area
- Eastern - Stockport-Manchester, Stockport-Buxton and east of Manchester
- Northern - Boars Head-Carlisle and lines in Cumbria
- South Wales - Central Wales line and all of South Wales
- London - ex North London Railway lines after 1909

The Locomotive Department was based at Crewe but had two divisions for running purposes, Northern based at Crewe and Southern at Rugby.