

The first Kenilworth railway station . . .

Kenilworth's first railway station, which was thought to have been demolished in 1883, is still standing in the town.

That's the claim of a local amateur historian who has devoted hours of research to the origins of the local railway network.

Robin Leach says that the original station is well known in the town — as The Vaults in Station Road, at the rear of the Kings Arms and Castle Hotel.

He has uncovered documentary proof in the form of a town directory advertisement of 1887.

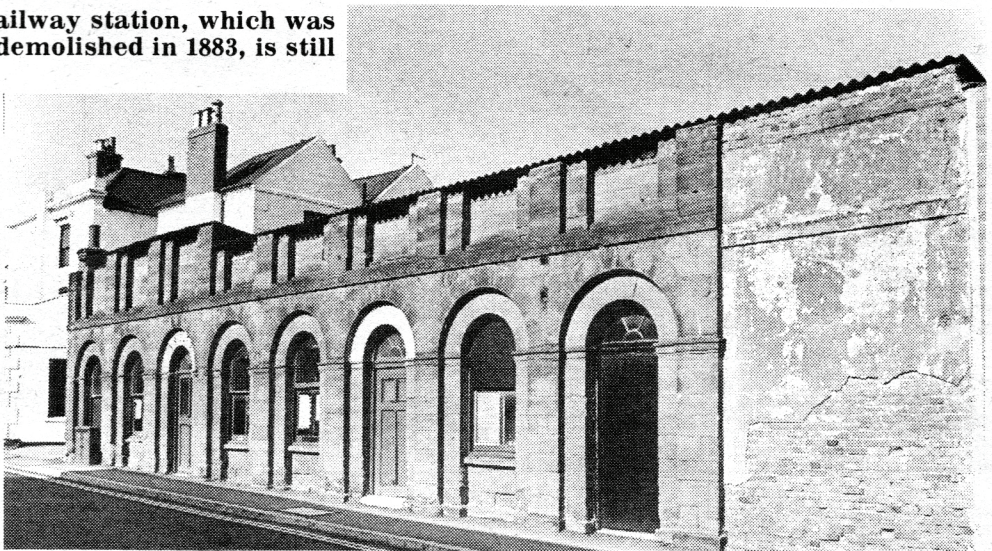
And Robin says dimensions of the Vaults match exactly the size of the foundations of the station which were recently uncovered.

His discoveries have excited the Kenilworth History of Archaeology Society which describes his work as valuable and extremely interesting.

Chairman Mr Richard Storey says the evidence appears quite clear. The society have also taken photographs and measurements on the station site, and the sandstone foundations revealed recently are part of the original buildings.

"The fact that stonework was re-erected at the Kings Arms is extremely interesting and Mr Leach has provided some most useful other information about railway activities.

"The society is preparing a leaflet to record the



The Vaults in Station Road — evidence that it was once the town's station

**STORY DOUG
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station and some of this material will be included," said Mr Storey.

An artist's impression of the first Kenilworth station, built in 1844, was carried in the London Illustrated News of the time, and has been reprinted in two of John H. Drew's histories.

It is shown as a single storey building with five archways forming the doors and windows.

The Vaults building has the same archways, although there are eight of them — but Robin has further evidence to show that the station was enlarged after its opening.

The key link which tied the Vaults with the station is an advertisement from a Warwickshire directory of 1887 — four years after the first station was supposedly demolished.

The advertisement makes it crystal clear that the building was, in fact, moved lock stock and barrel down Station Road to the Kings Arms — to be re-erected as a restaurant.

This is what Spennell's Warwick Enterprise Almanack and Directory says:

"Kings Arms and Castle Hotel, Castle End, Kenilworth: In a direct line to the Castle and nearest Hotel to the Station. The Stonework forming the Old Railway Station has been re-erected here, and forms the new and spacious refreshment rooms."

The advertisement appeared on more than one occasion and the news of the buildings was obviously of some importance to the proprietor of the Kings Arms.

But the Vaults, it must be

It was taken down and rebuilt says Robin



The first station — built 1844 and moved 1883

pointed out, was in living memory, a two-storey building, and the railway station was clearly single storey.

Robin Leach says this can be explained by the fact that the original buildings had arches front and back.

On its re-erection the two sides were placed one on top of the other to form a double storey frontage in Station Road.

The rear of the Vaults was made up of other material and in recent years the top storey has been removed, but the lower arched frontage remains.

Robin says he has measured the building and it fits perfectly the foundations on the station site, with the archways matching up.

He is very excited at the discovery, having been fascinated with railways for many years. He lives in Arthur Street, Kenilworth, but hails from London.

"I started taking a particular interest in the station when demolition was threatened. Since then I have built up quite a picture," said 30-year-old Robin who has made many visits to the County Record Office — where he discovered the directory.

"I see no reason at all to doubt that the Vaults is the original station building. There cannot be many 1844 sandstone railway buildings left, never mind one taken down and re-erected.

He has also discovered a pre-1883 plan of the station site which shows an enlarged station from the original. He believes three extra arches were added as business expanded. And those eight arches are now nicely preserved in Station Road . . .

Robin would be delighted to know of anyone with information and stories about the station and the railway in Kenilworth. He can be contacted at 118 Arthur Street.

Directory reveals all

KING'S ARMS & CASTLE HOTEL, CASTLE END, KENILWORTH,

In a direct line to the Castle, and nearest Hotel to the Station. The Stonework forming the Old Railway Station has been re-erected here, and forms the new and spacious Refreshment Rooms.

COFFEE & COMMERCIAL ROOMS.
PRIVATE SITTING ROOMS. BILLIARD ROOM.
BOWLING GREEN. EXTENSIVE YARD.

Stabling and Loose Boxes for Hunters.

EVERY FACILITY for the ACCOMMODATION of LARGE PARTIES.
The Assembly Room will seat 500 to 600 Persons.