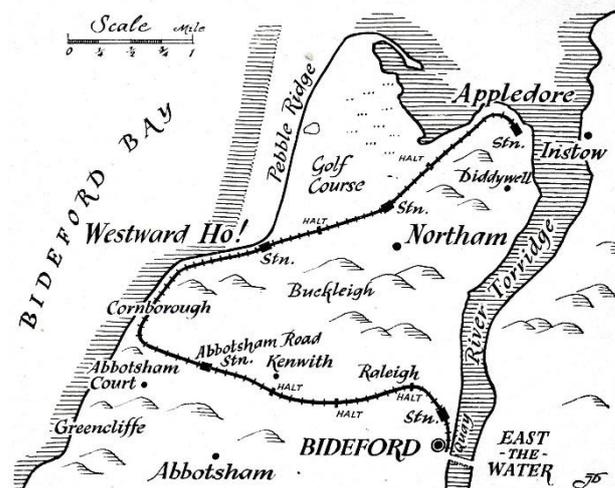


The Bideford, Westward Ho! and Appledore Railway by Jim Wigmore

This small and short lived railway is not well known philatelically, although examples can be found. Bideford's Museum in the Burton Gallery has a few examples of mail relating to the railway. All mail would have been delivered to or from, but not actually carried upon the railway. The Bideford, Westward Ho! And Appledore Railway Act received Royal Assent on Thursday May 21st 1896 and the railway opened as far as Westward Ho! on Monday

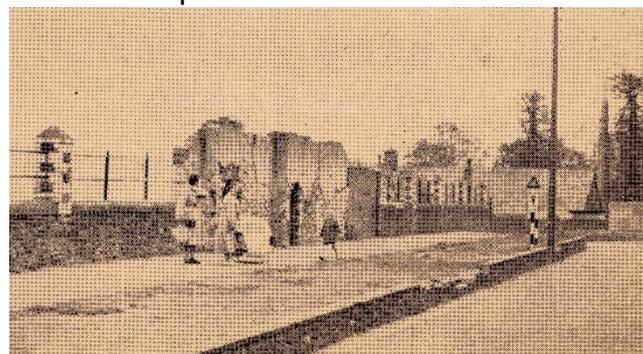


May 20th 1901, the extension to Appledore did not open for a further seven years.

A typical train is shown at the terminus on Bideford Quay left and the route of the railway is shown in the map above.

As can be seen from the map the railway was not connected to the LSWR railway operating on the

opposite site of the River Torridge, this was a major part of the railways final demise along with the fact that it was operated as a tourist railway only. The shareholders of the company never received any dividends as the railway always ran at a loss hence the enterprise was doomed to failure. The end came on Tuesday 27th March 1917 when the last train ran and all the locomotives carriages and rails were requisitioned by the Government for use in France. The sad thing is the ship carrying most of the above was sunk by a German Submarine off Padstow. [Locomotive "Kingsley" survived and was scrapped in 1937 after being sold by the Ministry of Munitions to the National Smelting Company in Avonmouth.](#) (Thanks to Pete Halmkin for this information)



Much of the railway route can still be seen and followed if you know where to look. Appledore Station is seen right after the closure, although it now forms part of Torridge Road a plaque appears on the wall as a commemoration.

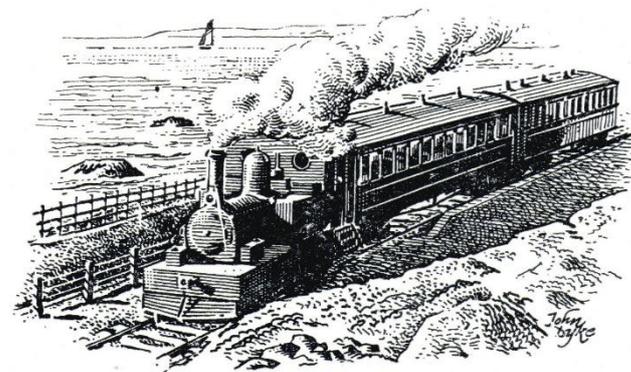


There are those who think the Appledore RSO cancel means Appledore Railway Station Office, this is not so it actually means Appledore Rural Post Office.

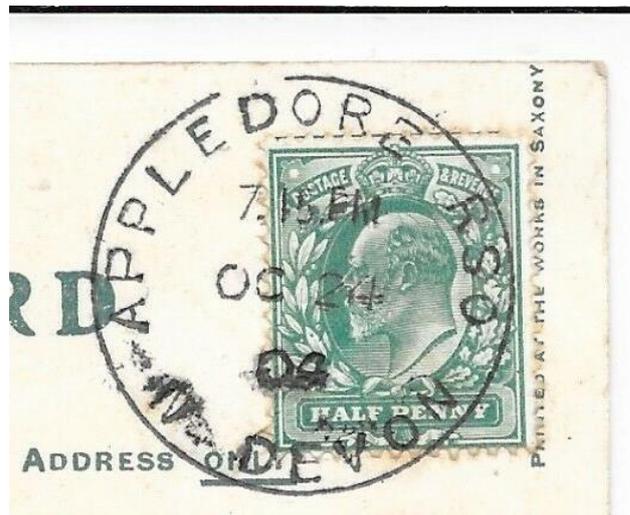
The illustration right gives a good idea of how the trains looked, the journey must have been very picturesque.

It is now almost 100 years since this short lived venture started and failed and it still has a fascination amongst railway historians and philatelists alike.

Thanks to Edith Rees of Exeter for the supply of copies of articles that appeared in the Bideford Gazette and Devon Life about the railway.



The following postmarks were identified by John Wheeley



The Bidford cancel shown above left is the Bidford Duplex likely to have been in use at the time of the railway, Bidford Stamp Club in conjunction with the Post Office were able to re-create the Bidford Duplex Cancel for use on a series of Special Covers for their 50th Anniversary.

Each member of the club was given a cover printed in Gold (*the gold has not reproduced very well*) signed by the Chairman of the time, see the reproduction below.

One of these special covers was accepted for inclusion in the Royal Collection.

