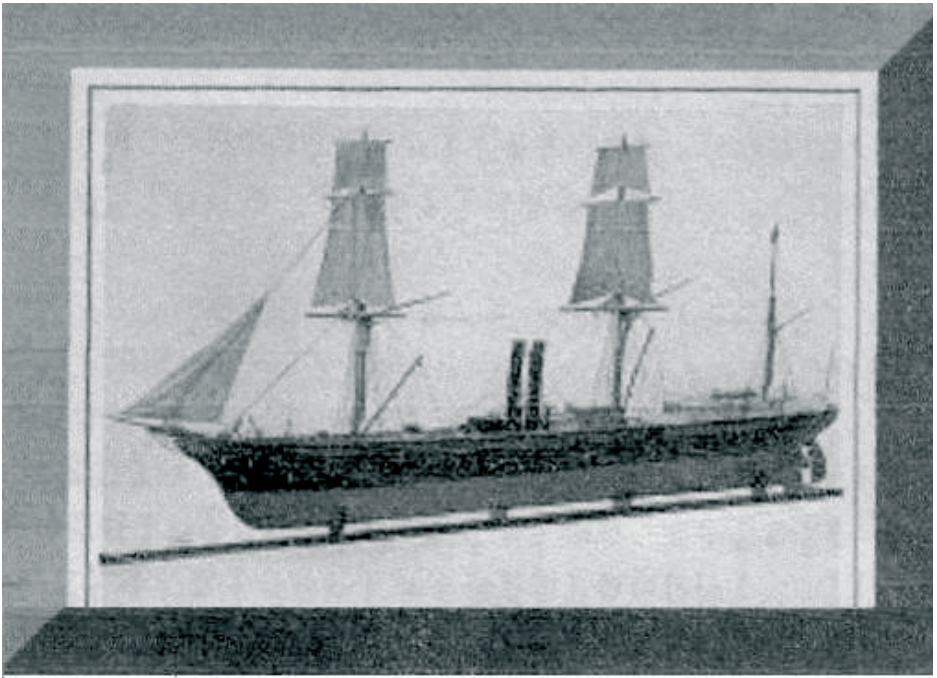


Florence Nightingale's Journey Home from the Crimea



Danube

George Wigglesworth

Oct 2010



Florence Nightingale

Foreword

Resolving the differing accounts and dates of the last few miles of Florence Nightingale's return from the Crimea in 1856 necessitated trying to verify her times through France, thence to London and from there home to Holloway, Derbyshire. This records such findings in detail if thereby diminishing the readability. One is faced with relating information from biographies of up to 100 years ago, where references are mainly absent, with present day ones. Letters are numerous and more clearly establish the circumstances. This booklet supercedes and extends Item 1, The end of the journey ... in Wigglesworth, G. Florence Nightingale in Holloway, Second Edition, Published privately, 2010.

There are very many books, some more scholarly than others, very many web sites, most of them unscholarly. There is a lack of obvious quotation of any, given, primary sources. What emerges is a very confused picture about the last stages, especially the last mile and a half which being local is my primary concern. The impression I gain is that much is embellishment. It may be staff seeking reflected glory by seeming involved in this event of some moment. Perhaps journalists sought to add details to add authenticity having consulted the 'village gossip'. Details of this event I tried and failed finally to resolve.

I am grateful to the helpful responses from archivists at The Nightingale Museum in London, Claydon House, The French Railways [SNCF], The Railway Museum at York, Hazel Bargiel, Phillippe Ramona, the Gaskell brothers and various biographers as well as other people. Predominantly my thanks are to John Slaney of Whatstandwell. In many, many emails he has reacted, responded and shared his researches. It should not however be assumed we agree on everything!

Supposed Timetable

Depart Constantinople	Monday 28 th July 1856
Arrive Marseilles.	Monday 4 th August
Up to 7 days sailing time if at 8 knots working speed over 1400 nautical miles + 2 short stops	
Depart Marseilles [22 hr journey at least]	Monday 4 th August?
Arrive Paris	Tuesday 5 th August?
Depart Paris [overnight to London?]	Wednesday 6 th August 7.30 pm
Arrive London	Thursday 7 th August 7.45 am
Depart London	Thursday 7 th August, noon
Met at Whatstandwell Bridge Station	Thursday 7 th August, evening

The war officially ended 30th March 1856 when the Treaty of Paris was signed. Florence had clear intentions arising from the duties she felt she had. She wrote over a hundred reports on her nurses and was resolved to leave only when the last soldier had left. At the end of June she thought she might leave on the Ottawa but was still there a month later. The nurses all left and two military transports carrying them arrived at Spithead, Portsmouth, the ST Thames on 4th July 1856, the ST Ottawa on 23rd July. The passengers on one were listed as 7 Lady Nurses, 16 Second Class Nurses and two hospital staff. It was by such transport that Florence's carriage came to England, together no doubt with her other bulky items of luggage.

Mother Fanny and sister Parthenope asked Aunt Mai repeatedly for details of Florence's plans and she replied that they had not been determined, which was in fact the case. That such enquiry was serious is indicated by one of their proposals, namely that they all met in Aix. Florence seems to have assiduously avoided any celebrations or reunions anywhere, even finally on Whatstandwell Bridge [sic] station platform [opened Sept 1853]. This is corroborated by a letter from Parthenope [in Bundle N291 at Claydon House dated 30th July 1856] saying the family do not know when Florence is due to return and that this is a deliberate policy by Florence so that the family can honestly say that they do not know "& so avoid all greetings & receptions".

Florence travelled incognito at the government's expense as *Miss Smith* with her Aunt Mai [Mrs Mary Smith, née Shore, her father's sister] who had been in the Crimea since 16th Sept 1855. She was accompanied by a Queen's Messenger to take care of the arrangements. He would draw attention to the party if he travelled as such although as such he wore plain clothes. However he may have been seen as a paid employee accompanying two ladies on their travels. We hear no more about him and do not know where he parted company. It is clear the Government did not exploit information it might have sought from him about her journey. It seems widely accepted that she left Turkey on 28th July 1856 on Danube. It was the first propeller ship launched in La Ciotat especially for Imperial Courier August 15th, 1855. It sailed via Athens and Messina to Marseilles, a distance of say 2400Km [1400 nautical miles] 7 days sailing time at an estimated working speed of 8 or 9 knots to which must be added the two stops. [The journey out had been 1462 nautical miles via Malta]. It seems therefore the voyage was not so long as to affect the arrival home on the 7th August.

When the nursing party went out the railway line to Marseilles was not complete and they journeyed by river steamer for some of the way, continuing on the Vectis via Malta. However on Florence's return the line from Marseilles to Paris was nearly complete, to be opened fully in December. It was complete apart from joining the terminals of the Paris-Lyons line at Gare de Vaise, Lyons to the Marseilles-Lyons line at Gare de Lyon-Perrache, perhaps 3 miles, including building the St Irenée tunnel. She would therefore have to change stations by road, thus prolonging her journey to Paris which must have taken about 24 hours.

Of her stay in Paris reports vary considerably from a stay in a cheap hotel or, more probably, overnight in the Mohl household with departure by train either by day or by night. She visited M. Mohl at 120, Rue du Bac, no doubt hoping to see Clarkey, her friend, that is to say Mary his wife, but discovered she was in England. Florence reportedly left Aunt Mai, I presume only for a short time, especially if Mai Smith was the aunt at Bermondsey [below]. One wonders if there was a degree of tension between Clarkey and Aunt Mai or did she have a *pied-à-terre* in Paris? Perhaps she was just shopping. Arrival home therefore on the 7th August remains a possibility.

The journey from there is obscure. Florence wrote to Sister Gonzaga Barrie RSM on 23rd July 1856, "I shall not stop in London at all, but go to Bermondsey to call upon Revd Mother and then sneak quietly out of the way". Also in a letter dated 17th July 1856 is stated "All I want is to get home quietly". There are no records of passengers and we don't know which channel crossing they used. She refused a warship as transport across the Channel, a civic reception by the Mayors of Dover and Folkestone with ceremonial arches and military ceremony and so on. The quickest journey is via Boulogne-Folkestone rather than via Calais with its 50 mile detour by rail through Lille which was only half as popular.

Her arrival, presumably after an overnight journey and stay in London are obscure. She is described variously as 'arriving at night' and 'lost for a night in London' whatever that means! I think it is established she visited the Bermondsey Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, coming directly from the nearby station, knocking on the door at 8.0 am on the 7th accompanied by an Aunt to see the Sisters & take some [say 3, Ed] hours rest which the Annals of Bermondsy Convent record. [It seems never authoritatively said to be Mai but Florence writes to her much later '31 years ago you returned me to England from Scutari'. Aunt Mai will have known the Mother Superior who had been at the Crimea since November 1854 and was invalided out of Scutari on 28th April 1856 - being 'dangerously ill'.] A subsequent letter by Florence to Sister Gonzaga dated 1868 confirms the date of the visit. [A party of nuns from that order had served alongside Florence's other nurses.] Their annual Retreat had begun on 6th August 1856. She then, on the 7th, travelled to Derbyshire by train, Aunt Mai to her home at Coombe Hurst, Surrey..

There were two trains left London then which Florence might take, the, presumably desirable, express leaving fifteen minutes before the slow. Using the latter she arrives home in the evening which relates better to the sense of dusk and a post-dinner family in the drawing room at Lea Hurst which many give. The fast train left London 11.45am with 2 stops before Derby arriving there at 3.15pm. A local train travelling as far as the terminus at Rowsley left Derby at 3.50pm arriving Whatstandwell Bridge at 4.27. If she caught the slower train arrival would be 7.47pm. Did she suppose a long wait in her neighbouring town of Derby might result in her recognition? But then what about a wait at Ambergate.

LONDON TO NOTTINGHAM, DERBY, AND LEEDS.

STATIONS.	1 2 3		Gov.	Mall	Fast		Gov.		1 2
	1 2 3	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	Mail
Departure	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.
London	6.15	6.30	9.15	11.45	10.30	12.0	4.0	8.45	
Rugby	8.30	10.5	11.35	1.50	1.30	3.25	7.30	11.15	
Leicester	9.2	11.3	12.10	2.21	2.20	4.25	8.12	11.57	
Syston	9.12	11.10	..	..	2.30	4.38	8.23		
Barrow	9.25	11.29	..	..	..	4.53	8.36		
Loughborough	9.31	11.36	p.m.	..	2.54	5.0	8.43	12.21	
Kegworth	9.40	11.50	12.40	..	3.4	5.10	8.53		
Long Eaton J.	10.0	12.9	..	..	..	4.26	9.5		
Hecceton	10.6	12.19	..	3.2	..	5.36	9.12		
			p.m.						
Nottingham A.	10.15	12.35	1.0	3.10	3.35	6.0	9.25	3.39	
Sawley .. ..	..	..	12.5	..	..	5.30	..		
Draycett .. ..	..	..	12.9	..	..	5.30	..		
Horrowash .. ..	..	..	12.15	..	..	5.36	..		
Spondon .. ..	..	..	12.20	..	..	5.40	..		
Derby*	A. 10.10	12.35	1.0	3.15	3.35	6.0	9.25	12.55	
	D. 6.30	10.20	12.45	1.25	3.0	3.50	6.15	..	12.50
Duffield	6.45	10.32	1.0	..	..	6.30	..		
Belper	6.50	10.39	1.7	..	..	6.36	..		
Amber Gate*	7.0	10.45	1.17	..	..	6.45	..		

DERBY TO AMBERGATE, MATLOCK, AND ROWSLEY

DOWN TRAINS LEAVE	1,2,3		1 2	1 2	1,2,3		2	Sunday
	Gov.	Cls	Cls.	Cls.	Gov.	Cls.	Gov.	Gov.
	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	a.m.
Derby	6.30	10.20	12.45	3.50	6.15	..	10.0	
Ambergate	9.10	11.15	2.10	4.20	7.40	..	10.36	
Whatstandwell Bridge	9.17	11.22	2.17	4.27	7.47	..	10.41	
Cromford	9.25	11.30	2.25	4.35	7.55	..	10.49	
Matlock Bath	9.28	11.33	2.28	4.38	7.58	..	10.52	
Matlock Bridge	9.31	11.36	2.31	4.41	8.1	..	10.55	
Darley	9.36	11.41	2.36	4.46	8.6	..	11.0	
Rowsley	A. 9.45	11.50	2.45	4.55	8.15	..	11.5	

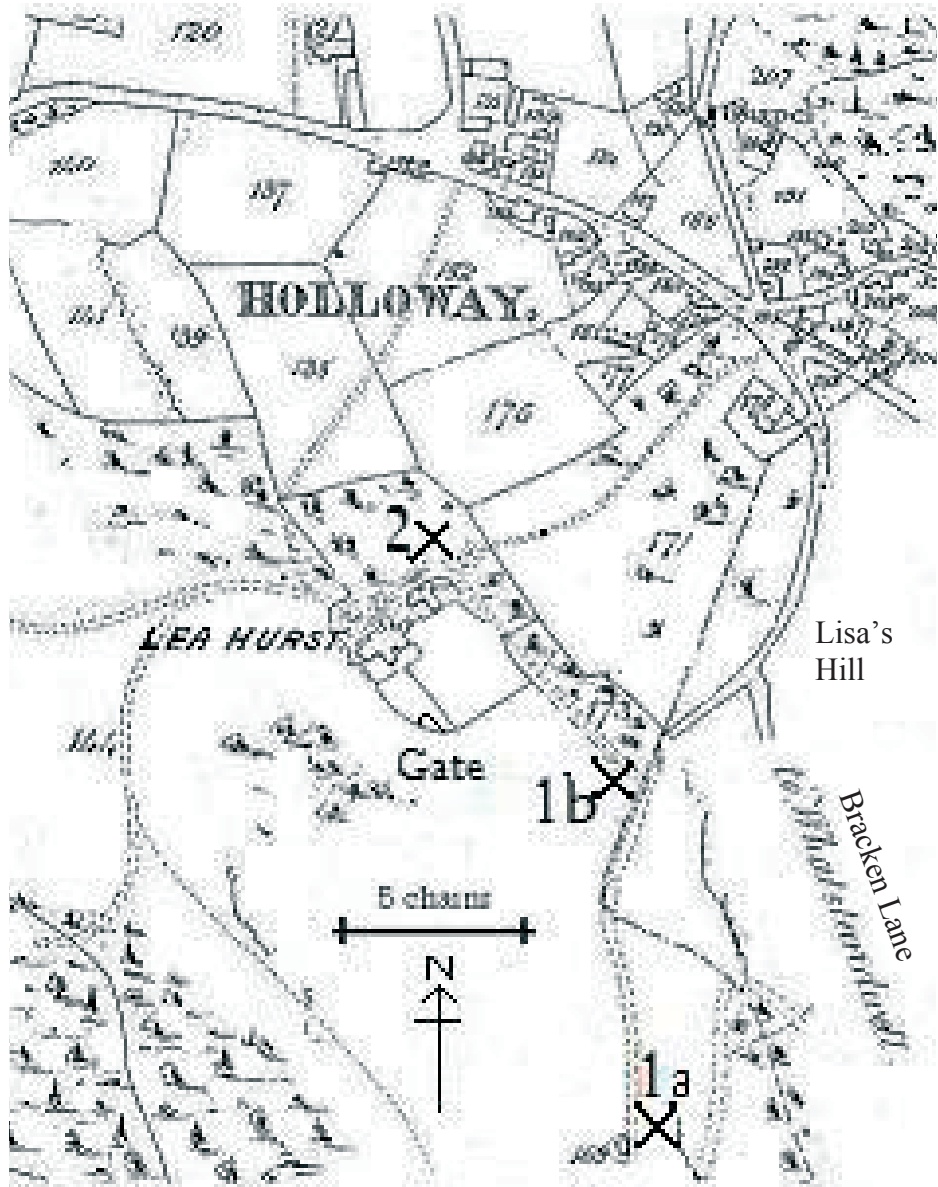
Train times August 1856
 Derby Mercury, 30th July 1856

The Derby Mercury, I think wrongly, reports this return as being the Friday the 8th, the day after this supposed journey, in fact when village celebrations began albeit in her absence. This questionable date is also used on the silver plate on the commemorative *papier maché* writing desk later presented to her by villagers and inherited by Mrs Lushington.

From The Morning Chronicle [18th Aug 1856], The Derby Mercury [20th August 1856], and the Midland Counties Herald [possibly all reiterating the same report] we read that Florence was met and greeted by Lady Mary Auckland. Maybe it was she, one of few who knew of her expected arrival, who prompted the girl who reportedly [The Telegraph, 22nd Augnd 1910] presented a bunch of flowers on this journey at this place where time and wild flowers can be thought available or did this happen at Ambergate during a wait there.

Lady Mary was at this time over fifty years old, one of a number of older friends and confidantes. She had a grown up family including a daughter called Florence Selina [b 1835]. She was the eldest daughter of the recently died Francis Edward Hurt of nearby Alderwasley; all were family friends. Mary's elder brother now lived in Alderwasley at this time. The Nightingales spent a lot of time staying in Burlington, London which would allow a continued friendship with Mary when her husband, the third Baron Auckland was fulfilling his religious duties in Battersea nearby. The two families' social circles overlapped. He was to become Bishop of Sodor and Man at the time of the station meeting and finally of Bath and Wells and was the Queen's Chaplain.

If the meeting at the station was pre-arranged, say by telegram, and 'met' implies transport, then a carriage seems likely. It was the end of many days' journeying across Europe with a final train journey at least 4 ³/₄ hours by a person suffering fatigue and in far from the best of mental and physical health. The alternative was at least a 1 ¹/₂ mile walk, perhaps along a well used horse tow path followed by a 200' climb. The obvious vehicle route in these times would be on Bracken Lane to the drive there. Any continuation up Lisa's Hill was steep, stony and rutted so the drive from a lower point was an obvious alternative choice. The proposed replacement of this unfenced lane by a turnpike in 1829 [never built] illustrates its limitations but any alternative would be much longer.



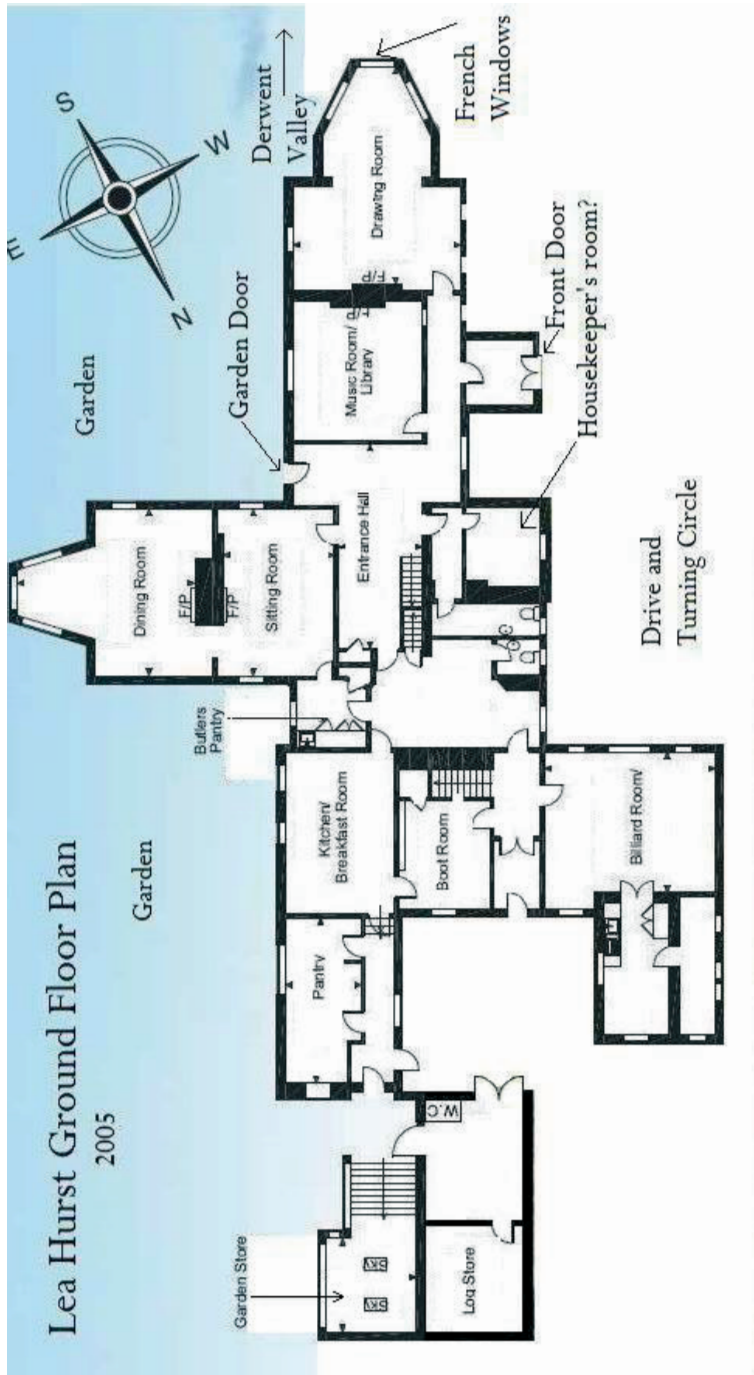
X - - - Possible alighting places

John Parkin, Estate Agent. Map 1865

Florence may well then have been dropped near Lea Hurst, walking the last bit. It seems likely that Lady Auckland had dropped her off a little way from the house maybe to avoid intruding on a family reunion or perhaps for there to be time for Florence to compose herself for greeting them, her sister and mother, initially at least, having been so vehemently against her nursing ambitions. It is said never the less that many family letters record her walk from the station. However it is likely Florence did not correct any misconception, if such it is, having taken every step to prevent any earlier meeting in public with her family, even locally on Whatstandwell Bridge platform. Only letters to or from confidantes like Aunt Mai or Clarkey would obviate my concern.

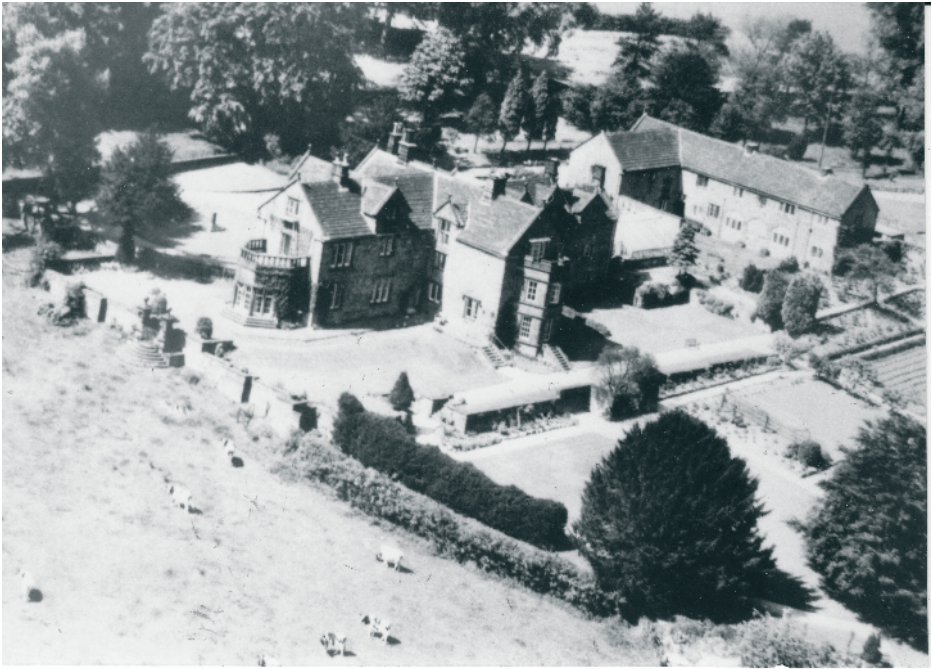
There are two or three obvious alighting points shown on the map where a carriage could turn to leave as an alternative to a drive on a circular route, the most distant [1a & b on the map] say 400 yards to the house. There would follow a walk over a field, through the garden gate and the garden and in that respect coincides with a walking route from the station. Point 2 is nearer the house [at most 50 yards away], if invisible from it, but on a main access drive. It seems most reliably said that she was seen by the housekeeper, a tearful Mrs Watson, to her great surprise, from her room at the front of the house - a lady in black walking alone, coming up the drive. Although this account is not specifically attributed it has a ring of authenticity. Reports like this of a lady on foot may account for the widespread view that Florence walked all the way from the station, by whatever route, not appreciating she had in fact been met.

So any evidence needs careful appraisal as to its nature. Much merely reports what is said in other published work. Little alludes to reports of actual sightings which was in the dusk at a period when Summer Time had not been instituted. Many are deduction from Florence's supposed walk from the station. In the literature, to summarise, this event is attributed variously to accounts by Mrs Watson, a butler, the family, it features coming in on the family, across the fields, along the canal, at the back gate, through the garden gate, the back door, the front door, up, down, along the drive or passing by the drawing room window! Florence's immediate family was in the drawing room and her arrival was clearly unexpected.



If through the garden, Florence seems to have ignored the Garden Door and Drawing Room French Windows, which might have been expected to be locked using the more formal Front Door. This would include passing the Drawing Room windows. Any approach along the drive would naturally lead to that door.

Perhaps it was mental or physical illness but certainly fatigue from her labours over two years in the Crimea culminating in this long journey by sea and land, that then caused her confinement to her room from the next day. This marks the passing from times in the Crimea to those of her efforts and influence in medical provision, for example, nationally and internationally. It started Friday, the next day, with village celebrations, including 'a peal on the village bells' and a prayer of thanksgiving in a chapel but soon grew. There were, just in this part of Derbyshire, crowds of people seeking her influence on their health or military pensions for example or just to catch sight of one of such wide repute.



Lea Hurst

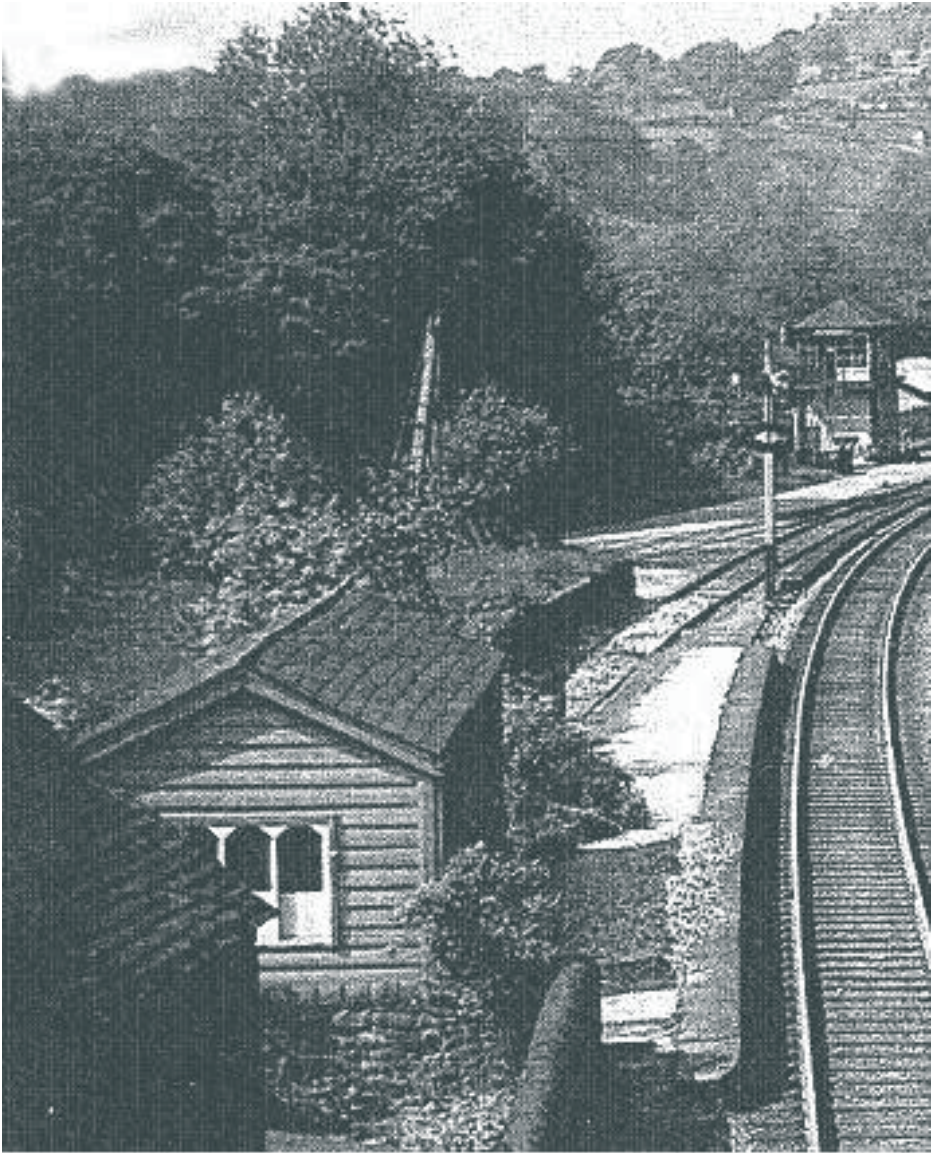
It is a pity the most vivid images I hold arise from cinema or television. Thus in my mind's eye I might visualise Florence using a shiny brass 'Aladin's lamp', alighting from a third class railway carriage [for want of a more appropriate one at Butterley Railway Museum], this happening at the anachronistic, newer Whatstandwell station, walking either way along the canal, lugging a holdall over the fields to get home. I think one is too easily deceived!

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Danube at <http://www.es-conseil.fr/pramona/danuba.html>

Sea distance calculator at <http://www.e-ships.net/dist.htm>



Whatstandwell Bridge Station [1952] [E R Morten]

Danube specification,

Mail steamer launched August 15th, 1855

Length: 76.20 meters

Width: 9.9 meters

Tonnage: 1039

Deadweight: 600 tons Displacement: 1698 tons

Power: 1,200 HP

Speed: 13 knots

Propulsion propeller, a horizontal machine

2 fireplaces placed side by side transversely to the running of the vessel

Passengers: 33 first, 28 seconds, 24 Third + 693 steerage passengers



At Lea Hurst, Holloway, Derbyshire

Local history, Dethick, Lea & Holloway, Derbyshire

Available in Derbyshire Local Studies Library

		pages
1	Parish History and Guide (Edited by GW)	1991 20
2	'For your tomorrow.' (commemorations from the wars)	1991 12
	Childhood reminiscences (Edited by GW)	
3	I, Lea and Holloway	1991 20
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26	The mills of Lea Brook (in 'Wind & Water Mills' journal)	2006 25
27	Florence Nightingale in Holloway	2009 16
28	Lucy Audubon née Bakewell	2009 12
29	John Smithurst of Lea [& Wm Shore] suitors of F Nightingale	2009 30
30	A personal Biography	2010 18
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http://www.wigglesworth.me.uk/local_history/index.htm

which also has a contact facility. There is also accessible there a pdf of Wigglesworth, G. John Smithurst of Lea; suitor of Florence Nightingale, published privately, 2009

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