

Sidings was for some years provided with limestone from Ardley. A locomotive from Leamington shed worked the empty wagons southwards through Banbury each afternoon and returned in the evening with the loaded train. A variety of locomotives were employed on the train, many photographs of which have been published.

After nationalisation the Bicester cut-off was used by the Dorrington–Marylebone (sometimes called the Dorrington–Banbury) milk train, a working that had an air of mystery about it largely because at Banbury it could be observed in daylight after the Second World War only at the height of summer. From their beginnings main line railways carried milk into cities. From the 1850s it was carried in ‘churns’ (not the original meaning of the word). Railway wagons carrying glass-lined milk tanks holding 3,000 gallons were introduced by the four railway companies in Britain in 1927-28, under agreements by which they owned the chassis, originally with four wheels but with six from 1933, and the dairy companies whom they served owned the tanks. The Dorrington milk train ran between a creamery alongside the Shrewsbury & Hereford Railway, six miles south of Shrewsbury, and a depot owned by Independent Milk Supplies in Rossmore Road, London, between the Marylebone passenger terminus, then part of the London & North Eastern Railway, and the carriage shed. The Dorrington Creamery was established by Midland Farmers Ltd in 1921 and originally sent milk in churns to London and Birmingham Independent Milk Supplies. This, a much smaller concern than the giants of the London milk trade, Express Dairies and United Dairies, was established in 1928 in Holloway in north London and moved to the site in Rossmore Road in 1934. In the summer of 1935 it began to supply the Marylebone depot with milk in tanks brought via Bletchley and Calvert from Sanquhar in Dumfriesshire. After taking over the Dorrington creamery in December 1935 the company began to send milk to Marylebone in churns. In June 1936 it purchased ten 6-wheel tanks built by the GWR at Swindon and shortly afterwards began to work them to Marylebone. A Great Western locomotive collected the tanks at Dorrington and took them north to Shrewsbury where they were held for a time in carriage sidings at Abbey Foregate, giving the working another of its names, the ‘Abbey Foregate milk’. In 1937 any scheduled delay at Shrewsbury was minimal, and the tanks arrived in Banbury in time to be taken to Woodford on the 20.12 passenger train reaching Woodford at 20.34. They were speedily attached to the 20.50 local train to Marylebone which was reached at 23.11. By the summer of 1937 the LNER conveyed