

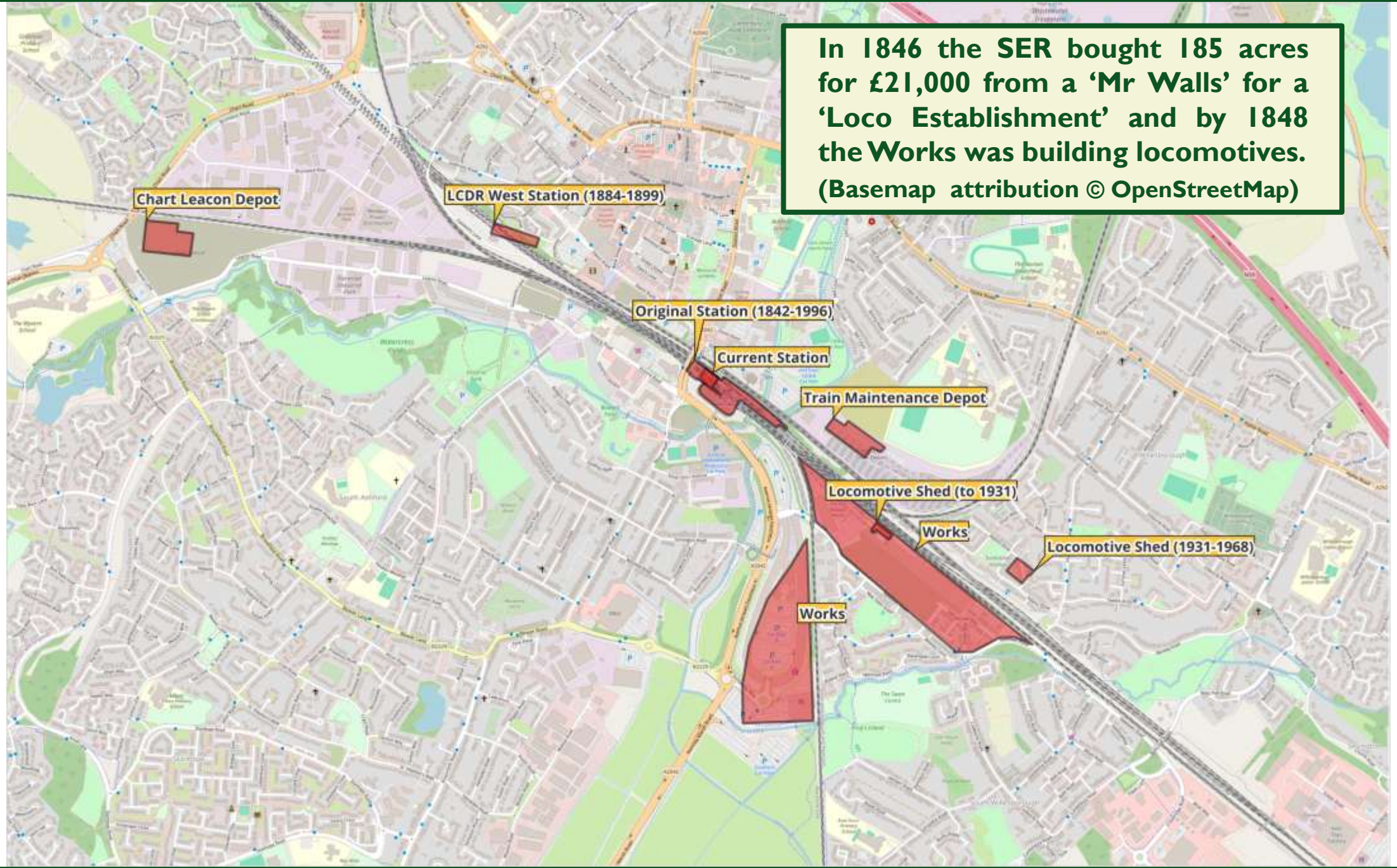


# RAILWAYS AT ASHFORD

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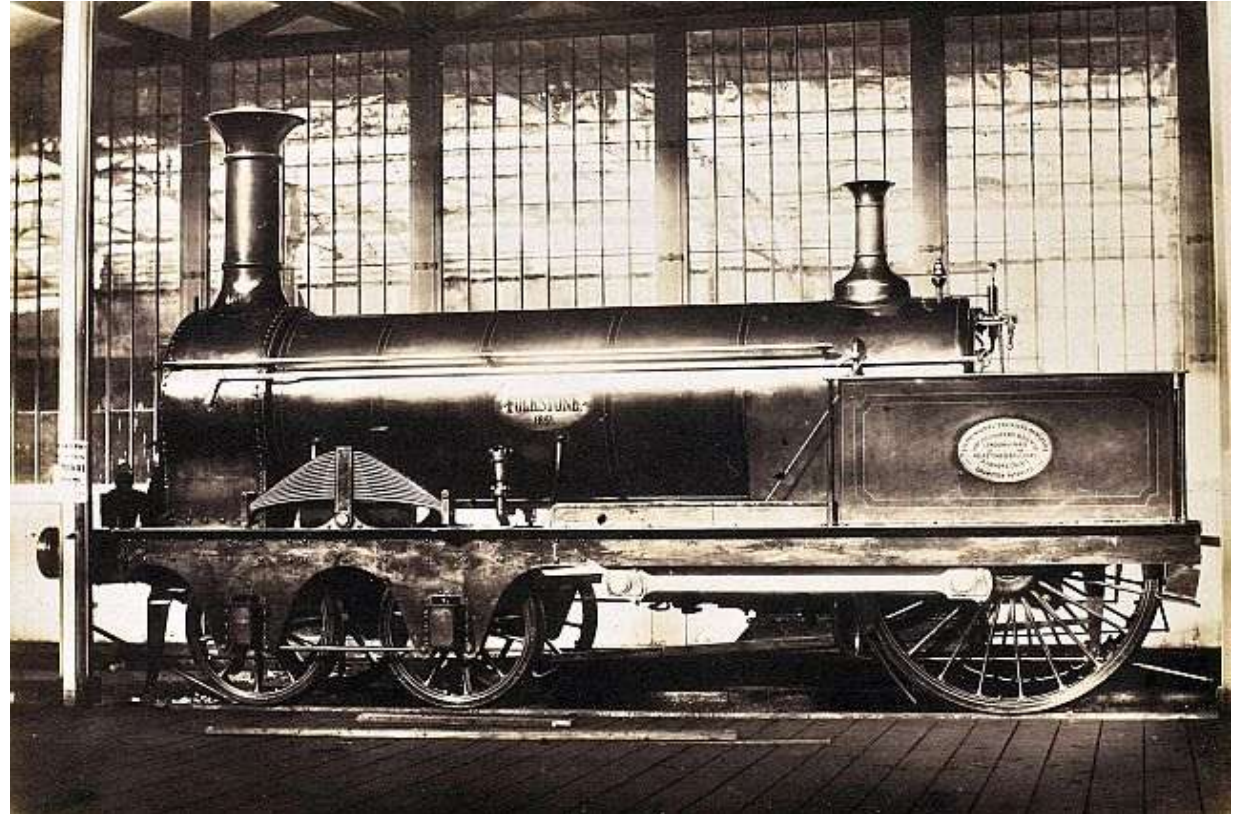
In 1846 the SER bought 185 acres for £21,000 from a 'Mr Walls' for a 'Loco Establishment' and by 1848 the Works was building locomotives. (Basemap attribution © OpenStreetMap)



## 1842

### The Railway Comes to Ashford

The South Eastern Railway's London to Dover line opened in stages reaching Ashford on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1842. The station had simple wood clad buildings with four lines and two platforms.



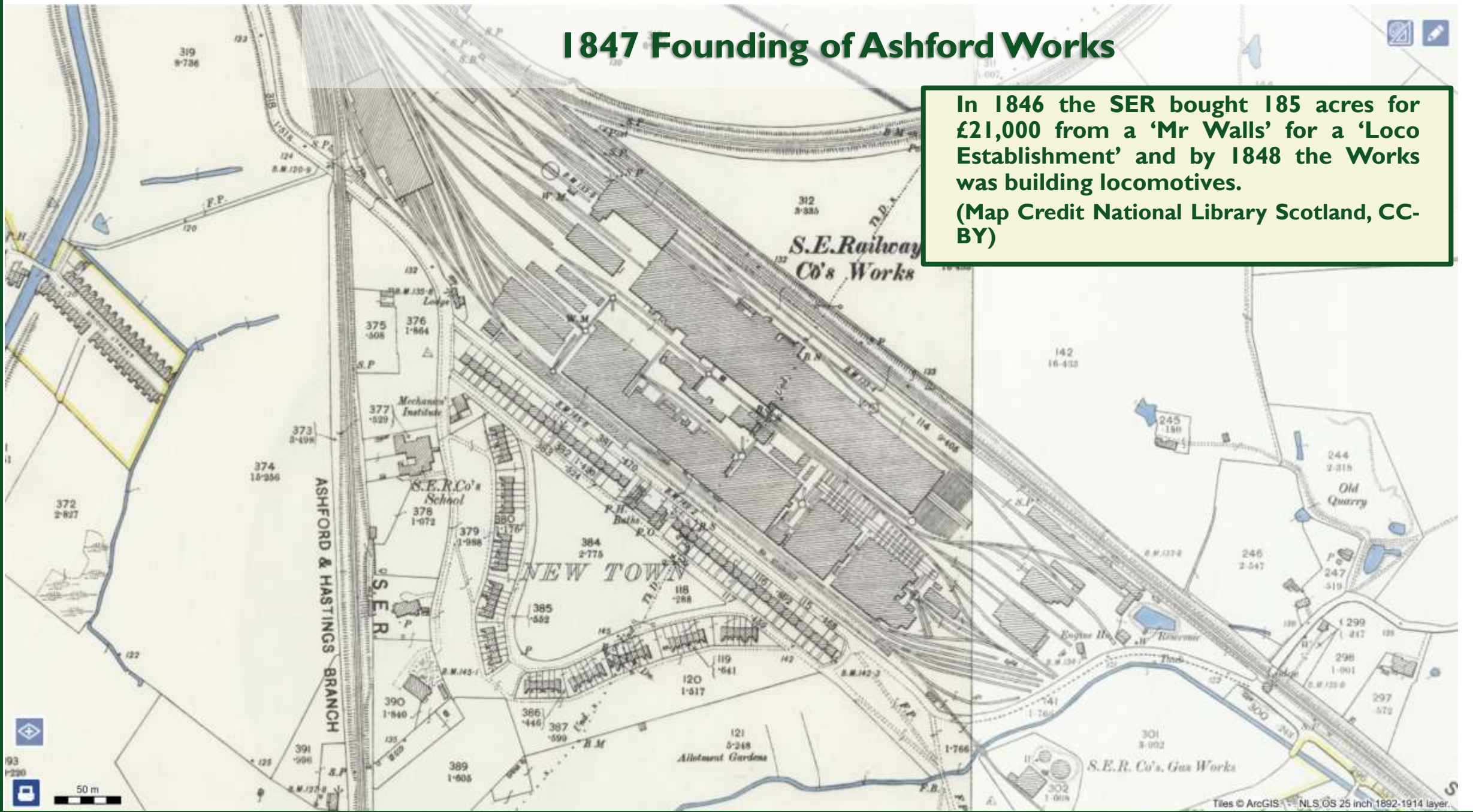
SER locomotive No. 136 'Folkstone' (sic) at the Great Exhibition in 1851

Henry Fox Talbot: Public Domain

# 1847 Founding of Ashford Works

In 1846 the SER bought 185 acres for £21,000 from a 'Mr Walls' for a 'Loco Establishment' and by 1848 the Works was building locomotives.

(Map Credit National Library Scotland, CC-BY)





## The Coffee Pot

The first engine  
completed at Ashford  
Works in 1850.  
Nicknamed the coffee  
pot.

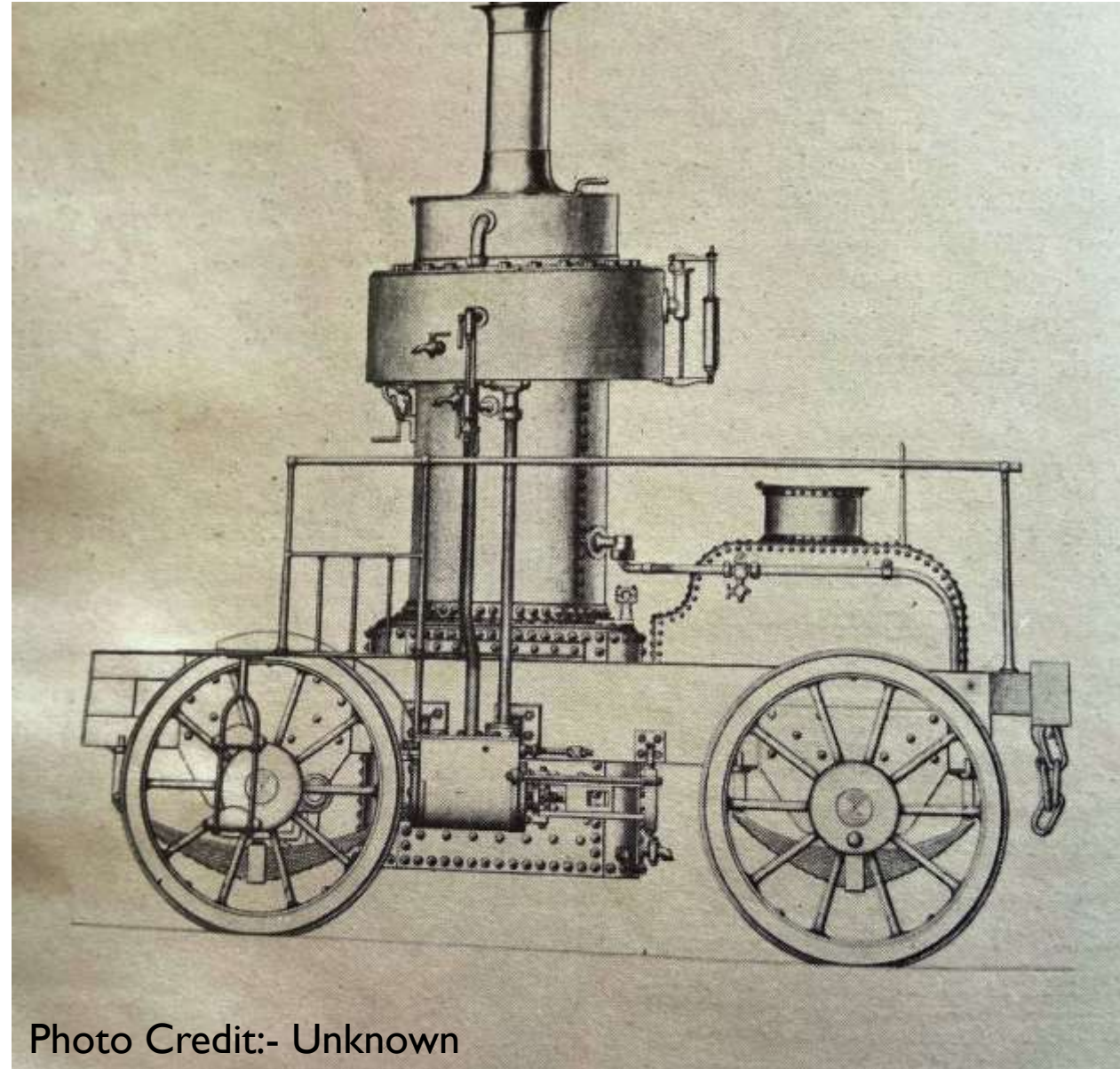
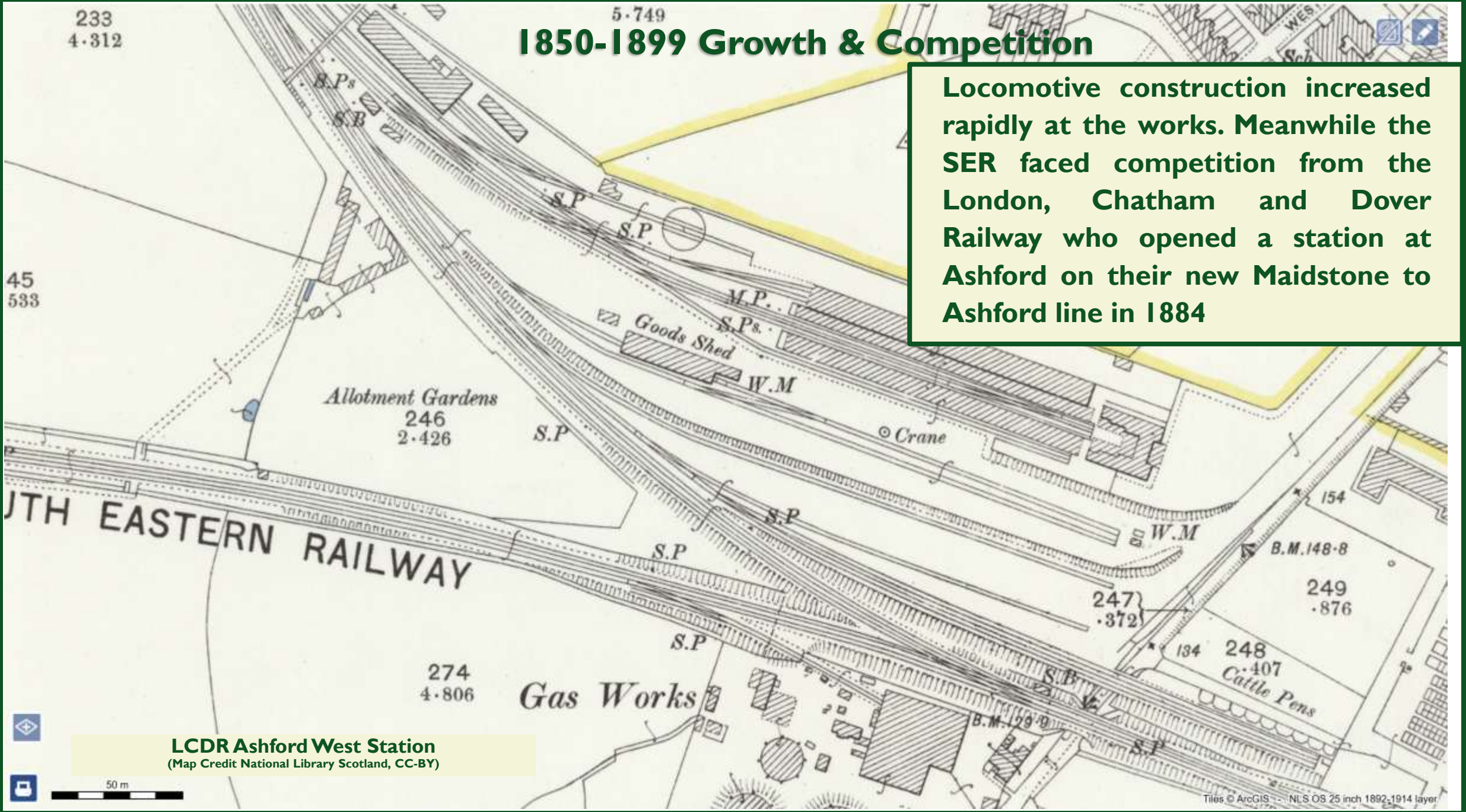


Photo Credit:- Unknown

# 1850-1899 Growth & Competition

Locomotive construction increased rapidly at the works. Meanwhile the SER faced competition from the London, Chatham and Dover Railway who opened a station at Ashford on their new Maidstone to Ashford line in 1884



**LCDR Ashford West Station**  
(Map Credit National Library Scotland, CC-BY)



## SER 'O1' Class

1878-1899

57 built at  
Ashford

James Stirling &  
Wainwright  
Rebuild

Preserved No.  
65 on  
the Bluebell  
Railway in  
Sussex.



## 1899-1923 Merger and Expansion

Ruinous competition results in the LCDR and SER merging to become the South Eastern & Chatham Railway (SECR). Upon merger, Ashford West closed and all trains from now on used the main station. LCDR's Longhedge Engineering Works closed with Ashford becoming the main works.



**SECR train leaving Ramsgate Harbour Station  
in the early 1900s**



# SECR 'C' Class

1900-1908,

109 built, 70 at  
Ashford

Harry Wainwright,

No.592 shown  
here





# SECR 0-4-4T 'H' Class

1904-1909

66 built

Harry Wainwright.  
Bluebell 263 shown  
here.





## SECR 'P' Class

1909-1910

8 built

Harry  
Wainwright

323 'Bluebell'  
shown here





# SECR / SR 2-6-0 'N' Class

1917–34, 80 built; Richard Maunsell, 50 completed at Ashford



## 1923 Southern Railway Grouping

Works

**Carriage building moved to Lancing and Eastleigh.  
1931 Opening of a new Engine Shed allowing expansion at the works  
Locomotive building continued with N, NI, U classes and the first diesel shunters.**

(Map Credit: National Library Scotland, CC-BY)

50 m

TOWN



# Southern Railway U Class

20 Built and 7  
rebuilt at Ashford  
1928-1932

Withdrawn 1962-  
1966

Preserved SR U class  
No. 1638 on  
the [Bluebell Railway](#)  
shown. With 1618  
both are awaiting  
overhaul



## 1930s Experiments & Electrification

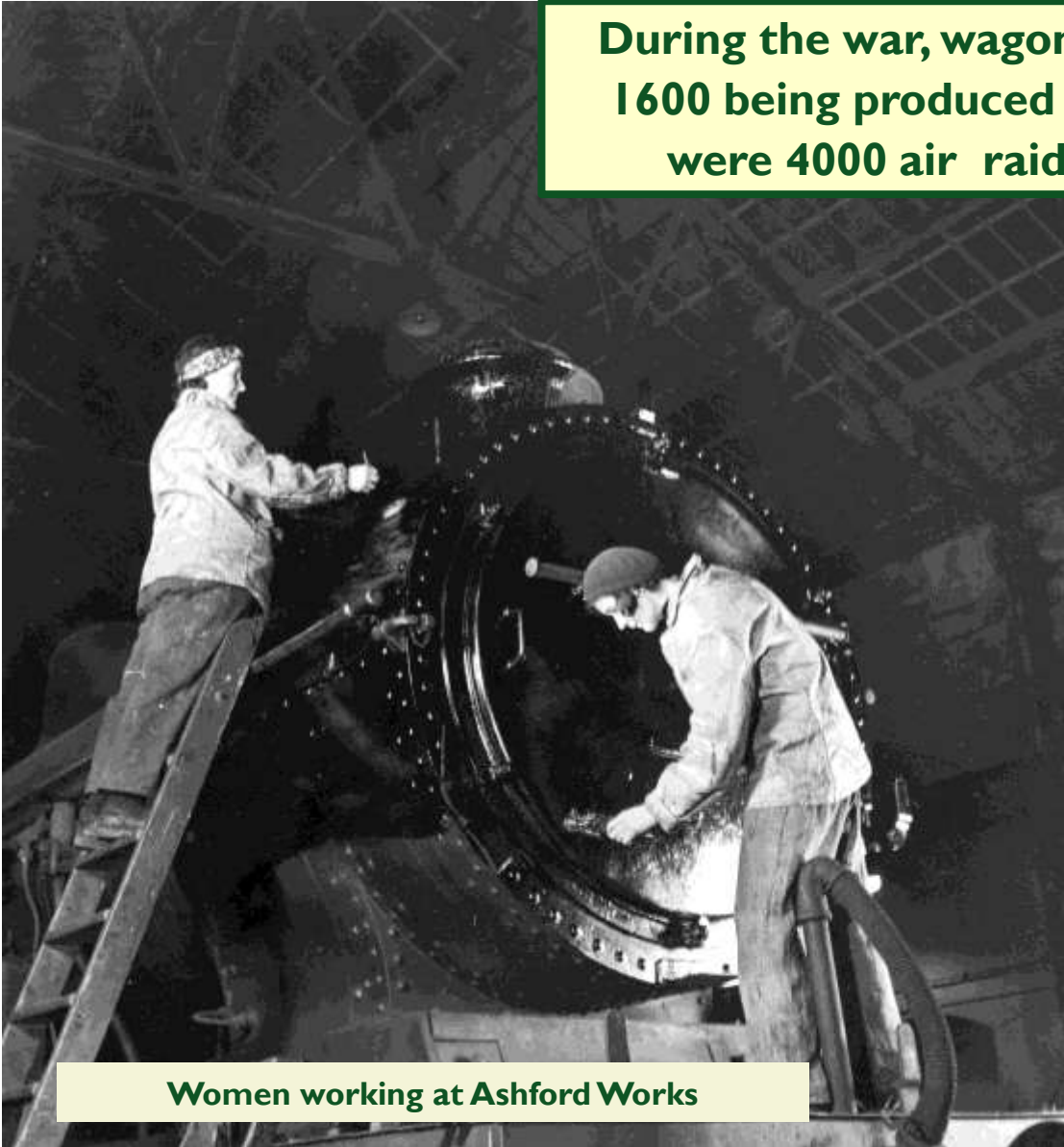
Diesel Shunters, Electric Multiple Units and Electric Locomotives began to be constructed at Ashford in line with the Southern's Electrification Program



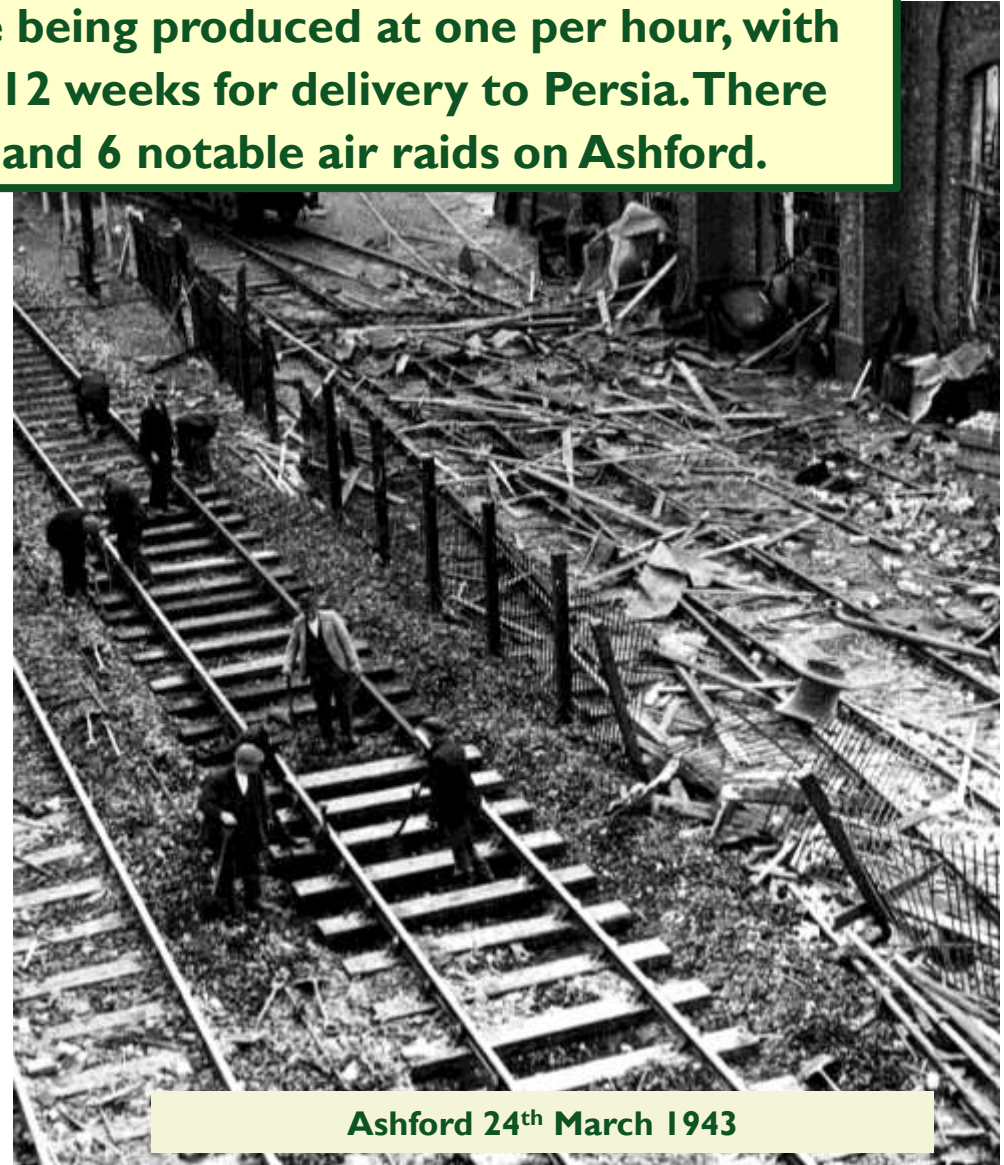
Class 70 'Booster' Locomotive

## 1939-1945 Ashford during WW2

During the war, wagons were being produced at one per hour, with 1600 being produced in just 12 weeks for delivery to Persia. There were 4000 air raid alerts and 6 notable air raids on Ashford.



Women working at Ashford Works



Ashford 24<sup>th</sup> March 1943



# Southern Railway Bulleid Austerity 'Q1' Class

20 Built in 1942

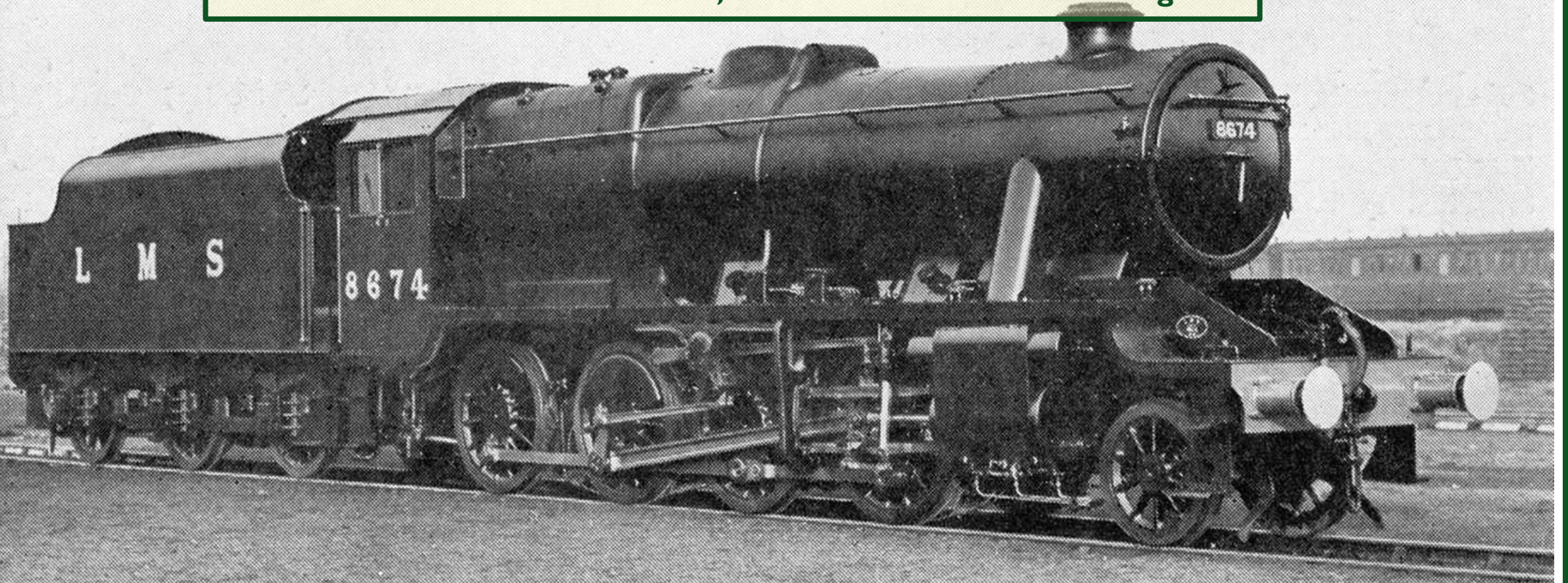
Withdrawn 1963-  
1966

Brighton Built  
33001 shown here  
(NRM)



## 1948 Nationalisation

Following nationalisation in 1948, British Railways began the process of modernisation. Though steam locomotive construction ended, servicing continued. The last steam locomotive built at Ashford was an 8F Class London, Midland & Scottish 2-8-0 design.



LMS 8F built at Ashford



# British Rail Class D16/2

2 Built 1950

Withdrawn 1963





## 0-6-0 Diesel Shunter

The last of the 36  
Class 12 shunters to  
be built at Ashford in  
1952



## 1961 Kent Coast Electrification Kent Coast Electrification

The Ashford line was electrified in 1961 and Chart Leacon Repair works opened under the BR 1955 Modernisation Plan's Kent Coast Electrification (Stage 2) project.

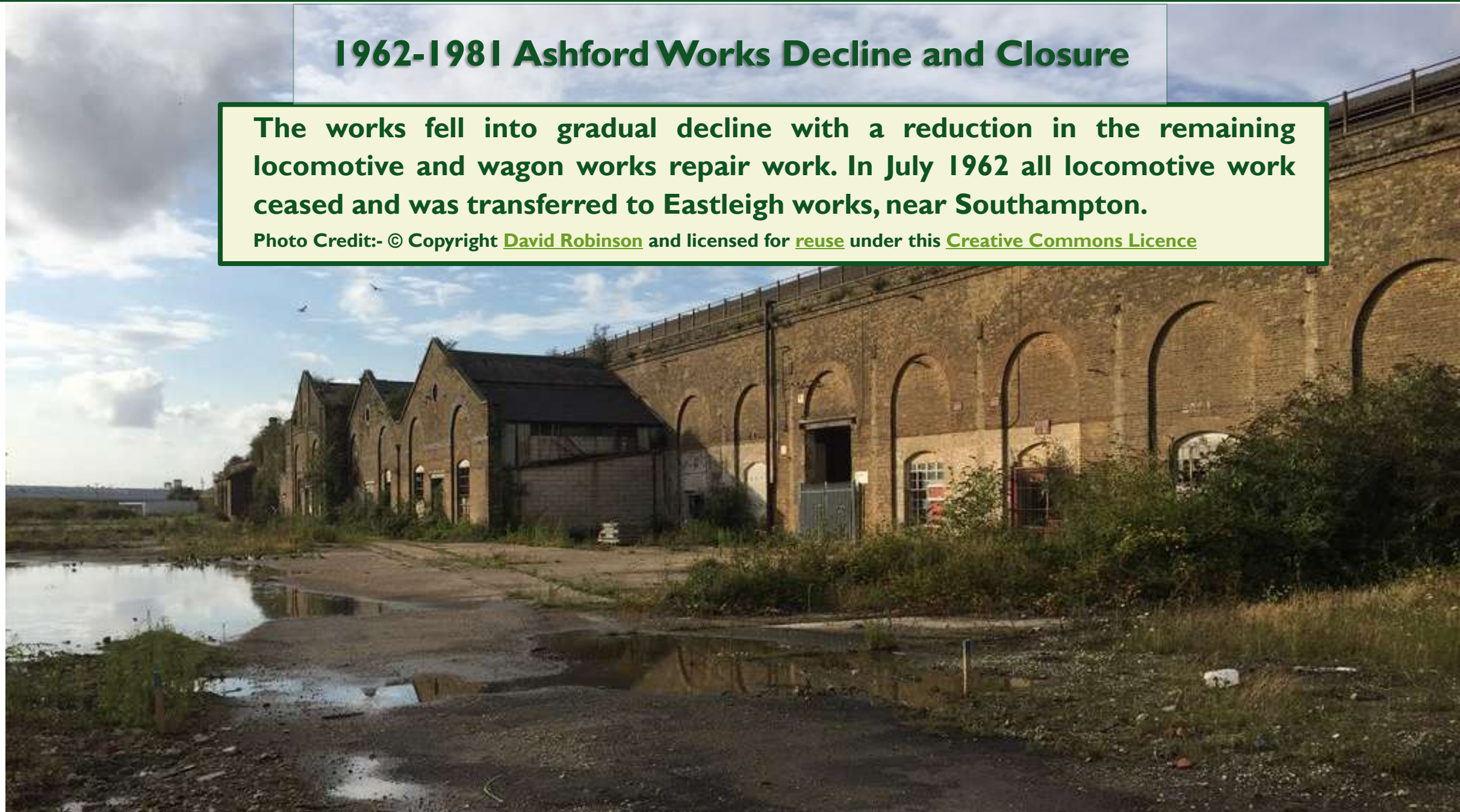


**Class 202 No. 1015 DMU and 2-HAP No. 6093 EMU at Ashford station in 1963**

## 1962-1981 Ashford Works Decline and Closure

The works fell into gradual decline with a reduction in the remaining locomotive and wagon works repair work. In July 1962 all locomotive work ceased and was transferred to Eastleigh works, near Southampton.

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## 1990s Ashford International

Work began on the Channel Tunnel in 1988 which officially opened on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1994, with Ashford International opening for Eurostar services.

Photo Credit:- Joshua Brown <https://www.flickr.com/photos/joshtechfission/>



## Ashford Timeline

1st Dec 1842	The Railway arrives with the opening of the London to Ashford line and, soon after, the extension to Folkestone
1846- 1848	Construction, opening and the first locomotive built at Ashford Works
1846 & 1851	Lines to Ramsgate and later to Hastings open
1899	Formation of the SECR from the LCDR and SER companies, with closure of Ashford West station and transfer in of LCDR engineering work to Ashford
1923	Formation of Southern Railway. Carriage building moves to Lancing and Eastleigh. Locomotive building continues.
1939- 1945	Ashford works on a war production footing. 6 major air attacks on Ashford
1948	Railways nationalised. Construction of steam locomotives ceased at Ashford works

1952	Last locomotive constructed at Ashford works; a diesel shunter
1961	Kent Electrification to Ashford with Chart Leacon established as a major repair depot
1962	Remaining loco repair work transferred to Eastleigh and the works becomes focused on wagon production
1981	Ashford works closes, 134 years of engineering work ends.
1994	The Channel Tunnel and Ashford International open
2007	The current Train Maintenance Centre opens
2014	Chart Leacon depot closes



# **SOUTH EASTERN'S ASHFORD TRAIN MAINTENANCE CENTRE OPEN DAY – 24/08/25**



## Jacked Up Javelin

**British Rail Class 395 *Javelin*** is a dual-voltage electric multiple-unit (EMU) passenger train built by Hitachi Rail as part of the Hitachi A-train AT300 family for high-speed commuter services on High Speed 1 and elsewhere on the South Eastern franchise.



# Class 377 Electrostar



## Class 69

A recent rebuild of a  
Doncaster built Class 56



The Bluebell's  
LB&SCR A1X class  
No.55 Stepney



# Spa Valley's Class 12 Shunter

Built at Ashford



# Balfour Beatty Class 20s

Purchased in 2024.  
Modified 20/9 versions of  
the original standard  
20/0 class



# Clan Line Rebuilt Merchant Navy Class

