

Sir Sam Fay - A renowned Railway Manager

Sam Fay was born on 30th December 1856 at Hamble, the son of Joshua Fay who was a descendent of farmers at Awbridge and at this time a bailiff and gardener for the Rector of Hambledon. Sam was educated at Hamble village school and then from 1867 at Blenheim School on West Street in Fareham. In 1872 he started work as a Junior Clerk at Itchen Abbas Station on the Mid-Hants Railway. Following this he worked at a number of London and South Western Railway (LSWR) stations developing his career and by 1877 he had become Chief Booking Clerk at Kingston-upon-Thames station and was looking for a more demanding role.

He was interested in various sporting activities such as playing rugby but most interestingly he was elected a member of the rowing club in March 1878 and by the end of the year he was on the committee. Having grown up by the Hamble River must have influenced this interest.

He continued his career in railway management with LSWR moving to Waterloo station in 1884 where he became Chief Clerk. In 1892 he was seconded to the Midland and South Western Junction Railway as Secretary and General Manager where he turned the company round from almost bankruptcy to solvency. He became the Superintendent of the LSWR in 1899 and from 1902 the General Manager of the Great Central Railway. He played an important role during the First World War being a member of the Railway Executive Committee and in 1917 he took over the post of Director of Movements at the War Office.

Sam Fay had a Great Central locomotive named in honour of his 1912 knighthood, the locomotives in the class becoming known informally as "Sam Fays". He died in Awbridge on 30 May 1953 and is buried in the churchyard of All Saints Church.

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