

# Closure of the Poplar Single Line

I was the duty signalman at Victoria Park Junction box on Wednesday 30th September 1981, which was the last day that a goods train ran from Poplar to Temple Mills

There was no ceremonial closure of the line, only an engineer's notice that the track forming the connections onto the remaining single line would be severed that late evening. There was no possession by the engineers at the box, because the Poplar Single Line was not under control of the signalman at Victoria Park and was

regarded as a siding, so authorised movements were done by the Yard Manager at Poplar.

However, we still maintained the run-round loop at Victoria Park and this was frequently visited by route trainers from the Southern Region.

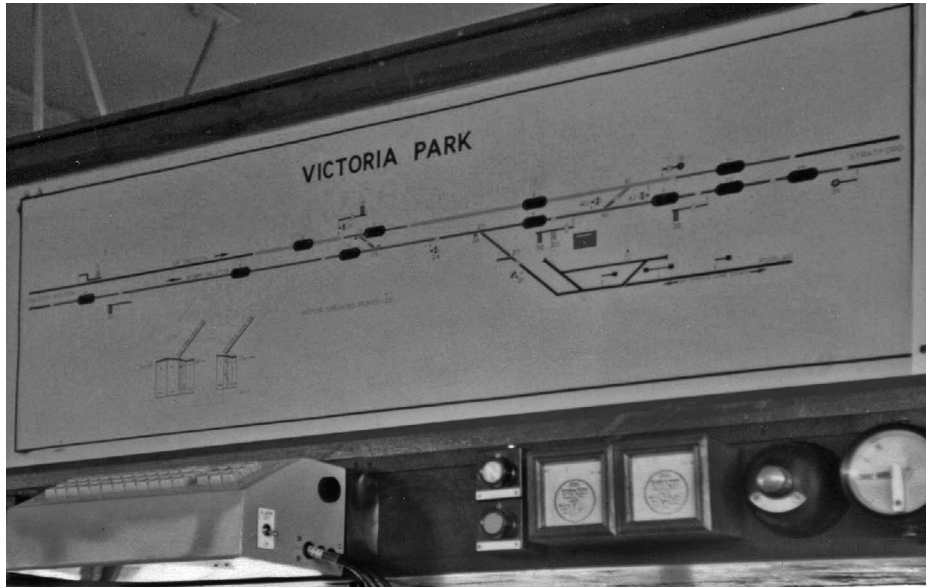
I photographed one of these on the morning of 10th February 1983 but, by this time, my days at Victoria Park Junction were coming to an end, as I was transferred to Fenchurch Street box soon after.

**Mike Parker**



The final signal box at Victoria Park opened in 1961 and was located at the west end of the former passenger station between the diverging Poplar and Stratford lines. This view dates from the 1970s and looks towards Dalston, with the Poplar branch on the left and the Stratford route passing behind the cabin on the right. It remained in use for a while after all activity on the Poplar line ceased, but was closed from 14th October 1984 and, at the time of writing, only a few remnants of it survive.β

**Lawrence Bolton**



As mentioned in the text, the single line leading off the Poplar Loop at Victoria Park was regarded as a siding. Before proceeding onto this, a member of the train crew would have to contact the Poplar Yard Manager by way of a ground frame telephone which was situated on the up Poplar Loop. There was no token or staff working and access to the branch was not controlled by the Victoria Park signalman. This photograph, taken in the box on Tuesday 29th September 1981 shows the run-round loop and commencement of the single line at bottom right.

*Mike Parker*



The final trains for Poplar originated at Temple Mills and travelled to Victoria Park where they reversed. Here we see the penultimate working, which ran on Tuesday 29th September 1981, approaching Victoria Park at around 8am with the early morning sun behind it. The train, which was hauled by 31 161, comprised of two ferry vans (VIX/ZSK) and a 20 ton brake van.

*Mike Parker*



*Above* : Once over the junction, the train was cleared to reverse from the Down Dalston Main Line by Shunt Ground Signal No 24, which controlled entrance to the run round loop.

*Below* : Having propelled the vans clear of the loop crossover, a member of the loco crew got down to attend to the points, which were manually operated. Then 31 161 could come off and run round. The loco, now at the opposite end, backed on and hauled its vans to Poplar.

*Both : Mike Parker*





After arriving at Poplar, 31 161 dropped the vans off and returned with the 20 ton brake along with two OBA open high ended wagons. The loco then ran round before propelling these a short distance and coming to a stand to await shunt signal No 31 before proceeding onto the Down Dalston Main Line. Here it waited for signals 24, 40 and 18 then crossed onto the Down Stratford Main.

*Both : Mike Parker*



*Above :* After crossing onto the Stratford Main Line, the Class 9 unfitted goods from Poplar, comprising the two high ended wagons and brake van, set off for Temple Mills at 09.44.

*Below :* The same loco worked the last Poplar goods on the following day, when the train comprised five banana vans. In this view these are being propelled towards the run round loop, before continuing their journey. Having dropped them off at Poplar, 31 161 returned light engine.

*Both : Mike Parker*







Although traffic to Poplar had ceased, the run round loop continued to be maintained and still saw use on various occasions. In these photographs we see Southern Region loco No 33 101 on 10th February 1983, whilst employed on route training duties, hence the 'RT' headcode. The buffer stop in the centre of the top view was on the former Up Poplar line.

*Both : Mike Parker*

