

J O U R N A L
- of the -
RAILWAY AND CANAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 3. No. 1.

January, 1957.

PRESIDENT C. R. Clinker
CHAIRMAN M. D. Greville

HON. SECRETARY
G. J. Biddle,
16, Longmead Avenue,
Bingley, Yorks.

HON. TREASURER
G. O. Holt,
Greystoke View,
Newlands Place,
Penrith, Cumberland.

HON. EDITOR
J. G. Spence
8, Stanstead Road,
Caterham, Surrey.

- - - - -

A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

1956 has undoubtedly been a successful year for the Society. Membership - which stood at 61 on 31 December, 1954, three months after its foundation, and rose gradually to 127 by 31 July, 1956 - is now over 150. Some measure of success may be attributed to the amount of valuable publicity it has received through the medium of television and films: "High above Water" on the B.B.C. newsreel, which showed the canal trip at the Oswestry weekend; and the B.B.C. and I.T.A. news, and the British Paramount film feature of the Caterham Railway centenary. The Railway History group of the University of Nottingham Summer School, held at Buxton in August, also attracted new members, and it is hoped that further courses and meetings of this type will be in operation in 1957.

The Annual General Meeting at Gloucester and the Oswestry weekend were amongst the most successful of the Society's outings, and were thoroughly enjoyed by those members who were able to attend.

The increase from three issues of the Journal annually to six, (44 pages in 1955 against 94 in 1956) is an indication that the Society is growing and finding welcome and, we believe, justified support.

Let us hope that, by the end of our third year, membership will have reached 200. By this means, the Society will be able to plan more elaborate programmes for the benefit of its members.

THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY AND LIVERPOOL

By M. D. Greville

The North Staffordshire Railway's threat to promote a line to Liverpool, as part of their pre-natal disputes with the Grand Junction Railway, has been duly chronicled; but a later and more determined attempt has been barely noticed by the historians. A brief survey of the facts concerning this may therefore be of interest.

In 1855, after the Bill for amalgamation with the L. & N.W.R. had been defeated in Parliament, the N.S.R., smarting under the refusal of the former company to renew the application in the next session, began to look round for opportunities to extend their system into L. & N.W. territory.

Consequently, in November the Solicitor was instructed to give the requisite notice for permission to construct a line from the St. Helens Canal & Railway, at Garston, to Liverpool; also in order to make contact with its own system, a line from Sandbach to the St. Helens Railway at Warrington, and the Bills were duly deposited. The Liverpool section, 4 miles 2 furlongs in length, was to take very largely the route of the later Cheshire Lines Railway. There was to be a tunnel at Dingle 800 yards long, and the Liverpool terminus was to be situated in Stanhope Street, just beyond the north end of Brunswick Dock.

About this time, a proposal was in the air for the amalgamation of the North Staffordshire, St. Helens and Warrington & Stockport Railways (see Railway Times, November 24, 1855). Interesting possibilities can be envisaged if this had come to pass, and the extension Bills sanctioned. The N.S.R. would have been brought into contact, at Rainford, with the East Lancashire Railway, then on fairly intimate terms with the St. Helens Company and in the course of the rapprochement with the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, which was shortly to lead to their fusion. What previous negotiations had taken place with the St. Helens Company is not clear, but it is evident that the N.S.R. had at any rate hoped that Company would join in the cost of the venture as, in January 1856, the Chairman reported to the Board that they had declined to do so. In view of this he proposed, as a second string, negotiations with the Bridgewater Canal Trustees for the leasing of their canal, with which the North Staffordshire's Trent & Mersey Canal connected at Preston Brook. This was approved and, by agreement with the Trustees, a Bill for the purpose was deposited in February. In the meantime, the Chairman had got into touch with Mr. Denison - Chairman of the Great Northern - with a view to the joint promotion of the railway with that company.

As Mr. Denison was in a decidedly expansionist mood about this time, it seems probable that agreement would have been reached, but at this stage Lord Ellesmere, for the Bridgewater Trustees, stepped

in. He informed the N.S.R. that he considered the railway Bills inconsistent with the spirit of the arrangement with the Trustees, and made a point of their withdrawal; the N.S.R. Board therefore, with great reluctance, withdrew them in April. It was then found that the Canal Bill could not go forward that session as, in order to permit this, it would have been necessary to dispense with Standing Orders, and this the Committee refused to allow.

It was then put forward again for the 1857 session, but then disagreement between the railway and the Trustees caused it to be finally dropped; so the N.S.R. had fallen between two stools. However, within a few years, relations with the L. & N.W. considerably improved, and the N.S.R. obtained running powers to Liverpool.

It may be mentioned, in conclusion, that there was a previous agreement between the N.S.R. and the Bridgewater Trustees, dated 29 September 1849, but no copy of this appears to be extant, and the author has been unable to trace any information as to its purport.

* * * * *

PADDOCK WOOD

by H. P. White

Paddock Wood, $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles on the Dover side of Tonbridge, was opened by the South Eastern Railway on 31 August 1842. From this station it is some 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles by road to Maidstone, county town of Kent. As can be expected, Maidstone was to have been included in some of the early railway schemes, and was to have been on the direct line of Rennie's Central Kentish Railway. But with the failure of all these schemes, Paddock Wood was to remain the nearest station until the opening of the Maidstone branch on 25 September 1844.

It has been generally assumed that until that date Paddock Wood was known as Maidstone Road, and indeed it appears as such in the columns of Bradshaw's Guide for September 1843. Evidence has recently come to light, however, which points to the fact that, whatever the official name of the station, the name of Paddock Wood was in current use prior to the opening of the branch. This takes the form of a handbill discovered during demolition work in Maidstone in 1955. It is dated 11 October 1842, less than six

weeks after the coming of Maidstone Road, and advertizes coach services to and from Swan Inn, Maidstone, in connexion with the South Eastern trains. This feeder route was operated by B. Kennet & Company, who maintained a booking office for the South Eastern Railway at the Swan Inn in the High Street (since replaced by shops). The handbill states "the Proprietors have determined to meet every up and down train at PADDOCK WOOD (sic). Superior appointed coaches, with experienced drivers, leave the above offices, punctually as under, for the railway station."

It would therefore appear that right from the opening of the station it was familiar to the public as Paddock Wood, although appearing in Bradshaw as Maidstone Road. This is the more noteworthy if we consider the origin of the name. Although the present village is a thriving one with several hundred houses, it is entirely post-railway in origin, and while it is now an ecclesiastical parish, it still has no civil entity, being located in Brenchley Civil Parish.

The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1819) shows a by-road straggling southward across the Weald Clay plain from the Tonbridge-Maidstone road at Watlingbury to the Hastings Turnpike at a lonely spot called Kipping's Cross, passing through country then almost as devoid of orchards and hop gardens as it now is of any other form of cultivation. Almost exactly half way along this road was a small wood, the site of which is now occupied by the station and approach roads. This was known as Paddock Wood. The nearest dwelling was a farm house $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles to the south.

Purely as a result of the building of the railway, Paddock Wood has become a thriving settlement with several quite large industrial establishments, while the surrounding countryside has come to be as intensively cultivated as anywhere in Britain. The village has grown up almost entirely on the south side of the railway, while the original station buildings are to the north. The main station buildings are, therefore, on the south or up side, designed in what might be termed "Managing Committee" style, i.e. similar to the rebuilt stations from Grove Park to Orpington, dating from the quadrupling. The original station, in a more severely classical style, still remains complete. Incidentally, because there is an almost complete lack of East to West road links on the Weald Clay, the village remains almost entirely dependent on its station, which must be the busiest of the smaller stations on the line.

The question still remains how far the name of Paddock Wood was current before the official renaming. The question also remains why it was current at all. Why not, for instance, Brenchley? There are numerous examples of stations named after villages more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away.

" A SUDDEN THOUGHT."

By G. O. Holt

It is seventy-five years since the London & North Western Railway diverted its main line round the carriage works at Wolverton, but the original course of the London & Birmingham track between the buildings can still be seen. Close to the point of deviation at the south end, the Blue Bridge crosses the old line. It has its niche in railway history, for it was here, on the night of 5 June 1847, that the 8.45 a.m. Euston to Liverpool mail train came to grief in a siding.

The Wolverton station of that time, a building in the Doric style, and famous for its refreshment rooms, was a place of importance on the journey northwards. The mail train was due there at 10.45 p.m. On this occasion, the signal for it to enter the station had been exhibited, and it had been heard approaching at its proper time, before the crash in the siding sent the station superintendent hurrying towards the Blue Bridge. He found the train in the siding, where it had run into several coal wagons. The fifth and sixth of its nineteen carriages were smashed to pieces, although the engine and four leading vehicles were almost undamaged. Seven passengers in the sixth carriage (a second class) were killed, and the principal guard (who had been riding on this carriage) had escaped miraculously by throwing himself from the roof to the embankment just before the accident.

The driver said he had seen a white light, indicating that all was right. Finding his engine entering the siding he had put on the brake and shut off steam, but the train was still travelling at about 10 miles an hour when the collision occurred. The accident was attributed to the unaccountable action of a signalman by the name of Fossey, who had actually gone a distance of forty or fifty paces to operate the points which turned the mail into the siding. The only explanation he could offer was that he mistook it for a goods train, but evidence given at the inquest showed that no such train was due at Wolverton within half an hour of the mail. Fossey was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labour at the next Buckingham Assizes.

G. P. Neele mentions, in his Railway Reminiscences, a strange suggestion made in a newspaper after this accident. It was proposed that mooring posts should be placed in sidings, and guards should be provided with coils of rope, which could be thrown round the posts and paid out to arrest the progress of trains. Ludicrous as this may seem, it shows an awareness of the trainmen's plight when the signalling system was uncertain and brake power was very inadequate. Such a thing, one might say, could only have happened in the earliest days of railways.

It was therefore surprising to find that a similar accident happened in the United States only a few months ago. The following story, published on 17 September 1956, is reproduced by the courtesy of Time: copyright Time Inc., 1956.

"In the pre-dawn darkness one day last week, an Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway mail train pulled off the main line and onto a siding about five miles south of the little cattle town of Springer, N. Mex., to let the Santa Fe's Los Angeles-bound streamliner, the Chief, roar past. As the mail train slid to a stop, Fireman Pete Camilo Caldarelli, 44, climbed down out of the locomotive and walked through the chill desert air to a switch up ahead. The job he had to do was one he had done many times in the past: stand by until the streamliner had passed, then set the switch to let his train back onto the main line.

"As the Chief's lights came sweeping out of the darkness, the mail train whistled on the siding, and Caldarelli suddenly raced across the track, opened two locks and threw the switch. The streamliner, instead of rushing past at 40 to 45 m.p.h. on the main line, roared into the open switch, onto the siding, and plowed head on into the mail train. One Pullman car, flung into the air by the force of the crash, dropped atop a dormitory car in which the Chief's dining-car employees were asleep; the next Pullman rammed into the crushed dormitory car from the rear. The toll: 20 dead, all of them Santa Fe employees; 35 injured, most of them passengers.

"As clean-up crews struggled with the tangled wreckage, Caldarelli went before a coroner's jury. Why had he rushed over to throw the switch the wrong way? Dazedly, Caldarelli could only say: 'It suddenly occurred to me that there must be something wrong with the switch. I don't know what made me think that.' The jury returned a non-committal verdict of accidental death."

* * * * *

THE DEWSBURY & BIRSTALL RAILWAY

By B. Bextor

This early railway, or tramroad, is shown on Teasdale's map of Yorkshire of 1817, and also on Thos. Dix's map of the County of York, 1820, but not on the Nicholas Priestley and Walker map, nor on Greenwood's County map dated 1834. It is referred to in Rees's Cyclopaedia, where the date of completion is given as October 1805. Rees's account says: "The general direction of this railway is nearly North for about three miles and its object is to bring down coals to the vessels in the Calder River: it commences in the Calder & Hebble Navigation at Dewsbury, and terminates at Stubley coal-mines in Birstall parish, which are worked by Messrs.

Thomas Chester & Sons who are also the sole proprietors of this iron railway."

The reference to Stubley coal mines almost certainly refers to what is marked on present day Ordnance Survey maps as "White Lee Colliery." This pit, now abandoned, stands about 600 yards to the north west of the present property known as "Stubley", and close by the present cross roads at Muffit Lane and Leeds Road, on the top of the high ridge of land before the Leeds Road starts to drop down the valley into Birstall.

A recent visit by the author to this area produced tangible evidence of the course of the railway, and the following notes may be useful to others wishing to trace the route.

After crossing the Leeds new and old roads, the line ran in a south-easterly direction along White Lee Side, and closely parallel to the present White Lee Road. At Dale Lane Top, the line turned more to the east, to cross White Lee Road obliquely, and continues along a field path to the higher ground at Healey. There is a rise against the load here of some fifty feet, and there may have been a rope-hauled incline in existence. The presence of some old buildings tends to support this theory. This is the summit level (approximately 475 feet) and from this point the gradient is falling all the way down to the river. The course is vague through the village of Healey due to subsequent building activity, but from the top of Healey Street (behind the school yard) an old pathway proceeds obliquely to the back of Mortimer Avenue. If one assumes that the track continued in a straight line from here, still following a south-easterly direction, one ultimately emerges on to Deighton Lane. From there onwards, turning southwards, the course of the line is practically as can be seen in Teasdale's map - alongside the main roads which were in existence even in those early days.

The present route, therefore, is alongside Staincliffe Hall Road (across Halifax Road), Dowsbury Gate Road, and along Staincliffe Road to its junction with Heckmondwike Road at Moor Bottom, continuing along the latter road past Ravens Lodge, where the line crossed the present Huddersfield Road at the junction of Temple Road and Fall Lane. This point is close to the River Calder, but the actual site of the wharf on the river is not now ascertainable. It lay somewhere close to Ravens Wharf at Scout Hill.

Visible proof that one is on the correct course when walking along Staincliffe Road is provided at the junction of this road with Oxford Road, where there is an old stone wall along the westerly edge of Staincliffe Road, the top coping stones of which are made up of old stone sleeper blocks. At least a score of these can be noted here. It is hoped that this description may be of use to anyone seeking to explore traces of this early line about which little has been written. The map references are taken from the 6" Ordnance Survey, and the relevant sheet numbers are Yorks (West Riding) 232 and 247.

RECENT LITERATUREWilliam J. Skillern

- ABBOTT, Robert. The Railways of the Leicester Navigation Company. 1955 [i.e. 1956]. (Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, The Guildhall, Leicester, 2/6). (Also in "Transactions of the Leics. Archaeol. & Hist. Soc.", Vol. 31, 1955)
- BETT, W. H. The Evolution of the Tube ticket office [in London]. 1956. (Electric Railway Society, 4 Sandhurst Road, Sidcup, Kent, 6d.)
Duplicated typescript.
- CHELMSFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY. Essex Railways, 1836-1956: an exhibition to mark the ... electrification to Chelmsford, June 1956: [catalogue and chronology, 1956]. (Chelmsford Public Library & Museum Committee, 3d.)
- CLINKER, C. R. The Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway, 1956. (Dugdale Society, Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon, 5/3).
- DERBY MUSEUM & ART GALLERY. Illustrated guide to the Midland Railway exhibit. 1955. (Derby Museum & Art Gallery Committee, 1/-).
- ELECTRIC RAILWAY SOCIETY. Journal of the Electric Railway Society. Bi-monthly from Jan.-Feb. 1956. (Electric Railway Soc., 4 Sandhurst Road, Sidcup, Kent; subscription 6/- p.a.) Duplicated Typescript.
- FESTINIOG RAILWAY GUIDE: the oldest passenger-carrying narrow-gauge railway in Britain. (1956). (Festiniog Railway Co., Portmadoc, Caernarvonshire, 1/3).
- HARVEY, John (ed.) Early railway historical news: a short anthology of extracts from early books and journals relating to railways, 1832 to 1853. 1956. (John Harvey, 185 Nutfield Road, Merstham, Surrey, 3/6). Duplicated typescript.
- HEATON WORKS Light Railway Order, 1956. (Statutory Instruments 1956 No. 1007). 1956. (H.M. Stationery Office, 8d.)
- LASCELLES, T.S. The City & South London Railway. 1955 [i.e. 1956]. (Oakwood Press, 6/- & 8/6).
- LEE, Charles E. The Metropolitan District Railway. 1956. (Oakwood Press, 8/6 & 11/-).
- LIVERPOOL OVERHEAD Railway Act, 1956. (4-5 Eliz. 2, ch.lxxxii). 1956. (H.M. Stationery Office, 3/-).
- O'DELL, Andrew C. Railways and geography. 1956. (Hutchinson's University Library). (Hutchinson, 10/6).
- PEAK PARK PLANNING BOARD. Survey and development plan: [map of] road and rail traffic. Scale, 1" to 1 mile. 1955. (Peak Park Planning Board, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, Derbyshire, 7/6). [Map indicates average number of weekday trains and of passengers at certain stations between Dunford Bridge in the north and Bakewell in the south].

- PREBBLE, John. The High Girders: [the Tay Bridge disaster, 1879]. 1956. (Sacker & Warburg, 18/-).
- RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE AND TRAVEL SOCIETY. A Midland traffic survey. 1956. (R.C.T.S., 96 Kenilworth Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts. 10/-).
- ROLT, L.T.C. Transport treasures - some historical relics of British Transport. 1956. (B.T.C., 1/-).
- SAMPSON, Henry (ed.) The Dumpy book of railways of the world. [1956]. (Sampson Low, 3/6).
- WROTTESLEY, A.J.F. Famous underground railways of the world. 1956. (Muller, 8/6).

ARTICLES

- Recalling a bright chapter in Kinsale's past: [the Kinsale Railway, by Walter McGrath]. (In "Cork Evening Echo", 29 September 1956).
- The Worcester and Birmingham Canal, by R. A. Pelham. (In "University of Birmingham Historical Journal", Vol. 5 No. 1 1955 [i.e. 1956]).

* * * * *

OBITUARY

Our members will be very sorry to hear that Mr. J. Bond, of Preston, died in hospital on 13 October last. Mr. Bond, like many railwaymen of his generation, had an interest in transport which extended far beyond the ordinary routine of his occupation. When ill-health brought about his retirement nearly four years ago, he was able to find more time for his scholarly study of railways and canals. He joined the R. & C.H.S. within a few weeks of its formation, and only about four months ago he was asked to undertake the organization of a Local Group in North Lancashire and Westmorland. He immediately expressed his willingness to do so, but once again illness intervened, and by his death the Society suffers a great loss. We extend our sympathy to Mrs. Bond.

* * * * *

The British Transport Commission have staged another historical exhibition, entitled "Transport Treasures", in the Shareholders' Meeting Room at Euston Station, which opened on 24 November last, and is to remain open indefinitely. It contains a display of miscellaneous items from the Commission's collection of smaller relics, including a set of wine glasses made for Queen Victoria's exclusive use, fittings from canal narrow boats, railway inspector's tipstuffs, and a fine collection of lithographs and paintings. The exhibition will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, and from 2 to 6 p.m. Sundays. Admission 6d. An illustrated brochure, describing many of the transport relics preserved by the Commission, has been written by Mr. L. T. C. Rolt.

WHAT KIND OF RAILWAY HISTORY DO WE WANT?

(From an address by Mr. Michael Robbins to the Society, in London, on 24 November, 1956. Copyright reserved).

To ask that question of the railway historian himself will probably merely irritate him. He knows what he wants to do; he gets on with it and does it (or, in some cases, spends a long time thinking about how he would do it if he did it); and he doesn't stop to waste time in analysing his aims or his methods. For the reader of railway history, on the other hand, there may be some point in pausing for a short hour to consider what kind of railway history he is looking for, and by implication how much of the historical work being done on railways today comes up to the standards that should be expected of it. I speak to you, therefore, rather as readers and critics of railway histories.

I take for a starting-point this assumption: that the aim of railway historical studies is to get full-scale railway histories written and on the bookshelves - not monographs on particular aspects (though they will be valuable adjuncts) but full, rounded histories of the railway in its different aspects. That is the end-product, and all the researches, the discussions about particular points, and the detailed information that make up the regular fare of our meetings and journals are meant to serve one day as single bricks in the whole edifice.

What, then, is a history? It is convenient to adopt the definition given by the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: "A written narrative constituting a continuous methodical record, in order of time, or important or public events, especially those connected with a particular country, people, individual, etc." This definition, with the necessary adaptation to conform with the limitations imposed on railway history by the nature of the subject, seems to me to suit us very well: "a written narrative" - that is, not mere learning or lecturing, but something written, communicable and lasting; "a written narrative" - not a list or tabulation, but a narrative in which cause and effect are made clear; "constituting a continuous methodical record" - it deals with all the subject it professes to, not merely with particular phases of it; "a continuous methodical record" - the method is what I have especially to speak of here; "a record" - that is, an account faithful to the known facts, permitting acknowledged conjecture but not fictional padding-out; "in order of time" - obviously so, provided that the distinction between post hoc and propter hoc is maintained; "of important or public events" - these words and the rest of the definition have to be taken in the narrower framework of railway, as opposed to national, history, but they should exclude the insignificant and merely trivial; balance and proportion must be observed in this kind of history as in any other.

The craft of the railway historian - perhaps I ought to call him "historiographer", but I do not care for the term, is therefore compounded of several distinct, but related, elements:

- First, deciding what are the questions to be asked and if possible answered.
- Second, seeking out and assembling the facts which are likely to throw light on the questions and provide the answers;
- Third, selecting those facts which do provide the answers to the questions;
- Fourth, arranging them and presenting them in such a way as to secure the greatest possible measure of acceptance.

Stated thus, you may think that this is a tall order. You may say that these skills are not likely to be found developed to an equal degree in the same person, and it might perhaps be best to form partnerships and allocate the different responsibilities according to the different capacities of the persons concerned. Perhaps; but in practice I think co-operative historical works do not prove very satisfactory. Co-operative research may prove very useful; but a satisfactory history seems to be best produced when a single mind performs the whole operation, and carries it through from beginning to end, laying the specialized work of others under contribution from time to time on specific subjects.

You may have noticed that I said that the first three steps in the process consist of asking and answering questions. This may seem surprising if history is thought of as assembling information and building up a narrative. But I think that if he goes to work in that way, the writer quickly loses grip of his material; if, on the other hand, his approach is that of a person asking important questions that he means to get an answer to, he will take control of the mass of his material and will be able to group it in a significant way. He may, of course, well pose fresh questions as he goes along, as the evidence he is accumulating may suggest them to him. For our present purpose I mean to adopt the question-and-answer approach as the most practical working method: method, I emphasize, of working. The final text, of course, is not to be set out in this way, but the basic design is likely to be sound if this method has been adopted.

Before I begin to indicate the sort of question that the railway historian should ask and seek to answer, there is one important preliminary step to mention. This, evidently, is the choice of subject. The writer has very likely made this choice for himself long before he consciously decides he is going to tackle a particular subject if you feel that there is something you really must write about, discussion of what subject to choose does not arise. For British railway history, the most necessary thing at

this time is probably to secure the production of satisfactory histories of all the old railway companies. But company history is not the only way of treating the subject, though I dare say that in our country it is the first requirement. Railway history can equally well be treated by taking a cross-section in time - the railways in the 1870s, for instance; or a single internal aspect - railways and their labour; or an external relation - railways and coastal shipping, or coal, or public opinion. There are so many facets of railway history that have never been treated that we might all be kept busy for years without touching any subject already dealt with as such; but there is also room for what historians call "revisions" - fresh assessments of episodes, like railway amalgamations, or men, like Hudson, where the traditional accounts may well need modifying.

Having chosen a subject, what are the questions that the historian should set himself to answer about it? I suggest that they are these:

- (a) What happened, and when?
- (b) How did it become possible?
- (c) Why did it happen?
- (d) Who caused it?
- (e) What were its effects or consequences?

Having answered these questions to his own satisfaction, the historian should then put the whole thing together in such a way that it shall be both acceptable as a book to be read by the normally intelligent, educated reader who starts with an interest in the subject indicated by the title, and that the book shall be useful, by its arrangement and composition, for later reference on particular points.

Let us take these five kinds of questions in turn, because they raise in different ways most of the fundamental issues about railway historical method.

"What happened, and when?" It is the first, and inescapable duty of the historian to get his facts right: exactly what happened, and how the events succeeded one another in time. This is the part of railway history most commonly studied; it is, indeed, quite often supposed to be the whole duty of the railway historian to set down a plain, unvarnished account of what actually took place. I am sure that his task does not end there; but it is, certainly, his first duty to be accurate, with statements based on evidence taken from authentic sources. Perhaps the most encouraging thing about the practice of railway history in the last ten years or so has been a genuine attempt to seek out new evidence, to probe fresh sources, and to bring a more vigorously critical approach to bear on the traditional accounts. Let us look for a few minutes at the sources that are available to us.

First, and by a long way foremost, there is the incomparably rich and varied quarry presented to the historian, in all its daunting amplitude, by the British Transport Commission's historical records, now open for use by students. Built up round the formal minute books of the old companies, this collection of records and documents will take many people very many years to digest; and it is encouraging to know that the facilities provided by the Commission are being increasingly used. The value of these original documents can hardly be over-estimated; but there is one thing to be said by way of warning. Remember that minutes record what people wished to be recorded, not necessarily everything that took place at the meeting; and remember that they are nearly always records of decisions and intentions, and what people decide to do is not always the same as what is done.

The second great class of original sources which the railway historian has only recently had opened to him is the County Records. These may now be searched in almost every county (in England and Wales, at any rate) for the information they contain about railways; the official records, especially for statutory deposited plans, but hardly less important the business and family records which are increasingly being deposited at the County Record Offices. You need a good measure of "hunch" or luck to come upon the right document in these latter classes, but as cataloguing goes forward we may expect potential sources of much new and important information about railways to be indicated.

Third, there are the Public Records, whose wealth and comprehensiveness for railway history is, I think, little suspected as yet; the recent article on the subject by Mr. D. B. Wardle of the P.R.O. will surprise a good many working historians. The records of Parliament, especially of the House of Lords, have scarcely been touched for railway history, yet they provide evidence of some considerable value about important aspects of the subject.

There are also, not to be overlooked, important manuscript collections in the British Museum, the National Library of Scotland, and the other great British Libraries.

Last of the great classes of manuscript records are those still in private possession; either in families, or in store-rooms, or with solicitors. There were frightful losses during the war, more by "salvage" than enemy action; we know that Sir Edward Watkin's personal papers were burnt, unsorted, in 1945; more destruction must be going on all the time. There must still be in existence unpublished papers of railwaymen; not all Sir Daniel Gooch's diary was printed, and some of the missing portions were apparently of some railway interest. There is precious information in diaries, letters and business documents, even of people unconnected professionally with railways.

When we consider the printed sources of evidence, the very mass of ephemeral printed material produced during the railway age may well appal us. And yet the most valuable source of all for the public, external actions of railways, and for what the public thought of them, has not been studied nearly enough; the newspapers, especially the local press of the 19th century. Their very bulk and the physical labour of consulting them, apart from the rarity of complete sets, makes them an intimidating ally; yet the newspaper evidence can be invaluable. When recently I was putting together the history of the Isle of Wight railways, mainly from various published sources, I thought to check the opening dates of the earliest lines from the local press in the British Museum's Newspaper Library at Colindale; and I found that the opening dates of the first railway in the island, Cowes to Newport, and of the completion of the main Isle of Wight Railway line to Ventnor had been wrongly stated in all previous accounts. I recommend the use of newspapers to railway historians, who must keep a sharp eye open for reports written for one week's or one day's issue which got held over and used in the next, but were not altered to suit.

Bradshaw and other railway timetables have an obvious value, and I think that these sources are generally rated highly and properly used. Bradshaw's accuracy has always been amazingly consistent; the only thing to warn the historian of is a tendency for events which in fact took place in the course of one month, but first appeared in the succeeding month's issue, to become attributed to the first day of that month. Always suspect "firsts" for opening dates. And do not argue from the negative evidence of Bradshaw; he could only put in what the railways told him. He had no research department of his own, and some stations and lines first appear months - even years - after they were in fact brought into public service.

Bradshaw's Railway Manual, and the railway and financial press generally, especially Herapath and the Economist, are respected for their usefulness by specialist writers, but they ought to be used more by the general railway historian. The lists of directors in the Manual can be specially valuable. Prints of Bills and Acts of Parliament also ought to be more carefully studied. Maps as a source of information otherwise not recorded have a limited but definite usefulness. The history of the Ordnance Survey map has not yet been studied in detail; when it is, the railway historian will do well to weigh the value of its evidence. The early editions on the larger scales afford the only evidence there is for the existence of some tramways, especially short lines to canals; the 25-inch map of North Wales gave me important evidence for my conjectural siting of the first water troughs (later decisively confirmed from documents) near Mochdre, and not at Aber as formerly supposed. Maps on the smaller scales are not much use; even the Ordnance 1-inch map of today is not very good on railways, though

it could be made virtually impeccable with the expenditure of a fraction of the care devoted on them to Celtic fields and other archaeological minutiae. The modern 1:25,000 map can, however, be valuable; it was on one of these sheets that I noticed an embankment south of Uckfield which proved to be part of the works of the abortive Ouse Valley Railway - a feature not recorded before, I believe, in reference to the line.

Photographs should not be neglected by the historical writer; they can provide evidence and not merely embellishments to a text. They are not very likely to record a fact otherwise quite unknown, but they do indicate by the appearance of trains, track, signals and stations the standard of maintenance the railway kept up at the date concerned.

Then there is topographical evidence, the evidence of one's own eyes: the surviving station buildings, the abandoned sidings and signal boxes, the style of the viaducts, bridges and tunnels, and the hundreds of significant details that establish the character of a railway, from the everlasting cast-iron trespass warning notices of the London & North Western to the quick-wearing painted name-boards of the Kent & East Sussex. Let me mention the case where a jaunt in the train put me on to something that I should never have thought to look for otherwise. Arriving at Rhymney Station, I noticed on the down side some sidings which seemed to run straight on up to buffer stops with a goods shed; the train ran on by a westerly curve to the station. "That," I thought, "looks like an original terminus." The railway, which was opened to Rhymney only in 1858, was extended by the joint line to Rhymney Bridge and Nantybwoch in 1871, and I am pretty sure the present Rhymney station was built at the latter date. Documentary proof can almost certainly be found; the important thing is that a look at the site starts a question in the mind.

(to be continued)

* * * * *

CORRESPONDENCE

Sir, - In his excellent article "Some Pitfalls in Research into Railway History", Mr. M. D. Greville seems to me to have missed the real importance of accurate dates. He suggests that we need to know the date of the Battle of Waterloo so that we can quote it when writing about the Battle. If this is the case, the learning of dates parrot-fashion in school (provided they are remembered) is a worthwhile occupation. Surely the real importance of dates is that they enable us to locate an event exactly in a sequence of events, so that the logical relationship of those events can be discussed? J. F. LING.

Sir, - During the year or so since the Society published A Short History of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, some further information about the early days of this railway has come to light. So little was known of the two stations on Chat Moss - Lambs Cottage and Flow Moss - that there was room for doubt as to whether they actually existed. I have now found a paragraph in the Railway Times of 29 October 1842 which shows that these "stopping places for second class trains" were "abandoned" about that date.

The memorial to Mr. Huskisson at Parkside was said (on p. 7) to have been put up shortly after the opening of the railway, and Mr. C. R. Clinker now tells me that he has come across a contemporary newspaper reference suggesting that it was placed there in May, 1831. - G. O. HOLT.

* * * * *

NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

THE PROSPEROUS TIMES OF THE FESTINIOG. (The Festiniog Railway, by J. I. C. Boyd. Vol. I. Oakwood Press, 25/6d.)

The revival of traffic on the Festiniog Railway, through the efforts of the Society formed for that purpose and attended with such encouraging results, gives added interest to Mr. Boyd's valuable history of the line, the first volume of which, taking it up to the close of the period during which the Spooners had direct connexion with it, appeared a short while ago. Much has been written about the railway at various times, for the most part in articles in magazines and technical journals and papers read before scientific bodies, and Mr. Charles E. Lee devoted considerable detailed attention to it in his work on the narrow gauge railways of North Wales, published in 1945. Mr. Boyd naturally has drawn on all the earlier sources of information, and by dint of much patient examination of documents, since brought to light, inspection of minute books, plans, photographs, etc., and other records belonging either to the old company or individuals, has, with the aid of numerous specially drawn diagrams of track layouts and stations, and other illustrations, some little known hitherto, given us a fascinating picture of the aims and achievements of those who financed and built the line, and overcame the difficulties of applying steam traction on so narrow a gauge.

The work of the Spooners and their associates deservedly attracted widespread attention, and caused C. E. Spooner himself to be consulted in connexion with narrow gauge projects in many parts of the world. His life witnessed the really prosperous days of the railway, and he could have no conception of the forlorn condition into which the undertaking he had served so well eventually would fall, and of how admirers of his labours would exert themselves so enthusiastically to rescue it therefrom, and make it again a living reality. Mr. Boyd's book will help them

and others better to realize how much enterprise and skill, in which, of course, several besides the Spooners participated, went to the creation and development of the Festiniog line which, like many other railways built to meet local commercial needs, fell into a decline when the inescapable influence of changing circumstances took the current of trade elsewhere.

T. S. L.

FIELDWORK IN LOCAL HISTORY

Writing under the above title in the Autumn issue of The Amateur Historian, Dr. W. C. Hoskins makes the sweeping assertion that "all historians are obsessed by the written and printed word to the neglect of the evidence that lies around them." This may be true of those branches of historical study with which he is familiar, but certainly not of all. In the study of railway and canal history the vital necessity of field work being pursued in parallel with research in written and printed records has long been recognized and practised. In fact, many young people have actually had their interest aroused in the first place by a visit to some place where tangible remains exist, and have followed this up with research in documents and archives. Perhaps our ideas and methods are a little more advanced than those of students in other branches of historical research?

C. R. C.

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES

New Members

COHEN, I. 130, Aylestone Hill, Hereford.
 JACOBS, G. A. 57, Spicers Hill, Totton, Hants.
 JOWITT, R. L. P. 8, Park Road, Winchester, Hants.
 KNOWLSON, P. M. 11, Westfield Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 15.
 PALMER, A. R. 86, Honeybrooke Terrace, Franche, Kidderminster, Worcs.
 PICKERING, E. B. Bolton Cottage, Battlefield, Shrewsbury, Salop.
 RILEY, C. F. 17, Cavendish Vale, Sherwood, Nottingham.
 SHEARAN, Sgt. P.D. J.I.B. (M.E.), Main C.H.Q., M.E.L.F., British Forces Post Office 53.
 SMITH, J. V. 22999161 A/T, RM D5,24 Plt., D. Coy., AAS Harrogate.
 STEPHENS, Miss K. M. 20, Colwyn Avenue, Derby.

Change of Address

WHITE, H. P. Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone, W. Africa.

Deletion

BOND, J. See Obituary Notice on p. 9.

Council The Council have pleasure in announcing that Mr. C. F. Klapper has accepted an invitation to serve as a co-opted member. Mr. Klapper, who joined the Society at its formation, will be well-known to many members as Editor of Modern Transport.

Publications Only 14 copies of A Short History of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, by G. O. Holt, remain unsold, and it is thought that more recent members may wish to buy a copy while the stock lasts. The publication, in duplicated typescript, may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, price 3/9d. post free.

REPORTS ON EVENTS

Sheffield On 27 October, Dr. A. L. Barnett addressed a small gathering at Sheffield on "The Railways of South Yorkshire at the Turn of the Century". Dr. Barnett's knowledge of a very complicated railway system was soon apparent, and the use of Railway Clearing House maps of the area was of great help in following his most interesting talk. Mr. Stewart Dewsbery, a guest, contributed a number of interesting reminiscences on local train services.

London Mr. Michael Robbins gave an excellent address to 28 members on 24 November on "What Kind of Railway History do we Want?" This is being published in the Journal, beginning on p.10 of this issue.

Woking The Permanent Way Institution, Guildford Section, kindly invited members to a meeting on 26 October, when Mr. H. A. Vallance gave an illustrated talk on "The Bergen-Oslo Railway".

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1957 Programme The results of the questionnaire postcards sent out have been very good, and replies have indicated sufficient support to warrant inclusion of all the events in the programme. Such a response is most gratifying, and shows that the types of activities arranged are those which members want. The Council is grateful to the large number of members who took the trouble to reply.

East Midlands A meeting of this group will take place on Saturday, 16 February at 8 p.m., when Mr. Charles Hadfield will address members on "The Cromford Canal". Members interested should contact the Local Group Organizer, Mr. P. Stevenson.

London At 3 p.m. on Saturday, 23 February, Mr. L.T.C. Rolt will give a paper entitled "New Light on I. L. Brunel". Members will be advised where the meeting is to be held. It is hoped that the occasion will also form the inaugural meeting of a London Local Group. As the result of a recent appeal, several offers have been made to act as Local Organizer.

West Midlands An evening meeting will be held at Birmingham on 6 March. For details, members should contact Mr. P. L. Dyke.

Annual General Meeting This will be held at York on 4 and 5 May. As hotel accommodation in York is often booked up several months in advance, members wishing to stay overnight are advised to make reservations as soon as possible. Full details of the weekend activities will be given in the March Journal, but for those wishing to make early arrangements, the following brief itinerary is given:

SATURDAY, 4 May: 10 a.m. Visit to Railway Museum. 2 p.m. Celebration of 300th anniversary of first Act for the River Ouse Navigation. In this connexion it is hoped to have the co-operation of York Corporation, who are trustees of the Navigation. 6 p.m. Annual General Meeting, followed by an informal Dinner.

SUNDAY, 5 May: 10 a.m. Coach tour, visiting Tadcaster (viaduct and site of direct Leeds-York line never completed); Milford Junction Old station; canal installations at Knottingley; site of Hack & Wentbridge Railway at Wentbridge and Kirk Smeaton; canal installations at Castleford; site of terminus of Aberford Railway at Aberford; and Wetherby Old station, returning thence to York.

It is emphasized that the time and itinerary are purely provisional. A coach has already been booked, but should petrol rationing render this tour impossible, the Council will try to make alternative arrangements.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Good headway is being made by the sub-committee, and it is hoped to make a statement in the March Journal.

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

We are grateful to the Worcestershire County Archivist for three copies of the Handlist of Plans, Sections and Other Documents deposited with the Clerk of the Peace, 1 April 1889 to 1 April 1950: Worcestershire Records Office.

JOURNAL

From 1 January, 1957, new members will receive back numbers of the Journal from the beginning of the financial year in which they join the Society. Owing to the limited number of back issues (from January 1956 only) members may obtain these from the Editor at a cost of 2/- per issue, post free.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Mr. D. Garnett, Ringwood. (a) North Yorkshire & Cleveland Railway and branches, including Rosedale. (b) Southampton & Dorchester Railway, its successors, and branches.

ERRATA

Journal, November 1956.

p. 84. June 23 SANDY POTTON should read June 23 SANDY & POTTON.
p. 86. Date in title, 1856, should read 1857.

Mr. M. D. Greville informs us that in Note A on p. 85 (M.S. & L. Rly), it has now been established that the opening date for passengers was 1 December 1859. In addition, two further lines should be added to the 1957 Centenary list:

Dec. 28	RHYMNEY	Rhymney to Hengoed Junc.	9½ mls.
Dec. 28	NEWPORT, ABERGAVENNY & HEREFORD	Tredegar Jc. to Hengoed Jc.	2 mls.

These two lines were opened for mineral traffic from the Rhymney to the Newport, Abergavenny & Hereford on this date.

The total mileage opened should now read 344.

* * * * *

UNIVERSITY COURSES

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL An Extension Course of 10 lectures will be given by Mr. J. A. Patmore on "Railway and Canal History" on Thursdays, commencing 17 January, 1957, at Wade Deacon Grammar School for Boys, Widnes, from 7.30 to 9 p.m. Fee 12/6. The course will outline the development of railways and canals from the late 18th century, and will indicate the critical part played by these new forms of transport in shaping the industrial areas of England.

Another course of 10 lectures will be given by Mr. Patmore on "Roads, Railways and Canals in English History" on Tuesdays, commencing 15 January, 1957, at the University of Liverpool, Brownlow Hill, from 7.30 to 9 p.m. Fee 12/6d. This introductory course will survey the early development of the road system, and will go on to trace the establishment of the canal system by the work of Brindley and others, the decline of the canals after the coming of the railway, and the stages by which the railway network was built up.

Enquiries should be made of the Director of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Liverpool, 9 Abercromby Square, Liverpool, 7.

* * * * *