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YORK, 1957.

As members will know, it is proposed to hold an informal Dinner at York on 4 May this year, after the Annual General Meeting. The occasion of this Dinner (or, more properly, before or after) should present a good opportunity for members to meet each other on common ground.

It is appreciated that some people prefer to remain on their own, or to make their own friends. But there are others who, although not liking to push themselves forward, would, nevertheless, wish to meet other members who may share similar interests even if, to begin with, this may only mean a drink in the bar.

It is expected that this year's Annual General Meeting will be well attended, and it is hoped that new members and others who have not yet been to any of the weekend meetings of the Society will be able to join us. It is to those especially, then, that we should like to say that the Council will be very pleased to introduce members to each other if they wish, and to assist in any way possible. Please do not hesitate to ask us if you want any help; we will try to do our best for you.

WHAT KIND OF RAILWAY HISTORY DO WE WANT?

(Continued from p. 15)

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

Another source of information, to be used with discretion, is the memory of man alive. By this I mean not only strictly personal stories, valuable though these can be in throwing light on character, but more general matters which were not likely to be written down. I have heard an account, by a London & North Western Railway officer, of the state of things on the Wirral Railway when he visited it at or just before the grouping of 1923. Making an allowance for the views of the North Western about concerns less blessed than itself, and on the other hand knowing my informant, I shall always take more than a grain of salt when I hear judgments that the Wirral was a splendid little railway (for even historians are rather inclined to believe that any little railway must have been splendid).

I have not exhausted the kinds of evidence that can be called upon; each kind I have mentioned could be discussed profitably for an evening by itself. I have not even mentioned tickets, or working timetables, or contributions by novelists like Arnold Bennett; but I have said enough for one evening about the different broad classes of evidence for railway history to indicate, I hope, how very much there is to be explored. There is, if we can avoid tedium, great richness here.

I should like to add one special word about the use of all this evidence. It is most important, and I think too often overlooked, that much of the documentary evidence, especially that relating to the formative stages, is evidence only of intention; this is true, as I have already said, of much of the minute book material. This kind of evidence needs confirmation of performance; and in the early days especially this is much more difficult to come by. Newspapers and timetables are valuable; but the best evidence as to fact, rather than intention, that I know is given by the financial results of the different lines. Now, working results and accounts have, on the whole, been neglected by our railway writers; they are not particularly exciting in themselves; they take some unravelling; but they do provide important factual information that may seriously and successfully challenge accepted notions. I will mention here only Mr. Harold Pollins's thought-provoking articles on the finances of the early lines, and a recent study of the branch line from Northallerton to Hawes by Mr. Parris, which throws a new light on the whole question of the filling-in of the railway map after the early main lines had settled down. The financial side of railway history has been far too long neglected; personally, I have little doubt it can be made to yield

valuable results. Though it may sound a paradox, I think it good for the historian, and likely to lead to a more balanced story, if he deliberately sets himself to master those parts of a subject that make no particular appeal to him. Those that do will look after themselves.

That is all I want to say about the sources of information; but I should like to add two notes about how to use it. First, let us be as accurate as we can be, but let us avoid pedantry. By pedantry, I mean tedious attention to detail which is not called for. It would be pedantic, for example, to drag in the fact that the portion of the South-Eastern line between London Bridge and North Kent East Junction was down to 1922 in law the property of the still existing London & Greenwich Railway Company, unless this had some clear relevance to the matter under discussion; and, to take this farther in the same territory, it is permissible, and in my view right, to refer to the South Eastern & Chatham Railway, though in law there was no such entity (as the framers of the 1921 Railways Act found out rather too late). I should not mention this unless I fancied myself able to detect a certain tendency towards excessive, and distracting, precision creeping in.

That may not be of very great importance; but my second point is. Until there is a general change in this respect, it cannot be repeated too often that it is indispensable in historical writing which is meant to be treated with respect that references should be given to the evidence on which statements are based. This is a positive duty that is flagrantly ignored by nearly all our writers in this field. To do this is tiresome, no doubt; it increases the trouble and the expense of production; but it must be done. Having said that, I will at once qualify it. There is no need to give references to contemporary sources for the statement, for example, that the Great Western Railway was opened throughout between Paddington and Bristol in 1841, or for facts of a similar kind that are well established in the general historical corpus; but authorities must be cited exactly on novel or controversial points, and in addition there must be a general list of all the sources used. It is not a question of the writer being disbelieved, but of his putting all his cards down so that fresh inquiry may be stimulated. It is a thing that should be insisted on in future for full-scale histories; articles in magazines should at least indicate the sources used.

Railway historians are working away, and there is a constant accumulation of new knowledge. It must be confessed that it is not easy to keep abreast of the somewhat scattered publications in which this appears. But there can be no excuse for writers who do not keep their scholarship up to date at least by reading the Railway Magazine, which maintains a meritorious record in this respect. If, for example, you are going to state the precise date of opening of

Maiden Lane station, from which the first Great Northern train left London, you should be aware of and accept the proof given in the Railway Magazine of 1936 that it was 7 August 1851, and not adhere (as a recent admired history has done) to Grinling's incorrect 8 August.

So much for "what and when." The next question was: "How did it become possible?" This is something that the constitutional historian can perhaps take in his stride; but we are dealing with a branch of technology. The technical aspects of the matter must be given their due place. By using the word "due" I beg the question. I mean to say that the historian must have a good understanding of the engineering questions involved: the track, motive power and signalling; and he should make it clear whether any of them is a primary feature in his story - when, for instance, he is dealing with the Severn Tunnel or the Lickey Incline - or whether they are subordinate to the economic features, which I shall mention in a few moments. The original application of steam; the progressively steeper gradients that engineers were able to accept; the development of signalling to accommodate with safety growing volumes of traffic - these three technical matters in particular ought to be faithfully dealt with. The steam engine has been well looked after; but we have as yet no general history of railway signalling; we do not know the actual train loads hauled, decade by decade, over our principal lines; we do not know how many wagons were dealt with daily at the main concentration points, at any rate much earlier than 1900; we should like to know much more about the composition of the rails themselves and their effects on traffic working. There is, here also, much rewarding work to be done.

I must say here a few words about locomotives and the part that the story of their development should play in the general history of a railway. This is a difficult matter. I contributed some opinions on it in 1953, which I quote:

"It is idle, to begin with, not to recognize that the locomotive section is the most attractive part of the book to many - perhaps most - of its readers, and these readers make publication commercially possible. A school has arisen of highly exact historical students of the locomotive in all its details, who will not remain silent in castigating the errors and deploring omissions. These things are true, and the consequences must be respected; but there is no reason why writing about locomotive history should be so dull to read, and so difficult to consult, as it generally is today. It seems to be accepted practice to put in every detail that can be learned, and to cast the whole thing into narrative form. But this is just the opposite of what should be done. The writer should decide at the outset what dimensions and similar particulars are required, and then state them in the case of each

class of engine, adding no others unless they are significant Second, as much numerical material as possible should be presented in the form of tables; continuous text is not an appropriate way to set it out."

So much, and too briefly, for technical matters. I must turn, as the Victorian writer expressed it, from *Madam How* to *Lady Why*. "Why did these things happen?" This brings us from the internal story of the railway to the broader aspects of its external relations - in a word, to the economic framework and background: a duty far too often neglected. The reason why a particular railway was built and operated successfully may be plain to see: inadequate roads and canals between important centres with common commercial interests - the Liverpool & Manchester; a developing coalfield and its route to the sea - hence the Taff Vale; expanding cities urgently demanding suburban transport - the North London. Or it may be more complex and need some special inquiry into contemporary financial or industrial conditions. Here, if I may again mention an example from my own researches, the queer story of the promotion of the Northampton & Banbury Junction and the East & West Junction (later Stratford-upon-Avon & Midland Junction) Railways never seemed explicable to me until I was able to link them with the need to get ironstone from the Midlands to South Wales when the local ores were worked out there, a speculation which was for several decades frustrated by the import of Spanish ores from Bilbao which began in the early sixties. Or the reason why a line was built may be still more obscure, arising from the quarrels of railway companies, their desire to secure more "territory" for themselves or keep rivals out, even at a punishing cost. These promotions arising from the inter-railway "political" situation are the most difficult of all to account for and explain satisfactorily: partly because precise evidence for motives does not exist, partly because some of the things that were done could not be justified in ordinary terms. Was the building of the Midland's Settle & Carlisle line in the early seventies, magnificent as the undertaking was, really warranted by its subsequent value? The Midland had in the end to be forced to do it as part of a bargain with the Lancashire & Yorkshire: that is known; but what has not, so far as I know, ever been discussed is whether in the end it proved justified. I doubt it; but I do not know. Perhaps the Midland itself never knew.

Another aspect of this same question is: "Why did it happen here?" I mean, on the particular alignment it actually followed. Topographical and technical points are involved; so is the attitude of the landowners, corporations and rivals. Miss Joan Wake's enquiry into the case of the main line missing the town of Northampton is an admirable study of this kind. There should be more such.

But the greatest of all the "whys" is: Why was such and such a railway able to find the money to get it built? Who put up the money and why? Was it local? Or did that well-known body in early railway history, the 'Liverpool party', provide it? Why did men in the city of Bristol put money up for the Taff Vale and the Brecon & Merthyr? Was a given line a genuine local promotion, like the Bridport or the Caterham, from a town that felt cut off from the world to the nearest main-line railway? Or was it separate only in form, but with the parent company heavily represented on the board, like the Charing Cross or the Wilts, Somerset & Weymouth? Or was it something of a personal property, like Piercy's Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay; or a contractor's line, like the Bishop's Castle? The answers to questions of this kind are important to an understanding of the eventual fate of the concern. Again, what was the kind and amount of support and opposition, both locally and in Parliament? And, a fascinating study, why did the lines that were projected and got some way, but were never built, actually fail? Some of them - the London & South Wales Direct, the Brighton Direct - were no worse conceived than some that did come into being - the Hull & Barnsley, or the Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast, or the Midland's Dore and Chinley line. There were reasons for all these phenomena; there must have been.

My next question can be dealt with more summarily, for we all recognize that railways, like other things, do not come into being simply because there is a need for them and conditions are favourable; individual men have to take the action. "Who caused them?" The personal element in railway history has not been neglected: indeed, in a few cases it has been wildly exaggerated: but I think that on the whole it has been too much subordinated to the impersonal. The determination of particular men that things shall turn out according to their ideas rather than other people's has had an enduring influence. I name only George Hudson: I do not think it was foreordained that York must be the centre of the network of lines as we see them today, but Hudson made it so. The antagonisms and suspicions existing between some men, the natural alliance of others, helped powerfully to shape the course of events. Some of these are known from the biographies; others I feel sure await discovery. We should welcome studies of George Findlay, James Allport, Sam Fay, Herbert Walker, if the personal material can be found to give them life. We should always keep watch for the personal element in the story, while we ought to restrain ourselves from falling into the great temptation to dramatize it and go beyond the facts that can be established.

The last of the group of questions I asked you at the outset was: "What were the consequences?" This question is not often asked in relation to railway history, and yet the answers, when they can be established, provide the greatest satisfaction to the writer and to the reader. This means keeping not merely the means but the end of a railway in view. Here I will indicate the sort

of thing I mean by putting a string of questions (as if we had not had enough already!) thus: Was the expected traffic in fact obtained? Did the towns on the route increase and those off it decline? Look at the respective fortunes of Newton Abbot and Modbury, two South Devon market towns.

What industries arose in consequence? What Crewes, Swindons, Eastleighs came into being to nourish the railway? What fishing villages became summer resorts? Did the railway impoverish the farms by drawing labour away, or did it make them more prosperous? Did that section of the country rise or fall in comparison with others? We may contrast the experience of Wiltshire, say, and the Fens in the railway age. When the coal or the iron gave out or ceased to be needed, what happened to the railway that was provided to carry it? Ponder on the Barry, or the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay, and decide how much of their downfall was due to outside causes and how much to features within the railway field - amalgamation or absorption. In short, follow your story through; don't leave off at the wedding day and allow it to be supposed that life was happy ever after.

What I want our historian to aim for is, in one word, comprehensiveness. I think we want to broaden our rather narrow view of the matters we think it proper to deal with in railway history. I do not think that this means that the total length of the work needs to be very much inflated: a few sentences or paragraphs will establish the framework that I am asking for: but I do hope to see, combined with improvement and refinement of technique in dealing with what I have called the internal history of railways, a greater awareness of the connexion between railways and wider local and national developments. I hope there will be no limitation in respect of time - the story of the whole life, not only of the formative years; or in respect of subject - breadth is more important than small-scale precision; or in respect of sympathy - the historian, while he may rightly have his preferences, should be judge, not advocate; or of comparison - what was and what was not remarkable about it. We want, in short, a full and comprehensive picture of the railway under notice.

But given all these desirable elements, I have not quite finished; I am exacting, for in addition I want the mixture to taste good. The book - for such by now it has become - must be reasonably acceptable as something to read. It cannot be overlooked that a history is only fulfilling its purpose in so far as it is read; the more people read it, the greater its value. I do not mean by this that the treatment must be dramatized, or vulgarized, but it should consult the intelligent, educated reader's convenience. He should be induced to enjoy reading the story, and it should be made comparatively simple for him to use afterwards for reference. This harks back to my earlier point about the allocation of certain types of information to tabulations, others to narrative, respectively.

If the writer is determined to please his reader, he will have to struggle almost as hard with the construction of his book - the architecture of it, if the expression may be permitted - as he did with the research that lies behind it. There should be a balance of the different elements - chronological; technical; financial; economic; personal - that should convey with readability the historian's knowledge of his subject and his sympathy for it. Unbalance - the omission of large and important aspects of the matter treated - and poor construction are soon shown up, and the book ceases to be read. But the book that is well written will attract readers for generations. If I were asked to point to one railway history that does have this quality, I should mention Charles Grinling's History of the Great Northern Railway - lively, personal, and written with spirit throughout, though its historical method would not be acceptable today. We want railway histories that can both be read with satisfaction and be consulted with confidence.

The title of this paper asks a question. Speaking for myself, my answer is simple. The kind of history I want is accurate, comprehensive, and readable. That's all.

(Concluded)

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THE VICTORIA PARK BRANCH OF THE EASTERN COUNTIES
RAILWAY AND NORTH LONDON TRAINS TO STRATFORD BRIDGE.

By H. V. Borley

The Victoria Park Branch of the Eastern Counties Railway was opened on 15 August 1854, but very little use was made of the line until the North London Railway began running a passenger train service on 16 October 1854. Regular goods trains started on 1 January 1855; these were worked by the North London, and consisted of merchandise transferred from places on the Eastern Counties Railway to places on the Great Northern, London & North Western and London & South Western systems. It will be observed that early in its active life the North London began working trains over other railways, and also transferring goods across London, these operations continuing throughout its career.

The branch of the Eastern Counties joined the North London at a point then known as Hackney Wick or Victoria Park Junction, but in later years usually called Victoria Park Junction. When the passenger service was started in 1854, additional carriages, usually two, were attached to certain trains from Hampstead Road, which was nearly on the site of the present Primrose Hill Station, formerly named Chalk Farm. These coaches were dropped - that is,

detached at the junction - and worked forward to Stratford Bridge by a North London engine, calling at the Low Level platforms at Stratford, which in consequence were often referred to as the North London station. At that time, only North London trains used the Low Level platforms at Stratford.

There was no station at Victoria Park at that time, and those trains which had a connexion to or from Stratford Bridge had to stop at the junction to drop or pick up the branch carriages. The train left Hampstead Road for Fenchurch Street with the Stratford Bridge carriages at the rear, but on the return journey various methods were tried; at one period it was the practice to attach the additional carriages at the rear, at another time they were attached in the front, the Stratford Bridge engine then working through to Hampstead Road, the other engine remaining at the junction to work the next train forward to Stratford Bridge. No method seemed to be entirely satisfactory, but the arrangement continued in various forms after the opening of the original station at Victoria Park. There were a few minor collisions and near collisions, and it was eventually decided that the through carriages would not be worked after the end of December 1859. On and from 1 January 1860, passengers had to change at Victoria Park, except on occasions as described later.

The original station at Victoria Park was opened specially on 29 May 1856, in connexion with the Peace celebrations held in Victoria Park that day marking the termination of the Crimean War. This station was shown in the timetables as "Victoria Park, Hackney Wick" until the end of 1859; it was sited before the junction, and consisted of two short platforms, and was at first without shelter of any kind. The entrance in Wick Lane was a substantial one. It was converted into a pair of dwelling houses now known as 339 and 339A Wick Road, and is still standing. This station was opened for regular passenger traffic on and from 14 June 1856, and subsequently the platforms were partially covered and waiting-rooms provided. The original station was closed when the new one, situated immediately beyond the junction, was opened on 1 March 1866; this station originally consisted of four platforms, but the one on the line to Stratford was used only by the through trains from Chalk Farm (the locals starting from the platform adjacent to the North London up platform) and was reached by crossing the line on the level, no subway or bridge being provided. This platform was not in general use after 1866, and was later removed, the work being completed 15 August 1895. A footbridge in the centre of the station, connecting the three platforms, was brought into use on 24 February 1891. An additional entrance from Risholme Street (near Wick Road) with No. 2 Booking Office was opened on 1 February 1899. Local people had asked for an entrance from Gainsborough Square, but as it was considered that it would be too costly to comply with this request

the new entrance was made from Riseholme Street, and was known as the Hackney Wick entrance.

Victoria Park was a very popular place, especially on Sundays in the summer, and the two carriages usually allocated to the Stratford Bridge service, worked in conjunction with the Fenchurch Street and Hampstead Road trains, proved insufficient. From 1855, the Stratford Bridge trains worked through from and to Hampstead Road on Sundays in the summer months - usually May to October, inclusive; this practice continued until 1866. In August 1864, the trains worked through on weekdays and Sundays, but this was not repeated in subsequent years. Hampstead Road station was renamed Chalk Farm 1 December 1862.

There were two through trains each way daily between Hampstead Road and Tilbury via Victoria Park Junction and Forest Gate Junction in July, August and September 1855, but the service was not repeated. The trains consisted of North London carriages, but possibly the Eastern Counties Railway worked the trains forward from Stratford main line station. From 1 September 1866, the North London ceased to work trains to Stratford Bridge, but instead ran a through service from Chalk Farm to Barking, worked by North London engines throughout; passengers for the North Woolwich line were conveyed via Stepney. This service lasted only two months. From 1 November 1866, all through working ceased, and the Great Eastern Railway started to work a local service between Victoria Park and Stratford Bridge. From 1 November 1867, the North London again took over the service, which remained a local one, and the Great Eastern and North London continued this arrangement in alternate years until 1874. The last North London passenger train to and from Stratford Bridge ran on 31 October 1874.

From the opening of the new station at Victoria Park on 1 March 1866, the local trains started back from the platform at which they had arrived. From 1 October 1895, the locals ran between Victoria Park and Canning Town, generally using a terminal platform at the latter place, the rails serving which having now been removed. At various periods since this date some of the trains have worked through to North Woolwich.

The Great Eastern service, which had been half-hourly since 1870, was reduced to hourly service from 1 January 1917. In 1921, the weekday service was much curtailed, and the Sunday service was withdrawn entirely on and from 7 October 1923. What remained of the weekday service was withdrawn on and from 1 November 1942.

Stratford Bridge station was situated approximately on the site of the present Stratford Market station, but the entrance

was in Bridge Road. The present building dates from 1880, and the name Stratford Market was adopted on and from 1 November 1880. In the Great Eastern timetables, the station was usually styled Stratford Market (West Ham).

The Hackney Wick, or No. 2, entrance to Victoria Park station was open only during certain hours from 11 July 1920, and was presumably closed from 29 January 1940, when the L.M.S. service to and from Poplar was curtailed. The station was closed entirely from 8 November 1943; it had been closed on Sundays from 31 March 1940, from which date the Poplar service ran only on weekdays; this service ceased to run on and from 15 May 1944. The station buildings at the No. 1 entrance still stand, as do the platforms and some of the buildings on platform level. The Hackney Wick entrance has, however, been removed entirely.

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LEOMINSTER & KINGTON RAILWAY

Recent research has revealed that the public opening date for the Leominster-Kington section was not, as usually quoted, 2 August 1857. An examination of the directors' minute book raised doubts as to the correctness of this and further enquiries seemed desirable.

Our member Mr. Cohen was good enough to search the Hereford Times, and it is now clear from contemporary reports that the formal opening (announced originally for 28 July 1857) was altered and actually took place on the previous day, the 27th.

The opening for public passenger traffic (also announced for 28 July) was postponed due to the Board of Trade's refusal to grant a certificate because a level crossing had been constructed at Pembridge instead of a bridge, as specified in the company's Act. After satisfactory negotiations, the opening took place on 20 August 1857, and the event is recorded in the Hereford Times for the 22nd. This accords with the directors' minute of 18 August, which fixed the opening for the 20th.

C. R. CLINKER.

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Mr. J. F. W. Bryon, F.L.A., Borough Librarian of Eccles and Hon. Secretary of the Eccles & District History Society, is interested in the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, Bridgewater Canal and Manchester Ship Canal, and would be pleased to hear from any members similarly interested. Mr. Bryon's address is Central Library, Eccles, Manchester.

THE TRENT NAVIGATIONby G. O. Holt

To most of us, the navigable parts of the Trent are no more than brief glimpses from the train at Newark or Trent Junction, or possibly the view from the few road bridges which cross it at Nottingham, Gunthorpe, Newark, Dunham and Gainsborough. We know vaguely of some large modern locks, that the river is tidal below Newark, and that an aegre flows up it from the Humber, but it may be rather difficult to appreciate what has been done to improve the navigation in the course of its long history.

In May 1956, we went by boat from Stone to Lincoln and back, sailing down the Trent between Shardlow and the Fosdyke at Torksey - 57 miles each way - so we were able to see a good deal of this very important and flourishing navigation.

In 1699, an Act of Parliament was obtained for making the river navigable as far upstream as Burton-on-Trent, but the Trent & Mersey Canal (opened in 1777) takes a parallel course from Burton to Shardlow, and the upper part of the navigation has fallen into disuse long since. The Canal actually passes through the Trent for a short distance between Alrewas and Wichnor - 7 miles above Burton - but does not enter it until it reaches Derwent Mouth Lock, which was $48\frac{3}{4}$ miles from our starting point and 11 miles above Nottingham.

There is a weir at Sawley, so one sails down the river for only half a mile or so before entering a short "cut", which rejoins the main stream below Sawley Lock. A further mile downstream are the junctions with the Erewash Canal and the River Soar (visible from the train south of Trent station), and here another "cut", three quarters of a mile long, leads to Cranfleet (or Old Sal's) Lock, which joins the river just below Cranfleet weir.

Down the $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from here to Beeston the river is a little dangerous; there are several hazards, including a submerged training-wall on the edge of the channel, an island and a wrecked dredger. At Beeston Lock, boats leave the river again and use the Beeston Cut (opened in 1798) to join the Nottingham Canal at Lenton Chain, but it is still possible to see a trace of the cut, a few yards in length, which avoided Beeston weir.

Passing through Nottingham, the Canal takes a sharp turn under the London Road (High Level) station, and joins the river just below Trent Bridge at the Trent (or Meadow Lane) Lock, where the lock leading into the disused Grantham Canal can be seen on the opposite bank. From Meadow Lane, it is two miles to Holme Lock, where the lock made in 1776 is still in use, although lately deepened and repaired. Alongside it is the much larger lock constructed by the Nottingham Corporation some thirty years ago. This, like the

locks at Stoke Bardolph, Gunthorpe and Hazelford, is designed to take four standard Trent boats (82'6" long and 14'6" beam) at one penning, and until they were made in the 1920s, there were no locks for a distance of 21 miles between Holme and Newark. Consequently, the river used to run rather swiftly and strongly, particularly between Holme and Fiskerton, and the 1904 edition of Bradshaw's Canals and Navigable Rivers mentions that the current had a velocity of six miles an hour for a distance of three quarters of a mile at Hazelford.

Two miles above Newark, on the left bank, one comes to Staythorpe Power Station and, immediately beyond, the Navigation leaves the river at Averham weir. Here it enters Newark Dike for a distance of about four miles. The Dike was made under powers granted in 1772, and was formerly the property of the Newark Navigation Commissioners, who leased it to the Trent Navigation Company. The 1904 edition of Bradshaw's handbook refers to a practice whereby, in time of flood, boats could pass through a gap in the west side of Averham weir and avoid the Dike (and its two locks) by using the main river channel through Kelham.

The Town Lock at Newark is the most recent of the new locks, having been opened in 1952, but the old lock which it replaced is still there. The opening of the new lock made it possible for petrol tankers, 141' long and 18' beam, to come up the river to Nottingham, and we passed a number of them on our journey. A mile from the Town Lock is the Nether Lock, which replaced a smaller lock of the old type in 1926, and three quarters of a mile beyond the Dike rejoins the river at Crankley Point.

Until 1911, the river was tidal to this part, and there were swift currents. In that year, the first of the modern locks was built at Cromwell, four miles from Crankley Point. It is sixteen miles from Cromwell to Torksey, and we were advised to cover this without stopping, taking care to keep in the channel. Between Newark and Torksey there are two large bridges over the river - the railway bridge between Fledborough and Clifton, and the toll bridge at Dunham, which was built in 1832.

Leaving the river at Torksey, we entered a short "cut" to Torksey Lock, made in 1671. Above this we came to the Fosdyke, which is said to have been constructed in the year 120. If it is true that the Romans used it for navigation as well as drainage, it is by far the oldest artificial waterway in the country. It is said to have been restored in the year 1121, deepened and improved in 1782, and again in 1840, and leased by the railways in 1846. It is eleven miles long, and we found nothing very remarkable about this broad straight waterway across flat country, except the absence of bridges, of which there are only two - a railway and a road bridge, together in the village of Saxilby. One or two metal notices bearing the initials of the Great Northern & Great Eastern Joint Railways were still to be seen on the banks.

The Fosdyke leads into the west end of Brayford Mere at Lincoln, which is at the head of the River Witham Navigation, and we went on under the High Bridge (or "Glory Hole") to Stamp End Lock. Here an unusual top gate of the guillotine pattern has lately replaced one erected in 1827. $8\frac{1}{4}$ miles down the Witham we came to Horsley Deeps Lock near Bardney, and although we had time to go the remaining 23 miles to Boston, we thought it wiser to turn back in case some unexpected happening delayed us on the return journey.

Two days later we met an old boatman at Newark who thought it would have been possible for us to cross the Wash from Boston to Sutton Bridge, and return by the River Nene to Northampton, and the Grand Union Canal. It sounded quite impracticable, but we have since heard that a boat taking part in the I.W.A. rally at Lincoln last August travelled from Nantwich to Lincoln by this route.

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LIBRARY AND RECORDS

It was reported in the May 1956 Journal that notes on the railways in the East Grinstead area in the 1890s (including some notes on the Bognor branch) had been received from Mr. A. H. Rowland, of Quebec. These notes, consisting chiefly of locomotive working, have been typed and sent to the Society's Library and Records. Some interesting, and possibly hitherto unknown, matters were revealed: a summer express from Seaford to London via Hayward's Heath, East Grinstead and Oxted, which ran non-stop from Lewes to Horsted Keynes; and the Kingscote stationmaster's famous flower gardens.

Another item which has been typed and sent to the Library is a list of telegraphic codes used for stations on the South Eastern & Chatham Railway (including a number of London, Brighton & South Coast stations). The code was usually made up from two (sometimes three) letters from the station name and, although the list was dated 1921, a number of the codes were formed from the original name of the station. It was apparently overlooked, after the fusion of the L.C. & D. and S.E. Railways, that the initials of the Chatham's Mepham station (MP) were the same as those of Woldingham, which was originally Marden Park. But how the Brighton got XV for Three Bridges is a mystery.

Members may borrow the above items on application to the Hon. Secretary, enclosing a 2d-stamped addressed foolscap envelope. If any member has knowledge of pre-grouping railway station codes, or other items of interest for the Library and Records, the Editor would be pleased to hear from them.

RECENT LITERATUREWilliam J. Skillern

- BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION. Proposals for the railways: presented by the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation to Parliament, October 1956. 1956. (H.M. Stationery Office, 1/9).
- CLEGG, Herbert. The Third Duke of Bridgewater's canal works in Manchester. 1956. (Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 88 Grange Avenue, Werneth, Oldham, 3/6). (Also in "Transactions of the Lancs. & Chesh. Antiq. Soc.", Vol. 65, 1955).
- ELLIS, C. Hamilton. The South Western Railway: its mechanical history and background 1838-1922. 1956. (Allen & Unwin, 30/-).
- FARR, Grahame E. West Country Passenger Steamers. 1956. (Richard Tilling, 106 Great Dover Street, London, S.E.1. 25/-).
- ISLE OF WIGHT RAILWAYS. Report of inquiry held in London, June 1953; reprinted with additions from the I.W. County Press. 1956. (Railway Development Association, 9 Ethelred Street, London, S.E.11, and 38 Lyndon Road, Sutton Coldfield, 9d, or 1/- by post).
- MILNE, Alastair M. & LAING, Austen. The Obligation to carry: an examination of the development of the obligations owed to the public by British Railways. 1956. (Institute of Transport, 5/-).
- WILSON, Edward. Save Time Guide to the London Underground Railways. 1955. Edward Wilson, BCM/STTC, c/o Monomark House, London, W.C.1., 1/-, or 1/2d by post).

ARTICLE:

The Leeds & Selby Railway, by "Yorkshireman". (In "Meccano Magazine", December 1956).

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BOOK REVIEW

"CRUISING ON THE LLANCOLLEN CANAL - Hurleston Locks to Llantysilio". (Inland Cruising Booklet, No. 1). Published by British Transport Waterways, 1956. Price 1/-.

This publication, the first of its kind, belies the belief that official publications must be dull. In a most refreshing

manner Major-General Sir H. Reginald Kerr, General Manager of the British Transport Waterways, gives a welcome to the users of pleasure craft, only asking that they should show care and consideration in their use of the canal, and inviting comment and criticism. The foreword concerns itself with the 1954 Report of the Board of Survey and the action taken by the B.T.C. on its recommendations relating to the future use of the country's canals.

A short history of the Llangollen Canal follows which is a masterpiece of condensation, while managing to include the item that the 1827 Act contained the provision that anyone damaging the Company's works was liable to transportation for seven years - a power which still exists! It is a relief to note that the portion of this canal now open will remain open owing to its new function in becoming a water conduit to transfer water from the River Des at Vron to Hurleston for the use of the Mid and South-East Cheshire Water Board in the near future.

There is a full page map showing the relationship of the canal to other canals, rivers, main roads and railways, and this is followed by ten pages giving a stylized strip diagram of the course of the canal from Hurleston to Llantysilio. While not to scale, all the main features, such as bridges, locks, roads, farms (for milk and water), railways, garages (for petrol and repairs), letter boxes, telephone kiosks, etc., are shown diagrammatically and adequately. Mileage is given on the left, and most useful and instructive notes about all features of interest en route occupy the right hand half of each page. Instructions for pleasure craft users are given which, if conscientiously followed, will encourage the B.T.C. to continue and expand this service, and promote general good feeling. Scales of charges and conditions under which cruising is permitted are plainly set out.

To avoid wasting water (one of the most important considerations for any canal user to observe) instructions for operating locks, including the special case of the Grindley Brook Staircase, are set out in detail with diagrams.

A list of addresses of pleasure craft hirers concludes this excellent booklet, and it only remains to be said that the many fine photographic illustrations bear out the contention that this canal is the most beautiful canal in the whole country, being unused by commercial craft, and providing facilities for relaxation and quiet enjoyment amidst unsurpassed scenery.

E.A.W.

ERRATAJournal, November 1956.

- p. 84. SANDY & POTTON: Date of opening (passengers) was
9 November 1857.
- p. 85. Add Dec. 8 EDENHAM & LITTLE BYTHAM 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

(See letter below from Mr. G. N. Webb on above items).

Journal, January 1957.

- p. 1. Hon. Secretary's address should read 16, Longwood Avenue.
- p. 1. Para. 3: Increase in issue of Journal was from four to six.
- p. 5. Para. 1: 8.45 a.m. should read 8.45 p.m.
- p. 9. WROTTELEY, A. J. F. For Famour read Famous.
- p. 18. FORTHCOMING EVENTS, London. For I. L. Brunel
read I. K. Brunel.
- p. 17. Last line: For Notive read Notice.

Annual programme, 1957 (which accompanied the January Journal)

Ulverston & Lancaster Centenary: For August 27 read August 24.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Sir, - I would like to point out that the opening date of the Sandy & Potton Railway quoted in the November issue of the Journal (p. 84) is the date of the ceremonial opening. The report of the Bedford Times dated 27 June 1857 says: "as soon as the Government Inspector has issued his report, passenger traffic will commence." The Parliamentary return of goods and passenger traffic, etc., for the second half of 1857 shows that passenger traffic did not begin until 9 November.

The same Parliamentary return also includes "Willoughby D'Eresby's, Lord (Edenham & Little Bytham)" Railway. A footnote says: "this line was not opened until 8 December." The report of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade to the Privy Council for the year 1857 contains a record of a long series of Government inspections of this line, beginning 26 June, 1856. The report of the inspection on 4 April, 1857 states that a considerable coal traffic was being carried. Permission to open the line to passenger traffic was given on 13 November 1857, subject to a speed restriction of 15 m.p.h. (8 m.p.h. on curves and down the inclines) and a maximum weight of 12 tons for the locomotive. - G. N. WEBB.

Sir, - Having read with interest Mr. Ling's letter in the January Journal, I hasten to say that I am in general agreement with him. In writing of dates I deliberately condensed my remarks in order not to give undue importance to them, and so may not have made myself quite clear. I would not for a moment suggest the necessity of "knowing" dates - I myself am quite incapable of memorizing them. My point is that, when writing of an event, the date should preferably be found and quoted, and the greatest care taken to ensure its accuracy; if this is not possible, it should be given with reservation, or not at all.

M. D. GREVILLE.

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SOME WATERWAY ANNIVERSARIES OF 1957

Mr. H. J. Compton has sent some notes on waterway anniversaries, which are as follows:

1657	Act of Commonwealth	First Act for Yorkshire Ouse.
1757	30 Geo. II c.47	Blyth River to Halesworth.
1757	30 Geo. II c.62	Ivel (Beds) River to Shefford.
1807	47 Geo.III c82	Act to authorize cut from Weaver Navigation to Weston Point.
1807	47 Geo.III c.117	Adur River to Binesbridge.
1807	47 Geo.III c.129	Avon (Som.), Act for towing path from Bath to Hanham Mills.

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AN INOFFENSIVE OFFENDER

The following letter, which had been sent to the appropriate department after a request had been made for an explanation of the pulling of a communication cord, appeared in the Great Western Railway Magazine in December 1913:

GENTLEMENS - I got your letter this morning. Its the fust time I ever went in a train and I hope its the last I pay my ticket and just because I pulls the chain thinking I was at West Drayton where I wanted to go along comes the porter and lugs me off into the guards van I always stops busses by the cord and I thinks trains is stopped same way If I done anythink rong I am very sorry and I hope you will let me off this time as I wont never do it again. Yours truly -----

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETYHON. SECRETARY'S NOTESNew Members

CIRCUS, Rev. R. W. St. Andrew's Vicarage, 2, Langham Place,
Northampton.
 CUTLER, R. 34, Meadow Street, Blackburn, Lancs.
 FITZMAURICE, R. M. 5, Spinneyfield, Rotherham, Yorkshire.
 GREEN, D. J. R. 96, Edward Wilson House, Arle, Cheltenham, Glos.
 PEARMAN, R. D. 109, Dads Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham 14.
 ROOS, P. 19b, Uxbridge Road, London, W.12.

Change of Address

BARFEY, M. F. 19, Westlands Grove, York.
 HALL, R. W. 18, Jordan Lane, Edinburgh 10.

Resignations

GENZEL, D. G. HARVEY, A. M. HARVEY, G. W.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.West Midlands

Birmingham, 13 March. A meeting will be held at 7.15 p.m. at the Chamber of Commerce, New Street. Mr. L. T. C. Rolt will give an address on "Thomas Telford."

Stafford, 13 April. A visit will be made to the William Salt Library, Stafford, to inspect some of the interesting railway and canal material held there, at the kind invitation of the Librarian and County Archivist. Meet outside the library, 2.30 p.m.

London, 13 April. North London Railway tour. Starting from Broad Street at 2 p.m., a motor coach will convey members to Poplar (Harrow Lane), Bow, and Dalston Junction stations. At Dalston Junc. the 3.48 p.m. train will be taken to Willesden Junc., whence the party will go forward by the 4.35 p.m. to Gunnersbury. Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ hour will be spent here in order to walk to Kew Old Station and back, after which the party will return to Victoria by District line. Buffet tea will be served in the Elizabeth Room at Victoria Coach Station from 6 to 6.30 p.m., after which Mr. H. V. Borey, who is conducting the tour, will give a talk on the N.L.R. All members are welcome, whether attending the tour or not, and the meeting will close by 9 p.m. Descriptive notes will be issued. The cost of the tour will be 10/- per head, inclusive of coach and rail fares and hire of room, but NOT including buffet tea. Members are to meet outside the Broad Street station, and the coach will leave promptly at 2 p.m. Those who wish to visit the station should allow themselves time to do so beforehand. See next page for booking arrangements.

London, 14 April. Regent's Canal Tour. There will be a cruise on the Regent's Canal in the well-known pleasure craft "Jason", starting at 10.30 a.m., and led by Mr. Charles Hadfield. Members should go to 56, Blomfield Road, W.9., and opposite this house is a gate leading to the canal where "Jason" will be moored in full view. The gate is about seven minutes walk along the Blomfield Road from Maida Vale, along which Nos. 6 and 16 buses run. Alternatively, members can walk from Warwick Avenue Underground station (Bakerloo), proceeding 100 yards up Clifton Villas to Blomfield Road, then turning right. The trip will end by 3.30 p.m. near Heath Road, Bethnal Green, where buses to Liverpool Street (for Inner Circle) and the West End can be caught. Members should bring their own lunches, but a stop will be made at a public house for drinks. There will be lavatory accommodation aboard the boat. The itinerary will include a visit to Paddington toll-house, where a demonstration of gauging a boat will be given; Maida Vale and Islington tunnels (not at all fearsome); six locks; and Paddington, Horsfall and City Road basins. Part of the canal runs through Regent's Park and the zoo. The rest is industrial, a main interest being the number of canal-railway interchange points. No itinerary will be issued, because a loud-speaker commentary will be given during the trip, but historical notes will be provided. The inclusive charge will be 10/- per head.

BOOKINGS for both London trips should be made, as appropriate, and sent with correct remittance to Mr. A. E. Bennett, The Royal Artillery Band, Woolwich, London, S.E.18, NOT LATER THAN 31 MARCH. Accommodation on both trips is limited. Acknowledgment and receipt will be made by way of copies of the respective notes for each tour.

York, May 4 & 5, A.G.M. Arrangements have now been completed, and members have been notified of hotels by separate circular in February. Agenda, Secretary's Report, Balance Sheet, Tours Itinerary and Booking Forms will be sent to members in mid-March.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Mr. W. J. Milner, Oswestry. Narrow Gauge railways, particularly the Glyn Valley Tramway.

JOURNAL

Any member wishing to dispose of a copy of Vol. 1, No. 1 of the Journal is asked to get in touch with Sir Arthur Elton, 10 Eldon Grove, London, N.W.3., who is prepared to pay 10/- for a copy.