

JOURNAL
 -- of the --
RAILWAY AND CANAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 3. No. 3.

May, 1957.

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

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

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

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

THE EARLY YEARS

From time to time, a member will ask how the Railway & Canal Historical Society was formed, and it is felt that some record should be made of its origin.

A number of the earlier members had known of each other's interests and research work for some time and had, in fact, corresponded, although some had not actually met. While it was quite clear that there was an increasing interest in railway and canal history, it is doubtful whether any of them ever considered forming a Society. The idea came from a member who was doing some research on his own, and wished to get in touch with people who shared his interests. He wrote to a railway journal, suggesting that there was need for such a Society, and his letter was published in the summer of 1954. Several people wrote to him supporting the idea and, within a few weeks they had, by means of correspondence, drafted prospectus, constitution and rules.

On 4 September 1954, those who had been working to form the Society met at Preston to settle details. The Society was launched at the beginning of October, copies of the prospectus being sent to people known to have similar interests. The first Council Meeting was held at Rugby on 13 November 1954. A meeting in London was arranged for 15 January 1955, and the first outdoor event - a visit to the Grand Union Canal - was planned for 26 March.

Those were the early days, when no one could be certain of the course of events, nor how the Society would develop. We have no cause to grumble now.

NEW LIGHT ON I. K. BRUNEL

(From an address by Mr. I. T. C. Rolt to the Society, in London, on 23 February 1957. Copyright reserved).

When we read the blurb on the jacket of a new biography, we often find the publisher claiming that it is the product of a lifetime's research. But when we read the book itself we are often forced to the melancholy conclusion that, if the claim is true, then the author must be an infant prodigy. What the publisher's blurb writer really means is that the author has had a lifelong interest in his subject, which is a very different thing. I think my interest in I. K. Brunel began when, as a schoolboy, I read a little book published by the Great Western Railway called Brunel and After, but I do not claim that this was the starting point of my research. On the contrary, when I began collecting material for a biography of Brunel in 1955, I had no idea what source of material existed or what it would yield.

My knowledge of Brunel was then based on the main printed sources which are as follows: firstly, The Memoir of the Life of Sir Marc Isambard Brunel, by Richard Beamish, published by Longmans in 1862. This, of course, is concerned with Brunel's father, but it gives us his family background, and it is informative about the Thames Tunnel where Brunel acted as engineer-in-charge under his father. On the tunnel, Beamish is a reliable author because he was one of Brunel's assistant engineers, and later took charge of the works when Brunel was preoccupied with the Great Western Railway. Next, in date order, there is the Life of I. K. Brunel, written by his son Isambard Brunel, and published by Longmans in 1870. This contains some useful information about Brunel's works, but it is a somewhat uninspired piece of filial piety written by a man who was not himself an engineer, and who had to rely upon information supplied to him by friends of his father and by his younger engineer brother Henry Brunel. Henry was a partner of Wolfe Barry, the Tower Bridge builder, and it is a pity that he did not write the book. Lastly, there is that charming book The Brunels, Father and Son by Brunel's granddaughter, Lady Celia Brunel Noble, published by Cobden Sanderson in 1938. This only touches lightly on Brunel's engineering work, but as a picture of the family life of the Brunels is it invaluable.

It is remarkable that so eminent a man should have so small a bibliography, but engineers have always been neglected by the literary world. We do, however, know a lot about Brunel's railway activities from MacDermot's great History of the Great Western Railway, which I saved pocket money to buy when it was first published. But a biography based on these sources alone could only be a re-hash, leaving a lot of gaps unfilled. I was anxious to discover more, not only about the man's work, but about the

man himself, and the only way to do this was to find out what original sources existed. My first quarry was the British Transport Commission's Historical Records, where files of letters from Brunel to Saunders and Gooch yielded some interesting points about the early days of the Great Western which are not touched on by MacDermot, and to which I shall refer later.

The next step was to visit Brunel's grand-daughter, Lady Noble, and here I found treasure trove such as any biographer dreams about. Since she wrote her book, Lady Noble had discovered a secret journal which Brunel kept between 1827 and 1829, that is to say, during and immediately after his Thames Tunnel work. It was written in a locked book which was not to be opened until after his death. Isambard Brunel, in his biography, quotes a diary entry of his father's made in the 1840's, but all trace of such a diary has disappeared. Lady Noble believes that such personal papers were destroyed by his sons and that this little early journal accidentally escaped them. As a personal document, revealing the hopes and fears of a young man struggling to make his way in the world, it provides a wonderful insight into Brunel's character, and I shall quote from it presently.

With this exception, Lady Noble has presented all the Brunel manuscripts in her possession to the Library of the University of Bristol, where they fill a number of large wooden boxes in the archives. They include a whole series of sketch books which make a fascinating study, and many volumes of copy letters. There were two particularly rewarding items here. One was what I can only call a railway engineer's commonplace book in which Brunel had evidently set down any scraps of information which he thought might be useful to him at the time the Great Western was first projected. The other was a manuscript book of information concerning Brunel's career which was, I suspect, compiled by Henry Brunel for his brother's benefit. It included information about the building of the "Great Eastern", which Isambard Brunel evidently thought it wise not to print at that time, and which gave me the first clues to a most extraordinary story of which even Lady Noble was unaware.

Copy letter books in the possession of Brunel's great-grandson, Sir Humphrey Noble, enabled me to piece together more of this story. Also in Sir Humphrey's possession I found two volumes of a diary kept by Brunel, and this is of the very greatest value. The first entry in the diary is dated 7 March 1830, in other words shortly after the entries in the earlier secret journal cease, and there follows an almost day by day record of his activities down to 24 January 1834. This period, of course, covers the birth of the Great Western Railway, and when we appreciate that Brunel literally worked night and day on the project, it is not surprising that the diary eventually became a casualty. As time goes on,

his handwriting becomes more and more hurried and difficult to read, and after January 1834 there are only a few random entries at widely separated intervals, the last being dated 3 March 1840.

So much for the most important original sources. I am now going to give you some of the information they yielded so far as it is relevant to the objects of the Society. The first thing that emerged very clearly was what a long and disheartening struggle Brunel had before he succeeded in establishing himself as an engineer. The closing down of the Thames Tunnel works for lack of funds, with no apparent prospect of a resumption was a terrible blow to a young man who already aspired, in his own words, "to be the first engineer and an example to future ones." He became acutely depressed, and wrote this in his secret journal: "The young Rennies, whatever their real merit, will have built London Bridge, the finest bridge in Europe, and have such a connexion with government as to defy competition. Palmer has built new London Docks and thus without labour has established a connexion which ensures his fortune, while I shall have been engaged on the Tunnel which failed, which was abandoned - a pretty recommendation."

Although he was only twenty-two when he wrote this, reputations were at this time won or lost very early in life, and Brunel was obviously desperately afraid that he was, to put it crudely, "missing the bus." Whereas he had previously worked under his father's direction he was now working on his own, and was glad to seize upon any small commission that came his way. A relevant example of the sort of work he would take at this time was his visit to Lincoln, in the spring of 1833, to make a survey of the Fossdyke Navigation. This he did at the request of the Proprietors as a result of complaints from the keel owners of lack of draught. Brunel did the job with his usual energy and thoroughness, travelling the length of the canal taking the soundings from which he prepared a series of cross-section drawings of the channel. This little episode has a side to it which is amusing in the light of what was soon to come, for one of the Fossdyke proprietors who stood Brunel a lunch at the "Black Boy" when he got to Lincoln was that arch-enemy of railways, Colonel Sibthorp. I think we can safely say that this was the last time Brunel enjoyed his hospitality.

It must have been obvious to Brunel that there was very little future for an ambitious engineer in work of this kind. He wanted to get into the railway field, but here again he had a lot of disappointment. A letter in the B.T.C. archives reveals that in January 1830 he applied for the post of engineer to the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway, and railway history might have been very different if he had got it. It must have been a bitter pill when he was turned down in favour of Francis Giles. He

tried again in the following November, when his father's friend Charles Babbage gave him an introduction to Whateley of Birmingham, solicitor to the proposed Bristol & Birmingham Railway. He at once went by coach to Birmingham, dined with the promoters at the "Hen and Chickens", and wrote: "Something may at last turn up of this." But he was disappointed again for, as you know, the scheme was dropped, and when it was eventually revived as the Birmingham & Gloucester, William Moorsom made the survey.

On Monday, 5 December 1831, Brunel had his first railway journey when he travelled from Manchester to Liverpool on the first morning train. The running time, he noted, was one hour and twenty five minutes. Interleaved in his diary at this date is a sheet of paper bearing some wavering circles and lines drawn in pencil with this note below them: "Drawn on the L. & M. railway 5.12.31. I record this specimen of shaking on Manchester railway. The time is not far off when we shall be able to take our coffee and write while going smoothly at 45 miles per hour - let me try." As we know, he soon got his chance to try out his ideas of smoother and faster travel with results which shook the railway world to its foundations.

It has often been assumed that Brunel's luck changed when he won the Clifton suspension bridge design competition in the spring of 1831, but this was not really so. The devastation in the city of Bristol caused by the riots in the autumn of that year put all idea of proceeding with the bridge temporarily out of people's heads, and Brunel's plans for improving Bristol Docks were also pigeon-holed. His future never looked blacker than it did that winter and the following year, and he became very depressed. "So many irons," he wrote, "and none of them hot."

It was at the end of January 1833 that the tide really began to turn in his favour. Then somebody blew the dust off his Dock plans, and he was asked by the Dock Committee to come down to Bristol and proceed with the work. It is less than a month after this, on 21 February 1833, that the letters B.R. - standing for Bristol Railway - appear for the first time as a marginal heading in his Diary. It was his friend Nicholas Roch who this day told him what was afoot, and suggested that he should apply for the post of engineer to the new railway. Roch was representing the Bristol Dock Company on the Bristol Railway Committee, and was a member of the sub-committee formed to superintend the preliminary work. Brunel agreed to Roch's suggestion, and he ends his diary entry for this momentous day with the question: "How will this end?" We all know the answer.

(To be continued)

A COLLISION IN FOG

By G. O. Holt

Those who have searched for railway history in the newspaper files of a century ago will have noticed the numerous paragraphs describing various mishaps, many of them rather trifling. In the absence of efficient signalling and brakes it is astonishing that major disasters were so infrequent, and some of the accidents which alarmed the public in their day have long since been forgotten.

Such an accident occurred on Thursday, 21 November 1844, when two Midland Railway passenger trains collided in thick fog near Beeston station. There was severe damage to the rolling-stock, and a number of passengers were seriously injured. Three of them died shortly afterwards, and the evidence given at the inquest provides some unexpected details of railway operation.

Shortly before two o'clock that afternoon, a passenger train, to which some coal wagons were attached, arrived at the old Midland Counties terminus at Nottingham. The engine returned to Wilford level crossing with the wagons, to place them in a siding there, and, as it was about to do so, the crossover points (described as "self-acting") failed to close properly, with the result that the tender was derailed and blocked the up line.

The mishap was seen by James Howitt, the policeman on duty at Wilford gates, and he called men from the yard nearby to get the tender back on the rails with jacks. John Kearsley, described as Foreman of the Enginemen, took charge of the situation, and instructed Howitt to go on foot to Beeston, three miles away, to stop any trains approaching on the down line, as he intended that the 2.15 and 2.50 up trains from Nottingham should go on the down line to that station. The Nottingham station master, Robert Lightfoot, was informed of the arrangement, and thought it rather dangerous in the fog. He happened to meet Mr. Youle, a director of the Company, who had arrived on horseback at the crossing-gates, and asked him whether he should travel on the engine of the 2.15 London train as far as Beeston, to make sure the drivers took precautions and blew the whistle. Mr. Youle, who evidently had a very high opinion of the station master, told him to do so.

The 2.15 train thereupon left on the wrong line, with Lightfoot on the engine, and overtook the policeman as it approached Beeston station. It was then crossed to the up line, and the station master, Jonathan Raven, was told what had happened at Wilford. Immediately after this, Howitt arrived "perspiring very much and quite exhausted", and told Raven to "turn the red board up the line". He seems to have supposed that Lightfoot had delivered Kearsley's message, as he then borrowed sixpence from Raven and disappeared in the direction of the Victoria Inn.

However, Lightfoot told Raven that the derailed tender, which he had seen uncoupled from the engine before he left Nottingham, would be back on the rails in a very short time, and the 2.50 from Nottingham would come up on the proper line. At 3 o'clock, a down train arrived at Beeston from Derby, consisting of a six-wheeled engine (No. 48), two loaded coal-wagons, a second-class and composite carriage. Howitt, who had now returned to the station, is reported to have said: "If I were master of the train or station, I should not let the train go until the up train had arrived." But Lightfoot replied that Kearsley was at Nottingham and would see all was right. He then climbed on to the footplate and told the driver to proceed, whilst Howitt climbed on the top of the last carriage from which he could see the engine of the train, but no more than a few yards ahead of it.

Meanwhile, at Nottingham things were not going very well. Water running out of the derailed tender had "washed away the earth which was under the rails" so that they "became bent" and had to be "adjusted." The 2.50 train therefore left on the down line as Kearsley had arranged, and a passenger said in his evidence: "as soon as we found ourselves going up on the wrong line, all in the carriage became so much alarmed, that I don't think an additional word was spoken amongst us from the time we had remarked it to the time of the accident."

The two trains collided about three quarters of a mile from Beeston station, and a young man employed at the station afterwards described the sound as "like the report of a cannon, but not such a dead heavy sound." So far as the down train was concerned, engine No. 48 seems to have borne the brunt of the collision, the outside framing being bent and the cylinders "doubled down," but no one was injured. The up train consisted of a four-wheeled Bury engine, a composite carriage "stuffed with luggage and acting as a dummy," a second-class, a composite, a first-class and a third-class. The engine withstood the shock, but the two leading carriages were badly damaged, the body of the second-class (occupied by about twenty passengers) being "literally swept away off its frame," and it was in this carriage that the casualties occurred.

The man who heard the noise of the collision at Beeston went back up the line as far as Long Eaton to stop approaching trains, and the fireman of the up train returned to Nottingham with news of the accident. A man who had intended to travel from Beeston to Nottingham by the down train was alarmed by the conversation he had overheard between Lightfoot and Howitt and remained behind. On hearing the collision, he ran across ploughed fields and over hedges to summon help, and sent two carts to the scene of the accident for those who had been injured.

In opening the inquest on the following Monday, the Coroner said he had expected General Pasley, the Government Inspector, to be present, and seems to have been much offended by a letter from him saying he had already examined a sufficient number of witnesses to enable him to "form a perfect opinion" as to the cause of the accident. Details of the incidents leading to the collision were given in the evidence, and seem to show the result of some of the efforts which Hudson, as Midland Chairman, was making at that time to cut down the working expenses. The guard of the train from Derby appears to have been a redundant engine driver, who had been acting as guard for five months but was appointed only a month before. He had no rule book, and only received a copy of the timetable on the day after the accident. ("There are time-tables at the stations," he said, "but I have not usually time to look at them when going by.") He also mentioned that he started the train from Beeston by waving a white flag. It was soon discovered that two different rule books were in force, some of the staff having one published in 1842, whilst an 1844 book was in the hands of others. The driver of the train from Nottingham did not receive his new rule book until the morning after the accident. "You went to the Insurance Office after the fire," said a juror to one of the railways directors who gave evidence.

The unfortunate Mr. Lightfoot was charged with manslaughter, and Mr. Raven with aiding and abetting the commission of the offence. The two station masters were tried at Nottingham in the following month, but the counsel for the prosecution said he must admit that the prisoner Lightfoot had endangered his own life for the sake of "preventing that mischief which unfortunately afterwards occurred." The Judge thereupon directed the Jury to find the prisoners not guilty, although he had a few words to say about station masters who did not "confine themselves strictly to the duties of their respective stations," because, if they did not, "the probability was that they would in many instances do more harm than good."

* * * * *

ERRATA

Journal, March 1957.

p. 24, line 3. For 7 August 1851 read 7 August 1850.

THE CROMFORD CANAL

(Summary of a talk given by Mr. Charles Hadfield to the East Midland Group of the Society at Nottingham on 16 February 1957).

Transport by water was introduced into the area between Nottingham and Derby by the opening of the Erewash Canal throughout from the Trent at Sawley to Langley Mill in December 1779. Extension northwards was projected by local interests to serve the coal mines at Codnor, Pinxton and elsewhere, the iron furnaces at Butterley and Somercotes, the lead works at Alderwasley, the limestone quarries at Crich, Arkwright's cotton mills at Cromford, and the general needs of the neighbouring towns of Matlock, Belper, Wirksworth, Alfreton and Mansfield. This extension was authorized by an Act of 31 July 1789 as the Cromford Canal from a junction at Langley Mill with the Erewash Canal to Cromford via Codnor Park and Ambergate, with a branch from Codnor Park to Pinxton.

Among its supporters were Sir Richard Arkwright, the Gell and Beresford families, and the Outrams, Jessops and Hodgkinsons, all of them concerned with mining. William Jessop, as engineer, was assisted by Benjamin Outram; a partnership responsible, with others, for founding the Butterley Company in 1790. The Cromford Canal itself contributed greatly to the development of that company.

While construction progressed, a project to link the canal to Nottingham was authorized by an Act of 8 May 1792 as the Nottingham Canal. This canal was subsequently opened from Langley Mill in 1802, carrying coal from the Cromford Canal to Nottingham.

The main engineering features of the Cromford Canal were the Butterley Tunnel (2,978 yards long until later lengthened to 3,063 yards when the railway was built over it) and the aqueducts over the Amber and Derwent rivers (the latter having an 80 feet span). The main line of the canal was $14 \frac{5}{8}$ miles long, and the Pinxton branch $2\frac{1}{2}$, with 14 locks on the main line (all between Codnor Park and Langley Mill) built to take the Erewash barges, though the tunnel would only take narrow boats.

After some troubles with cracks in the aqueducts, the canal was opened throughout about August 1794, having cost about £79,000. A short private branch canal was opened in 1802 by Mr. Peter Nightingale (Florence Nightingale's uncle) from the Derwent aqueduct to his wharves at Lea Wood.

By 1803, the canal was carrying 155,000 tons, two-thirds of it coal: this figure had increased by 1831 to 289,000 tons, of which 218,000 tons was coal and coke; and by 1840 to 346,000 tons, the maximum reached. Coal from the area served by the canal, besides being used locally, was exported to Nottingham and down the river Trent to Newark, Gainsborough and Lincoln; it went to Derby by way of the Derby Canal, which connected with the Erewash Canal at Sandiacre, and to Leicester, and later London via the Soar and other navigations. Other important traffics were in limestone, iron, and stone for roads and later for railway ballast. The growth in traffic as a result of the development the canal brought to the area it served produced good dividends to the shareholders. In 1804, £7 per share (£120 paid up, £170-5-2d nominal) was paid: this rose to £12 in 1814, £16 in 1819, £18 in 1829, £25 in 1839, and a maximum of £27 in 1840.

Two important branches were built to the canal, apart from a number of small colliery tramroads. One was the Mansfield and Pinxton tramroad, opened in 1819 from Mansfield to the canal basin at Pinxton. The other was the Cromford & High Peak Railway, opened in 1831, from the Peak Forest Canal at Whaley Bridge to High Peak Junction on the Cromford Canal near the Derwent aqueduct. The latter was at first thought of as part of a shorter through route between London and Manchester, but the need to tranship goods twice, prevented much through traffic passing over it, though a good deal of flour and malt went from the Nottingham district up the canal and over the railway to Manchester.

The long Butterley tunnel, which could take only one narrow boat, was always a bottleneck on the canal, as it took three hours to leg a boat through. From 1802 it was worked round the clock, boats entering the east end between 5 and 6 a.m., 1 and 2 p.m., and 9 and 10 p.m., and the west end between 1 and 2 a.m., 9 and 10 a.m., and 5 and 6 p.m.

In the early 1840's, the canal traffic suffered from the competition of the railways in its export trade in coal, especially to Leicester and onwards to London. When a directly competitive Erewash Valley Railway arrived during the railway mania of 1845, the company began to feel unhappy about the future; dividends had dropped in five years from £27 to £12 per share. Arrangements were made to sell the canal to the Manchester, Buxton, Matlock & Midland Junction Railway two months after the railway should complete its line. The canal was finally sold to the Railway for £101,200 in 1851, by which time the Erewash Valley line had been opened, and revenue had fallen still further. In 1870, the Midland Railway bought both railway and canal.

Apart from the disadvantage of railway ownership, the canal had the Midland Railway alongside it the whole way, and also the Great Northern from Langley Mill to Pinxton. Traffic fell from

285,000 tons in 1850 to 146,000 in 1870, 85,000 in 1880, and 46,000 in 1888. In 1839 there was a bad subsidence in Butterley Tunnel, which was then closed and about £8,000 was spent in repairs; it was reopened in May 1893 in a poor state, and in July 1900 a worse subsidence rendered it impassable. The railway company then decided to close the tunnel, so dividing the canal into two parts which both continued to be worked on a small scale for a time, but are now disused.

The upper part of the Cromford Canal is one of the most beautiful stretches of canal scenery in England, as anyone can find for himself who walks from Cromford down the towpath to the Amber aqueduct, but the whole of it is a memorial to the industrialists of the region who built it. The long tunnel under the works at Butterley still remains.

* * * * *

FURTHER NOTES ON THE ELLESMERE & CHESTER CANAL

By P. A. Norton

A study of a copy of the original prospectus reveals some interesting information of the high hopes entertained by the promoters of the Ellesmere & Chester Canal. The plan of the canal was "laid before the gentlemen at their meetings at Ellesmere on 15 September 1791, and then finally determined on, and the necessary steps taken to apply to Parliament." A sketchmap was included with the prospectus.

A description of the proposed course of the canal is given. The mileage, inclusive of the branches, is given as 115 miles. A lengthy dissertation is given on the beauties of the countryside through which the canal would pass. "A canal of this great extent, must, if executed, bring comforts and conveniences of life at a very cheap rate to the inhabitants of an extensive country": this is illustrated by a catalogue of the many different types of goods the canal would carry. Apart from coal, limestone, slate and agricultural produce, the list includes iron, timber, salt, leather, wine, porter, hops and Russian and Irish tallow.

The prospectus makes interesting reading on prices: "it is plain, coal will be delivered at Whitchurch at 5^d. per hundred, or 9s.2^d. per ton long weight, which they now pay 12s.6^d. for; likewise at Wem coals will be delivered by the canal at 10s. per ton long weight, which they now pay 13s.4^d. for." The branch to Wem was not built.

An estimate of annual income from all sources is given, totalling £16,455-16s., made up of different items varying from £60 to £4,000 per annum. It is also suggested that even if only one boat a day passed along the main line of the canal (called the "grand trunk" in the prospectus), and one boat a day along each of the branches, the annual income would be £7,270-19s-3d.

The prospectus continues: "and further, the great summit level will form a reservoir of forty-five miles and a half long; so that five hundred boats passing from Shrewsbury to Chester, the water necessary to lock them down must be a mere trifle in so large a reservoir."

No mention is made of the possibility of having to erect the two aqueducts at Pontcysyllte and Chirk. Alternatives to the present route were suggested, one being the provision of lock staircases down and up each side of the Dee and Ceiriog valleys (abandoned because of the time it would take the boats to travel, and loss of water).

Towards the end of the prospectus an apologetic tone is introduced with the "estimate of Expenditure." The estimated cost was £171,098-9s., a considerable sum in 1791. Yet, in spite of the estimate that traffic "will be to show a fund of such magnitude to pay an interest of ten per cent. in the first instance," difficulties arose when the canal was only half built. Such heavy calls had been made on shares that construction was slowed down and less frequent calls were made. No new digging was done after 1805. Most of that which was built became more of a branch canal than a main line canal connecting the Severn with the Rivers Dee and Mersey. The original North-South line was abandoned, and the canal from Whitchurch was connected up to the Chester Canal at Hurleston, so that a wayround to the original Wirral Branch could be made. Further, the "water line" to Llangollen from Pontcysyllte was made navigable; thus the "branch" from Frankton via Ellesmere, Whitchurch and Hurleston became part of an East-West main line.

The only portion which still carries traffic is the stretch from Ellesmere Port to Chester. When the author visited Ellesmere Port in February of this year, the "Shropshire Union" basin contained a large number of private pleasure boats, and the warehouses looked as though they had seen better days. Since 1921, Ellesmere Port has been part of the Manchester Ship Canal's Dock Installations.

It is interesting to note that at a later date, when the London & North Western Railway were owners of the Shropshire Union Canal system, the canal was dredged and adequately maintained because it lay in Great Western Railway territory. (The

Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company was formed by the amalgamation of various canals and railways in 1846 and "leased in perpetuity under guarantee to the London & North Western Railway" in 1847. The Shropshire Union Canal Company was dissolved and this canal vested in the London & North Western in 1857. It was maintained efficiently because the London & North Western had no railway in the area served by the canal - the Great Western had.

Later still, according to the Manchester Guardian of 15 January 1957, a new waterborne trunk service was "started by Shell Mex and B.P. to economize on fuel," lubricating oil being taken by lorry from the Stanlow refinery to Chester, by barge to Wolverhampton and distributed from there. The figure quoted was ten barges to ply between Chester and Wolverhampton, "delivery 50 tons every other day." (See note below).

The author is indebted to Mr. J. A. Patmore of the University of Liverpool for loan of the copy of the prospectus.

(Note: Mr. E. A. Wilson informs us that he has seen narrow-boats decked over and being filled with oil at Stanlow refinery, and thus serving as oil tankers, and has also seen them travelling in pairs on the Wirral Branch. He believes this service is still doing well).

* * * * *

On 8 March of this year, the "John Moody" was launched at the Ellesmere Canal Depot. Although repair work is carried out in the Boat Dock, it is a rare event in these days to see a new boat being built there. Further, this particular boat is a new type, termed a "piling punt" and will be used for pile-driving in connexion with the strengthening of the canal banks. It is stoutly built, with three-inch thick boards forming a hull three feet high, and has a typical narrow-boat cabin with fireplace and lockers; and sloping ends like those of fishing punts.

What a happy inspiration it was when it was decided to name the boat after its builder, Mr. John Moody! Both Mr. Moody's father and grandfather worked on the canal, and to see Mr. Moody at work, caulking the seams of the boat, or walking nimbly across to the boat on a plank, it is difficult to realize that he is seventy-five years old. He is a real craftsman, who would rather be at work than retire, and after all the boats he has helped to build, index or repair, it must give him a sense of pride to see his name on this boat for whose construction he was largely responsible.

E. A. WILSON

RECENT LITERATUREWilliam J. Skillern

- CRUISING ON THE LLANGOLLEN CANAL, Hurleston Locks to Llantysilio.
[1957]. (British Transport Waterways, 1/-).
- NOCK, O.S. Steam locomotive: the unfinished story of steam locomotive men on the railways of Great Britain. 1957. (Allen & Unwin, 25/-).
- REIMER, A. The Cromford & High Peak Railway. 1957. (Oakwood Press, 5/6).
- SAVAGE, C. I. Inland Transport. 1957. (History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series). (H.M. Stationery Office and Longmans Green, 47/6).
- STEPHENSON LOCOMOTIVE SOCIETY. Historical notes and itinerary in connexion with the last train on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway on 3 November 1956. [1956]. (Stephenson Locomotive Society, Midland Area, 16 Hutton Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 20).
- WHITEHOUSE, P. B. Narrow Gauge album. 1957. (Ian Allan, 25/-).

* * * * *

CORRESPONDENCE

Sir, -

The Railway Mania and its aftermath, by H. G. Lewin

The entry (Journal, January 1956 p.10) shown as "Page 336, April 1, Colchester, S.V.S. & H.: Should read March 31" should be expunged, as Lewin's date turns out to be right. The correction was given to me in good faith from a contemporary notice which, it now appears, was rather obscure and was misunderstood.

May I take the opportunity to make an addition to the list?

Page 336 May 11 - Lowestoft Rly & Harbr,: Should read May 3.

M. D. GREVILLE.

EDENHAM & LITTLE BYTHAM RAILWAY

Mr. G. N. Webb has sent some further information about the Edenham & Little Bytham Railway (reported in the March Journal).

A footnote to the Parliamentary return of railway traffic for 1871 reads: "the passenger traffic on this line was discontinued on 17 October 1871." This was a Tuesday, but there is nothing to show whether the last train ran on this day, or whether traffic ceased on and from this date.

The train service disappears from Bradshaw in October 1866, reappearing in February 1870, and it has been assumed that the line was temporarily closed. The Parliamentary returns show that passengers were carried every year during that period except in 1869 when "No information" appears against the line. This does not prove that the railway was never closed in the 1866-1870 period, but does show that it was in operation during part of the time when it was missing from Bradshaw. It should be noted that, in 1868, the total of 768 train miles run is equivalent to less than two trains each way per week. Except for a few goods trains in 1866, all trains run were mixed.

	<u>1865</u>	<u>1866</u>	<u>1867</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1869</u>	<u>1870</u>	<u>1871</u>
No. of Passengers, 1st cl.	376	240	15	12	No	40	24
do. , 2nd cl.	1337	610	269	300	1	291	256
do , 3rd cl. & Parly	3463	2719	679	761	n	1544	1135
Minerals (tons) ...	2152	2464	2660	2395	f	4337	1997
Gen. Merchandise (tons)	1752	1878	2252	1932	o	703	975
No. of trains Mixed ...	3170	2405	936	*	m	*	*
do. Goods ...	--	156	--	*	a	*	*
Miles run by trains Mixed	13076	9920	3861	768	t	3570	3894
do. Goods	--	644	--	--	l	--	--
Total Expenditure ...	£ 977	860	734	469	o	485	551
Total Receipts ...	£ 425	423	350	356	n	428	379

* Return not called for in this year

There were two carriages "used for the conveyance of passengers only," and two "other vehicles attached to passenger trains and no other vehicles."

When the line closed, the official title was "Willoughby D'Eresby's, Lady, (Edenham & Little Bytham)", Lord Willoughby D'Eresby, the brother, having died on 29 August 1870.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

(It is not necessarily intended that this will be a regular feature of the Journal, but if members are interested, the Editor would be pleased to receive items from contemporary railway or national press, etc., on railway or canal matters. The next period to cover will be June and July, 1857).

Railway Times, 25 April 1857. "The various companies interested in the Manchester traffic, having determined to run special trains to the Art Treasures Exhibition on the opening day, and cheap excursion trains as soon as the shilling admission commences. a number of their representatives have met in Manchester for a completion of the arrangements. It will be endeavoured so to arrange the trains that visitors from great distances, even so far as London may go and return on the same day, and yet have several hours to spend in the Exhibition. All the companies, will run their principal trains up to the Exhibition Station."

Railway Times, 11 April 1857. "NORTH-EASTERN - BISHOP AUUCKLAND: The 1st of April was the day chosen for the actual opening for passenger traffic. The Durham County Advertiser says:- 'At last, we are enabled to announce that this railway has been opened. Long promised and often postponed; delayed, in the first instance, by actual causes; and, latterly, by imaginary ones, - it is, at last, un fait accompli ...'"

(This is an example of how a date can be misquoted. This was the formal opening, as elsewhere in the same issue it gives the opening for regular passenger service as 2 April).

Railway Times, 4 April 1857. "The annual report of Captain Galton to the Board of Trade, on accidents in the United Kingdom, is again largely occupied with the London & North-Western. Of seventy special reports into cases of particular negligence or other misconduct, in thirty-one companies, no less than thirteen relate to the model management of Euston-square." The L. & N.W.'s average was "one accident to each 50 miles of track." "The cause of each accident shows that the rash and improvident manner in which the goods traffic is cultivated and conducted is the sole origin of the wanton sacrifice of life and property by which the undertaking is injured and disgraced." It was reported that the departments to blame were "the locomotive, which sent a driver over a difficult line, with the peculiarities of which he was perfectly ignorant, and the department in which rests the responsibility of erecting proper signals at the stations."

Herepath's Journal, 25 April 1857. The issue of this date has a long article condemning certain newspapers for their publication of "Fearful and Fatal" railway accidents when a man is run over by a train which "when studied, prove that the railway had no more to do with causing the accident than the man in the moon, the bottle having been the true and only cause."

Railway Times, 9 May 1857. "The Leicester and Hitchin line of the Midland Railway was formally opened on Thursday, 7th inst The Midland sent some of their most efficient officers to Hitchin, Bedford and other stations on this route, so that the monster trains were filled without confusion, and despatched with the utmost regularity." At Hitchin, the first train, of 18 passenger carriages, started at 7.33 a.m. and reached Leicester at 10.50 a.m., and was distinguished by a red flag. At Bedford, nearly 3000 tickets were issued. The first train left at 9.2 a.m. and consisted of 16 first-class and 14 second-class carriages. The second train, of 30 third-class carriages, left at 9.16 a.m. The Bedford trains were distinguished by white flags. The Kettering train consisted of 29 first-, second- and third-class carriages, and left at 9 a.m., carrying green flags. "Though there were more than 100 carriages and six engines to return the way they came, all reached their destination without anything to mar the pleasures of the day. Nearly 5000 tickets were taken for this trip."

Railway Times, 2 May 1857. "Mr. C. V. Walker, telegraph engineer of the South-Eastern, has devised an expedient by which the power of communicating with the stations on both sides, up and down the line, is placed at the instant command of those in charge of trains. The contrivance is one of extreme simplicity. No portable apparatus whatever is employed; and no knowledge of telegraphs or telegraph language is required of the guard. An apparatus is placed at the various stations along the line, every two stations being connected by a wire. It consists of an electro magnet provided with a keeper, carrying a hammer so fixed as to strike a bell whenever a current of electricity is transmitted. A battery of graphite (from gas retorts) and zinc is placed at every station - the graphite end of each being in connexion with the earth, and the zinc end with the apparatus Thus, the galvanic currents of each two batteries are acting in contrary directions in the same circuit, and the power of each being equal, no action ensues. Whenever it is wished to transmit signals in consequence of some break-down occurring between the stations, all that has to be done is to make a connexion between the wire and the railway metals or the earth. The two currents then no longer oppose each other, but flow regularly through the connexion made to the earth, causing the electro magnets at the two next stations to attract their keepers, and thus strike both bells loudly. One stroke is given

upon each bell as often as the guard of the train makes the contact The system of bells with a language of bell-strokes has been in operation on the South-Eastern for the last four or five years for ordinary trains, signalling and protecting junctions and level-crossings When once the means of communication is understood it is easy to conceive how, by a combination of successive blows, it may be possible to form a complete code of signals "

Railway Times, 4 April 1857. TO RAILWAY DIRECTORS AND OTHERS. A YOUNG MAN, Twenty-Seven Years of Age, of highly-respectable connexions, will give half of the first year's Salary to any person procuring him an APPOINTMENT as GUARD or CLERK on any Railway in the Kingdom. The highest References will be given. Address "J.B.E.," care of Messrs. Dawson and Sons, 74 Cannon-street, City, London, (E.C.) - Advertisement.

* * * * *

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES

New Members

CLARK, R. H. 185 Nutfield Road, Merstham, Surrey.
 PITTS, N. T. 24 Midvale Road, St. Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands.
 TRACEY, D. B. Hertford, South Downs Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire.

Change of Address

PALMER, A. R. 13 Salisbury Drive, Kidderminster, Worcs.

REPORT ON EVENTS

London, 23 February. There was a good attendance at this meeting, when Mr. L. T. C. Rolt spoke on "New Light on I. K. Brunel." The first part of this is reproduced on page 42 of this issue.

East Midlands, 16 February. The address of Mr. Charles Hadfield on "The Cromford Canal" is summarized on page 49 of this issue.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

York, 4 and 5 May, A.G.M. Members will have received a copy of the Agenda and Programme. The Annual Balance Sheet, to 30 September 1956, is enclosed with this issue. Members taking part in the tour on 5 May should note the following erratum in the itinerary on page 3: the reference to "Allerton Bywater" station should read "Ledston."

West Midlands, 25 May. Visit to the Stratford & Moreton Railway. Details will be supplied by Mr. P. L. Dyke.

East Midlands. It is hoped that a paper will be read by Mr. H. W. Farris in June on "The Railway Department of the Board of Trade." Mr. P. Stevenson will supply details of this meeting.

Oxford Canal, 22 June. A visit will be made by coach to some of the old curves of the Oxford Canal between Hawkesbury and Rugby, abandoned after the canal was straightened between 1829 and 1834. Departure will be from Nuneaton (Trent V.) at 11.15 a.m. First call will be at Hawkesbury, where the Oxford Canal leaves the Coventry Canal. Here the Lady Godiva pumping engine, preserved by the B.T.C., will be inspected. The abandoned aqueduct at Brinklow and the old tunnel at Newbold will be seen, lunch being taken at the latter place. There will also be an opportunity to walk through the newer Newbold tunnel. The party will then see the old loop at Cosford, after which the coach will go to Foxton to inspect the flight of locks and site of old inclined plane, returning to Rugby (Central and Midland stations), for trains, about 5.45 p.m. Fare will be 10/-. Applications, with remittance, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, 16 Longwood Avenue, Bingley, Yorks, NOT LATER THAN 25 MAY. Bookings will be acknowledged by Notes and itinerary in the usual way. IMPORTANT. Please note that the Hon. Secretary will be on holiday for two weeks commencing 6 June, and therefore will be unable to answer any enquiries about the tour after that date. All enquiries should reach him at least four days before 6 June if a reply is required.

West Midlands, 6 July. Visit to Birmingham Canal system.

Western Region Rail Tour, etc., 27 and 28 July. Preliminary notice is given of the rail tour by 2-coach push-and-pull set of the W.R. branches from Leominster to New Radnor (as far as Dolyhir) and Presteign, including the old terminus at Kington. This will be on Saturday afternoon, 27 July. The Society is participating with the Stephenson Locomotive Society, Midland Area, who have arranged the tour. The train will meet the 2.10 p.m. from Kidderminster at Tenbury Wells, and will terminate at Woofferton in time to connect with the 7.50 p.m. to Stourbridge Junction. Arrangements are being made to pick up and set down R. & C.H.S. members at Leominster if desired. The following day, a tour by coach is being made of the site of the Leominster Canal, starting from Hereford and terminating at Worcester for trains. Full details of both trips will be circulated to all members in June.

As it is advisable to book accommodation early, details are given of hotels in Hereford. (See page 60).

GREEN DRAGON, Broad Street (21/-)	
CITY ARMS, Broad Street (21/-)	Figures in brackets
IMPERIAL, Widemarsh Street (25/-)	indicate lowest cost
BOOTH HALL, High Town (17/6)	of bed and breakfast.
CASTLE POOL, Castle Street (18/6)	
KERRY ARMS, Commercial Street (17/-)	

LOCAL GROUPS

London. A Committee for a London Local Group has been set up, organized by Mr. P. Roos, 19B Uxbridge Road, W.12. A preliminary meeting has taken place, and members in London and the south of England (within certain limits) will be advised of arrangements for meetings, etc., as soon as possible.

North-west. Mr. P. A. Norton is willing to arrange a meeting in Warrington or Widnes for members interested in forming a Local Group. He suggests a business meeting on a Saturday afternoon, followed by tea, and a talk by a member. Will interested members please write to Mr. Norton at 23 Crosfield Street, Warrington?

BIBLIOGRAPHY SUB-COMMITTEE

A good deal of hard work has been done by the sub-committee, and the Society is very grateful to them and to Mr. S. G. Ottley of the British Museum for his co-operation. A full statement will be made as soon as possible.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Mr. R. M. Fitzmaurice, Rotherham. Mineral railways in south-west England, particularly the Redruth & Chacewater Railway, Portreath-Poldice Tramroad, and St. Austell & Pentewan Railway.

THE JOURNAL

Enquiries have been received regarding back issues of the Journal, none of which is available prior to January 1956. Consideration has been given to reprinting early issues or, alternatively, collecting historical articles in the form of "Transactions." The Editor would be pleased to have members' views before taking the matter further.

The Editor is grateful to the response made to the request for articles on canals. A similar appeal must now be made to those interested in the railway side of the Society.