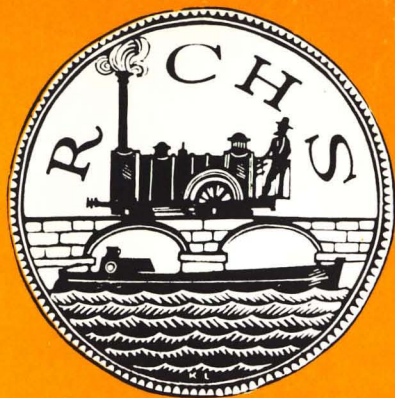




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The Trevil Rail Road Company

GORDON RATTENBURY

Introductory Note:

About three years ago, when in the Gwent Record Office, I had finished what I had intended should be my day's allotted task and was glancing idly through their 'Tramroad' index cards. I found a card I had not seen before, headed 'Trevil Tramroad'. This card listed about thirty items that had recently come into the custody of the Record Office, including the minute book of the company from 1820 to 1874, and a long list of share transfers and a few other documents.

On making enquiries, I found that these had been received from Abergavenny Museum, to which I went on the following day. It appeared that, some weeks before, two small boys had gone into the Museum with a parcel containing the documents and asked the Curator to purchase them. Fearing that they might be stolen, the Curator had told the boys that she would need to have the items valued before she could buy them, and they said they would return in a few days time. They did not re-appear, and the Curator passed the whole lot to the Record Office for safe-keeping. A pleasant change from the stories one hears of history being dispersed and lost. What follows has been compiled from information I already had, augmented by this later find.

My thanks are due to the staffs of the National Library of Wales and Gwent Record Office for their courtesy and help, and to His Grace the Duke of Beaufort for permission to examine the Badminton Collection at the National Library of Wales.

Trevil Railroad Company

By 1792, when the Monmouthshire Canal Company obtained its Act, the three ironworks at the head of the Ebbw Vawr Valley that its Beaufort Railroad was designed to serve had already been in existence for a number of years—Sirhowy (SO 143101) in 1778, Beaufort (SO 169114) in 1779, and Ebbw Vale (SO 171098) in 1789. The Beaufort Railroad ran from the canalhead at Crumlin to Beaufort, passing through the Ebbw Vale Works, with a branch from Shop Row, Beaufort (SO 168110, now known as Beaufort Terrace), to Sirhowy by a very circuitous route running as far north as SO 146115 before turning south to its destination. Under its Act the MCC was empowered to make railroads to any manufacturing or extractive industry lying within eight miles of its authorised lines; should the canal company refuse to do so, the owner or the occupier of the 'work' was to be permitted to make the requested line for himself under the 'eight mile clause'.¹

All three works were admirably sited, as far as their supplies of coking coal and iron-ore were concerned, but were some distance from a supply of limestone necessary to flux the smelting operation. The MCC Act made no provision for transport to be supplied for the import of raw materials.

Whilst there is no mention of any request to the MCC to provide transport to the works from the limestone quarries, it is evident that one, at least, of the iron-masters must have asked for this facility, as on 23 March 1793 the MCC instructed their engineer, Thomas Dadford junior, to make an 'ocular survey' from Ebbw Vale and Beaufort to Blaenonney (Blaen Onneu SO 156169) and from Sirhowy to Trevil (SO 122134), at both of which places suitable stone was to be found. The use of the expression 'ocular survey' is a fair indication that the MCC was not particularly interested, and on 27 May the MCC committee resolved that,

‘...no extension of Rail Roads or collateral Cuts can be made until all Canals and Rail Roads mentioned in the Company’s Act are completed.’

effectively putting an end to any hopes that the ironmasters may have entertained of having a railroad provided for them.

Several of the ironmasters served on the canal committee, and would have been fully aware of the state of affairs, and on 30 May 1793 a meeting was held of the interested parties leading to the formation of the ‘Trevil Rail Road Company’.² Construction of the railroad probably started soon after.

The MCC’s Rassa Railroad, as the line from Beaufort to Sirhowy came to be known, formed an essential part of the scheme, and as executed the TRR consisted of a line from Trevil Quarries to a junction with the Rassa at its most northerly point, with branches from the Rassa to the charging-banks of the three works. One longer branch was made to the Beaufort Company’s iron-mines at Cwmgywybedog from the line into their works. In all, the full length of the TRR was 6 miles 2 furlongs and 1 chain.

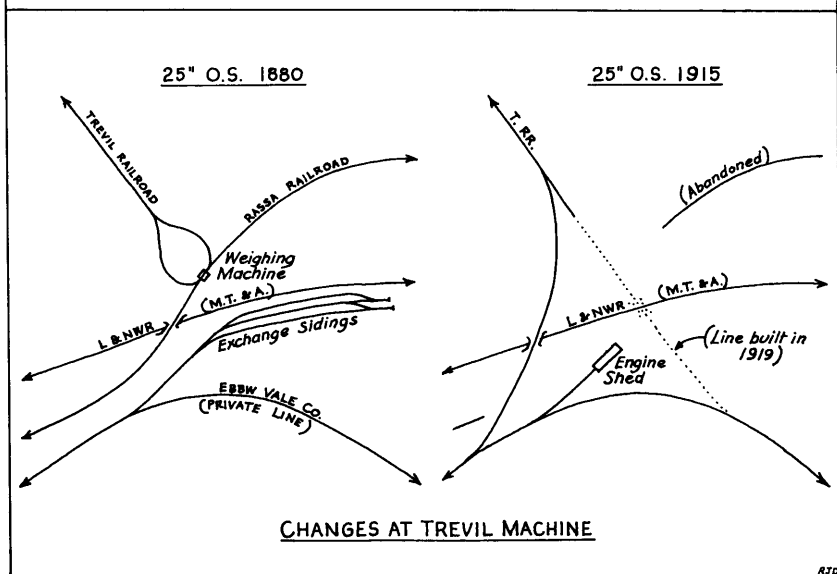
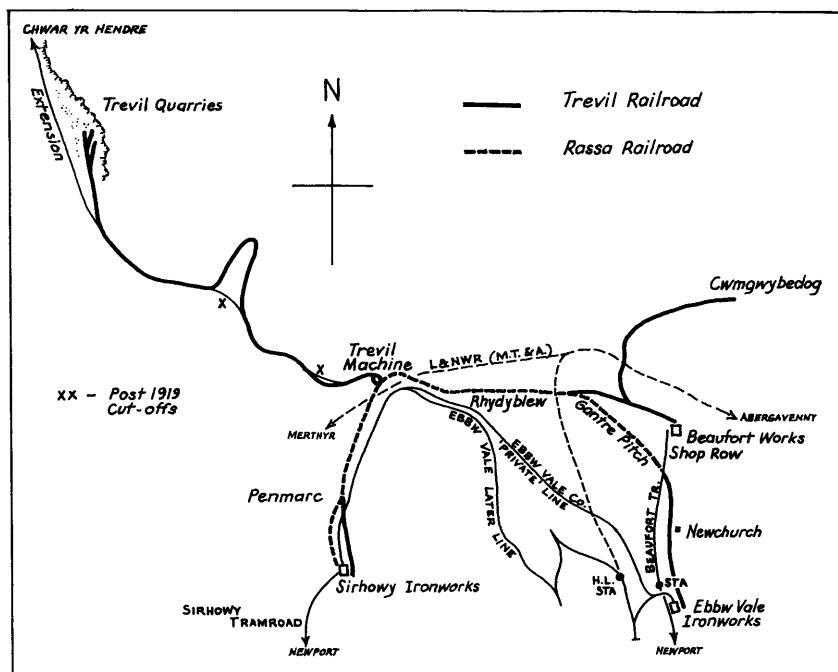
The capital of the company was £5,500 divided into shares of £100 of which £1,600 was subscribed by the three ironworks, the remainder coming from other parties interested in Monmouthshire concerns. Thomas Dadford junior subscribed £300.³

It was unnecessary to apply for an Act for the construction, as authority was to be found in the MCC Act under the eight-mile clause. The necessary land was leased for 2,000 years from the Duke of Beaufort, with Edward Frere and Thomas Cooke, of the Clydach Ironworks, to hold it in trust.⁴ Dadford was probably responsible for laying out the line, the gauge of which was of necessity the same as the Rassa, 3 ft 4 in edge-rail.

At the time the TRR was under construction, Dadford’s brother John was engaged in making the Clydach Railroad of the Brecknock & Abergavenny Canal using the same gauge and type of track. In May 1794 the B&A resolved to extend its line to Tyr Meddig on the TRR’s branch to Ebbw Vale,⁵ hoping to divert some of the traffic from that works to its own line. An application was made to the TRR for permission to make the junction, but on 12 July 1794 this was refused, and an alternative site for the junction offered at Rhydyblew, ‘upon payment of a small acknowledgement.’⁶

Under the partnership agreement or Deed of Settlement that they signed on 16 August 1795, the three ironworks agreed to pay 5d per ton per mile on all lime-stone to be used for smelting carried on the TRR, and 1½d per ton per mile on any building stone carried. Kendall & Co. of the Beaufort Works undertook that all stone used at their works would be obtained from Trevil, and that the agreement should be binding on their ‘heirs, successors and assigns’—a phrase that was to cause considerable difficulty in later years.⁷

In its early days the collection of tonnages on the MCC railroads was most haphazard, relying entirely on the monthly returns of cargoes carried submitted by the ironmasters, with no weighing machines provided to enable the company to check their figures. To prevent unauthorised use of the Rassa, in May 1794 the MCC ordered that a locked gate should be placed across it where the branch to the Beaufort Works led off, and that keys should be held by the three ironworks using the line. Gates were also to be erected wherever a railroad belonging to another party joined the company’s lines. On 5 December 1795 the MCC ordered that a toll-house should be built where the line from the quarries met the Rassa, but there was no mention of the provision of a weighing-machine and it can only be assumed that the sole duty of the person in charge would be to take note of the



way-bills attached to the waggons. It was a long time before the toll-house materialised, and the order for its erection was repeated in September 1797.

On reading the MCC minutes for 17 October 1797, it is a surprise to realise that the traders on the railroads did not understand that it was essential that the wheels of the waggons should be set to the proper distance apart to ensure safe running on the railroad. Instructions were given to George Bage, one of Dadford's assistants, that he should:

‘...examine the Waggons belonging to Sirhowy, Beaufort and Ebbw Vale and make enquiry which of those Waggons travell best upon the Road, and having ascertained the best Gage for Wheels he informs the diff. Proprietors if their Waggons are not made to the same Gage and Flaunches they will be Prosecuted...’

The first time that a weigh-house affecting the TRR appears in the MCC minutes is on 12 February 1799 when it was ordered that a machine-house should be erected at the junction with the Rassa of the TRR line from the quarries (SO 14661154) a point later known as ‘Trevil Machine’. The minutes record that the expense of its upkeep should be borne equally by the two companies, but a year later the MCC ordained that the TRR should bear two-thirds of the costs of the weigh-house and the Clerk's salary, otherwise the MCC would refuse to share any of the expenses; the same meeting appointed Joseph Beeston as weigh-clerk at a weekly wage of 10s 6d.

The ruling by the MCC appears high-handed, but it was a fair reflection of the fact that by this time the greater part of the traffic passing the machine originated on the TRR. In January 1800 the Ebbw Vale Company had taken a sub-lease of the Sirhowy Works, and had straight away started to make a railroad to connect their two concerns, which had, owing to the nature of the terrain, to run parallel with the MCC's Rassa line for part of the way. It was obvious that once this ‘private’ line was completed it would be used for inter-works traffic in preference to the Rassa. The MCC, who always considered that their Act gave them the monopoly of traffic in any area served by them, wrote to the Sirhowy Works questioning the ‘legality’ of what was being done,⁸ but as the Ebbw Vale Company were building their line on land that either belonged to one or the other of the companies or was leased by them the MCC could only protest. It is doubtful if the Rassa carried any iron once the ‘private’ line was completed.

The Rassa line fell by about 200 ft in the 1½ miles from the machine to Shop Row (1:40). Unlike the waggons used on the B&A Canal's Clydach Railroad, those on the MCC's lines were not fitted with brakes, and it was customary for the hauliers to place ‘sprags’ between the spokes of one pair of wheels to effect braking on this descent. This method of braking damaged the track considerably, and on 26 August 1803 the MCC wrote to both Beaufort and Ebbw Vale works demanding that the practice should cease on this particular stretch of line and that the iron companies should repair the damage already done.

In 1799 Benjamin Outram had inspected the MCC's railroads and recommended that they should be altered to plateways, but it was not until 1803 that a start was made to implement his suggestions.⁹ The conversion was completed from Crumlin to the Ebbw Vale Works by October 1805, when at the request of R. S. Harford it was decided to instal plates on the line from Ebbw Vale to Beaufort instead of relaying it with heavier edge-rails as originally intended.¹⁰

The Rassa provided an essential part of the TRR scheme, but the MCC had no powers to force that company to alter its track and so the Rassa had to remain a line of edge-rails to the end of its days.

By 1803 the TRR had become quite prosperous. An advertisement in the *Hereford Journal* of 7 December 1803 inserted by Thomas Bold, a Brecon solicitor, offered for sale several TRR shares on behalf of a client. The advertisement stated that in the previous year to March 1803 a dividend of £17 6s per share had been declared, and that with an expanding iron trade dividends were expected to increase.

Despite the fact that it carried all the traffic from the TRR at some stage, the Rassa Railroad was not a profitable line, and once the iron traffic between Sirhowy and Ebbw Vale had been withdrawn it ceased entirely to fulfil the function for which it had been made. On 17 November 1804 the general meeting of the MCC authorised the committee to sell or lease it to the TRR or to any other interested party. The offer was not taken up, and the MCC was left with a line that did not pay and which could not be disposed of. The proposed sale was, itself, of doubtful legality—as a company incorporated by Act of Parliament the MCC was authorised to perform only such acts as were specifically included in its Act; selling part of itself was certainly not included therein.

Edmund Estcourt wrote to William Powell, another Brecon solicitor, on 8 December 1805, enquiring what price he was likely to obtain for his TRR shares and if he would have any difficulty in disposing of them.¹¹ Powell does not appear to have had any offers, and in July 1809, when Benjamin Hall asked if they were still for sale, he was informed that Estcourt was asking a minimum of £250 each.¹² It is doubtful if Hall was interested at that price, as a list of TRR shareholders in August does not show any successor of Hall's but does contain a Revd. Edmund W. Estcourt of Newton, Gloucestershire.¹³ In 1826, when the depression following the Napoleonic wars had come and gone, it was reported that shares had changed hands for as much as £350 each.¹⁴

It is unfortunate that the minute book from 1793 to 1819 has not been traced. It is known that David Williams was the first secretary to the company from the signature on the letter to the B&A refusing to allow them to join the TRR at Tyr Meddig. From the price Estcourt expected to receive for his shares it is clear the company was exceedingly prosperous. Indeed, with a war in progress and the iron trade booming it could scarcely be otherwise. The large quantities of limestone being carried led the MCC to complain in 1813 of the damage done to the Rassa,

‘...as it appears that the enormous weight of three tons is carried on one set of wheels to the great injury of the Road. It is conceived that two tons and a half is as great a weight as should be carried in one Wagon.’¹⁵

and it was recommended that a by-law should be introduced to this effect at the general meeting in November 1813. As though to emphasise its independence of the MCC the TRR, in May 1820, asked the ironmasters to limit their loads to two tons eighteen hundredweight.

It would be interesting to know how the TRR fared in January 1814 when the MCC minuted that ‘the unusual depth of snow’ prevented all but one of the Committee attending the meeting.¹⁶

The first entry in the only TRR minute book that has been found,¹⁷ dated 31 May 1820, shows that on that day Joseph Latham of the Beaufort Works resigned as treasurer and manager of the line and was succeeded by William Hibbs Bevan of the same works. It is not known if Latham had been the immediate successor to David Williams. The minutes for the day reveal that the branches of the TRR, each of which served one works only, were repaired by the works concerned, an allowance being made by the TRR for this purpose. Kendall & Bevan who had succeeded E. & J. Kendall in the Beaufort Works in 1818¹⁸ were granted an

additional £4 10s for the repairs on the line to Cwmgwybedog iron mines, making the total for the year £13 10s. Bevan was instructed to increase this amount if necessary.

The Deed of Settlement of August 1795 laid down that the tonnage on limestone should be 5d per ton per mile, the maximum permitted by the MCC's Act of 1792 under which the TRR had been made. Over the years, the MCC had varied their charges several times, and the TRR should have kept theirs in line with those of the MCC. It appears from the TRR minutes that their rates were more likely to vary with the destination of cargoes. On 31 May 1826 it was decided that Sirhowy should be charged 2½d per ton per mile, and a year later this was reduced to 1½d per ton per mile on the basis of the Statute ton of 2,240 lbs retrospectively from March 1826—equivalent to a reduction of ¾d per 'long ton' of 2,520 lbs previously taken as standard.

On 28 May 1828 the highest dividend to date was declared at £30 per share from net profits of £1,985, leaving £335 to be carried forward. At the time it was customary for partnerships to ascertain their net profit, divide it by the number of shares in issue, and declare a dividend of the resultant figure to the nearest pound, carrying any remainder forward to the new accounting period. On this basis the TRR would have been justified in distributing £35 per share, but it is probable that a decision to appoint a committee to inspect the railroad with a view to its conversion to a plate-way with the attendant expense warned the shareholders not to be too lavish with the company's money. The conversion was never made.

It is thought that one of the shareholders, E. H. Phillips, who was also on the committee of the MCC, may have heard of the state of affairs at the Beaufort Works that led him to ask the May 1828 meeting of the TRR if he might borrow the original Deed of Settlement, as he wished to obtain Counsel's opinion of it. With respect to Beaufort affairs, it will probably make for easier understanding if this is left to a later paragraph, however.

W. H. Bevan convened a special general meeting on 15 October 1828 to consider a demand from the Ebbw Vale Company that the tonnage rate on limestone should be reduced to 1½d per ton per mile, the rate currently in force on the MCC's lines. The meeting agreed that the rate should be reduced to 3½d per ton per mile, but would go no lower. It then went on to discuss a suggestion from the Ebbw Vale Company that they should, jointly with Kendall & Bevan and at the joint expense of the two ironworks, convert the TRR to a plateway, provided that once this was done the rate should be reduced further to 3d per ton per mile. No decision was reached on the latter point, and a further special meeting on 11 February 1829 also deferred a decision in respect of the track; it did, however, confirm the reduction in the tonnage.

The TRR made the highest net profit it was ever to achieve in the year ended March 1829, at £2,177 6s 11d, which with the help of the balance brought forward from the previous year enabled the company to pay a dividend of £39 per share and still carry forward £32 6s 11d. From this time, profits and dividends fell slightly, as the costs of track renewals and repairs increased, and the item 'sale of old iron' started to appear in the accounts.

Kendall & Bevan reported to the meeting on 26 May 1830 that the line from their iron mines in Cwmgwybedog to the works was 'inconvenient in its line of direction—expensive to them to carry upon and to the company to repair', and that they were prepared to build a new line if the company would allow them to use the materials of the existing line. The new line would be shorter than the old one, but they were prepared to pay the same total annual tonnage on the new line

and to keep it in repair, 'at a cost not exceeding 2s per share—the present outlay being 6s'. The meeting approved of their making the alteration.

One of the periodic depressions in the iron trade started in 1830, with the inevitable reduction in the consumption of limestone. This was naturally reflected in the profits of the TRR which fell from the peak of 1829 to £1,581 in 1830 and £1,610 in 1831. In an attempt to keep up traffic, on 27 May 1831 E. H. Phillips proposed a general reduction of tonnages by $\frac{1}{4}$ d per ton, which was confirmed at a special meeting in September, when the majority of the shareholders voted through their proxies.

This brought about a decrease in the total received for tonnages in 1832, a year in which expenses rose to £346 caused by the need to rebuild the machine-house. In 1833, whilst tonnage receipts amounted to £1,702, expenses increased to £401 with the rebuilding of the branch to Sirhowy Works.

The manner in which the TRR lost the Beaufort Works' trade must now be told.

The Beaufort Ironworks was established in 1779 by Edward Kendall and his partners, all members of his family, on land leased from the Duke of Beaufort. All had had previous experience of the trade in Scotland and the Midlands. The management of the new works was undertaken by Edward himself and his brother Jonathan. In 1796 the former manager of the family's works in Argyle, Joseph Latham, was admitted to the partnership.

Edward died in 1807 leaving all his property to his son by his first marriage, also Edward, who was to attain his majority at the age of twenty-four. He appointed two of the original shareholders in the TRR to be his executors, Joseph Latham and James Cockshutt. His widow had two sons from her previous marriage, William Hibbs Bevan, who was to feature largely in the affairs of the TRR, and George Bevan. Jonathan died in 1812, his executors being his widow (Mercy), Latham, and John West.

After the deaths of the Kendall brothers the executors kept the works operative, in trust for Edward junior. When he came of age, however, he was not interested in the trade, and the original partnership was dissolved.¹⁹ A new partnership was formed in 1816 by Mercy Kendall and W. H. Bevan to trade as Kendall & Bevan, with Bevan as superintending manager at a salary of £200 annually, with a house and candles.²⁰

Latham had two daughters, one of whom married W. H. Bevan and the other Joseph Bailey, of the Nantyglo Ironworks where he was in partnership with his brother Crawshay Bailey. When Bevan retired in 1833, the Bailey brothers purchased the Beaufort Works for £45,000 and took possession in March 1833.

The Baileys had their own limestone quarries on Llangattock Mountain from which a plateway had been made to the Nantyglo Works. Even before the purchase of the Beaufort Works had been completed, they had started to extend their line to the new acquisition, ignoring the fact that the Deed of Settlement of the TRR demanded that they obtain their limestone supplies from Trevil Quarries via the TRR. The TRR minutes for May 1833 record that Crawshay Bailey had asked that his solicitors, Gabb & Secretan of Abergavenny, might inspect the partnership deed of 1795, to which the meeting agreed. He must, therefore, have been fully aware of the terms of the agreement, but he is reported to have said, 'Well. We must manage as well as we can with the Trevil Road and try to make some arrangement with them about it.' On 13 August 1833 the TRR were granted an injunction restraining the Baileys from continuing their tramroad to Beaufort in a penalty of £5,000.²²

How nearly the Baileys had come to reaching Beaufort was revealed at a special meeting of the TRR on 23 September, when their solicitor, William Macdonnell of Usk, reported that Gabb & Secretan had asked that the Baileys might be permitted to use their own line to import limestone pending the settlement of the legal points. The TRR would have none of it, and appointed a sub-committee to watch over matters.

The Baileys appealed against the injunction, and it was ruled that the clause binding successors in title was illegal. The TRR went to court again in November 1834, but withdrew its application before the hearing was completed, only to file a Bill of Revivor in April 1835. This was only partly heard by January 1836, when the sub-committee and Macdonnell met Crawshay Bailey and Secretan in Abergavenny and reached a tentative agreement, subject to ratification by the TRR shareholders, that the Baileys should be released from their obligation to use the TRR on payment of £2,125, the TRR to withdraw its Bill. Each party was to be responsible for its own costs, and the TRR was to remove its tracks leading to Beaufort Works. Crawshay Bailey complained that there had been so many changes in the shareholding of the TRR that he had been unable to ascertain by whom he was being sued, (it must be remembered that the TRR was a partnership and not a statutory company, so that all members had to be party to any proceedings), and it was further agreed that as all the original partners were dead (David Williams being the last survivor), the TRR should hold a general meeting to elect a new secretary, or Clerk and Treasurer, and that Bailey should be supplied with a copy of the minutes of the meeting. The general meeting was held on 30 June 1836 and ratified the agreement with the Baileys.²³

An unusual entry in the TRR minutes dated 30 September 1833 records a visit paid to W. H. Bevan by Charles Harford of the Ebbw Vale works on that date. It appears that once it had become known that there was some doubt of the legality of the Deed of Settlement Harford had questioned the tonnage rates charged by the TRR. Under the deed the three ironworks had agreed to a charge of 5d per ton per mile on the limestone used in their furnaces. This was the maximum charge permitted under the MCC act of 1792, under which the TRR had been built. Over the years the MCC had several times varied its rates, but the TRR had kept their rate to the Ebbw Vale Company at the same level. Harford informed Bevan that he did not intend that his company should pay more than 1½d per ton per mile after the 29 September, the rate then current on the MCC. Bevan suggested that he should put his views in writing, and that he should sign a letter to that effect which Bevan would write. Whilst Bevan went to look for a pen and paper, Harford left the house. The entry concludes with the note—'Sent a copy of the above-written within half an hour to Messrs. Macdonnell & Mostyn, Usk, same day'. There is no further mention of the Ebbw Vale Company rates being reduced.

In the general upset of settling affairs with the Baileys no accounts were presented to the meeting on 28 May 1834, and in May 1835 combined figures for the years 1834–35 were presented. The combined receipts for the two years amounted to £2,530 of which tonnages accounted for £2,205. Under expenditure of £1,482 it is noted that this figure included the cost of 369 pairs of rails and the legal costs incurred against the Baileys. The following year tonnages fell to £845 and expenses of £407 included the cost of repairs to Gantref Bridge (SO 17011086) and further legal expenses, and there is a note that a further £184 was owed to Macdonnell & Mostyn yet to be paid.

The Baileys paid the TRR £2,466 made up as follows on 8 November 1837:

Sum agreed on 1 January 1836	£2,125
Interest from 1 June 1835	159
Due in respect of Cwmgwybedog line	200
Interest	8
	<u>£2,492</u>
Gabb & Secretan's expenses for making out the TRR's title	26
	<u>£2,466</u>

which sum is shown under receipts in the accounts for March 1838. Under expenditure is an item 'Division of Money from Baileys' showing £1,870, from which it can be inferred that the total legal charges amounted to £596. In addition to the dividend declared to £10 per share a further £34 per share was paid.

W. H. Bevan offered his resignation as Treasurer and Clerk at a special meeting held on 7 October 1834, but he was persuaded to remain until the difficulties with the Baileys were settled. His resignation was finally accepted on 25 May 1836. His successor, E. H. Phillips, a banker of Pontypool and a member of the MCC committee, was elected to the position on 30 June 1836.

After the payment of the dividend and the division of the money received there remained a balance of £135 in the company's accounts. From the Phillips proposed to establish a reserve fund of £100, which on deposit with a banker would realise £3 10s a year.

As already related, when the Ebbw Vale Company assumed the management of the Sirhowy Works in 1800 they made their own railroad between the two works, rendering the Rassa Railroad redundant except for those parts used by the TRR. Over the years the MCC protested at what they considered to be an infringement of their rightful monopoly of the transport of the district, but could do nothing about it unless the iron companies encroached on their land or damaged their railroad. By 1833 the Ebbw Vale Company had made a tunnel through the mountain between the two valleys and provided themselves with a better-graded route that not only avoided the climb in both directions to Trevil Machine but also enabled them to cut back their railroad at their No. 1 Pit (SO 155112).²⁴

On 7 November 1838 R. Summers Harford of the Ebbw Vale Works attended the MCC committee with an offer to purchase the Rassa line from the machine to the Sirhowy Works. The MCC demurred at first, but on 13 January 1839 it was agreed that they should lease them 25½ chains of the railroad at the end nearest to the works, across which the ironworks had already erected a wall, for a term of 999 years at a rental of £1 p.a. with a stipulation that the land was not to be used for transport in any form.²⁵ Thus the only parts of the Rassa left in use were from the Machine to Penmarc and from the Machine to Gantref Bridge, Beaufort, and the only traffic was that of the Ebbw Vale Company.

There was a short-lived addition to the TRR's traffic in 1836 with the formation of the Monmouthshire Iron & Coal Company by a partnership composed chiefly of men from the Bath and Plymouth areas. Working on borrowed capital, they planned to open a number of collieries in the Ebbw Fawr Valley and an ironworks about a mile and a half lower down the valley than the Ebbw Vale Works. The company was ambitious but modest in its attainments and only opened three of the planned seven collieries, and the ironworks with four furnaces,²⁶ known in honour of the Queen crowned in 1837 as the Victoria Works. Iron production started on 1 January 1839, and the TRR accounts for that year show receipts for

tonnages paid by the 'Lower Ebbw Vale Works'.²⁷ A country-wide slump in the iron trade later in 1839 left the MICC with large stocks of unsaleable iron, and the Monmouthshire & Glamorganshire Banking Company foreclosed on its mortgage for the recovery of £12,500 it had lent. In an attempt to recoup its losses the bank tried to run the works on its own account, but failed. The site reverted to the ground-landlord, Sir Benjamin Hall. Eventually the site with the furnaces on it was sold to the Ebbw Vale Company in 1848 for £55,000.²⁸

The TRR meeting on 29 May 1839 decided to appoint a salaried treasurer and clerk to fill the previously honorary position, and the job went to Samuel Phillips at a salary of £30 p.a. It appears that he had already served a year's probation as 'in view of the increased and increasing business of the Road' he was authorised to pay himself an additional £10 for the past year. The accounts produced at this meeting show that 452 pairs of new rails had been purchased at a cost of £351, with the same number of stone-blocks costing £105.

The accounts for the year ended March 1840 show that a further 129 pairs of rails had been laid in the year. The necessity for continual renewals seems to have worried the proprietors, and Phillips was authorised on 27 May,

'...to expend what shall be necessary out of the balance in the Treasurer's hands as well as in the general income in laying a section of Road not exceeding half-a-mile in extent with wrought-iron rails in chairs.'

and the accounts for 1841 show that by then 534 yards of wrought-iron rails had been laid, and 300 yards of cast-iron rails had been renewed. In 1840 the sale of old rails realised £90 and in 1841 £80.

For several years cast-iron rails continued to be laid as renewals, doubtless until one type or the other had proved itself superior. The company started replacing stone blocks with wooden sleepers in 1842-43, and after 1844 there is no mention of purchases of stone-blocks.

From the time that the Harford family first took an interest in the Ebbw Vale Works the necessary finance was largely supplied by their Bristol banking house. In 1842 the bank, at that time Harford, Davies & Co, suffered heavy losses on loans made to the southern states of the USA, and was forced to suspend payment. In realising their assets they had to dispose of the ironworks at Ebbw Vale and Sirhowy, then trading as Harford, Partridge & Co. The works paid between £700 and £900 annually in tonnages to the TRR and any loss of this source of income was a serious matter. The accounts for March 1844 have a note appended that it was expected that there would be a loss of £120-£140 on this account in the current year. Until a purchaser could be found both works were carried on by the Assignee in Bankruptcy, and in late 1844 they were taken over by a consortium led by Abraham Darby (IV) of Coalbrookdale, Shropshire, for £216,000.²⁹ He appointed Thomas Brown of the Blaina Ironworks to be manager. The old company eventually paid a composition of 14s in the pound, but not until the TRR had written off £122 3s 1d.³⁰

In May 1844 the MCC proposed that a testimonial should be presented to E. H. Phillips 'for his gratuitous services' in settling the Harfords' estate, and in May 1845 the TRR voted to contribute £10 to the fund.³¹

On 27 May 1846 Samuel Phillips was authorised to repair the line from the quarries to the Machine, and the accounts for March 1847 show that 'the new laying with wrought-iron rails' had cost £590. In view of this heavy expense a suggestion made by Thomas Brown at the 1845 meeting that tonnages should be reduced was left on the table.

In November 1847 the Ebbw Vale Company suggested that the traffic on the TRR should be diverted to that company's 'private' line at the Machine. The idea was discussed at a special meeting in December, which, after receiving a report from a committeeman, Thomas Davies, decided to leave things as they were for the time being.

The meeting in May 1847 decided that the £100 in the reserve fund should be used to purchase a debenture in the Monmouthshire Canal and that the interest should be allowed to accumulate; it had been the practice to incorporate the interest on the former bank deposit into the profits each year. In May 1848 a further £100 was appropriated to reserve and Phillips was instructed to find an investment yielding 5 per cent for the whole fund.

Samuel Phillips tendered his resignation as Clerk in May 1849, but his successor, Joseph Needham, was not appointed until the 1851 meeting. Far from agreeing to the tonnage reduction demanded by the Ebbw Vale Company, the May 1849 meeting decided that, in future, tonnages should be based on the Statute ton of 2,240 lbs. In spite of numerous disputes with railroad and canal companies, the ironmasters had always insisted on using the 'long ton' to ensure that the full Statute weight was delivered after allowing for breakages in transit;³² it is a little difficult to see how this reasoning could be applied to limestone as carried on the TRR. In effect the alteration was to increase tonnages by 12½ per cent.

Whilst the TRR was still trading profitably, by the 1850s the halcyon days were over, and for the ten years from 1841 to 1850 dividends averaged £11 2s per share, the best year being 1846 when £13 10s per share was paid. Between 1850 and 1860 the best year was 1859 with a dividend of £12 per share. This was reflected in the price the company's shares commanded, which earlier in the century had changed hands at £350 each. The shares held by the partners in the Ebbw Vale Works prior to 1842 had all to be sold, and in the forced sale they had realised only £82 each. After that time the price remained around par, although in 1846 Thomas Brown, who was anxious to have a say in what had developed into a service directed solely to the Ebbw Vale Company, purchased one share from E. H. Phillips for £160.

In May 1853 Needham was instructed to show more detail in presenting his annual accounts, and whilst later accounts reveal more in respect of receipts, expenditure continued to be shown as lump sums with explanations such as 'Road Expences', 'Weighing Machine Expences', 'Agency' (this usually meaning his salary of £30 p.a.), and 'Incidental Expences including Property Tax and Parish Taxes'.³³ From this time it can be seen that the Monmouthshire Railway & Canal Company (by which name the MCC had been known since 1848), continued to pay a share in the expenses of the Trevil Machine and that the reserve fund had been invested in Midland Railway stock. In May 1856 it was decided to increase the fund by a further £100, also to be invested in Midland stock. At the 1857 meeting it was revealed that this last sum was still on deposit with the company's bankers in Tredegar; it was later used to purchase a debenture in the Swansea Harbour Trust.

The MRCC announced in January 1855 that all its lines in the Western Valley had been converted to standard-gauge railways, apparently forgetting that it owned the Rassau Railroad.³⁴ The MRCC's several Acts authorised the extension of the railway from Beaufort to Rhydyblew, and interested parties tried to induce the company to make the extension. Nobody seems to have considered the position of the TRR should this be done. In July 1858 the MRCC went as far as to purchase the George Inn at Rhydyblew, but subsequently sold it to the Merthyr, Tredegar & Abergavenny Railway (in the guise of the London & North Western

Railway), to make room for that company's branch to Ebbw Vale (High Level) station in 1867.³⁵

Needham reported in 1866 that the LNWR had commenced to make the branch from the MTA to the High Level station in Ebbw Vale, which would have to cross the site of the abandoned branch to Beaufort Works, but the TRR had not been notified of their intention. He was instructed to take steps immediately to prevent any encroachment on TRR property, and on 1 June he sent a copy of the minute to the LNWR engineer in London, and despatched a letter to the local contractor per the local bailiff, warning him not to trespass on TRR property. On 13 June a letter was sent to the railway company's solicitor demanding that the crossing should be made by an arch with a minimum span of 14 ft, for which an annual charge of £1 1s would be imposed. Thomas Davies and W. H. West met the railway's engineer, James Gardener, on 2 August, when it was arranged that the railway company would pay £50 for the crossing within three months and that the railway would be completed within nine months. Possession of the site was formally handed over on 7 August 1866.

The LNWR opened its branch to Ebbw Vale in 1868, but by September 1869 the TRR still had not received the agreed £50. Needham then put the matter into the hands of Walford & Gabb, solicitors, Abergavenny, who demanded that the railway company should pay up forthwith or restore the land to the TRR, but there is no mention of payment having been received before the end of the only available minute book in April 1874.

Between 1860 and 1870 there was an up-turn in the fortunes of the TRR with tonnage receipts averaging £936 p.a., the best year being 1869 with receipts of £1,131; the dividend was kept at a steady £11 10s per share over the whole period. Expenses averaged £388 p.a., being heaviest in 1868 at £528 due to track repairs and in 1870 at £729 when the branch to Ebbw Vale was relaid at a cost of £483; this did not include the cost of rails and sleepers, for which £209 was charged in the following year's account. In 1872 the Ebbw Vale Company relaid the line from Penmarc to Sirhowy for which they charged the TRR £117 for labour and £59 for new sleepers.

In the early part of 1871 Needham was very much engaged in sorting out the investments of the TRR's reserve fund. Shares and debentures purchased with the reserve monies had apparently been invested in the name of W. H. West or Thomas Davies, with no mention of their being trustees. At the time the fund was represented by £100 invested in each of the Swansea Harbour Trust, the Midland Railway, the Brecon & Merthyr Tydfil Junction Railway, the London Chatham & Dover Railway, the Rhymney Railway, and the Monmouthshire Railway & Canal Company, with a £100 debenture in the latter company. The only dividends to be received regularly were from the Midland Railway and the Swansea Harbour Trust. After considerable correspondence with the other companies it came to light that all had despatched dividend warrants regularly to Thomas Davies, who had died in December 1869. His executors had assumed that as they were received at his private address they were his personal property, and they had not passed them on to the TRR. The matter was eventually settled, but not before the TRR had indemnified the MRCC in respect of share and debenture certificates the executors were unable to find. When the accounts for 1871 were finally presented in June all the dividends were shown.

Baker Gabb, a partner in Walford & Gabb, attended the TRR meeting in May 1870, and was instructed to re-draft the constitution of the company, so wording the deed that no liability could devolve on either Thomas Davies or W. H. West who had managed the company's affairs for many years. It took a considerable

time to prepare the new deed, and it was not until 26 June 1872 that a meeting held in Abergavenny and attended by W. H. West, Thomas Gratrix, and two representatives of the Ebbw Vale Company agreed the draft proposals. Walford & Gabb were given a list of shareholders and instructed to call a general meeting. The minutes state that on that date the value of the company was £110 4s per share, a total of £6,061.

William Needham took stock of the TRR property on 24–26 May 1872, but his report was not received until 25 March 1873. His report stated that the repairs to the Sirhowy branch were completed, but 300 yards at the quarry were in bad condition and required to be relaid with new rails. The company's stock on hand consisted of 5 tons of wrought-iron rails, 2 tons of chairs, and 400 sleepers. There were 16 tons of 'old metals' to be disposed of.

The first meeting under the new constitution was held on 27 February 1874, when W. H. West was elected chairman of the Trevil Railway Company, the title having been changed in the new deed. Joseph Needham was confirmed as Secretary at a salary of £40 p.a. and given authority 'to endorse and accept cheques on behalf of the Company'. Abraham Darby, who had acted as a director whilst the new deed was being prepared, resigned. On his suggestion Matthew Curtis, chairman of the recently-formed Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron & Coal Co. Ltd, was elected to the board. W. H. West and Sir Joseph Bailey Bt, were appointed trustees of the company's property, and Baker Gabb was instructed to have all the company's assets registered in their names.

The meeting noted the complaints from three directors of the EVSI&CC of the state of the track between the Machine and the quarries. William Needham was instructed to inspect this, report his findings, and estimate the cost of repairs. The meeting closed with a resolution that the first general meeting of the shareholders in the new company should be held on 29 April 1874 at the Beaufort Arms Hotel, Crickhowell.

The meeting was held at the appointed venue on the date specified, but it was attended only by W. H. West, the Revd H. B. Bevan, William Needham, the Revd John West, W. Richards, and R. Jordan, as representing the EVSI&CC.

The accounts produced to the meeting are the most revealing of the whole period covered by the minute book. How much relaying had been done can be gathered from the fact that £199 had been received for old rails. Tonnages received, all from the EVSI&CC, amounted to £896; and on the expenditure side 'Roadmen's Wages and Repairs' cost £103, 'Clerk's Wages' £40, and wages for the machine-man were £37 8s, half of which was met by the MRCC. Owing to lack of itemisation in the previous accounts, it cannot be determined how long they had been paying more than the one-third of machine expenses ordained in 1800. A dividend of £10 per share was declared and the large balance of £303 was carried forward. It was resolved that this sum plus the entire reserve fund should be devoted to track improvements, which Needham's estimate had shown would cost £1,000. Walford & Gabb were instructed to sell all the investments. Before appointing the time and place for the next meeting, it was resolved to confirm the agreement that Thomas Davies and W. H. West made on the company's behalf with the LNWR in August 1866 and to ensure that it was carried into effect—in other words to ensure that the TRR received the £50 promised.

Following this last-recorded meeting of the company there are three copy memoranda. The first, dated 11 May 1874, records the order of 60 tons of double-headed rails, 70 lbs to the yard at £9 per ton, and a quantity of chairs of 28–30 lbs each at £2 per ton. The second, dated 25 July, is a copy of the notice given to Edwin Pittway that his services would not be required after 29 August as

machine-man and that after that date he would be required to quit the machine-house and give up all books and papers belonging to the company and the MRCC. The third records the receipt of 348 wooden sleepers.

The Ebbw Vale partnership was formed into a limited company in 1864 under the title of the Ebbw Vale Company Ltd, and share transfer deeds that have been seen show that the company held nine shares in the TRR, several of which had been purchased by Thomas Brown in his own name and transferred to the company when he retired in 1861,³⁶ others had been acquired by the Darby partnership at below par on the bankruptcy of Harford, Partridge & Co.³⁷ In 1868 the company was reorganised as the Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron & Coal Company Ltd with a capital of £2,383,000 in £15 shares and Abraham Darby as managing director. With the other shareholders in the TRC spread all over the country, it is probable that their nine shares were sufficient to give them a controlling interest in the TRC, as very few of the others bothered to attend general meetings either in person or by proxy.

In September 1870 the EVSI&CC leased the Trevil Quarries from the Duke of Beaufort for a term of 21 years at a sleeping rent of £500 p.a. with a royalty of 2d per ton on stone extracted,³⁸ and the lease was renewed in 1890.³⁹ At the time that the TRR was formed there were three iron companies obtaining their limestone from Trevil, but it is not known by whom the quarries were held.

The Merthyr, Tredegar & Abergavenny Railway was opened from Brynmawr to Nantybwlch in March 1864, passing under the Rassa line close to the Machine, but there is no mention either in the TRR minutes or those of the MRCC of any disruption of the limestone traffic to Sirhowy whilst the bridge was being constructed.

The First Edition of the 25" OS in 1875 shows that by that time the 'private line' had been reconstructed on a slightly different route from Ebbw Vale to the Machine, and exchange sidings had been laid alongside the MTA—the difference in gauge precluded an actual junction. There is no connection shown between the TRC and the 'private' line, which can only mean that the limestone for Ebbw Vale must still have travelled over the Rassa.

The 1915 revision of the 25" plan shows that by then the Rassa had been cut at SO 14751157 and SO 14601136, and the TRC extended over the Rassa bridge to make a junction with the 'private' line at SO 14651141 involving a back-shunt for traffic in the Ebbw Vale direction. The exchange sidings had been removed and an engine shed had been erected in the fork formed by the two lines, the EVSI&CC having introduced two narrow-gauge steam engines and hopper waggons for the stone traffic in 1907–8. The Sirhowy Works had been closed in 1882.⁴⁰

The directors report to the Trevil Railway Company in 1907 confirms that it was about this time that the TRC was connected directly to the private line, as it records that it had been agreed to dispense with the Trevil Machine and that in future the EVSI&CC would supply the TRC and the GWR (as successors to the MRCC) with details of tonnages passing; the report states that the GWR had agreed to this procedure, but as the only part of the Rassa to remain in use was that between the Machine and the Rassa bridge over the MTA, their share in tonnages must have been minimal. The report also records that part of the former branch to the Beaufort charging-bank had been let to the Monmouthshire County Council to enable them to widen the road at the foot of Beaufort Hill.⁴¹

The directors' report in May 1911 states that the GWR considered that the closure of the Trevil Machine was a violation of the agreement made many years

before between the MCC and the TRR and had refused to pay any part of the expenses of the non-existent or non-functional machine. Strangely, the accounts show a receipt of £24 19s 6d 'Moiety paid by and due from the G.W.R.Co.'⁴²

The Ebbw Vale Works closed suddenly in May 1911, causing a complete stoppage of work at the quarries and on the railroad. It was re-opened in February 1912, and in March 1913 the EVSI&CC opened a tinplate works to the south of their iron furnaces.⁴³

In 1919 the line from the quarries and the private line were both altered to standard gauge, and the private line was carried over the MTA by a new bridge, the former Rassa bridge being abandoned. This gave traffic from the quarries a straight run on to the private line, avoiding the back-shunt. The private line from the Machine to Sirhowy was re-routed to serve the brickworks that was opened on the hill behind the site of the Sirhowy furnaces (SO 146101). It is probable that by this time the EVSI&CC had acquired the remaining shares in the TRC.

The Ebbw Vale Works was taken over by Richard Thomas & Co. Ltd in 1935. It was completely rebuilt, and was re-opened in 1938. The line of the railway was extended to Chwar yr Hendre (SO 095147) where new quarries were opened. The railway remained in use until 1963, when a road was made to the quarries, running for part of the way to the north of Trevil village on the line of the Brinore Tramroad, and diesel power was substituted for steam.

Thus one hundred and sixty-seven years of railway history passed into oblivion.

APPENDIX 'A'

Original Shareholders in the Trevil Rail Road Company:

William Barrow and Matthew Monkhouse, Sirhowy Works	£600
Edward and Jonathan Kendall, Beaufort Works	£500
James Harford and Jeremiah Homfray, Ebbw Vale Works	£500
Samuel Glover, Birmingham, owner of Abercarn Works	£500
Thomas Green, London	£500
William Maud, Abercarn, a partner of Glover's	£500
Edmund Estcourt, Lincoln's Inn, Solicitor to the Duke of Beaufort	£500
Frederick Fredericks, Glan Usk	£400
William Edington, Worcester	£400
Henry Bird, Goytre	£200
Thomas Dadford junior, Newport, Engineer to the MCC	£300
John Williams, Llandaff	£200
James Cockshutt, engineer, London	£200
David Williams, Beaufort	£100
Thomas Hoodless, Beaufort	£100
	£5,500

APPENDIX 'B'

Lines constructed by the Trevil Rail Road Company:

- 1 From Trevil Quarries to the Rassa Rail Road at SO 146115, a point later known as Trevil Machine (2 miles 5 f. 3 ch.)
- 2 From Penmarc (SO 144111) on the Rassa to Sirhowy charging bank (6 f. 8 ch.)
- 3 From Rhydyblew (SO 160115) on the Rassa to the Beaufort charging bank (7 f. 1 ch.)
- 4 From 3 near Beaufort to iron mines belonging to the Beaufort Works at Cwmgybedog at approximately SO 174124, a point now lost under the Heads of the Valleys Road, A 465T (1 mile 1 f.)

- 5 From Shop Row, Beaufort (SO 169110) to Ebbw Vale Works charging bank,
via Newchurch (6 f. 8 ch.)
Total length: 6 miles 2 furlongs 1 chain

REFERENCES

- 1 32 Geo. III cap. cii
- 2 *Hereford Journal*, 5 June 1793 (Quoted by Charles Hadfield in his *Canals of South Wales & the Border*, David & Charles, 1960)
- 3 NLW Maybery 1220
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 PRO B&A Canal minutes, 28 May 1874
- 6 NLW Maybery 510
- 7 GRO D.43/1335
- 8 PRO MCC committee minutes 19 March 1800
- 9 Ibid. 16 September 1803
- 10 Ibid. 6 October 1805
- 11 NLW Maybery 3143
- 12 Ibid. Maybery 2569
- 13 GRO D.591/39.1
- 14 NLW Maybery 3006
- 15 PRO MCC committee minutes, 17 July 1813
- 16 Ibid. 21 January 1814
- 17 GRO D.1877/1 (Minute book of the TRR, 1820–1874)
- 18 *Hereford Journal* 4 February 1818
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 GRO D.397/1671
- 21 Ibid. D.591/39.31
- 22 Ibid. D.43/1335
- 23 Ibid. D.591/39.1 and D.1877/1
- 24 Ibid. D.740/508 and D.43/1336 (Plan in sale catalogue of Ebbw Vale and Sirhowy Ironworks, 1844)
- 25 Ibid. D.43/6462
- 26 Ibid. D.749/1499
- 27 NLW Maybery 4110
- 28 Gray-Jones, A. *A History of Ebbw Vale*, Ebbw Vale 1971
- 29 Gray-Jones, A., *op. cit.*
- 30 NLW Maybery 1028
- 31 PRO MCC proprietor's minutes, 1 May 1844
- 32 The Statute ton consists of 20 hundredweight of 1121 bs each. The 'long ton' was 21 cwt of 120 lbs each, a total of 2,520 lbs.
- 33 GRO D.1877/1, entry of 31 May 1854
- 34 PRO MRCC committee minutes, 5 January 1855
- 35 NLW Badminton 5894 and 5992
- 36 GRO D.1877/20, 21 and 24
- 37 Ibid. D.1877/19
- 38 NLW Badminton 3837. The sleeping rent was the minimum payment possible. At 2d per ton royalty this would cover the extraction of 60,000 tons. Any excess would have to be paid in addition to the sleeping rent.
- 39 NLW Badminton 3839
- 40 Gray-Jones, A. *op. cit.*
- 41 GRO D.1877/32
- 42 GRO D.1877/34
- 43 Gray-Jones, A. *op. cit.*

PRO = Public Record Office. NLW = National Library of Wales.
GRO = Gwent Record Office, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran.

Mr Pick and the London Midland & Scottish Railway Company's Canals

L. J. BOUGHEY

In eight weeks to May 1941, Frank Pick, late head of London Transport, visited most of the inland waterways in Britain to prepare a report to the Minister of War Transport.¹ Pick made recommendations to many concerns, which were received with varying levels of seriousness. One of the more serious recipients was the London Midland & Scottish Railway Company; this article will examine his recommendations and their consequences, concentrating less on the closure proposals than on those for transfers and amalgamations.²

Relations with Pick

Surviving records of Pick's dealings with the LMS do not indicate a particularly cordial relationship. After the LMS board had read his report, they deemed it excessively critical of railway companies, and his enquiries via the Railway Executive Committee were met somewhat irritably with terse and dismissive generalities.³

His Report of May 1941 made few direct references to waterways owned by the LMS. A selection of little-trafficked canals which should be abandoned included the western branches of the Shropshire Union Canal along with such diverse lengths as the Stroudwater Canal, Kennet & Avon Canal, and the Halifax Branch of the Calder & Hebble Navigation. A special note on Mersey ports singled out Ellesmere Port for its efficient, if somewhat outdated and rundown, transshipment facilities. The LMS was criticised for selling off canalside facilities at Chester, to which most direct traffic had ceased.⁴

Pick had already offered detailed proposals to the LMS, which Ashton Davies, the Vice-President, was asked to investigate. His Report to the Board of April 1942 lays out Pick's suggestions and his own views.⁵

Pick's proposals

Pick suggested the closure of disused canals, the transfer of certain lightly-trafficked waterways, and the retention and grouping of the canals based on the Mersey Ports. These may be summarised as follows:⁶

<i>Canal</i>	<i>1941 Tolls</i>	<i>Proposal</i>
	£	
Ashby	1,990	Transfer
Cromford (east of Butterley)	304	Transfer
Huddersfield (Cooper Bridge-Huddersfield)	225	Transfer
Manchester, Bolton & Bury (Salford-Clifton)	c15	Transfer
Coalport	Nil	Close
Cromford (west of Butterley)	Nil	Close
Huddersfield Narrow Canal (rest)	Nil	Close
Lancaster	2,258	Close
Monkland	2	Close
Shropshire Union (all branches)	c8	Close
St Helens	1,976	Close
Trent & Mersey (Leek Branch)	Nil	Close
Ulverston	Nil	Close

Forth & Clyde	1,872	Retain—local
Manchester, Bolton & Bury (rest)	c735	Retain—local
Shropshire Union (main line)	19,764	Retain } —group
Trent & Mersey	14,948	Retain } —group
Kensington (joint ownership)	—	No comment

The exceptions to this included two waterways with reasonable levels of traffic, the Lancaster and the St Helens, for which closure was mooted. Part of the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal, isolated since a breach in 1936, was to be retained as a local canal. Other waterways, with some local traffics, were to be transferred to the owners of adjacent waterways. The Forth & Clyde Canal was considered to be of some military importance, while the tiny Kensington Canal, jointly owned, was not considered.

Rationalisation would be extended by the transfer to the LMS of the Ashton, Peak Forest, and Macclesfield Canals, owned by the London & North Eastern Railway Company. These would be operated in a group with the adjacent Trent & Mersey and Shropshire Union Canals.

Plans and deficits

Although he did not advocate public ownership, Pick's main concern was with the securing of an adequate system of canal transport. The railway company's concern, by contrast, was to reduce deficits. Losses on the LMS canals in aggregate had been reduced from the £82,894 of 1923 to the £1,388 of 1934, but had then grown through £28,861 in 1938 to £41,618 in 1941. However, of the latter, £31,372 was accounted for by two waterways for which Pick had no major proposals—the Forth & Clyde and the Trent & Mersey. Reduced maintenance would reduce expenditure on the closed canals, while deficits on transferred canals would cease to concern the LMS.

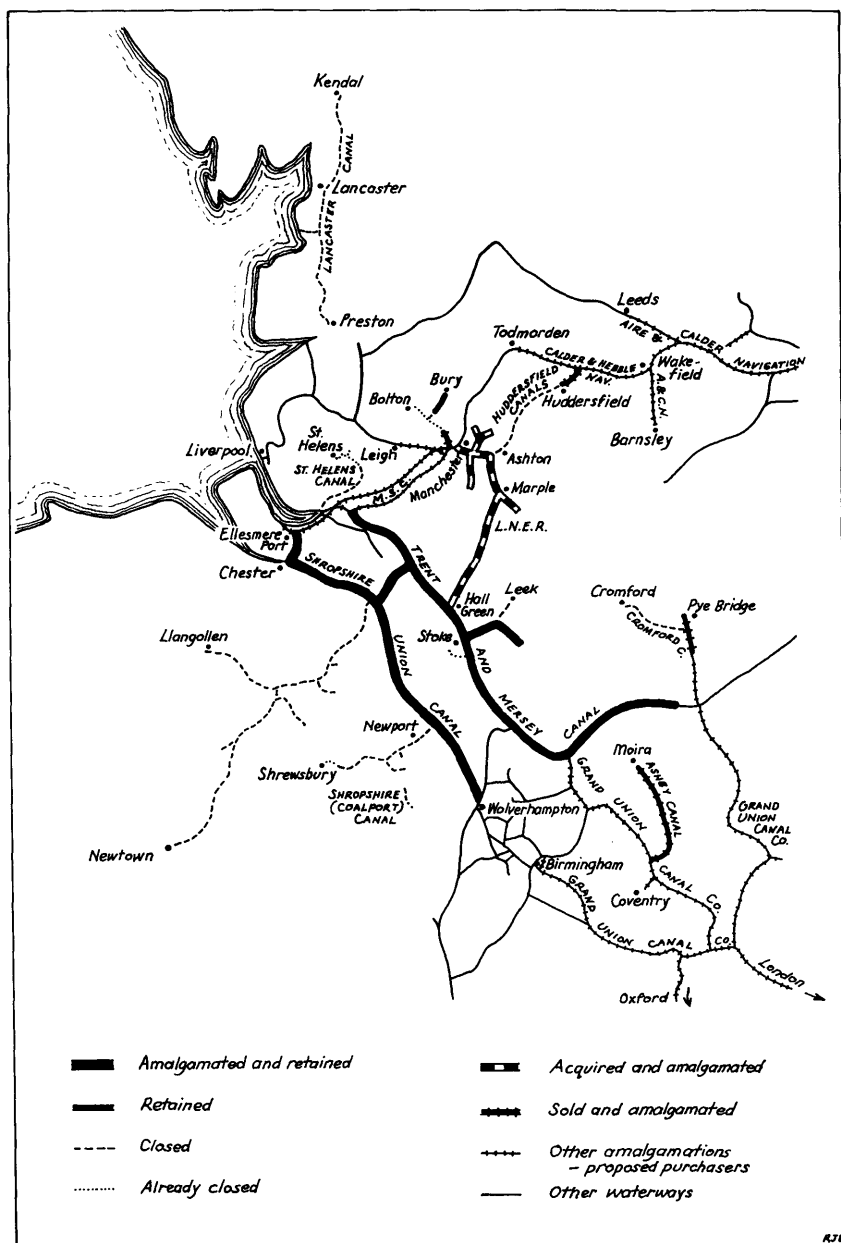
Closure proposals

If 100 tons p.a., to Newport on the Shropshire Union, is ignored, the only toll revenue to be lost would be on two local canals in Lancashire, the Lancaster and the St Helens. The biggest traffic on the Lancaster Canal in 1941 was a temporary local traffic in gravel, which took up 29,172 tons out of the total of 44,029 tons. After a small traffic in coal to Kendal gasworks had ceased the main traffic was in coal to Storey's Mill at Lancaster, transferred from railway wagons at Preston. This could be supplied directly by rail.⁷

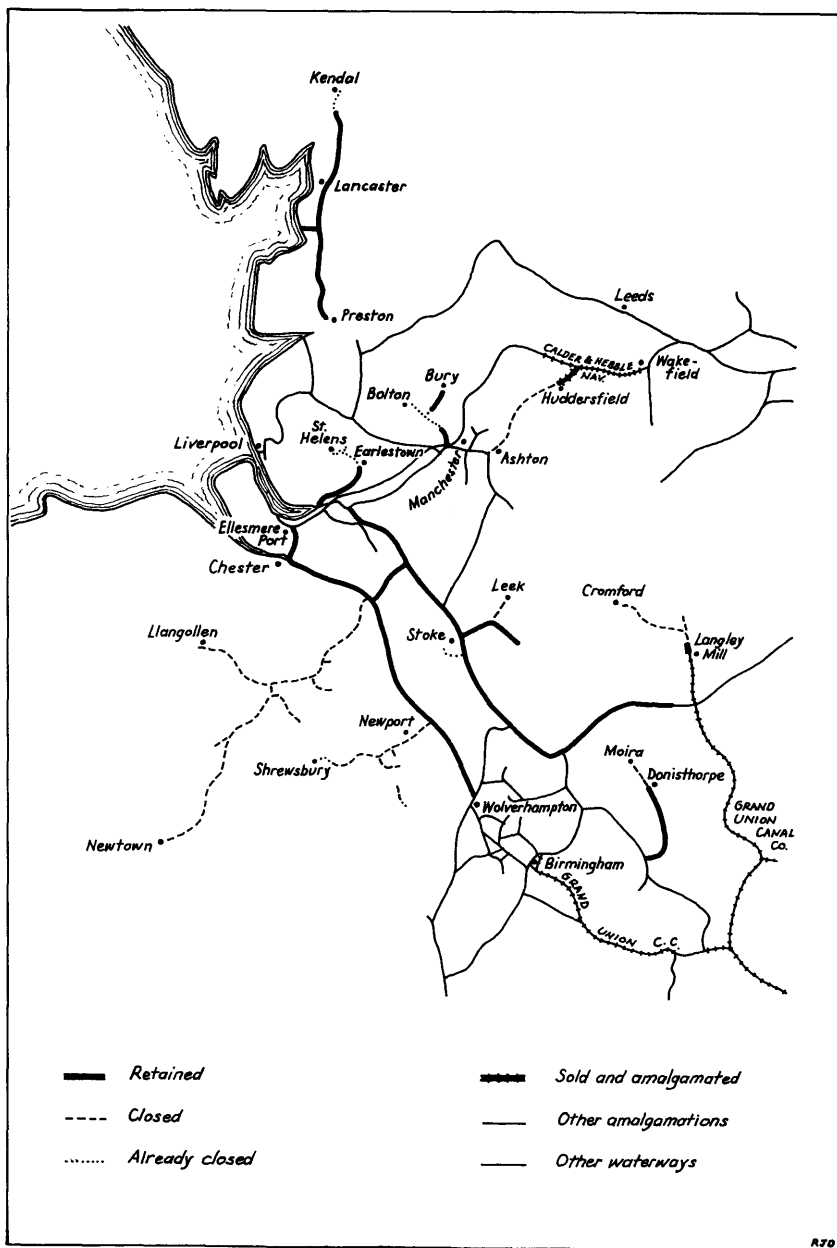
Prospects of further traffic were limited, and even the impressive tolls of £2,258 in 1941 had to be set against maintenance expenditure of £9,669. Surpluses earned by this waterway came from water sales, which could be prejudiced by the continuation of navigation through Tewitfield Locks, above which the summit level, leaking, was often used as a reservoir during droughts.⁸

The St Helens Canal's peculiarity lay in its single traffic, beyond Widnes, of bagged sugar to the Sankey Sugar Works at Earlestown. Here again, a toll income of £1,796 had to be set against maintenance expenditure of £7,225 in 1941. Water sales reduced the deficit to £3,147, but these were mainly incurred on the length in St Helens, which was already closed.⁹

Although the Canal did serve the Port of Liverpool and was not thus of solely local interest, it presented a barrier to the proper drainage of the Sankey Valley, and Lancashire County Council was anxious to see the canal closed to divert part of the Sankey Brook along its course.¹⁰



LMS Canals—Pick's proposals 1941



LMS Canals—After the LMS Act 1944

Transfers and traffics

The position facing the canals to be transferred may be summarised in the following table:

<i>Canal</i>	<i>Toll revenue</i>		<i>Tons conveyed</i>		<i>Transfer to:</i>
	<i>1938</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>1938</i>	<i>1941</i>	
Ashby	808	1,990	16,920	35,608	Coventry Canal
Cromford	154	304	16,218	29,211	Grand Union Canal
Huddersfield	287	202	16,650	11,208	Calder & Hebble
MBB	c100	c15	c6,500	c1,000	Bridgewater Canal
TOTAL	c1,350	c2,510	c56,300	c77,000	

Their common feature was that they exchanged traffics with waterways in other ownerships; three also connected with lengths to be closed but retained in LMS ownership. Examining each in turn, their value to the LMS may be weighed against their value to a purchaser.

Transfer proposals

1. Ashby Canal

Pick suggested that this should be part of a larger amalgamation, under which the Coventry and Oxford Canals would be leased to the Grand Union Canal Company. This would add the North Warwickshire coalfield to the routes to London from Derbyshire and Birmingham secured by the Grand Union Canal Company in the 1930s.

This aim apart, it is doubtful what the Coventry company would gain, beyond control, from the free transfer which was offered. The Ashby's revenue almost entirely derived from coal carried to Coventry from mines at its northern end. Even though this was growing, there was virtually no prospect of other traffics on this rural waterway.¹¹ The annual deficit remained at about £5,000 p.a., due largely to the subsidence caused by the mining which provided traffics. Other sources of income, such as water sales, were minimal.

2. Cromford Canal

The length proposed for transfer included all that generating tolls, but almost all traffic ran on the southern half mile, in coal from Beggarlee Wharf to the Erewash Canal. The other traffic, in gas tar from the Erewash to Pye Bridge, was only 1,303 tons in 1941. The GUCC owned the connecting Erewash Canal, and only the control of the lowest half mile could have been of interest. The remaining length, to Butterley Tunnel and Pinxton, was needed for water-supplies to the trafficked length; however, with water sales minimal, the GUCC were being offered a length affected by mining subsidence with negligible traffic, contributing to the deficit on the whole canal of about £3,000 p.a.

3. Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal

The middle section of this canal had been closed by the LMS Act of 1941, leaving an isolated length serving Bury with coal. Pick proposed to transfer the length from the Irwell at Salford to Clifton Junction to the Manchester Ship Canal Company, to be run by the Bridgewater Department in conjunction with the Irwell & Bridgewater Canal. By 1941 the latter provided the canal with its sole traffic, about 1,000 tons p.a. from the Worsley Collieries to Pendleton. About 5,000 tons p.a. traffic in pottery materials to Clifton Junction had been lost in

1939 when a section was drained to alleviate flooding problems, and this could possibly be regained after the war.

The canal to Pendleton was industrial, but a pit closure had necessitated a complicated route for coal deliveries, although the proximity to the docks at Manchester might appear to foster new traffics. In the meantime, toll revenues were minimal, with water sales and supplies to locomotives at Pendleton forming the principal benefit to the LMS. The deficit on the whole canal of about £1,750 p.a. was partly assisted by tolls of about £725 p.a. on the isolated length, but it is unlikely that the transferred length could ever yield any surplus.

4. Huddersfield Canals

Pick proposed closure of the whole Narrow Canal apart from a section in Huddersfield, to be transferred with the Broad Canal to the Calder & Hebble Navigation. In turn, he suggested that the CHN take over the eastern Rochdale Canal up to Todmorden, with the enlarged CHN being amalgamated with the Aire & Calder Navigation (which declined).¹²

The decline in traffics on the Huddersfield Canal was partly due to the wartime disruption of traffics to East Coast ports. General merchandise traffic dropped from 12,530 tons to 7,734 tons between 1938 and 1941, while even coal tonnages declined slightly from 4,120 tons to 3,474 tons. The CHN handled all of this traffic, and although a small proportion of the 245,724 tons conveyed in 1941, closure of the canal to Huddersfield would damage the CHN.

Although maintenance expenditure averaged about £5,000 p.a. on the Huddersfield Canal, much of this was incurred on the 72 locks and summit tunnel on the section of the Narrow Canal proposed for closure. There was a prospect of a modest surplus on the remainder, as negotiations would reveal.

Consolidation and amalgamation

Having suggested transfers from the LMS, Pick had gone on to suggest that the LMS should acquire three canals owned by the London & North Eastern Railway. The Ashton, Peak Forest, and Macclesfield Canals, operated as a group since 1888, were to be acquired and operated in a group with the Trent & Mersey and Shropshire Union Canals. The latter two, operated separately, were to be operated together in future.

The two heavily-trafficked canals carried quite different traffics. The Shropshire Union handled long-distance traffics from the upper Mersey ports to the Midlands, while the Trent & Mersey handled traffics to and around the Potteries, plus local coal-traffics. Only on the lower length of the Trent & Mersey, north of Middlewich, did traffics coincide, while different carriers handled each type of traffic.

Although the Ashton, Peak Forest, and Macclesfield Canals were already an integrated group under LNER management, through traffics were limited to diversions necessitated by stoppages on the Bridgewater/Trent & Mersey line from the Potteries to Manchester.

The main traffics were in coal on the Macclesfield Canal to Marple, and in salt and coal exchanged with the Rochdale Canal in Manchester, along with local traffics on the Ashton and Peak Forest Canals. There was no traffic on the main Ashton Canal branches, or on the Peak Forest above Marple. About 17,000 tons p.a., about half short haul, provided tolls totalling £917 p.a. in 1941. Against maintenance costs of over £27,000 p.a., water revenues and other receipts held the deficit to £9,234 in 1941. However, the proximity of the industrial Ashton Canal

to the docks in Manchester offered possibilities for traffic development, although the largely rural Macclesfield Canal could not offer much prospect.¹³

The main benefits from consolidation would be the reduction of overheads created by separate organisations, the elimination of separate tolls and accounts, and uniformity in maintenance and traffic development. However, the LMS Board was to conclude that advantages to carriers were more obvious than those for canal owners.

The LMS Report

Some 12 months after Pick visited the LMS canals (and after his death), Ashton Davies presented his report on Pick's suggestions. The LMS Board by and large approved all of Davies's recommendations. It agreed to all of the closure proposals, except the St Helens Canal, where it viewed the compensation payable to the principal carrier and the Sankey Sugar Company as prohibitive.

Davies dismissed the suggested savings from amalgamations. The acquisition of the LNER canals would save an Assistant Canal Agent's salary at Hall Green toll office—about £70 p.a. The amalgamation of management of the Shropshire Union and Trent & Mersey Canals would only involve disruption, as one of two established offices would have to close.

Preliminary approaches to possible transferees had not proved successful. The Coventry Canal Company had declined a free transfer on the grounds that both existing and potential traffics did not justify the risks involved. The Ship Canal Company had not expressed interest in the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal, while the Grand Union Canal Company was still considering a possible free transfer (but would decline it).

Huddersfield Canals: towards transfer

Only the Calder & Hebble Navigation was seriously interested in a transfer, after their General Manager, Jackson, had been alerted to the possibility by the Ministry of War Transport. Discussions with the CHN in March 1942 produced agreement in principle to a transfer. Jackson initially insisted that this should be free, given the poor traffic prospects for the Huddersfield Canal. Davies responded that the Canal itself might be transferred free, but not the accompanying properties. The LMS Board agreed that further discussions should take place.

Not until February 1943 did the LMS produce trading statistics which indicated some value in the Broad Canal. The first table indicates the poor financial position of the combined Huddersfield Canals:

HUDDERSFIELD CANALS

RECEIPTS				EXPENDITURE			
Year	Tolls	Wharfage/ Cranage	Net rents	TOTAL	Maintenance	TOTAL	(SURPLUS) DEFICIT
1930	440	51	4,867	5,358	6,061	7,655	2,298
1931	351	33	4,659	5,043	4,083	6,665	1,622
1932	352	29	4,606	4,987	4,105	6,831	1,844
1933	339	38	4,633	5,010	3,538	6,380	1,370
1934	313	33	4,590	4,936	2,319	3,794	(1,142)
1935	364	38	4,462	4,864	4,260	6,566	1,702
1936	330	31	4,872	5,233	4,437	6,496	1,263
1937	262	24	4,911	5,197	4,650	6,712	1,515
1938	287	29	4,738	5,054	5,253	7,404	2,350
1939	244	35	4,769	5,048	5,258	7,676	2,628
1940	221	27	4,895	5,143	4,929	7,488	2,345
1941	202	23	4,881	5,106	5,162	8,152	3,946

This clearly shows that the canals were a net liability to the LMS, although they were useful in supplying LMS locomotives at Huddersfield. It was clear that water rents were by far the main source of income on both canals, and that toll revenues were insignificant. When the company apportioned the accounts between both waterways, the following summary appeared:

HUDDERSFIELD BROAD CANAL
(PLUS NARROW CANAL IN HUDDERSFIELD)

Year	TOTAL RECEIPTS	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS
1930	1,573	1,026	547
1931	1,481	893	588
1932	1,464	915	549
1933	1,471	855	616
1934	1,449	508	941
1935	1,428	880	548
1936	1,536	870	666
1937	1,526	897	627
1938	1,484	993	491
1939	1,482	1,029	453
1940	1,510	1,003	507
1941	1,499	1,092	407

The lost water rents were more than matched by the reduced burden of maintenance costs, mainly because of the 72 locks, tunnels, and reservoirs on the Narrow Canal section. Receipts were boosted by tolls and wharfage receipts, which the CHN probably felt development would increase.

Such figures could be varied if the CHN's own methods of management and maintenance were brought into play, and if traffic could be increased. Before these figures were produced, however, various issues had to be explored, some with the CHN, and some within the LMS. The way in which these were handled indicates some of the problems with Pick's approach.

The LMS considered that two groups of properties could be left out of any transfer. Properties at The Slopes, Aspley, included two warehouses at the terminus of the Broad Canal. At a meeting in September 1942 Davies stressed that these had been by and large vacant from 1918 to late 1940, when one had been let to the Ministry of Supply. The long-term future of this would be limited. The second group lay at the proposed end of the transferred length, at Engine Bridge, Chapel Hill, but its location had no traffic significance. Davies voiced concern that the CHN might develop a 'warehousing business' in competition with the LMS.

Water supplies to the Broad Canal were independent of the Narrow Canal, being taken from the River Colne at Aspley. There were, however, problems with the short length in Huddersfield. One solution which the LMS considered in September 1942 was to backpump, but this was dismissed on grounds of cost. A second possibility was to transfer a much longer length of the Narrow Canal, up to Slaithwaite. This would be supplied from the reservoirs at Sparth and Slaithwaite. The LMS's prime interests here lay in the supply of water to its locomotives at Huddersfield. This was supplied via a pipeline from Slaithwaite Reservoir; Davies suggested that this pipeline could be extended up to Tunnel End Reservoir. He doubted that the CHN would be keen to accept a transfer just to supply two pools in Huddersfield, and suggested that this length should be

excluded from transfer. Finally, it was possible to guarantee a supply from the Narrow Canal at least for such time as the lower length was in use. This solution, with a permanent guarantee, would emerge as that adopted.

Another issue was the question of payment, if any. Davies suggested that the CHN should take a free transfer of the whole canal from Ashton to Cooper Bridge. If the Broad Canal alone was transferred, there appeared to be a surplus of £400 p.a. Based on a yield of 5%, capitalised at 20 years purchase, this suggested a purchase price of £8,000.

These possibilities were explored at a meeting with the CHN manager at Preston on 8 October 1942. Davies outlined the possible lengths for transfer, ranging from both canals to just the Broad Canal. Jackson's response was that there was no question of taking over the Narrow Canal, except possibly the Huddersfield length. He agreed to inspect the Broad Canal on 16 October, and, following approval by the CHN Board, the LMS prepared a draft of agreement for transfer in December 1942.

A further problem was that the CHN was not legally constituted to accept a transfer. By the December 1942 agreement, it was agreed that both parties would promote legislation after the war. Anxious to progress the transfer, Sir Osborne Mance, who had succeeded the now-deceased Pick as Director General of Canals, suggested that the Minister could promote an Order under the Defence Regulations, permitting a transfer which could be ratified by later legislation.

In the event, the LMS was soon forced, by problems over the water supply to the Shropshire Union Canal from the River Dee, to promote a Bill to legalise abstractions, and chose to include the closures in a parallel Bill.¹⁴

A much more minor problem with the separation of property lay in the LMS's viaducts over the Canal, for which free easements were granted. An issue which later arose was the precise boundary between the two ownerships. Jackson wanted access to two canal-side mills which the Narrow Canal supplied with coal; one lay above Lock 1w and the other above Lock 2w. He favoured the transfer of the canal to the latter point at Queen Street South, but was persuaded, after negotiations throughout 1943, to purchase the next section, up to the east face of the next bridge at Chapel Hill. Reasons for this have not been given, but perhaps it related to the need for one owner to control the level of the pool above Lock 2w.

By November 1943 final terms were agreed. Jackson had quibbled at a payment based on 20 years purchase, pointing out that much income depended on four major water abstractions and that rents were small. Accordingly, the payment was agreed at £4,000, although Jackson was later to suggest that the surplus to the CHN could be as much as £1,200 p.a.

Towards the Act

The legal agreement, with a proposed transfer date of 1 October 1944, was completed on 29 March 1944, after the Bill had been published. By then, an unexpected objector to the transfer had appeared. In January the LMS had been approached by the Huddersfield Corporation, which sought to purchase the Broad Canal.

At the Select Committee considering the Bill in May 1944, Counsel for the Corporation asserted that the LMS had refused to discuss any transfer, although, when pressed, it was admitted that the Corporation did not propose to purchase for £4,000. It was stated that the freehold would be purchased and a lease granted to the CHN while traffic lasted.

The Corporation's interest arose from its purchase of the Ramsden Estate of 6,000 acres in 1920 for £1.25 million; this included all the land on either bank of the Broad Canal, with some 30 agreements with the LMS, covering mainly easements. A postwar town development scheme was planned for areas presently occupied by the canal. Although Counsel suggested that to deal with the CHN would cause problems in implementing the scheme, it was suggested that the Corporation wished to purchase, run down, and then eliminate the canal.

This suggestion was not repudiated with sufficient vigour, and the Act passed into law unamended, despite a promise by Huddersfield to promote another Bill for a transfer in the following session. The canal was transferred on 1 January 1945, exactly three years before the Transport Act of 1947 would have achieved consolidation in any event.

Amended closure measures

The closure provisions of the Act did not entirely coincide with those approved by the Board in April 1942. The acid traffic on the Cromford Canal had become occasional by 1944, and as the GUCC did not purchase, the whole canal above Beggarlee Wharf was closed.¹⁵

The whole Ashby Canal remained in use, but there was a breach at Donisthorpe in 1943, and mining subsidence was taking its toll, including a bridge which needed to be rebuilt immediately. It was proposed to close the last $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles of the canal from Moira Colliery, from which traffic was minimal, to Willesley Basin, whence a new siding would be laid from Donisthorpe Colliery. This would obviate the need to rebuild Bridge 71, which had subsided so badly that boats had to be ballasted with sand barrels to pass under it. Leicestershire County Council objected to the proposal to replace the canal to Willesley with a siding, including level crossings. As the Ministry of War Transport concurred in this, the closed length was reduced to the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Donisthorpe Colliery Basin.¹⁶

Finally, all riparian local authorities, carriers, the owner of Storey's Mill, and even the Council for the Preservation of Rural England objected to the Lancaster Canal closure, and the Board agreed on 30 March to withdraw this from the Bill. The Monkland Canal was also excluded, on the grounds that its water supplies to the Forth & Clyde Canal might be affected.¹⁷

Conclusions

Pick's transfer proposals aimed to rationalise canal management and encourage traffics. None of the waterways involved carried heavy traffics, and the unspoken assumption, partially voiced in his general report, was that much more traffic would emerge under better management. The financial position of these railway canals was already very poor, and even with transfers at nominal values, they were hardly attractive properties. The only possibility was that new owners could make savings from consolidated management and the generation of new toll income from new traffics. The LMS canals were effectively subsidised by the railway revenues, and transferors would be difficult to find without public subsidy.

It was perhaps naive to conceive that railway companies would be concerned to develop canals which had been acquired, by and large, in order to control competition. The LMS's attitude towards the Huddersfield Canals was typical: they could be transferred if railway water-supplies and crossings were safeguarded, traffic potential was minimal, and an appropriate capital payment was made. The notion that railway companies would willingly consolidate and transfer their canal undertakings for the promotion of canal traffics which might be at rates which would compete with railway rates was unrealistic. An essential prerequisite was compulsion, and that would have to await the unification of ownership provided

by nationalisation. Pick identified the end of canal development and the means of consolidated ownership, but not how this means could be brought about.

REFERENCES

This article is based on three main sources: the Report by Ashton Davies to the LMS Board in April 1942 (PRO RAIL 1007/55); a file (WYAS C299/271/3) on the transfer of the Huddersfield Broad Canal; and the Ministry of War Transport file (PRO MT52/132) on the LMS Bill. The latter file includes copies of the Proceedings before the House of Lords Select Committee on 2–5 May 1944. These are not referenced in detail below.

- 1 BW 1157/84: Pick F., Report on Canals and Inland Waterways to the Minister of War Transport, 1941
- 2 This is briefly covered in L. J. Boughey, 'The Big Closure', *Waterways World*, March 1985, pp 30–35
- 3 See LMS Minutes, 12.3.41
- 4 Pick Report, pp 16–17
- 5 PRO RAIL 1007/55
- 6 This table makes some assumptions about the minor coal traffics on the Newport Branch and the Salford section of the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal.
- 7 'Local' is in the sense that these were not part of any national, connected canal system. Some of the LMS canals featured purely local traffics. The Newport Branch traffic was mentioned in the Select Committee proceedings. For the Lancaster Canal, see Taylor M., 'Memories of the Preston-Kendal Canal', *Waterways World*, January 1987, pp 32–35
- 8 From 1942 it would be out of use north of Lancaster, while the locks became unnavigable from 1949 onwards.
- 9 This had been closed by Order on 21 May 1931. The water sales arose mainly in St Helens itself.
- 10 This was finally achieved after the St Helens Canal was closed in 1963. Later the Sankey Brook was diverted into the line between Hulme and Bewsey.
- 11 See Report of the Royal Commission on the Canals and Inland Navigations of the United Kingdom, 1907–9, 23943–24008. Even in 1907 traffic was primarily coal from collieries at the north end.
- 12 PRO RAIL 800/20, 431, 12.9.41. Rochdale Canal letters and other records are held at Greater Manchester Record Office. See B2/2T/163, letter of 20.8.41, and B2/1/22 agenda paper of 28.1.41, stating that the transfer proposal was 'finished for the time being'.
- 13 Ashton Canal records include a LNER Permit Book of 1942–4, from a private collection. See also Rochdale Canal records on Ashton Canal traffics, letter book B2/2T/163.
- 14 AN2 561/11/2, especially letter of 7.12.42
- 15 Kempson & Co of Pye Bridge had collected gas tar from Loughborough Gas Works in their own tank barges up to December 1942, and claimed that traffic only ceased because of crew shortages. The trade recommenced in April 1944 and was still running in July. The tar distillers did not oppose the Bill, no doubt due to the cost, but it is clear that the cost of road service was greater, and unloading plant would be lost. It would be valuable to know whether any negotiations with the LMS took place.
- 16 The significance of the additional length was in Bridges 71 and 72, which had to be rebuilt after the war until Donisthorpe Colliery Basin became disused in 1957. It was made clear that the construction of a long siding to Willesley would remove traffic forwarded by the Moira Colliery Company—about half the tonnage passing.
- 17 Lindsay J., *The Canals of Scotland*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1968

'Any Ware to Anywhere'

RICHARD STOREY

The literature of road haulage history² is in inverse proportion to the immense potential scope of the subject, which embraces thousands, probably tens of thousands, of undertakings, many short-lived, and few leaving behind such substantial physical remains as those of the railway system. In some respects the literature reflects the mix of interests involved—academics, practitioners past and present (from lorry-drivers to managers), and enthusiasts—although, as this brief summary is intended to indicate, each category has something of value and relevance for any student of the subject. In this area of transport history, perhaps more than in others, there is much to be gained from a mixing of approaches and 'conversations' across boundary-lines of activity and approach. This short article does not attempt to be comprehensive, but to point out some recent developments and indicate some potential sources as these are viewed by an archivist with a long-standing interest in road transport.

The 1980s have seen some notable additions to the literature, in a number of categories. At the end of the previous decade G. Turnbull's study of Pickfords³ had analysed a firm which, in various ownerships, linked the canal era with that of the motor lorry. In 1981 a former transport practitioner, C. Dunbar, surveyed *The Rise of Road Transport 1919–1939*,⁴ illuminating a key period with personal experience, providing particularly interesting material on parcels traffic and on the organisations of employers and employed. More fully illustrated than is usual with such studies, the illustrations were generally of considerable relevance and very well captioned. *The Rise of Road Transport* was much more successful than a superficially similar earlier study, *The Long Haul. A Social History of the British Commercial Vehicle Industry*.⁵ This was an uneasy mixture of Foden company history with general transport and industry background.

Several very different studies of aspects of road haulage appeared in 1982. Theo Barker's history of a Sussex road haulage contractor⁶ provided a model which we can only hope will be emulated in years to come. Nick Baldwin's *Pictorial History of BRS*⁷ was too modestly titled. Books such as this and Dunbar's, by their arrangement, introductory text, picture-choice, and depth of caption, are far more significant than the mere picture-books which academics and academic librarians might assume them to be, although their publishers have obviously had the wider enthusiast market in mind when commissioning them. Another book in this category published in 1982 was P. J. Kelley's follow-up to his earlier work on Great Western Railway road-vehicles (including horse-drawn) published in 1973.⁸ The labour aspect of road haulage was the subject of another 1982 publication, by a former TGWU official, T. Corfield, *The Rule of Law, a study in trade union organisation and method*.⁹ The Law referred to in this punning title was the TGWU official Alan Law (d.1985), and the book dealt with the often pace-setting TGWU 5/35 Midlands road haulage branch. In the following year S. McLachlan added a major business study to the literature with his analysis of *The National Freight buy-out*.¹⁰

A few road hauliers, including R. Hilton and P. Henman, featured in the multi-volume *Dictionary of Business Biography*, the first volume of which appeared in 1984.¹¹ However, it is indisputable that an immense amount of biographical work remains to be done, especially on the smaller haulier to be found in almost every locality of the UK. The present writer has been fortunate to secure interviews with two such—in one case with the sight of day-book, invoice-book, and cash-book—which led to short articles.¹² It may be that others are being published in local

history publications, but this is not believed to be generally the case; if so, then there are many retired operators to be located and interviewed, before time takes its toll.

Turning to archives, it is symptomatic of the former general poverty of road-haulage records in local record officers that the only references to goods transport by road in *Transport in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. A Guide to the Records*¹³ were to Portsmouth wagon services. However, over the past decade some local repositories have received accessions of road hauliers' records, as may be traced in the annual classified list of business-records accessions published in the journal *Business Archives*. It is difficult to make any general, definitive statement about the relevance of deposited business records generally to the study of the road transport of materials or products. Certainly the degree of detail given in the chance survival of a group of records of the motorcycle manufacturers, the Triumph Engineering Co., is unusual.¹⁴ However, occasional references will be found, not always in anticipated sources; examples from the Modern Records Centre include some references to road-haulage contracts and problems in the Standard-Triumph archives, with a detailed memorandum on an operator serving an acquired subsidiary; a 1933 list of the Rover Co. works transport fleet (mainly Ford vehicles); and a statement of the problems of an Essex village carrier in 1950, in a parliamentary candidate's papers. Major sources in the Modern Records Centre¹⁵ include a deposit of mainly post-war records of the Road Haulage Association and records of some of the many concerns acquired by the Transport Development Group; these are largely formal, but can be made to yield some information on operating history. Although this article is not a comprehensive survey of road haulage archives, it may be noted that RAIL classes 1130-1133 in the Public Record Office at Kew cover Carter Paterson, Hay's Wharf, and Pickfords material and AN 62-7, 69-70 cover BRS and the THC (access to public records generally being, of course, governed by the 30-year rule).

The trade and technical press has much to offer the historian, not only in editorial content, but also in display and small advertisements, including notices of auctions. To the more obvious titles, such as *Commercial Motor*, *Modern Transport* and *Motor Transport*, should be added those less well known to the general reader, such as *The World's Carriers* (established 1904), and more recent titles, such as the authoritative monthly *Truck* (established 1974). Two enthusiasts' journals, both established in 1984, should be added to the list, *Vintage Commercial Vehicle Magazine* and *Vintage Roadscene*. They are particularly informative on manufacturers, profusely illustrated, often with archive publicity photographs, and in some issues they carry reminiscences of drivers which are a useful substitute for some of the oral history recording which needs to be done in this field. Reminiscences also feature in the *CVRTC News*, the circulation of which is restricted to members of the Commercial Vehicle & Road Transport Club.¹⁶ Some historical data can also be extracted from the Road Haulage Association journal *Roadway*. The information to be obtained from such printed sources may be very basic, on the lines of these hypothetical examples: J. Brown & Son operate 5 tippers from Anytown for quarry work and local authority haulage, 1976; or A. Carter, of Carter Haulage & Packing Ltd., entered the industry in 1925, building up a fleet of lorries with depots at Liverpool, London, and Birmingham; he pioneered the road distribution of motorcycle sidecars from the Martin Works; deceased February 1965. However, the accumulation of such information on a computer database, suitably tagged for retrieval under various headings, could provide the starting-point for a new era in road-transport historical study.

Literature on the vehicles themselves is akin to the railway enthusiasts' volumes on classes of locomotive and types of rolling stock. Nonetheless, it cannot be

overlooked by the serious historians of road transport. Of the many titles available, the 'World Trucks' series¹⁷ and Haynes Publishing Group's 'Illustrated History' titles¹⁸ may be mentioned as good examples. The definitive reference work for commercial vehicles throughout the world appeared in 1979.¹⁹ Bob Tuck's illustrated history of heavy haulage, *Moving Mountains*,²⁰ serves as a reminder of the books devoted to aspects of transport rather than to manufacturers. It also points to the steam traction engine and steam wagon, surviving in operation into the Second World War, and the subject of a literature of their own.

Goods transport by road is a rapidly-changing scene and we must look to the trade press already referred to for coverage of such phenomena as the replacement of 'C' licence fleets by contract vehicles and owner-drivers, the development of distribution services involving warehousing as well as transport,²¹ the growth of 'hub' systems, and the evolution of vehicle types. For ease of reference, researchers would do well to maintain their own indexes or cuttings-files to record developments.

In conclusion, although this article has been devoted to the road transport of goods by motor vehicle, the writer is aware of the concurrent, though declining, significance of horse-drawn transport throughout much of the period covered, of its continued significance for breweries such as Young & Co. of Wandsworth, and of the growing interest, at several levels, in the history of the subject. In this connection may be cited a popular introduction to vehicle types, a study of one of the key horse-breeds, and a survey of the horse in railway service.²²

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- 1 The slogan of Saltend Haulage, Hedon, 1930, illustrated in *British Lorries 1900-1945*, 2nd ed., 1988, p. 13.
- 2 'Road haulage' is used in this article as short-hand for the carriage of goods by mechanical road vehicles, whether by the producer's own vehicle ('C' licence) or by a haulier ('A' licence). Specialised aspects, such as parcels traffic by bus, are not considered.
- 3 *Traffic and Transport. An Economic History of Pickfords*, Allen & Unwin, 1979
- 4 Ian Allan
- 5 M. Seth-Smith, Hutchinson Benham, 1975
- 6 *The Transport Contractors of Rye. John Jempson & Son. A Chapter in the History of British Road Haulage*, Athlone Press, 1982
- 7 Warne, 1982
- 8 *Great Western Road Vehicles Appendix*, Oxford Publishing Company
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- 10 Macmillan
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- 12 R. Storey, 'A pioneer Leamington haulier', *Warwickshire History*, vol. III, No. 1, Summer 1975, pp 37-40; 'A South Warwickshire Haulier and Coal Merchant', *Transport History Group Newsletter* No. 8 (1984)
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- 21 An excellent history of Unilever's road distribution subsidiary appeared in 1969: W. J. Reader, *Hard Roads and Highways. SPD Limited 1918-1968*, Batsford
- 22 D. J. Smith, *Discovering Horse-drawn Commercial Vehicles*, Shire Publications, 1977; K. Chivers, *The Shire Horse. A History of the Breed, the Society and the Men*, J. A. Allen, 1976, abr. pb Futura, 1978; B. Holden, *The Long Haul*, J. A. Allen, 1985

Book Reviews

THE MIDLAND COUNTIES RAILWAY, compiled by Derby Railway History Research Group, ed. P. Stevenson, 128 pp, 49 illustrations, maps & plans, card covers. Railway and Canal Historical Society, 1989. ISBN 0-901461-11-3, £7.95.

The Midland Counties Railway has not only survived for 150 years but apart from the most southerly portion from Wigston to Rugby it has flourished. It is surprising therefore that there has been no previous attempt to provide a detailed investigation into its history and origins. The new publication by the Derby Railway History Research Group more than adequately fills the gap and traces the origins of the MCR back to the later part of the eighteenth century, and concerns the carriage of coal by canal from the pits along the Erewash Valley. The opening of the Leicester and Swannington Railway in 1832 broke the monopoly of these coal owners.

There followed during the 1830s several schemes that were to play an important part in forming the railway network that was constructed in the Victorian age: the London and Birmingham 1838, the MCR 1839, the Birmingham and Derby Junction and the North Midland 1840. The last three combined to form the Midland Railway in 1844.

The book is attractively produced with well-chosen illustrations and maps. One or two of the latter were difficult to interpret; the captions could have helped more to clarify. On p. 79 the Earl of Scarbrough should be spelt thus. Fig. 39 of the Queens Road crossing, a rather poor reproduction of a photograph by Samuel Bourne, c.1860 states that there were four lines of rails across the road by 1864. This is very unlikely in view of the long running complaints by the borough council about the nuisance of the crossing. The additional lines most probably followed after the viaduct was completed about September 1869.

There is no reference to the visit of the Dowager Queen Adelaide to Nottingham in July 1840, one of the earliest of all Royal train journeys, neither of the most important MCR relic, the stone coat of arms from the 1839 station now in the Nottingham Industrial Museum, nor to the gate pillars at the station yard entrance. However these are points which could be looked at if a second edition is contemplated.

The book can be recommended especially to serious students of railway history. J. P. WILSON

THE WELSHPOOL & LLANFAIR LIGHT RAILWAY, Ralph Cartwright and R. T. Russell, 207 pp, 35 photographs, 42 maps, diagrams, etc, boards, David & Charles, 1989, ISBN 0-7153-9226-3, £10.95.

The valley up from Welshpool through Llanfair Caereinion to Mallwyd was once described as the longest valley in Wales without any mineral extraction or industry of note. It is not surprising, therefore, that this early progeny of the 1896 Light Railways Act and the first to be contracted was lacking in dividends. This seemingly gentle agricultural country may look easy going compared with the lines to the north-west perched on rock shelves above rhododendron clad ravines, but with gradients like 1 in 29 for a mile both engineering and subsequent running costs are infinitely worse than many of those obtaining on the more spectacular routes. Opened in 1903 (when a competing horse-drawn bus actually ran a faster schedule!) it survived for passengers until 1931 and freight until 1956. It was rescued by a preservation society and the first part was reopened in 1963—the week of the Beeching Report! Since then it has gone from strength to strength.

In this third and revised edition, the story of the line from its inception, through its years under Cambrian, GWR, and BR control, and into the present era with its fascinating collection of stock from all over the world, is excellently told by the authors who are to be congratulated on writing a thorough and all-embracing history. What a pity that the publishers did not give them better backing. The new photographs are reasonably well reproduced. Those that appeared in earlier editions are now crudely rehased by some process that renders them deplorable. The jacket blurb (presumably from the last edition) says 'extensions are in hand to restore the railway to Welshpool itself.' The line opened to Welshpool in 18 July 1981. JOHN DENTON

RAILS IN THE VALLEYS, James Page, 192 pp, 285 mm × 220 mm, 131 photo illus, map, extracts from Appendices to Service Timetables, boards, David & Charles, 1989, ISBN 0-7153-8979-3, £14.95.

The railways of the Welsh valleys constituted a group of lines unique in character. Nowhere else in these islands were to be found so many different railway companies operating within such a small geographical area, competing with one another in each others' valleys. Considering the complexity of the railway system of the region not a great deal has been written about it. The present book is particularly welcome as it sets out to bring to life the character of the valleys' railways. It is not a catalogue of Acts of Incorporation, opening dates, and so on, but an overall word picture of the history and operations of the railways of the area as a whole.

The first chapter is entitled 'Journeys in the Valleys' and describes a journey up the Taff Vale ('up' in South Wales meant literally inland away from the ports to destinations such as Merthyr). It is followed by 'Moving the Coal', a most informative chapter describing the railways' part in handling the one-time enormous coal export trade from pit to port. Subsequent chapters include a general account of the build-up of the railway system in the valleys, the different types of traffic handled, locomotives, engine sheds and stations, ports, the LMS presence in South Wales, and a chapter called 'Cake Trains and Wet Fish' which is a fascinating account of some of the author's personal experiences whilst he was employed at Cardiff General station in 1956.

There are numerous personal anecdotes and considerable information is included by way of extracts from Appendices to Service Timetables and such publications

as *The Railway Magazine*. A vast amount of research has gone into the preparation of this volume and the selection of photographs is widespread. They have reproduced well.

A canal historian might question the use of the adjective 'great' in connection with the Glamorganshire, Neath, and Swansea canals (p. 46) and the Mersey Railway was hardly a major English railway (p. 84). A point about Swansea, there were five and not three engine sheds which survived into the post war years, the two not mentioned being the LMS sheds at Paxton St. and Upper Bank (p. 119). Why is the firm of contractors at Swansea docks consistently referred to as 'Powlsland & Mason' instead of 'Powlesland & Mason', the correct form?

These are very small criticisms which do not detract from the value of the book. It should be on the bookshelf of anyone whose interests extend to that absorbingly interesting group of lines in the South Wales valleys. NEIL PITTS

THE GREAT DAYS OF THE CANALS, Anthony Burton, 224 pp, 285 x 220 mm, 22 colour and 125 b. & w. illus., sketch maps as endpapers, index, boards, David and Charles 1989, ISBN 0-7153-9264-6, £15.95.

'I can travel a canal I thought I knew well and still find features I had missed, which bring out some new and sometimes unexpected aspect of the old life of the waterway'. A fitting aphorism for this delightful overview of the British canal system. This is not a detailed historical survey of individual canals but a philosophical look at those who created and worked this vital transport network and whose activities generated the satisfying functional appearances of British waterways.

This is a book which should enthuse the general reader who knows little of canal transport yet it equally contains much of value to the dedicated enthusiast in tune with the above quotation. Opening with his reactions on a day trip from Bradford to Bath on the Kennet & Avon Canal the author then surveys the earlier river navigations, canal construction and engineering features, their craft and day to day operation. The problems of both the boatpeople and the carriers are sympathetically covered and their difficulties highlighted in the onset of rail and road. A brief look at the burgeoning leisure interest is followed by a most important and cogent argument for water transport revival, relevant as we stand on the threshold of Europeanisation. It is good to read this reasoned response to the blinkered myopia of the government and its advisers.

The text is enhanced by the quality of the illustrations many of which clearly demonstrate the author's photographic ability as both a record and artistic interpreter.

After such commendation it seems churlish to cavil but two small points arise. Why describe the Thames & Medway Canal as the Gravesend and Rochester (p. 163) and why repeat essentially the same lengthy quotation from a Fellows, Morton and Clayton officer on both pages 101 and 121?

A worthy addition to a RCHS bookshelf. JOHN H. BOYES.

A REGIONAL HISTORY OF THE RAILWAYS OF GREAT BRITAIN:
VOLUME 15 NORTH OF SCOTLAND, J. Thomas and D. Turnock, 336 pp,
36 photo illus., 5 maps in text, folding map, reproduction of timetables, boards,
David St John Thomas, David & Charles, 1989, ISBN 0-946537-03-8, £14.95.

Here is the final volume of the Regional History series by which the whole of Great Britain has now been covered. It is a fitting finale to the series as it deals with the most remote and the largest geographical area of any in the series. John Thomas, who wrote volume 6, sadly died when the present volume was in its fairly early stages. However David Turnock has incorporated John Thomas' original work and has completed the volume himself.

The work takes in the area roughly north of a line from Fife across to the northern end of the Firth of Clyde. The logical inclusion of the whole of the Western Highlands means that the little isolated Campbeltown and Macrihanish line is included in the present volume rather than in Volume 6 notwithstanding the fact that Campbeltown is slightly south of Ayr (by $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes of latitude!). This is appropriate.

After an account of the general background there are six chapters each dealing with a particular part of the north of Scotland. They are entitled 'Central Region: Stirling—Gateway to the North', 'Fife Region: Between the Bridges', 'Tayside Region: Perth and Dundee', 'Grampian Region: Little and Good', 'Highlands and Islands: Inverness and the Far North', and 'Highlands and Islands: Oban and the West Highlands'. The final chapter is styled 'A Concluding View: Train Services and Motive Power'. There is a chronology giving opening and closing dates of the lines covered in each chapter, and a bibliography. Included in the chapters are references to proposed lines and industrial railways.

Throughout the book populations of communities, frequently quite small ones, are quoted for each of the years 1861, 1921, and 1981. Also imperial distances and weights are individually converted into metric equivalents. This does seem largely a waste of space. Yet such a line as the Wick and Lybster Light Railway is disposed of in just four lines on page 251, and even that includes the populations of Latheron parish for 1861, 1921 and 1981. A few years ago a 64-page book was published on this railway, which incidentally is not mentioned in the bibliography. A number of minor typographical errors have crept in.

As in other books in this series, it is set against the social and economic background of the area covered, with reference to the problems peculiar to this part of the country.

It is a good overall picture of the railway history of a large area of country which consists to a large extent of rugged terrain with a vast irregular and heavily indented coastline. NEIL PITTS

THE CROMER BRANCH, Stanley C. Jenkins, 144 pp, 210 × 145 mm, 73 illustrations, 7 maps, card covers. The Oakwood Press, 1989, ISBN 085361-330-3, £6.95.

This is the latest book to come from the Oakwood Press in their attractive new format and covers very fully the interesting lines in the Cromer area. Compared with many other areas these lines have a very short history, for until the mid-19th century Cromer and Sheringham were still small fishing villages and the first railway to reach the area—the East Norfolk Railway, from Whitlingham to Cromer—did not arrive in Cromer until 1877, thirteen years after being incorporated, having been delayed by the financial crisis of 1866 and subsequent

shortage of money; it was absorbed by the Great Eastern in 1881. Cromer then began to develop as a high class residential and holiday area, and this was further stimulated by the arrival of the Eastern & Midlands Railway (Midland & Great Northern Joint from 1893) at Cromer Beach in 1887, which brought visitors from the Midlands and elsewhere. Further lines in the area were subsequently built by the GE and the M&GN acting together as the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Committee. These lines ran from North Walsham to Mundesley and from Mundesley to Cromer through the district then called Poppyland, but traffic never developed as was hoped and they were early pre-Beeching closures in 1953-4.

The author takes 'The Cromer Branch' as comprising all these lines and recounts in great detail their history and the train services and engines that were worked over them, as well as describing the lines and stations, and the book has many well-reproduced photographs.

There are occasional blemishes; in a description of the disastrous head-on collision on the single line between Norwich and Brundall on 10 Sep. 1874—a month before the East Norfolk Line was opened—it is stated that the accident was caused by a Norwich station inspector ordering the telegraph clerk to tell Brundall to let an up (westbound) train enter the single line section while that section was occupied by a down express. Actually at that time the section was not so occupied, for the down express had still not arrived at Norwich from the south, but it did so a few minutes later and inexplicably the same inspector allowed it to leave for Brundall before the up train had arrived. On the subject of fencing the author refers to many M&GN and N&SJ stations having decorative Midland style diamond pattern fencing; in fact however this type of fencing was M&GN style—in the Midland style the diagonal palings were all inclined in the same direction. But these things apart, the book is to be commended as a comprehensive account of the lines in the Cromer area. H. C. L. TRICKETT

THE HUNDRED OF HOO RAILWAY, Brian Hart, 84 pp, 107 photo illus., 7 maps and plans, 6 pp of scale drawings, 6 reproductions of posters and timetables, card covers, 275 mm × 215 mm. Wild Swan Publications, 1989, ISBN 0-906867-73-8, £7.95.

The railway from Hoo Junction to Grain and Port Victoria and later All Hallows-on-Sea has already attracted much attention; this is the fourth book to appear on the subject since the 1960s and there have been at least half a dozen extended references in railway periodicals. This is an attractive production, well up to the publisher's high standards in book design. Although it is understandably difficult for him to find much new to say, the author relates the story of the line to date in considerable detail, writing with great affection, and easing readability by the insertion of well-crafted pen pictures. These minor literary excursions, together with quotations from contemporary guides and other documents are supported by beautifully reproduced photographs of every part of the line and its villages and surrounding scenery—a small fortune must have been spent in buying old picture postcards at their present high prices. Thus is the atmosphere of this rather special branch evoked in a way which has not been done before, the result deserving to stimulate local sales and generating the reader's interest.

Conscious of the author's commendable endeavour to record the background and place the railway in its proper setting, one puts the book down with a slight regret that more was not said of the SE's financial involvement in the All Hallows town development project, the various attempts to get this going over the years 1929-39 and the reasons for its failure (in contrast to its success with day excursion traffic). Events in the last two decades are also skated over lightly and there is no index, list of sources, or bibliography. ALAN A. JACKSON

HIGHLAND RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES—BOOK 1—EARLY DAYS TO THE LOCHS, J. R. H. Cormack & J. L. S. Stevenson, 160 pp, 236 mm × 182 mm, 114 photo. illus., 2 line drawings, map, boards. Railway Correspondence & Travel Society, 1988. ISBN 0-901115-64-9, £12.95.

This book, which is the first in a two-volume history of Highland locomotives, commences with those built in 1855 for the opening of the Inverness & Nairn Railway and covers all locomotives built or acquired up to the end of David Jones' period as Locomotive Superintendent in 1896. For completeness the three Jones 4-4-0's built in 1917 are also included. The history of all these locomotives is followed to the end, be it in HR, LMS, or BR days.

In the introduction a brief history of the Highland Railway is followed by short biographies of the Locomotive Superintendents, a description of the line and its features, and details of liveries and special fittings on the engines.

The locomotive classes are described in order of appearance, with individual class histories being broken down under subject headings rather than being written in strict order of events. Reference is thus made easy but the smooth flow of a continuous narrative is lacking.

Origins of the locomotive names are explained, yielding much interesting background information on the railway. Devotees of the works of John Buchan will be disappointed to learn that the 4-4-0 *Huntingtower* was not named after the scene of the exploits of the Gorbals Die-Hards. Most helpfully for this Sassenach reviewer guidance is given on the pronunciation of the names. There are also appendices on engine loading, turntables, and water columns.

In places more information on locomotive design and detail features would have been welcome. Errors seem to be few. The name of Major Marindin of the Board of Trade appears on p. 57 as Mandarin, and it is stated that the Skye Bogies had horizontal cylinders when the illustrations clearly show them inclined.

The book is printed on art paper, with well-chosen illustrations nicely positioned in relevant portions of the text. With few exceptions the locations are given—the authors clearly know their terrain. May we look for a bibliography covering both volumes in Book 2?

A most charming and enlightening book, both for the student of locomotive history and for those with other railway interests. D. F. TEE

ATLANTIC COAST EXPRESS, Stephen Austin, 112 pp, 23 maps and diagrams, 102 photographs, soft cover, Ian Allan 1989, ISBN 0-7110-1822-7, £6.95.

This book puts the clock back to a September day in 1960 when we are taken for a journey to Padstow on the 11.00 am from Waterloo. After some potted history and an account of the operation of this unique multi-portioned train, the narrative concentrates on the work of the footplate crews, handling 35028 *Clan Line* as far as Exeter and 34033 *Chard* for the remainder of the journey to the Atlantic seaboard.

The task of working a heavy train on the ACE's tight schedule is recalled from the memories of one of its drivers as well as from the author's recent experience of 35028's preserved activities. The lineside scene and passing traffic are also described in detail, with the aid of track diagrams of the principal stations en route. One or two anachronisms have crept in here; M7 tank 30051 brings the ACE stock into Waterloo some six months prematurely, while the VC10 at Weybridge was still 21 months away from its maiden flight.

The numerous photographs include details of preserved Bulleid rolling stock and of his Pacifics to illustrate some of the less glamorous aspects of the engineman's job. Moving from the grime of the loco shed to the West Country scenery a selection of contemporary colour pictures shows Bulleid engines at work on the SR's most attractive main line. This well produced book evokes many happy memories of the latter years of the Atlantic Coast Express. J. N. FAULKNER

RAIL CENTRES: LEEDS/BRADFORD, Stephen R. Batty, 160 pp, 242 x 176 mm, 203 photo illus., 11 maps and plans in text, end-paper maps, boards. Ian Allan 1989, ISBN 0-7110-1821-9, £11.95.

This is a generously illustrated account of main line railways in the Leeds and Bradford area. Two thirds of the book are devoted to a detailed history of railway development in the industrial West Riding. The story is complicated, but the author succeeds in unfolding it with the minimum of fragmentation and repetition. The remainder of the book deals with passenger services down to the present day, emphasising the current revival in main line and local travel. Apart from a page and a half devoted to the major goods depots, freight operations receive little attention.

The photographs contribute materially to the value of this book. They have been chosen carefully and the quality of reproduction is very good. The majority were taken between 1950 and 1970 with another forty since 1980. For those living in the West Riding the photographs give a fascinating insight into the changing landscape.

In common with other volumes in this series there is no index. This is a major flaw in a book containing so much historical detail. Factual errors appear to be few, though there are occasional misprints and slips of the pen in the text and in the maps. The lists of locomotive allocations given as appendices seem to have been compiled hastily as there are mistakes and inconsistencies in classification.

The aim of the author is to stimulate his readers to enquire further into the railway history of the two cities. This attractive and well produced book should ensure fulfilment of that ambition. GRAHAM HARDY

DIDCOT, JUNCTION & RAILWAY CENTRE (A Railway World Special), L. Walters, 56 pp, 286 x 211 mm, 101 illus., (17 in colour), 6 plans, pictorial soft covers. Ian Allan, 1989, ISBN 0-7110-1831-6, £5.50.

This profusely illustrated publication, printed on good quality paper, is much more than a picture book of steam locomotives. Practically two-thirds of the all-too-restricted space is devoted to a history of the continuing development of the railway settlement, best remembered by many for the dominating bulk of the GWR Provender Store. A general plan of the village would have aided understanding of the text, and the reviewer would have welcomed a longer description of the station buildings and their facilities, together with more of the fascinating early photographs.

Over a 28 year period the Great Western Society has grown from a group of four schoolboys to the operators of a Railway Centre that attracts over 100,000 visitors annually. As well as locomotives and rolling stock a number of GWR structures and much equipment is also preserved. These current activities are also well described. Recommended, together with a plea that the author writes a more detailed account for a local history publication. DENNIS HADLEY

MAKING TRACKS, J. R. Fairman, 56 pp, 98 photographs, 5 maps, soft cover, Kingfisher Railway Productions 1988, ISBN 0-946184-57-7, £5.95.

As part of British Rail's rationalisation of its civil engineering facilities involving greater use of outside suppliers, the Redbridge permanent way works near Southampton was closed in March 1989. This book describes the history of the works since the site was acquired by the LSWR in 1880.

Commencing with a review of the social, industrial and railway history of the area, the development of the works is described. This is followed by a valuable account of the evolution of permanent way into today's continuous welded rails on concrete sleepers. The book then deals with each of the departments of the works and how they were adapted and modernised (even as late as 1988) to meet these changes. One feature was the fabrication and pre-assembly of complicated pointwork for major track renewal or remodelling.

All these activities are fully illustrated in the book which forms a worthy record of the skills and human effort behind the maintenance of LSWR, SR and BR permanent way. The track has always been a rather neglected subject for railway literature, a need which this book meets. J. N. FAULKNER

THE WELLAND CANALS—The Growth of Mr. Merritt's Ditch, Roberta Styran and Robert R. Taylor with John N. Jackson, 168 pp, 240 photographs, drawings and charts, 215 mm × 280 mm, The Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ontario, Canada. ISBN 0-919783-63-5, no price quoted.

Apart from the pioneering works of Robert F. Leggett, there are few other books readily available which detail the many facets of the social history of Canada's unique canals. It is therefore timely that a first class illustrated history of the Welland Canals has at long last appeared. The book has its roots in the extensive research undertaken for the First Annual Niagara Peninsular History Conference held at Brock University in 1979. It sets out to show the relationship between local and national demand for a reliable waterlink between the two great lakes of Erie and Ontario and the St. Lawrence River valley.

Preliminary chapters offer a useful historical review between canal development elsewhere and its influence on the building of the Welland Canal, including the particular problems of surmounting the Niagara Escarpment. They plot the drive of the local businessman, William Hamilton Merritt, and his relationship with Thomas Telford who he persuaded to purchase 20 shares, worth £225, in the First Welland Canal Company. The changing technology of canal building is clearly illustrated through striking comparative illustrations of the techniques used to construct the various improved canal lines. A useful review interrelates the stages in the development of the canal to the changing demands of industry, trade and ship size. These in turn are reflected in separate chapters to the changing nature of the employment in the area and the way local communities developed. Further chapters on 'People and Pleasures', 'Difficulties and Disasters' and 'Transforming the Landscape' combine to make the whole book a compact social history of a key locality in Canada's history.

The book is profusely illustrated with a carefully chosen selection of archive drawings and unique local photographs all reproduced to a very high standard. The three authors, with a common link through their contacts with Brock University, have combined their specialist knowledge of the locality to produce a most informative and readable book with a useful Bibliography which adequately fills a key gap in local canals literature. ROGER W. SQUIRES

A GENEALOGY OF THE LNER AND A CHRONOLOGY OF ITS ANTECEDANTS, Miss Dawn Smith, 224 pp + 8 pp prelims and 33 pp appendices, A4, 290 x 210 mm, no illustrations, soft covers. Printed by Howard-Turner Computing Services Limited, Wingate, County Durham, TS28 5AH for Glebe Publications, 19 Eldon Grove, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS26 9LY, 1988. ISBN 1-871658-00-4, £12.85 including postage.

Apart from the spelling of 'antecedent', the cover of this substantial volume is attractively set out on a background of approximate 'LNER Green' which, as the reviewer has discovered, unfortunately fades in strong daylight. The book sets out to provide information on the various constituents of the London & North Eastern Railway, the full title of which appears nowhere in the book, presented in a standardised form listing: Act of Incorporation; Other Acts; Route; Engineer; Dates of Opening; Other Information. If the information does not fill the space available a large rectangle is provided, labelled 'Notes'. All this would be splendid if only the information could be relied upon. The various constituents are not arranged in any kind of order. At the end Appendix D gives a list of reference sources numbered from 1 to 40, arranged in the most random fashion with some items mentioned twice such as: 1 Tuck's Shareholder's Guide 1846 and 7 Tuck's Railway Shareholder's Manual 1846, all from Mr. J. T. Howard-Turner's private library. Here probably is the root of the book's troubles. To produce this kind of book the compiler needs the resources of a comprehensive library, such as Manchester, where there are complete runs of Bradshaw Manuals and timetables, Local & Personal Acts, and other material. Even this is insufficient; to complete the work properly many weeks would be needed in the PRO at Kew and the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh. A work such as this is too vast for one person to undertake alone if it is to be completed in a reasonable time. Nothing less than a team of dedicated researchers is needed, prepared to divide the work between themselves. The conception and layout of the book are commendable, but there are omissions and mistakes on almost every page. Where the information has not been readily to hand it has simply been left out. Thus there are many blank spaces after 'Route', 'Engineer', 'Date of Opening', etc., where a little more research could have supplied the information. There is no mention of whether the dates of opening are for passengers or goods. The reviewer naturally examined first the section on which he was best informed, the Great Northern, and soon found himself using the book as a form to be filled in with chapter numbers of Acts (to be found in the *Index to the Local and Personal Acts*), routes, engineers, dates of opening and much other information. The form becomes unmanageable for lines which were authorised but never built under the original Act but under subsequent Acts with a different name such as the Stamford & Spalding. If the day of opening could not readily be found, only the year is given. Various companies which were not fully integrated with the GNR are listed under 'Independent Companies' at the end of the book. Here we read, for example, 'Nottingham Canal otherwise known as Grantham Canal'. Errors, omissions and confusion are everywhere. An acquaintance has had a similar experience with the Great Eastern and the Great North of Scotland sections.

All this is not to say that nothing is right in the book. It does indeed contain much sound information, but without careful checking there is no means of identifying it. Thus a book which could have been a valuable work of reference and a tool for the railway historian has become little more than a form to be filled in by the enthusiast with plenty of free time. For anyone who loves delving in archives and libraries, and who is short of something to work on, this book is ideal. One is left with the sad feeling that, despite an immense amount of work, a great opportunity has been missed. If, as is stated in the Introduction, this is the first of four such books then a much more diligent approach is needed before embarking on the GWR, LMS, and SR. JOHN MARSHALL

SHORTER REVIEWS

RAIL PORTFOLIOS 8: THE 24s AND 25s, Hugh Dalby, 64 pp, 71 photo illus., (all in colour), boards. Ian Allan Ltd, 1989, £6.95.

This is the first title in the Rail Portfolio series produced by Ian Allen since acquisition from Janes Transport Press. It consists entirely of photographs with extended captions of members of the two classes described, in various liveries and numerous differing situations. The pictures by a wide range of photographers are well reproduced and photographic details, camera, film, etc are quoted in nearly all cases.

RAIL PORTFOLIOS 10: THE WR DIESEL-HYDRAULICS, Hugh Dalby, 64 pp, 76 photo illus. (all in colour), boards. Ian Allan Ltd, 1989, £6.95.

This publication includes all classes of diesel hydraulic locomotives used by the WR. As in the earlier Rail Portfolio reviewed above it consists of a wide selection of coloured illustrations of members of the various classes in many environments, in action, in workshops, etc. Photographic details are given and the pictures are well selected and reproduced.

THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY IN MID CORNWALL, Alan Bennett, 96 pp, profusely illustrated, maps, track plans, extracts from timetables, card covers. Kingfisher Railway Publications, 65A The Avenue, Southampton SO1 2TA, £7.95.

The author treats Mid Cornwall as the area from Lostwithiel to the Redruth/Camborne district. His book surveys the main line and the associated branch lines in the area designated. These latter include that to Falmouth, both branches to Newquay and the various lines serving centres of the china clay industry. There is a chapter on harbour development, notably at Fowey, Par, and Newquay, one on St. Blazey workshops and yard, and another on tourist traffic to Newquay. Besides an outline of the history of the railways there is much information on such matters as locomotive working and traffic handled.

THE ISLAND TERRIERS, M. J. E. Reed, 48 pp, profusely illustrated, card covers. Kingfisher Railway Publications, £4.95.

After a brief introduction about the LBSCR Terriers and the pre-grouping lines in the Isle of Wight the remainder of the book is devoted to a series of 'biographies' of each of the eight engines of this class which worked on the island. The numerous illustrations include views of the locos in LBSCR days, in pre- and post-grouping liveries on the island and in a few cases after return to the mainland in SR and BR liveries. There are also a few pictures of the preserved specimens, two of which are back on the island. Appendices list dimensions, boiler details, etc.

ANDERTON FOR ORDERS, Tom Foxon, 152 pp, 8 colour paintings, endpaper maps, card covers. J. M. Pearson & Associates, Tatenhill Common, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs, £8.95.

A most interesting and informative account of the author's experiences on working boats on the canals in the early days of nationalisation. He describes trips undertaken and the cargoes handled to and from Birmingham, Wolverhampton,

Manchester, Ellesmere Port, Stourport, and other places on the canal system. The book brings to life a period when much commercial traffic was still being handled by the waterways, including the narrow canals.

LONDON'S INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY No. 4, 54 pp, obtainable from Tom Smith, 74 Lord Warwick St. London SE18 5QO, £2.80 inc. p&p.

This is the latest in the series of journals from the Greater London Industrial Archaeological Society. Highlight is a study of Bricklayers Arms station by RCHS member Malcolm Tucker who looks at his subject in depth, mainly through its buildings, traffic, and handling arrangements.

WAS YOUR GRANDFATHER A RAILWAYMAN? Tom Richards, 2nd edn. 52 pp, card covers. Obtainable from the author at 1 Apsley Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2SH, £2.25 inc. p&p.

The second edition of this work, the first having been reviewed in the March 1989 Journal. Many additions have been made, notably regarding LNWR Crewe staff records, various LNW Joint Committees, a new section on UK railway shipping records of many companies (the oldest for the Stockton & Darlington Railway 1838) and many extra references to staff records of the GCR, LBSCR, and LCDR.

THE USA 756th RSB (RAILWAY SHOP BATTALION) AT NEWPORT (Ebbw Junction), E. R. Mountford, 48 pp, 30 photo illus., 4 line drawings & plans, soft covers. Oakwood Press, 1989, £3.30.

In readiness for the invasion of Europe in 1944 a large number of USA locomotives, mainly 2-8-0's of class S160, were brought to this country. They were serviced at Newport and stored in the Newport area until they were needed on the continent. This is a personal account of observations and information obtained from US Army officers who were responsible for the operation, being based at the fitting shop at the GWR engine shed at Ebbw Junction. Full details are given of the locos involved, together with their locations at the three storage sites. There are also brief details of other types of US locos used by the Allies during the war. An interesting work about a little known aspect of railway history.

WATERWAYS INTO CASTLEFIELD, John C. Fletcher, 20 pp, maps, drawings, photo illus., soft covers. Obtainable from the author at 36 Trawden Avenue, Smithills, Bolton BL1 6JD, £2 inc. p&p.

This small but informative book traces the history of navigations to Manchester with the main emphasis on the Castlefield area. Starting with river navigation the story is followed through the canal era to nationalisation, and concludes with a section on the site of the National Boat Rally of 1988. Among other interesting features described are the origins and functions of the various canal tunnels in Manchester, which constitute a lesser known aspect of the Manchester canal system.

THE HELLINGLY HOSPITAL RAILWAY, P. A. Harding, 32 pp, profusely illustrated, soft covers. Obtainable from the author at 'Mossziel', Bagshot Road, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2SG, £1.75 plus 25p p&p.

This latest work by Mr Harding describes the little known railway which linked Hellingly Mental Hospital with the LBSCR line at Hellingly on the Polegate—Eridge line. The book covers the history of the line, a description of the route, motive power and rolling stock, operation, closure, and a brief account of the position in 1989. A well researched and well produced account of an interesting and unusual railway.

THE MIDLAND COUNTIES RAILWAY 1839–1989: A PICTORIAL SURVEY, Mark Higginson, 60 pp, 106 illus, 3 maps, Midland Railway Trust, Butterley Station, Ripley, Derby DE5 3TL, ISBN 1 872194 00 1, £1.95 plus £0.50 p.&p.

This is a special edition of *The Wyvern*, the quarterly journal of the Trust, published to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the railway. The illustrations are arranged in geographical sequence and include contemporary engravings and woodcuts, and historical and recent photographs, together with excellent maps showing the railway in 1840, 1922 and 1989. It will be of particular interest to those who attended the Society's 1989 AGM Weekend visits.

Correspondence

The Weaver Navigation

Sir,—While greatly enjoying *Reflections on Water—Reminiscences of Frank Rogerson, one-time Waterman on the Weaver Navigation* in the March issue, I was reminded of work now being carried out to develop the 20-mile Weaver Valley Way which runs north from Winsford through the centre of Northwich and past the Anderton Lift to the Weaver outflow into the Mersey estuary near Frodsham. The project is being co-ordinated by Cheshire County Council Countryside and Recreation Department and there is an excellent free leaflet available from the Department's office at 40A Church Street, Davenham, Northwich. There is a lot to explore and enjoy in the Weaver Valley, not least its railways and the disused Cheshire Lines branch from Cuddington to Winsford. Much of the trackbed now forms The Whitegate Way, the subject of another leaflet.

A reference in part two to the old *Indefatigable* being anchored just outside Eastham Lock is perhaps misleading, for two training ships which bore this name were always anchored in The Sloyne off Tranmere, four miles further downstream. This, the safest of the Mersey anchorages, is marked on OS maps. It is close to the Cammell Laird shipyard. The *Indefatigable* originally used as a training ship was a wooden wall. It was replaced in 1914 by an old cruiser.

REX CHRISTIANSEN

Bournville Station

Sir,—In his review of John Mander's book 'Collecting Railwayana' (RCHS Journal, July 1989, p. 410), Neil Pitts makes what he describes as a small point concerning Bourneville Station. Mr Mander had referred to this as a long-closed station, but Mr Pitts stated that it was still very much alive, enjoying a frequent service on the Birmingham Cross-City service.

May I make a further small point and say that they are both wrong? There is not now and never has been a Bourneville Station. Bournville, yes. Bourneville, no. This is a common mis-spelling. When I pointed it out to the author of a canal book who had made a similar error, it was suggested in justification that there were alternative spellings if you went back in history, but this is simply not true. The place name 'Bournville' was invented by the Cadbury brothers, George and Richard, when they moved their factory to the area from the centre of Birmingham in 1879. The Worcester & Birmingham Canal provided a long-standing connection between the two sites, and the railway had just arrived in the form of the Birmingham West Suburban Railway, authorised on 31 July 1871 and opened on 3 April 1876. It was then only a single-track line and terminated at Granville Street, half a mile from the town centre.

As Bournville did not exist at the time, the station originally took its name from the area that was then known as 'Stirchley Street'. Stirchley still exists as a suburb of Birmingham but Stirchley Street does not. Although not a railway historian or collector of 'railwayana' (I am a canalcoholic), I have a copy of a photograph showing Stirchley Street Station as it was in 1879. I can well imagine that for a railway buff something like an original sign proclaiming 'Stirchley Street Station' would be a highly collectable item. Does anything of this sort still exist?

STANLEY A. HOLLAND

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