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Editor:

Paul Reynolds
87 Gabalfa Road, Sketty
Swansea SA2 8ND
email: journal@rchs.org.uk

Reviews Editor:

Peter Brown
34 Waterside Drive,
Market Drayton,
Shropshire TF9 1HU
email: reviews@rchs.org.uk

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The Railway & Canal Historical Society

WEBSITE: www.rchs.org.uk

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Vice-Presidents: G J Biddle, G A Boyes, Dr JV Gough,

Dr M JT Lewis, I P Moss

Chairman (Managing Committee): Dr Martin Barnes

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Oxford OX2 8LP. email: secretary@rchs.org.uk

Hon. Treasurer: R O Welton, Wynch House, Ashton-under-Hill,

Evesham WR11 7SW. email: treasurer@rchs.org.uk

Membership Secretary: Roger J Taylor, 16 Priory Court,

Berkhamsted HP4 2DP. email: roger.taylor1004@talktalk.net

Local Group Secretaries:

East Midlands: R Sladen, 25 Linden Grove, Beeston,
Nottingham NG9 2AD

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North West: R Brice, 7 Hough Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 2LG

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West Midlands: E H Cheers, 7 Wealden Hatch, Bushbury,
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Doncaster DN2 5PJ

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Hull HU5 3PJ

Modern Transport: R M Shill, 100 Frederick Road, Stechford,
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Road Transport: P L Scowcroft, 8 Rowan Mount,
Doncaster DN2 5PJ

Waterways History Research (including Docks & Shipping):

P E Jones, 27 Bexley Avenue, Denton Burn,
Newcastle NE15 7DE

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Killaloe, the base for the nineteenth century Shannon steamers (lower) (© Brian J
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Steam, the Shannon and the Great British breakfast

Brian J Goggin

The 2014 Clinker Lecture presented on 18 October 2014 at the Birmingham and Midland Institute

Ruth Delany's *The Shannon Navigation*¹ describes, in five of its twelve chapters, the surveys and works carried out in the 1830s and 1840s to improve the navigation of the river Shannon; a sixth chapter discusses 'The Steamers and Trade 1826–1860s'.

Charles Wye Williams, the most important steamer owner, had written a pamphlet² urging such improvement but Delany discounts its importance:

C W Williams' tirade may have helped, but it was possibly more in response to many factors including the need to carry out drainage to produce profitable agricultural ground and to address the growing problems of lawlessness and destitution.³

Williams's actions were more important than his words. Government acted to improve the Shannon, not as an Irish navigation, but as an artery transporting Irish food to Britain.

Lord Goderich

The Shannon campaign opened in the House of Lords in June 1827 when Lord Goderich, Leader of the House, made rude remarks about the butter tasters of Dublin.⁴ Under the *Butter Trade (Ireland) Act 1812*,⁵ butter that was exported from or sold or exposed for sale in any Irish town, city or port had to be 'tasted, weighed and proved' by weighmasters or tasters. Cork had separate rules and in 1813 an exception was made for Waterford: some towns on the navigable rivers Barrow and Suir had their own tasters and sent their butter by boat to Waterford for export; the 1813 act exempted such butter from retesting.⁶

Lord Goderich said that 'gentlemen tasters' in Dublin who did their jobs properly 'would be sick for a fortnight after' and that 'he did not understand why they could not enjoy their butter without an assurance of its merit, on the authority of the delicate and refined palate of an Irish taster'.⁷

Lords Limerick and Ormonde and the Marquesses of Downshire and Lansdowne, all owners of large

Irish estates, said that abolishing tasting would benefit Irish waterways, especially the Shannon, where steamers had recently been introduced. The Marquess of Downshire feared that this 'new species of intercourse' would be threatened if butter from Limerick, on the west side of Ireland, had to bear the cost of retesting in Dublin. Accordingly, the *Butter Trade (Ireland) Act 1827*⁸ abolished tasting except in sea ports and places of export; it also provided that butter being shipped from Dublin, but not for sale there, need not be tasted.⁹

The debate showed the confluence of five factors that, in 1839, led the government to spend almost £600,000 on the Shannon. The five factors were geography, technology, economics, politics and entrepreneurship.

Geography

The head of navigation on the Shannon is Lough Allen; a 5-mile canal from the lake bypasses the river but rejoins it near the village of Leitrim. From there, the river runs roughly southward for 113 miles to Killaloe, at the foot of Lough Derg, falling just over 30 feet in that distance. However, in the 15 miles from Killaloe to tidal waters at Limerick, the river falls another 100 feet. From Limerick, a 60-mile estuary runs westward to the Atlantic.

The Shannon has three connections to the sea: one at Limerick and the others by the Grand and Royal Canals to Dublin. But the river carried very little traffic. The Limerick Navigation, on the 15 miles between Limerick and Killaloe, was a poorly constructed mixture of canal and river navigations. Upstream of Killaloe river and lake sections alternate. Lough Derg, the largest lake, is 25 miles long and up to 7 miles broad. Towing from the bank was impossible on lakes and even on the river sections, which are wide with reed margins; they are often flooded and they lack towing-paths.



There was some carrying by small local boats, sailed, rowed or poled; some canal craft also used the river, relying on sails and poles – and on fine weather. However, in 1826 the trade to Limerick amounted to only 2,004 tons.¹⁰

Technology

Steam changed everything. Lough Derg was now an asset, where a steamer could carry or tow a heavy load faster than any waggon, cart or canal-boat.

In 1822 Aaron Manby, of the Horseley Ironworks at Tipton, built a 107 foot, 32 hp iron steamer, to be used on the Seine by a company he had formed with Captain Charles Napier. The *Aaron Manby* used Oldham's feathering paddles or 'revolving oars'. It was dismantled, sent to Rotherhithe and reassembled at the Surrey Canal Dock.¹¹ Trials were conducted on the Thames with guests including Napier, Manby and 'Mr Williams, the patentee of the revolving oars'.¹² Shortly afterwards the *Aaron Manby* sailed to Paris: the first iron steamer to make a sea crossing.

In 1821 Manby supplied a small steam engine to Charles Wye Williams in Dublin, who spent £1,400 financing John Oldham's experiments with feathering paddles, including £400 for the patent.¹³ In 1823 Williams set up Charles Wye Williams and Company, with a capital of £50,000, to run steamers all year round, carrying freight as well as passengers.

The company's *City of Dublin* inaugurated the Liverpool–Dublin service in March 1824. By May 1826 the company had become the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company (CoDSPCo) with 400 shareholders in Dublin, Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds. Its capital was being raised to £250,000 and shares were offered to 'Shippers, Importers, Merchants, Wholesale Graziers, and exporters of Cattle'. It had taken over the Mersey Steam Company and now had fourteen steamers sailing six days a week with the tides.¹⁴

In 1827 the first steamer arrived on the non-tidal Shannon, John Grantham's *Marquess Wellesley*, built by the Horseley Ironworks:

This vessel will, in almost all weathers, be able to take her own cargo and tow her fly-boats across the lake, and thus ensure the certain delivery of goods both here and in Dublin, within regular given periods.¹⁵

The rival *Mountaineer*, built in Dublin and owned by the Shannon Navigation Company, arrived soon afterwards.¹⁶ Both steamers were intended to link Limerick and Dublin.

Economy

The hazards of the Shannon estuary, Limerick's outlet to the sea –unmarked rocks, narrow and winding channels, strong currents and tidal streams, the pirates of Cratloe – were described by Thomas Steele in 1828.¹⁷ He said that Limerick was 'admirably situated for commerce with the West Indies and America', but Ireland's trade had already shifted from west to east. As early as 1780 74 per cent of Ireland's imports came from Britain and 79 per cent of Irish exports went there.¹⁸

Britain was not self-sufficient in food in the early nineteenth century whereas Ireland produced a surplus. Before the 1840s famine a small plot of potato ground could keep an agricultural labourer's family well fed and healthy, releasing more land for growing corn under the protection of the Corn Laws. In 1814–16 over 70 per cent of British imports of grain, meat and butter came from Ireland: that rose to 75 per cent in 1824–26 and 85 percent in 1834–36.¹⁹

Ireland's provision trade had traditionally supplied heavily salted meat and butter to the navy and to what was politely called the West Indies trade, which meant food for the slave plantations: mess beef for the planters, cargo beef for the poorer whites and cow beef (with bits of other animals) for the slaves.²⁰ Beef exports peaked in 1813 but the advent of steam opened a new market for the farmers.²¹

Before steam, the livestock trade was small. Exporters could not predict when a sailing vessel would be able to leave harbour or how long its journey would take. The Dublin–Liverpool crossing could take anything from two days to three weeks; average crossing time was a week (with loading and discharging) and vessels made about eight voyages a year.

Steamers crossed regularly in fourteen hours, allowing at least two round trips per week, and they departed predictably with the tide.²² The result was a large increase in the volume of Irish Sea traffic. Sailing vessels retained the cargoes for which transit time was less important – grain from Ireland to Britain, coal the other way – while steamers developed new cargoes that required speed, predictability and reliability. Dublin–Liverpool was the most important route and nine tenths of the cargoes were livestock.

Store cattle exports continued, but steam allowed cattle to be fattened in Ireland and landed in Britain ready for slaughter. Large trades developed in the export of sheep, lambs and pigs and, by the mid-1830s, up to 90 million eggs a year went to Britain.²³

Steamers generally sailed full from Dublin – but only about half carried back-cargoes from Liverpool.²⁴

By 1830 there were 42 steamers on the Irish Sea: 94 per cent of the total investment of £641,000 was Irish money.²⁵ Almost half of all steamship tonnage entering British ports in the 1830s came from Ireland.²⁶ Irish-owned vessels were larger, on average, than those in other UK centres of steam shipping.²⁷

Filling the steamers meant drawing potential cargoes from well beyond Dublin. The two canals carried less from the Shannon than they might have and much of the traffic was in grain; much of it was for export but usually by sail rather than by steam.²⁸

Politics

The *Butter Trade (Ireland) Act 1827* was an attempt to attract more exportable goods to Dublin port. The Marquess of Downshire presented a petition from Charles Wye Williams who had paid all the costs of the bill.²⁹ That was not the last time on which Williams required legislative action.

There was a wider political context. The Acts of Union of 1800 created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; the final step in its implementation was the abolition, in 1825, of customs duties on trade between Britain and Ireland.

But the Union raised some questions to which the UK government and state had not worked out the answers. Ireland's status was formally that of a kingdom in a union of equals, but it retained a colonial administration, the 'separate British executive ... after the fashion of a Crown colony'.³⁰ By 1827 Roman Catholics had not been granted equality: though they formed the majority of the Irish population and accounted for almost one quarter of the people of the UK as a whole, the government continued to rely on 'an exclusive protestant ascendancy for the internal management of Ireland'.³¹

If Britain did not know what to do with Ireland, that might explain the 100 or more official inquiries, between 1800 and 1848, into aspects of Irish social and economic life. Charles Wye Williams was a frequent – and a cogent, well-informed, persuasive and polite – contributor to such inquiries. He offered a solution to some of the problems confronting policy-makers. It was always the same solution: steam navigation. His message was:

England is the manufacturer for Ireland; Ireland is the granary for England.³²

Removing obstacles to trade between England and Ireland would benefit both countries: higher produce prices for rural Ireland; Irish food for England; an outlet for English manufactures; fewer Irish paupers seeking work in England. And Williams's solution did not require argument about national or religious matters: people of all opinions could support it.

Entrepreneurship

One obstacle to trade was the poor condition of the Shannon navigation. Williams lobbied for improvements throughout the 1830s, but in the meantime he spent his own and his partners' money to make the Shannon work.

When he obtained the 1827 Butter Act, Williams was not operating on the Shannon. By 1829, however, he had bought out both John Grantham and the Shannon Navigation Company, merging them into his Inland Steam Navigation Company (later merged into the CoDSPCo).

In May 1829 the CoDSPCo steamer *Mona* began services on the Shannon estuary.³³ In September, Fawcett Preston of Liverpool launched a twin-hull iron paddle steamer, with an 18 hp engine and the paddles between the hulls:

... so that in working they will not be likely to injure the banks of the canal, which has always been the principal obstacle to steam boats being employed in canal navigation.³⁴

Williams commissioned it for the Shannon: he was Fawcett Preston's best customer until 1845.³⁵

In October Cheshire's first iron vessel was launched, an iron barge 60 feet long and 13 feet wide, built for Williams's Shannon fleet.³⁶ It was the builders' first iron vessel too: their first three iron vessels, and some of their earliest iron steamers, were for Williams.³⁷ The builders were Messrs Laird & Co.

The *Liverpool Mercury* reported that Williams's boats would run from Dublin along the Grand Canal to the River Shannon, thence downriver to Banagher, Portumna, Dromineer, Killaloe and Limerick and, on the estuary, to Kilrush and Tarbert – and back, 'bringing to our markets live stock in the most perfect and healthy state'.³⁸

Those 1829 investments were the first of many allocations of private capital to the cross-Ireland route. The fleet was expanded and renewed; Williams built harbours, piers and cargo-handling facilities, two hotels, roads, a dock, offices and a water-

powered mill. He invested in quarries and rebuilt at least three bridges to accommodate his steamers.

He set up the New Limerick Navigation Company to buy from the government the navigation linking Limerick to Killaloe. With help from the Limerick MP Thomas Spring Rice he obtained an act enabling the company to rebuild Baal's Bridge in Limerick: its three arches prevented boats from moving between the port and the canal harbour. Williams's single-arch bridge still stands, its plaques bearing his name and that of Thomas Spring Rice.

Operations

In April 1837, CoDSPCo advertisements showed that it had 16 steamers on the Irish Sea, and two more being built, as well as a cattle tender. It had two steamers, *Garryowen* and *Clarence*, on the Shannon estuary and five on the non-tidal Shannon: *Lansdowne*, *Wellesley*, *Dunally*, *Clanricarde* and *Avonmore*. The Marquess of Lansdowne was Lord President of the Council in the cabinet for most of the 1830s; he owned very large estates in Counties Kerry and Limerick and elsewhere. The Marquess of Clanricarde and Viscount Avonmore owned large estates around Lough Derg; Lord Dunally's estate did not touch the lake but he built a road to Killaloe. The Marquess of Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington's elder brother, was twice Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

The company also had a fleet of 52 'trade boats' (barges), 24 timber and 28 iron, 'averaging 50 tons burthen, for the carriage of Goods, Produce and Live

Stock, by the Grand and Royal Canals, and the River Shannon, between Dublin and the Interior'.³⁹

The Railway Commissioners' second report describes the CoDSPCo's Shannon operations in the mid-1830s.⁴⁰ The three-cornered route on the Shannon estuary served Limerick, Kilrush on the north side of the estuary and Tarbert on the south side. At other stations passengers and cargo were taken on board from small boats. In 1835 the iron *Garryowen* – probably the world's first steamer with watertight bulkheads – made 156 round trips. The wooden *Clarence* made 104 round trips to the village of Clare (now Clarecastle) at the head of the Fergus estuary which is linked to the Shannon.

Cargoes from Limerick to Dublin were carried on the company's trade boats, hauled by horse up the Limerick Navigation. The company also operated a passenger-carrying horse-drawn packet service between Limerick and Killaloe using the iron passage-boat *Nonsuch*: it was longer than the locks but its hinged ends were winched up when entering a lock.⁴¹

The *Lansdowne* ran a scheduled daily service from Killaloe, at the southern end of Lough Derg, to Portumna at the northern end. It carried passengers and towed trade boats, those from Limerick and others from around the lake. The *Clanricarde* collected trade boats from other lake stations and, if necessary, left them at Killaloe or Williamstown for the *Lansdowne* to pick up.

The *Lansdowne* was too big to pass Portumna so two smaller steamers, the *Avonmore* and the *Dunally*,



Fig. 1. A steamer towing trade boats past Parker's Point on Lough Derg [extracted from an 1839 drawing by the Admiralty surveyors: ADM344/341, by kind permission of The National Archives (UK)]

took the passengers and towed the trade boats upriver to the junction with the Grand Canal at Shannon Harbour. The *Wellesley* towed trade boats downriver from Athlone, at the southern end of Lough Ree, to Shannon Harbour.

The system minimised transhipment. The inland steamers generally did not carry cargo. The trade boats were built to pass through the locks on the Grand Canal. A boat might be towed by horse from Limerick to Killaloe, by the *Lansdowne* to



Fig. 2. A steamer off the CoDSPCo's harbour at Williamstown. The cutter in the foreground may be the Admiralty survey vessel [extracted from an 1839 drawing by the Admiralty surveyors: ADM344/343, by kind permission of The National Archives (UK)]

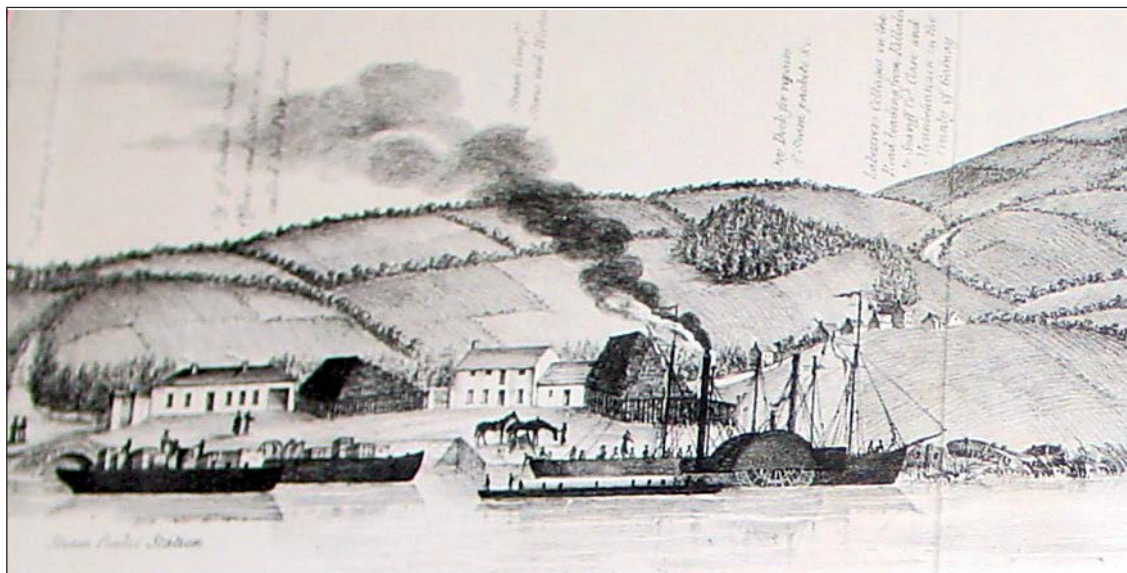


Fig. 3. The CoDSPCo station at the Pierhead, Killaloe [from William Stokes, *Pictorial Survey and Tourists' Guide to Lough Derg and the River Shannon* (London: Schulze, 1842)]

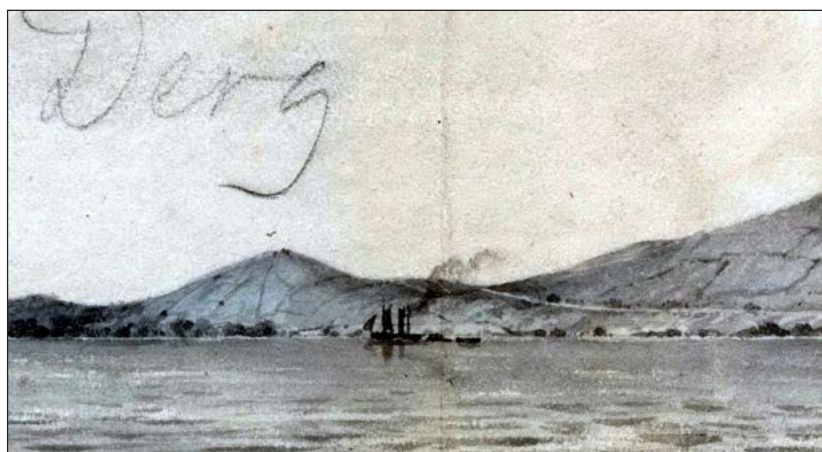


Fig. 4. Evidence that the steamers used sail as well as steam [extracted from an 1839 drawing by the Admiralty surveyors: ADM344/340, by kind permission of The National Archives (UK)]

Portumna, by the *Avonmore* or *Dunally* to Shannon Harbour and by horse to Dublin. Only at that point was it necessary to tranship the cargo on to the cross-channel steamers.⁴²

Volumes

Irish food supplies to Britain continued to increase, as shown in Table 1.

The trade in eggs had reached 60–90 million a year, to Britain as a whole, by the mid-1830s;⁴⁴ in 1850 Liverpool alone received 90 million eggs from Ireland.⁴⁵ The quantity of wheat and wheat flour sent to Britain, 41,616 quarters in 1790, averaged 375,781 quarters per year in the three years ending 5 January 1826 and 445,126 quarters per year in the three years ending 5 January 1840. For the same

periods, the quantities of oats and oatmeal rose from 285,015 quarters (1790) to 1,301,188 (1826) and 2,307,472 (1840).⁴⁶

Supplying oatmeal, wheat and flour, pigs, eggs and butter, Ireland could claim to be the source of many Britons' breakfasts.

On the Grand Canal the volume of and the income from both low-toll and high-toll goods grew between 1822 and 1837. Growth was greatest in the high-toll categories which included exportable goods.⁴⁷

The Shannon Commissions

The Limerick MP Thomas Spring Rice was the son-in-law of Lord Limerick and the political protégé of the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁴⁸ In March 1830 he secured the appointment of a select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland; it reported in July.⁴⁹

The committee noted that steam navigation between Ireland and Britain improved the condition of the poor, having political, moral, commercial and economical benefits. It also noted the benefits of steam on inland navigations:

Your Committee recommend the evidence of Mr Williams to the attention of The House; and they consider the improvement and extension of the internal navigation of Ireland to be a matter entitled to the earliest and most serious consideration.⁵⁰

Table1. Landings at Liverpool⁴³

Commodity	Unit	Year	No	Year	No	Year	No
Butter	Cwt	1824–5	154,708	1839	247,499	n/a	n/a
Cattle	Head	1829	53,158	1838	102,337	1848	151,364
Calves	Head	1829	43,671	1838	*	1848	1,322
Pigs	Head	1829	178,178	1839	284,833	n/a	n/a

* In 1838 included with cattle

In November 1830, Spring Rice became Financial Secretary to the Treasury in Lord Grey's administration. In 1831 Williams published the first edition of his *Observations* on the Shannon, addressed to Spring Rice. He argued that Ireland's main problem was that '[t]he population want employment', which could come only from agriculture, trade or commerce, all of which required 'intercourse and interchange'.⁵¹

Government received other representations too, notably from the Marquess of Downshire's Committee of Gentlemen, and in October the Chief Secretary for Ireland formed a three-man commission to report on the condition of the Shannon and on various suggested improvements. This first Shannon Commission reported in April 1833. Williams updated his *Observations*, complaining that the Irish Board of Works had spent only £8,910 (of a budget of £550,000) on loans for inland navigation:

This is not the way to cement the legislative Union, or disprove the necessity for its repeal.⁵²

In June 1834 the Chief Secretary set up a select committee 'to inquire into the navigation of the Shannon, and its tributary streams, and the best means of improving it'.⁵³ Chaired by the Earl of Kerry, son of the Marquess of Lansdowne, it heard an impressive performance by Williams and a weak one by Nicholas Fanning of the Grand Canal Company; it also heard from local and technical experts. It reported on 29 July 1834.⁵⁴

By then Lord Melbourne had succeeded Earl Grey as Prime Minister. He was dismissed by King William IV in November but returned to power in April 1835 after the Lichfield House Compact created an anti-Conservative bloc of Whigs, Radicals and Daniel O'Connell's Irish MPs (who wanted the Acts of Union repealed). One result was the formation of 'the first Irish executive for a century and a half that worked against protestant ascendancy': it provided patronage for Catholics and liberal Protestants in Ireland and an activist administration in Dublin committed to improving the Irish economy and government. On the other hand, the cabinet was marked by discord and the Whigs were heavily outnumbered in the Lords.⁵⁵

On 12 May 1835 the Earl of Kerry proposed in the Commons that his select committee's recommendations be implemented.⁵⁶ His father was Lord President of the Council, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked that the matter be left in his hands.

He thus took over the management of the Shannon improvement project.

In September 1835 the Chancellor's Shannon Navigation Act appointed a second Shannon Commission to draw up plans and estimates for improvement works.⁵⁷ The Chancellor said:

He would not ask the House to advance one single farthing, except for the expenses that must be incurred by reason of inquiry. The Bill did not pledge the House to the advance of any money; all it pledged the House to was, that in the event of there being a satisfactory plan and estimates, and in the absence of all unreasonable local demands, the money should be hereafter advanced.⁵⁸

The Commissioners submitted their final report on 28 February 1839.⁵⁹ Meanwhile Admiralty surveyors charted the Shannon lakes, produced Sailing Directions and made sketches showing steamers and other vessels. The Railway Commissioners' report led government to propose spending £2,500,000 building a public-sector railway in Ireland; the proposal was approved by the Commons⁶⁰ but Viscount Morpeth said later that he 'had involuntarily been compelled to abandon it'.⁶¹

The Chancellor's task

In 1830 Charles Wye Williams said that £15,000–£20,000 would solve most of the Shannon's problems.⁶² In 1834 he reckoned that £2,000 would put the river section between Athlone and Portumna (that is, between Lough Ree and Lough Derg) 'in an excellent state'.⁶³ However the engineer Thomas Rhodes, one of the first Shannon Commissioners, was more ambitious.

To make the entire river meet the standards set (but not met) for the stretch between Athlone and Portumna would cost £85,625 9s 3d. But Rhodes also wanted to enlarge the locks to take the largest steamers. Williams saw no point in that: the money was earned by the trade boats, which had to be small enough to fit the Grand Canal locks. Rhodes's large locks would bring the total cost to £153,163 2s 10d.⁶⁴ Even that, though, was a modest sum compared with the £584,805 17s 9½d suggested by the Shannon Commissioners in 1839.⁶⁵

It was the task of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to persuade parliament to meet the cost, but he had other business on hand. Exchequer Bills and public spending plagued him throughout his few remaining months in office – for even in May, when Lord

Melbourne's administration resumed office after the Bedchamber crisis,⁶⁶ there were rumours that the Chancellor would be retiring.⁶⁷

That prospect may have prompted him to push forward some favoured projects. In July he introduced a bill for the uniform fourpenny post. It passed into law on 17 August 1839⁶⁸, but the fourpenny post was soon succeeded by the uniform penny post.⁶⁹ He introduced a bill to extend certain privileges of the Bank of Ireland: that evoked a 'storm of protest' in Ireland and was fought, line by line, by Daniel O'Connell and others⁷⁰ until on 20 August, 'in a most lacrymose speech', the Chancellor was forced to abandon it.⁷¹

The passing of the 1839 Act

The Chancellor's Shannon Navigation Bill had its first reading on 17 June 1839;⁷² the Royal Assent was received two months later.⁷³ A new, third set of commissioners was appointed to improve the Shannon.

The bill was debated both in the press and in parliament. The tenor of the press debate ranged from the passionate but well-informed denunciation of jobbery in the *Spectator* to the demented ravings of the *Manchester Chronicle*, which saw the bill as a way of funding 'O'Connell and the friars'.⁷⁴

The important parliamentary debates were on the second reading and committee stages in each house.⁷⁵ In the Commons, the case for the bill was put by the Chancellor and by Daniel O'Connell, who had originally intended to oppose it on behalf of the Grand Canal Company.⁷⁶ O'Connell's argument was straight from Charles Wye Williams: improving the Shannon would make provisions cheap in Liverpool and Manchester, with cattle only 36 hours from the Manchester market.

The Chancellor advanced two arguments. First, the process had started and must be completed: reports had been written; the principle had been accepted by both Houses in the 1835 act; the government had acted responsibly by seeking costings and 'would be guilty of a fraud' if it now abandoned the scheme. Second, the 'interests not only of Ireland, but England were involved in this vote'. The scheme did not involve subsidy from Britain to Ireland: as part of the UK, Ireland would be paying its share of the cost.⁷⁷

The two principal proponents in the House of Lords were the Marquess of Lansdowne and Viscount

Duncannon, the cabinet member closest to O'Connell.⁷⁸ Only vague aspirations were advanced: Duncannon said that 'the most beneficial results might be confidently anticipated'. The Earl of Ripon, who had at least read the relevant reports, believed that 'the work would effect one of the greatest improvements that could be made in Ireland'.⁷⁹

There was no organised parliamentary opposition. Individual speakers advanced individual objections, with no coordination and no blocking tactics like O'Connell's against the Bank of Ireland Bill. There was little analysis of the bill itself, of the reports that led to it or of any economic or social case for the Shannon improvements. In particular, although five MPs regretted that the Chief Secretary for Ireland had abandoned the Irish Railways Bill, nobody asked whether railways might supersede waterways.

At Committee stage, Daniel O'Connell said that he had been accused of having 'a personal interest in the improvement of the navigation' but that his own estate was 40–50 miles away. The Chancellor said that his estate ran for 1½–2 miles along the Shannon estuary and that, like other estuary landowners, he could have improvements made (a pier or quay built) if he paid half the cost, £4,000 in his case.⁸⁰ That was, as he said, a small proportion of the entire budget. At that time, the Chancellor may not have known that the commissioners would hire his quarry at Corrigg, which supplied much of the stone they used on the estuary.

The Newry Conservative MP John Ellis mounted the fiercest assault on the bill, although he may have weakened his case by attacking on too many fronts. His most significant observation was made after he had lost the battle. The third reading in the Commons was on Friday 26 July 1839.⁸¹ On the following Monday Ellis said that he had 'distinctly [given] notice of his determination to take the sense of the House on the third reading'. He was therefore surprised to find that the bill 'had been smuggled through the House at two o'clock on Saturday morning'.⁸² Clearly the government was determined to get the bill through; the opposition was neither determined enough, nor well enough organised, to defeat it.

The Shannon job

The *Spectator* attacked the 'revival of the Shannon job'. Half the cost was to be paid by local authorities and land owners who would initially receive loans for those amounts: loans they were

unlikely to repay. The public would thus bear the entire cost of the government's patronage, with supporters rewarded by cash disbursements and by higher property values.⁸³

The first reading was put through 'about two o'clock on Tuesday morning':

It is edifying to observe Mr. Rice's vigour and activity when money is to be voted for the benefit of certain properties and the corruption of certain parties in Ireland; but how very shy he shows himself of the really important business of his department!⁸⁴

On 6 July, in a lengthy attack echoing Ellis's arguments, the *Spectator* added one point not made in parliament. The Shannon Commissioners were to take over the whole of the navigable inland Shannon. The Grand Canal Company, which leased the middle Shannon, was to receive only £5 in compensation while Williams's Limerick Navigation Company 'are to obtain twice the amount of their capital, with money to pay their debts'.⁸⁵

On 10 August the *Spectator* regretted that the Conservatives in the Lords had permitted the bill to pass; it wondered whether Frederick Shaw, MP for Dublin and Irish Conservative leader, might have changed the 'tactics of the Tory Peers'.⁸⁶ But not until 31 August, two weeks after the Royal Assent, did the *Spectator* notice the role of the Marquess of Lansdowne, who had gone on holiday with important unfinished parliamentary business:

He waited till the Shannon Bill was safe, and off he went. Very particular pains did his Lordship take to pilot this bill through Parliament – and *pour cause* ... The Marquis of Lansdowne is, we understand, the real father of the project; having in 1834 put forward his late son, the Earl of Kerry, to moot it to the House of Commons. A Committee was appointed, of which Lord Kerry was chairman; and the Report was drawn up at Lansdowne House. The result of this movement – cautiously conducted – is the Shannon grant of £600,000; no small portion of which will go to enrich the Lansdowne family.⁸⁷

The Chancellor's retirement

The Chancellor had by then retired, but the *Spectator* was not finished with him. On 28 September it highlighted the extent of his family's income from the state: his son's £1,000 a year as a Commissioner of Customs, his daughter's £500 a year as a Maid of Honour at Court and his own retirement package. That included, the *Spectator* believed, an increase in the value of his estate as a result of the Shannon

act, a peerage as Baron Monteagle of Brandon – and a sinecure as Comptroller of the Exchequer at £2,000 a year.

The sinecure excited particular anger because it had first been created for Sir John Newport in 1834 and he had to be compensated, with £1,000 a year, on making way for the Chancellor. Newport in turn had displaced Henry Ellis, Clerk of the Pells, and he too had been compensated. As the *Spectator* (citing *The Times*) saw it, a post formerly held by Ellis at £1,400 a year was now costing £4,400. The *Spectator* was not pleased, given the Chancellor's 'impudence and his jobs, and his official incapacity'.⁸⁸

But undoubtedly Baron Monteagle of Brandon had a finer ring to it than Thomas Spring Rice.

Envoi

The *Spectator's* unsupported assertions do not prove that the Shannon Navigation Act of 1839 was a 'job'. Nor do they show what sort of job it was: who was intended to benefit in what way. Apart from the hire of his quarry, the direct benefit to Lord Monteagle was small, whilst the Marquess of Lansdowne was unlikely to notice the indirect benefit to his vast wealth. Daniel O'Connell's estate did not benefit and any impact on CoDSPCo share values would have been small, given the scale of the company's activities.

But, leaving motivation aside, the *Spectator's* view seems to accord with the evidence: Spring Rice and Lansdowne, the 'representatives in the Cabinet of the Irish landed interest',⁸⁹ were undoubtedly the main proponents of the legislation. If they did not benefit by much directly, perhaps there were indirect benefits: in increased opportunities for patronage and in retaining the support of O'Connell, who in June had despaired of achieving anything for Ireland:

Nothing will be done for Ireland and, in fact, Ireland has nothing for it but the REPEAL.⁹⁰

Perhaps the Shannon Navigation was therefore a sop to Cerberus, but the mystery of motivation requires more research; political history is probably the best place to start.

The Shannon Commissioners appointed in 1839 signed their final report on 31 March 1850, making excuses for the failure of the project to produce the expected benefits. Charles Wye Williams had already begun to scale back operations and, within less than ten years, had abandoned the inland Shannon. But he had other matters to occupy his attention: running

the CoDSPCo and being a founder director of the P&O Line – and one of the founders of the Midland Great Western Railway. In 1851 its lines crossed the Shannon at Athlone and it became Ireland's greatest carrier of livestock, serving Dublin port. As the Irish grain trade declined and the livestock trade increased in importance in the late nineteenth century waterways simply could not compete with railways.

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Fig. 5. The Black Bridge built for horses by the Shannon Commissioners in 1842

Two railway rhymes

‘The Board’ by Tom Young

‘George Hudson’ by W E Gladstone

David Hodgkins

The two sets of rhymes included in this article date from the late 1840s and early 1850s. Neither has been published in full previously. Though both can be described as ‘railway rhymes’, they relate to completely different matters. The first contains descriptions of all the members of the original main board of the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) by Tom Young, one of the members, except for the last eighteen lines which were added by Hardman Earle, another member. The second set was written by Gladstone on the occasion of the fall of George Hudson and offers a more sympathetic view of the Railway King than might have been expected from such a quarter.¹

‘The Board’

Tom Young penned some verses entitled ‘The Board’ which shed light on the characters of the eighteen members of the central LNWR board soon after the formation of the amalgamated company in 1846.² It is not clear why Young did not himself complete his description of the board members, but four more verses were added in 1849 by H E (Hardman Earle) so all eighteen members of the original main board are mentioned.

Young is well known to biographers of Lord Melbourne, but political historians have not associated him with railways and railway historians seem not to have referred to him at all, despite the fact that a street in Wolverton was named after him. It was by chance that I found a letter from George Carr Glyn, then a director of the London & Birmingham Railway (LBR), which referred explicitly to Young’s position with Melbourne as well as to his role on that railway.³ This was reinforced by another piece of serendipity when I found ‘The Board’ in The National Archives.⁴

Young was an unusual character whose claim to fame rests on his position as private secretary to Lord Melbourne when he was Home Secretary and then Prime Minister. David Cecil described him as a

sharp vulgarian of dubious connections and breezy over-familiar manners.⁵ Melbourne first seems to have made use of him when he was Home Secretary to communicate with Radical leaders like Charles Napier and Francis Place who were asked to use their influence to control and moderate protest at the time of the great Reform Bill. Place regarded him as a cleverish sort of fellow with a vulgar air of frankness.⁶

Young was born in Nairn, the son of a small farmer. He spent some time in the Navy and made money trading in India. He was recommended to Melbourne by the duke of Devonshire, as a shrewd handy sort of man whom he had found as purser of his yacht more serviceable than men of better breeding. He accompanied the duke as secretary to his embassy to the coronation of Emperor Nicholas I in St Petersburg in 1826. Melbourne regarded him as ‘my weather gauge: through him I will be able to look down below; which is for me more important than all I can learn from the fine gentlemen clerks about me’.⁷

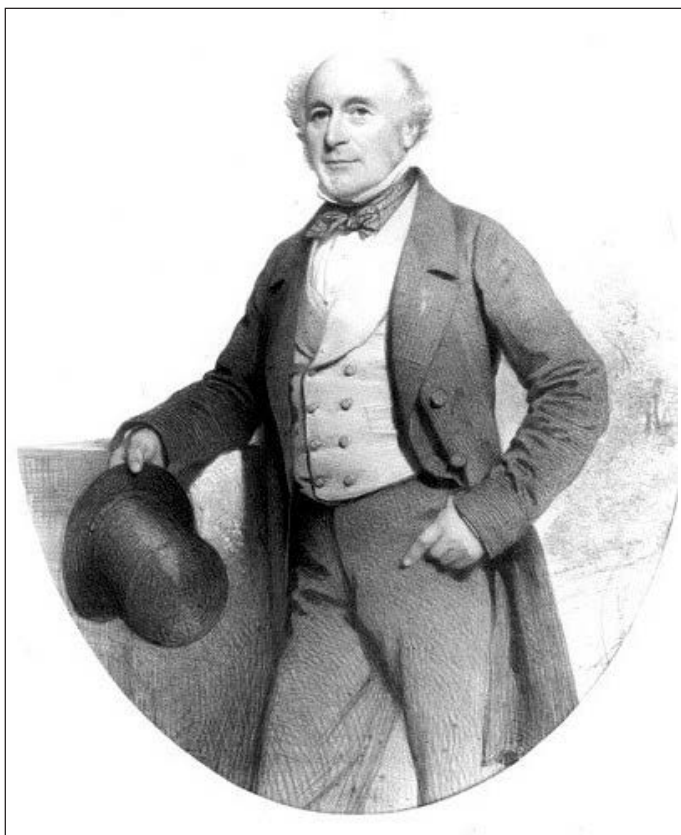
Known as ‘Ubiquity Young’ he was always running errands for Melbourne, making ways smooth, and ready with down to earth opinions and persuading John Hobhouse to join Grey’s ministry in 1832. He was also asked to influence the editors of newspapers and thought himself ‘entitled to praise and thanks for the services which I have been enabled to render the Whig Ministry through the press’.⁸ He was reputed to have persuaded Melbourne to accept the premiership in June 1834. ‘I think it’s a damned bore. I am in many minds as to what to do’, he said to Young. The latter answered ‘Why damn it all, such a position was never held by any Greek or Roman: and if it only lasts three months, it will be worthwhile to have been Prime Minister of England’.⁹ Denis le Marchant, a Whig MP, said he had never seen greater dexterity than Young showed in accommodating himself to his company. ‘You never quit him without having a better opinion of yourself than before.’ Although Young seems to have ceased to be Melbourne’s private secretary in 1834, in September 1838 Melbourne told Queen Victoria that Young was

ready to assist him whenever he sent to him.¹⁰ In 1835 when Melbourne resumed the premiership both he and Young ran into heavy criticism for their handling of Faraday's pension when they were determined not to honour Peel's offer in full.¹¹

Melbourne thought so highly of Young's services that he believed the Whigs should find 'something good and permanent for him'.¹² Young was appointed Receiver General of the Post Office by Melbourne in October 1836 at a salary of £800. The post was probably not a total sinecure, but Robert Willmot, Receiver General in the 1820s, went to the office only two or three times a week.¹³ In 1848 when Smith O'Brien was on trial for treason for organising an abortive insurrection in Ireland he published Young's letter of June 1832 to Colonel Charles Napier in which he stated that in the event of a fight Napier would have been invited to take command of the insurrection in Birmingham and set out possible ways in which that might develop. The existence of the letter had come to the notice of Smith O'Brien's defence as a justification for his treason. It was alleged that Napier had said he would publish it if the Whigs should dare to attempt to deprive of life a British subject whose only imputed crime was to follow the course of policy adopted by themselves in 1832, which Napier strongly denied. Young's letter was undoubtedly injudicious, if not foolish, and that this came out during the last three months of Melbourne's life led the former Prime Minister to disassociate himself from Young's conversations with revolutionaries nearly twenty years earlier.¹⁴ Melbourne's son, Lord Beauvale, told Greville that Young's letter was the immediate cause of his father's death, as it brought on an attack from which he never rallied but Greville added that his constitution was already irretrievably shattered.¹⁵

Young continued as Receiver General in the Post Office until 1854. He died in 1864 when he was worth £30,000. How far this was the result of his trading in India, his salary from his position in the Post Office or the results of railway investments, is not known.

Why and how Young became a director of the London & Birmingham Railway is not clear from the



***Hardman Earle (Crewe Official Photograph D19)
(by courtesy of the LNWR Society, reference CRPRT
D19)***

company records. Melbourne does not seem to have had any interest in the LBR which did not go near Bocket Hall, his estate in Hertfordshire, or Melbourne Hall in south Derbyshire, and he was not noted for his involvement in railways, though the Midland Counties Railway was advertised as being under his patronage when it was formed, possibly because he owned land at Selston and Greasley.¹⁶ Although Young was not one of the members of the board of the LBR on incorporation in 1833, he was appointed in May 1835 and according to Glyn seems to have been involved at an earlier stage before he became Melbourne's private secretary, though no reference to this has been found in the company records. Isaac Solly was chairman of the LBR until 1837 but George Carr Glyn was very active and influential in trying to ensure a cohesive board, particularly through building up relationships with Edward Cropper¹⁷ and other Liverpool directors. He not only wrote regularly to Cropper but even more frequently to Joseph Langton,

general manager of the Bank of Liverpool, primarily about banking matters (Glyn, Hallifax, Mills were the London agents for the Bank of Liverpool) but on occasions about railway business as Langton was in touch with many of the leading business men in Liverpool. With George Loch, Langton was appointed by the duke of Sutherland to the Liverpool & Manchester Railway board and to the Grand Junction following the amalgamation.

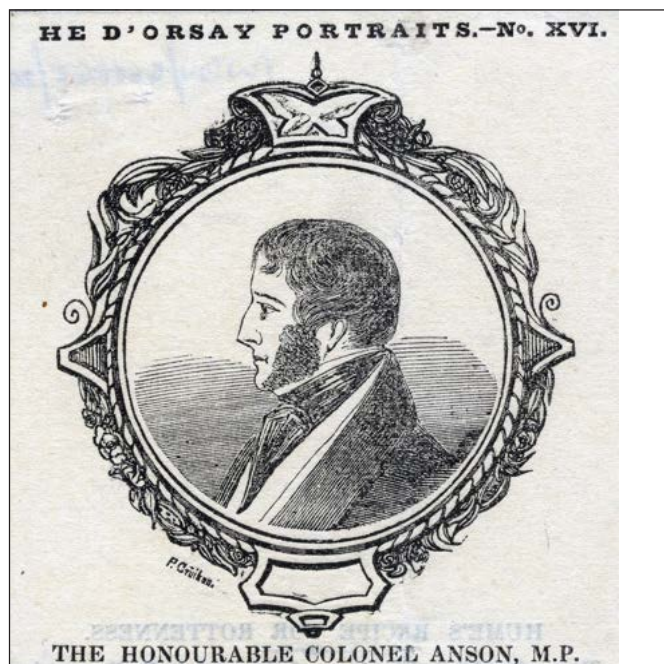
In late 1834 Glyn wanted to get Hardman Earle, a prominent Liverpool broker, onto the LBR board.¹⁸ He explained to Langton that

Mr Young, late private Secretary to Lord Melbourne, and Mr Gibson¹⁹ were formerly on the London Committee – the first resigned on his appointment as Secretary and the second was removed to make way for Mr Ed Cropper. If Mr Lefevre resigns directly, the probability is that they may be candidates and though I think we should carry Mr Earle in preference to another, yet as Gibson and Young have friends on the Committee it would be attended with a collision which is not agreeable. It might be better therefore if Lefevre's resignation was delayed until the period of the annual election, then I think we could introduce Earle without difficulty aided by our Liverpool friends.

It did not work out like that. Despite Glyn's preference for Earle, Young's name was put forward to the board by the London committee in place of John Shaw-Lefevre in May 1835 and he was appointed later that month. Lefevre, who had been appointed one of the new Poor Law Commissioners, was presumably too busy to continue on the board. The change was confirmed at the general meeting in August 1835, by which time Melbourne was Prime Minister again, but this did not affect Young's position on the board although he continued to work for Melbourne informally until at least 1837. Earle had to wait until February 1836 when he replaced Alderman Copeland who did not wish to continue. In early 1836 Laurence Heyworth was attempting to secure more seats on the board for Liverpool and to do so Prevost, Grenfell and Young as retiring members would have had to drop out. In a letter to Langton, Glyn referred to them as 'our three friends'.²⁰ The board in any case thought that Liverpool's interests were well served by the three non-resident directors, Cropper,

Rathbone and Garnett, and so objected to the removal of three 'very efficient directors' who were re-elected.²¹

Young remained a director of the LBR, playing an active, but not particularly prominent, part in the work of the board until the LNWR was formed. He held only ten £100 shares, the minimum to qualify as a director, though this was also the case with a number of his colleagues.²² With Glyn he was appointed in April 1837 to be a committee to oppose the Post Office Bill and perhaps he was seen as a useful conduit for communication with the Government.²³ Young sided with Boothby²⁴ in wanting two trains from London to connect with the Grand Junction line on Sundays and served on the short lived rota of directors established so that one of them could attend each day at Euston. He was also on the Finance Committee. In December 1845 he was nominated by the board as one of the LBR directors to serve on the new LNWR board.²⁵ He was quickly put on the committee to sort out new fares and charges for the coaching department which as the minute put it would 'require a nice adjustment to make them substantially conformable to the new law', i.e. the amalgamation act. All this meant he was well placed



George Anson (by courtesy of William Salt Library, Stafford)

to describe the key characteristics of his fellow board members.

However Young's career as a director came to an abrupt end. In 1850 Glyn put to the board a letter from the auditors from which it appears that Young had become disqualified as a director because he did not hold the minimum amount of stock necessary. Young had written a letter of explanation offering to obtain sufficient shares to restore his qualification, but after considering the matter the board decided 'that with every desire to regard favourably the request of Mr Young they would not be justified in ordering registration of the transfer prior to the opening of the books'.²⁶ Young was not present when this decision was taken, although he had been attending regularly. The board's refusal to agree to Young's request suggests that there might well have been other reasons for his departure, and perhaps his personality if not his policies had made him enemies on the board. The reason for his departure was not mentioned to the general meeting which met later that month. The report simply announced his retirement. He did however continue as a director of the Buckinghamshire Railway until his death.

All the LNWR board members whom Young and Earle described had been on the boards of the constituent companies. Glyn, Edward Cropper and Ledsam were on the LBR board from the start. The others from the LBR were Moorsom, one of the first secretaries of the LBR, Thomas Smith, George Anson, John Lewis Prevost and Young himself. Lawrence, Grant, Earle, Hornby, Mozley and Rotheram were from the Grand Junction Railway, together with George Loch, continued as the representative of the duke of Sutherland on the LNWR. The three from the Manchester & Birmingham Railway all became prominent on the LNWR board – Joshua Brown Westhead, Robert Benson Jnr and Richard Barrow.

'The Board, a poem dedicated without permission to the Shareholders of the L&NW Rly by their Obedient Humble Servant, The Author'

First Glyn, the Chairman, quick of speech,
On any given text can preach,
Lawrence, the vice, next in the van,
'A fine Old English Gentleman'.²⁷

Tom Smith, who in himself comprises,
All that good and great and wise is,
And though strange fancies oft has uttered,
He knows which side his bread is buttered.²⁸

Ledsam, though silent as a door,
Like the Welshman's parrot thinks the more.²⁹
Then there's the wavering Prevost
Who loves to vote both yes and no.

Anson who makes, not writes, a book,
And Loch who represents the Duke
Both ornamental in their way,
But less disposed to work than play.³⁰

Barrow from Staveley (not Odillon),³¹
And Mozley who glories in a million³²
Whose eloquence is nothing but
A Steam Engine to crack a nut.

Then there's Tom Young, who's called also
For brevity TY HO,
George Grant, the chief of all the Grants;
With pockets filled he nothing wants
But for his native mountain pants.³³

Tom Young Home Office³⁴

There's Cropper too, who having made
His fortune has retired from Trade,
And Benson, who with honest zeal
(Though somewhat fierce) the public weal
Pursues, or sits he for the nonce
In ten Committees all at once.³⁵

Rotheram, a pecker in Finance,
Who never throws away a chance.³⁶
There's Moorsom, Captain in the Navy,³⁷
And Hornby, a dealer in Polldavey;
(A sort of canvas this, thats sent em
From their factory at Bentham.)³⁸

And then there's Westhead, Knaresborough's pride,
A new M.P.,³⁹ and there's beside
One Earle, a draft from the Grand Junction,
A hardman he without compunction,
Of whom least said is soonest mended,
And now my list and poem is ended.

H. E. 1849

‘The Fall of Hudson’

It is perhaps surprising that the verses penned by Gladstone on the occasion of the fall of Hudson were not more critical. Gladstone, when he was President of the Board of Trade with responsibility for railways, became exasperated by the attitude of leaders of the railways to the proposals he put forward in committee in 1844 and which were in a diluted form incorporated in the Bill presented to Parliament in June of that year. Hudson gave evidence to the committee and was the most outspoken witness against third class travel and cheap fares. He was in favour of high fares and did not think that profits could be made from third class passengers which his York and North Midland Railway did not carry. He even argued that third class passengers did not like second class carriages and preferred theirs completely open. Low fares were a dangerous experiment for railways to try and would not substantially increase their revenue. The idea that traffic would double if fares were halved was preposterous.

Competition was the other main ground traversed by the committee where Gladstone wanted powers for the state to intervene after fifteen years if high dividends had been paid. Hudson wanted more immediate action. He thought Parliament should refuse to sanction lines whose primary object was to compete with an existing line. If he were given a protection against competition he would seriously consider whether it would not be advisable for the companies to agree to a fair consideration of their case after twenty years. His difficulty was that he could not see that Parliament could give a guarantee that any future Parliament would not authorise a competing line. He did not hide his self-interest, denouncing the proposed York and Cambridge line as unnecessary. Lincoln had no need of more direct communication with London than that provided via Nottingham and the Midland to Rugby and Euston: if an existing line was doing its job properly and there was not sufficient local traffic to support the new line, the competing line ought to be stopped.

When Gladstone put forward his Bill, Hudson led the opposition with a vehemence which belied the extent to which his fellow railwaymen had been prepared to go along with the proposals and the extent to which they had been consulted. He organised and presided over a meeting of seventeen railway companies on 26 June which drew up a memorial to Peel, the Prime Minister, attacking ‘a most inexpedient change in the system under which

railways have been hitherto promoted and maintained’ and the *ex parte* nature of the enquiry which did not give the railways an opportunity to respond.⁴⁰

Before the bill was introduced 29 companies sent representatives, with Hudson in the lead, to an acrimonious meeting on 1 July with Peel and Gladstone, which was preceded and followed by much publicity. Initially this had the effect of strengthening Gladstone’s resolve. ‘My temper was moved by the proceedings of the railway people today: a kind of sediment of anger remained long after, though the opportunity was good for discipline.’⁴¹ Two days later he wrote to John Moss, chairman of the Grand Junction: ‘More blind and unreasonable conduct I have never yet known. In Parliament I have been viewed with suspicion as being interested in railways,’⁴² and disposed to sacrifice the public to the companies. But from me those who are leading this movement will not obtain one jot or tittle of concession.’ He admitted the strength of the railway companies in the House of Commons and the benefits they had conferred on the country, but it was time there should be a trial of strength, which he felt he had made every effort to avoid.

Hudson then wrote an open letter to Gladstone, arguing that the railways had not misunderstood or misrepresented the Bill. The enquiry had been one-sided being dominated by Samuel Laing of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade. They objected particularly to the clause which in their view gave the government absolute power to purchase compulsorily any new railway after fifteen years. The fact that the railways had remained passive until the publication of the Bill should not be taken as acquiescence in the government’s intentions. They did not want to take steps prematurely or disrespectful to the Government. On second reading the Government won by 188 votes to 101, which Gladstone regarded as ‘a satisfactory division’.

However the Prime Minister, Peel, although making it clear that he still thought it right to take security for the public interest against exaction and abuse, was much more conciliatory to the railways and his attitude seems to have influenced heavily Gladstone’s next steps. He offered to meet Hudson when he ‘settled, as he hoped, the railway enactment in a long conference’.⁴³ The result of this private meeting was a much more limited bill. The period was increased from 15 to 21 years. More importantly it also omitted the precise, but complicated, purchase formula and

other provisions which had taken many clauses to set out but which would now have to be settled in the future.

These rather antagonistic encounters in 1844 do not seem to have prevented Gladstone from taking a rather more detached view of Hudson than did many of his contemporaries. He was prepared to see his accomplishments as well as his faults. He, like other politicians, not only met Hudson in the House of Commons but also socially. His diary for 9 July 1846 records 'Mrs Hudson's in the evening'.⁴⁴ He declared Hudson to have been 'no mere speculator, but a projector of great discernment, courage and rich enterprise'.⁴⁵

Gladstone's verses are undated. The British Library catalogue attributes them to *circa* 1854, but they are associated with papers containing other verses of Gladstone's of different dates. His diary entry for 2 November 1864 explicitly states that 'I finished my old song about Hudson's fall', but the diaries contain no clue as to when he started it. 1854 remains a possibility when Hudson was only protected from bankruptcy by his parliamentary immunity, but so is 1849 when his practices on the York & North Midland, Great Eastern, and Midland Railways were the subject of enquiries and when Lord Edward Stanley refused to admit him to his house to a meeting of Protectionist MPs of which Stanley was the leader.⁴⁶

'The fall of Hudson, A song (verses by WEG)'⁴⁷

What's the view upon 'Change, What's the talk of the town?

'Tis that Hudson was up, and that Hudson is down.

2. He bamboozled the mob, he astonished the quality,
He led both through the quagmire of gross immorality.

3. But still, there's a maxim, both famous and true;
Give the devil, nay even Hudson, his due.

4. There are things he has done that I would he had not;
There are things he left undone, I imagined he forgot;

5. Yet my muse which was dumb at his fortune's high pitch,
May half take up his cause, now he lies in the ditch.*

6. He began without sixpence, was poor at his birth:
The wealth he ill used, he had much by his worth.

7. When he grew to be great, he forgot not the small:
He fell by temptation: may none of us fall.

8. How many thousands, that counted their gains,
Were miniature Hudsons excepting the brains.

9. Who I ask were the shareholders, greedy of gold,
That bought when he bought, and that sold when he sold?

10. What were the meetings, assemblies of geese,
That brought him to buy, or that begged him to leave?

11. They who lost by the game, every man of them squeaks;
But the winners, how is it that none of them speaks.

12. Nay both loser and winner found shame in heineries.
And each piously turns up the whites of his eyes.

13. The world with its vices is cruel I wis,
But the world in its virtue, God save us from this.

*[Gladstone's note]

Lui folgorante in soglio
Vide il mio genio e tacque;

Sorge or commosso al subito
Sparir di tanto raggio.

Il Cinque Maggio

These lines are taken from the third and fourth verses of Alessandro Manzoni's (1785–1873) *Il Cinque Maggio* written in 1821 to commemorate the death of Napoleon. Manzoni left open the question of Napoleon's future fame but paid homage to his mighty creativity. The lines in Gladstone's note can be translated as: 'He was dazzling on the throne, he saw my character and was silent; He rises and now moves suddenly and will vanish in so much glory'.

Notes and references

1. A few lines of Gladstone's verses were published in Philip Magnus, *Gladstone, a Biography* (John Murray, 1954), p. 117, and in Brian Bailey, *George Hudson: the rise and fall of the Railway King* (Alan Sutton, 1995), pp. 153–4.
2. The eighteen were named in the Act, 9 & 10 Vic cap. CCIV, section XLIII. In view of the reference to Odillon (see note 31 below) Young's verses probably date from 1848 or 1849. The addition by Hardman Earle bears the date 1849.

3. Barclays Archives, LP91, 18 December 1834, Glyn to Joseph Langton
4. The National Archives (TNA), RAIL 1057/3335, Lord Wolverton, 'biographical material probably collected at time of his death', mostly obituaries. 'The Board' is in typescript and seems to have been typed in the 1920s, judging by the other contents of the file.
5. David Cecil, *Lord M, or the Later Life of Lord Melbourne* (Constable, 1954), p. 45
6. Diary of Francis Place, 26 Aug. 1832, quoted in L G Mitchell, *Lord Melbourne, 1779–1848* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 128. Mitchell's book is the main source for details of Young's involvement with Melbourne.
7. *Morning Post*, 17 October 1864; Mitchell (1997), p. 259; Cecil (1954), p. 45
8. Mitchell (1997), p. 259
9. Alleged in *The Greville Memoirs 1814-1860*, ed. Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford (Macmillan, 1938), vol. 3, p. 76; Cecil (1954), p. 111
10. Queen Victoria's Journals 2 September 1838, quoted in Mitchell (1997), p. 260
11. *Morning Post*, 16 and 30 November, 2 and 9 December 1835; *Fraser's Magazine*, December 1835
12. Melbourne to Brougham, 23 August 1834, quoted in Mitchell (1997), p. 259
13. He was also Lord Liverpool's private secretary. C R Perry, *The Victorian Post Office: the growth of a bureaucracy* (Royal Historical Society, 1992), p. 14; British Postal Museum and Archive, POST 67/5, Grant of Royal Letters Patent, 29 October 1836
14. Mitchell (1997), p. 129, and *The Times*, 9 and 16 October 1848
15. Greville (1938), vol. 6, p. 140
16. With Lord Denbigh (1833 prospectus) and also Lord Scarsdale, (1834). British Library (BL), Maps, 18 C 1; *The Nottingham & Derby Railway Companion 1839*, with a new introduction by J B Radford (Derbyshire Record Society, 1979), p. ii
17. Edward Cropper, son of James Cropper of Cropper Benson, Liverpool merchants, director of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway (LMR) and brother of John, director of the Grand Junction Railway (GJR). An original member of the LBR board.
18. Earle who was already a director of both the LMR and GJR was eventually appointed in March 1836 in place of Alderman Copeland, one of the London directors, but in turn was replaced by Edward Wilson, a Liverpool merchant in February 1838. Earle was a Liverpool broker, the managing partner in Salisbury, Turner and Earle, and also a partner in the seed crushers, Earles and Carter. He married Joseph Langton's sister, Mary. Director of the LNWR until 1877. Baronetcy 1869 for services to the Liberal Party.
19. Barclays Archives, LP 91. James Gibson was appointed to the London Board of Management in 1830. He was not appointed a director on incorporation in 1833.
20. Barclays Archives, LP138, 20 February 1836. John Lewis Prevost was a London merchant, of Morris, Prevost & Co. He was agent and consul general for Switzerland. His business was in the City but he lived in Suffolk Place off the Haymarket. He served on the LBR board from its inception and then on the LNWR. Like several other members of the London board he was a member of the Political Economy Club. Pascoe St Leger Grenfell was Glyn's brother-in-law; he managed the Grenfell family's copper smelting business in Swansea.
21. TNA, RAIL 384/2 22 February 1836
22. TNA, RAIL 384/149, list of directors at 21 August 1834, with ms notes of shareholdings dated 13 June 1835
23. TNA, RAIL 384/3, 11 April 1838
24. A Liverpool director of the LBR
25. TNA, RAIL 384/45, 2 March 1838 and 18 October 1837; RAIL 384/6, 12 December 1845
26. TNA, RAIL 410/21, 14 February 1850
27. Glyn, chairman of the LBR since 1837 was elected chairman of the newly amalgamated LNWR. He was the leading partner in Glyn, Hallifax, Mills, known as the Railway Bank from the volume of railway business it conducted and the number of railway companies which banked with it.

Charles Lawrence, of Wavertree Hall, where he entertained Peel on his visit to Liverpool in 1847, a West India merchant and mayor of Liverpool in 1825, who was the first chairman of the LMR. He had been deputy chairman of the GJR and chairman since John Moss's resignation in August 1845.
28. Smith, a director of the LBR. Deputy chairman of the LNWR 1851–3 and on the board until 1861. Heavily involved in the talks about amalgamation with the Great Western and London & South Western Railways in 1848 and with the Midland in 1852. Briefly a director of the LSWR.
29. Joseph Frederick Ledsam, a Birmingham director of the LBR, where he served a deputy chairman and later a leading member of the LNWR board until 1860. A member of a prominent Birmingham manufacturing company, director of the Birmingham Banking Co and the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Co. Died 1861.

30. Anson was first an MP in 1819 and was now a member for South Staffordshire. He had become a director of the LBR shortly before amalgamation. His military career in this period had largely consisted of political appointments in the Ordnance at home. He had been a well-known man about town during the Regency and won the Derby in 1842 with *Attila* and the Oaks in 1844 with *The Princess*. Tom Young's comments, 'he makes, not writes a book' and 'less disposed to work than play', hardly suggest that he was regarded as a future chairman though in 1852 he succeeded Glyn when Lord Panmure (Fox-Maule) turned down the chairmanship, but resigned the following year to resume his military career. He may have been put forward as a figurehead to avoid more controversial and more powerful figures, although Glyn had wanted a strong personality to control the board.
31. Richard Barrow retired as a London overseas merchant in 1840 and bought the Staveley Coal and Iron Co in which his elder brother was involved. He was a director of the Manchester & Birmingham Railway (MBR) and then of the LNWR until 1861.

'Not Odillon' is a reference to Odilon Barrot, who from December 1848 to October 1849 acted as Prime Minister of France in the Second Republic under Louis Napoleon's presidency.
32. Lewin Mozley, a Liverpool banker in Barned & Co. GJR director.
33. George Grant, a Liverpool merchant, who had been John Gladstone's partner since 1812 and a director of the GJR despite Gladstone regarding his directorship as an unwarranted breach of the articles of partnership which prohibited him from engaging in other business without his consent.
34. It is not entirely clear why Young describes himself as HO in the verse and Home Office at the end, but Paul Reynolds has pointed out General Napier in his cross examination in court in 1848 produced a letter signed with the initials TY HO and was asked what they meant (*The Times*, 7 October 1848). Young may have been teased about this by members of the board and so included it in the verse, but it is odd that he put Home Office as his address since in 1848–9 he was still Receiver General at the Post Office. Possibly this was misread by whoever typed the verses.
35. Robert Benson junior left Liverpool and set up as a textile manufacturer in Manchester before becoming a merchant banker in London. Married Moorsom's daughter. Director of the MBR. Deputy chairman LNWR 1853–8.
36. William Rotheram, another Liverpool merchant, had been on the first board of the LMR and on the GJR board.
37. Constantine Richard Moorsom served at sea until 1827, promoted vice-admiral 1857. Joint secretary LBR 1833, director 1839. Director LNWR, deputy chairman 1858–61, chairman 1861–2.
38. Joseph Hornby, a Liverpool merchant, also involved in insurance and slate quarrying, had been on the board of the GJR since it was authorised.
39. Joshua Brown-Westwood, Manchester textile manufacturer, director of the MBR and of the LNWR until 1850. Elected Liberal MP for Knaresborough 1847. Returned to LNWR board 1861 and deputy chairman 1861–72.
40. PD, 76, 8 July, 504; PP, 1844, XLI, ('Copies of any Memorial to Sir Robert Peel by certain directors and others connected with Railway Companies, against the Railway Bill now before this House and of any correspondence thereupon between the Board of Trade and the aforesaid Memorialists')
41. *The Gladstone Diaries*, ed. M R D Foot and H C G Matthew, vol. 3 (Clarendon Press, 1974), 3 July 1844; BL Add MS 44527, Gladstone to John Moss, 5 July 1844
42. Gladstone's father, John, had substantial holdings in the GJR and his brother was a director of that line. He had told Moss earlier that it might be as well that he should not be the medium of communication on the GJR's interest in the Chester and Holyhead Railway. BL Add MS 44527, Gladstone to Moss, 23 November 1843
43. *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. 3 (1974), 17 July 1844
44. *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. 3 (1974), 9 July 1846
45. Quoted without source in Richard S Lambert, *The Railway King 1800–1871: a study of George Hudson and the business morals of his times* (Allen & Unwin, 1934), p. 16
46. *The Gladstone Diaries*, ed. H C G Matthew, vol. 6 (Clarendon Press, 1978); A J Arnold and S McCartney, *George Hudson, the Rise and Fall of the Railway King* (Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 177
47. BL Add MS 44744, f 183

The Oldham family of railway contractors

Brian Lewis

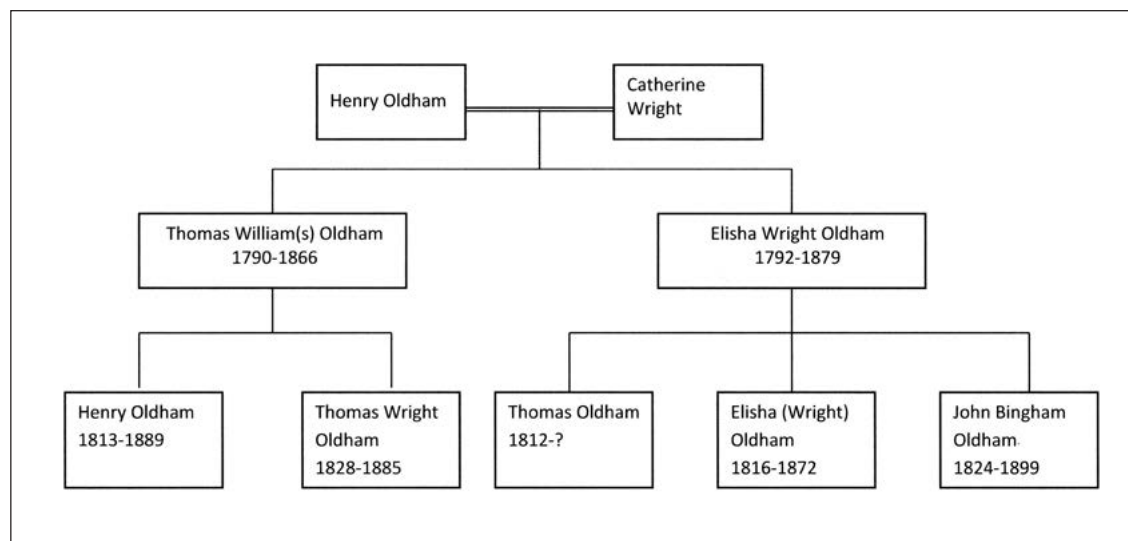
Many railway historians will have noticed passing references to the name Oldham in railway literature. MacDermot, in his history of the Great Western Railway (GWR), mentions 'Mr Oldham'; Grinling's history of the Great Northern Railway refers to Messrs Oldham; *The Cirencester Branch* from Oakwood Press gives 'Elisha Oldham & Sons'; David Clifford in his book on the London to Bristol contracts of the GWR lists 'T W Oldham' and 'Messrs Oldham & Son', Wrottesley's *The Great Northern Railway*, volume 1, 'Oldham'; and The National Archives catalogue offers 'Messrs Oldham', 'Elisha & Thomas Oldham', 'Thomas William Oldham' and 'Henry Oldham'.¹

How many members of this family were connected with railway construction? Research has shown that there were no less than seven. With the aid of census returns, other family history research tools and railway company records it turns out that there were originally two brothers, Thomas Williams Oldham and Elisha Wright Oldham who came from Warwickshire farming stock, being born in 1790 and 1792 respectively. Thomas had two sons in the railway contracting business, Henry Oldham (born 1813) and

Thomas Wright Oldham (born 1828), and Elisha three, Thomas Oldham (born c1812), Elisha Wright Oldham (born 1816) and John Bingham Oldham (born 1824).²

Thomas William(s) Oldham

His sole railway work seems to have been for the GWR on contract 7L from Maidenhead bridge to Ruscombe (1837/8). It is not clear what prompted him to take an interest in railway construction although there is some evidence that he may have been involved in water contracting in Leamington in the 1830s.³ Members of the family also tendered for several other contracts on the GWR line from London to Bristol. Henry Oldham was one such bidder but surviving records do not make it clear which other family members were involved. After this Thomas appears to have retired from contracting as census records from 1841 until his death in 1866 give his occupation as 'gentleman', although in 1850 he was described on his son's marriage certificate as a builder. Presumably, apart from any profit on the GWR contract, as the eldest son he inherited his father's estate.



Selected members of the Oldham family

Henry Oldham

Thomas's eldest son Henry obtained several contracts, being awarded contract 12B (Bathampton) on the GWR main line⁴ which appears to have been the subject of a dispute (quite a hallmark of the Oldham family, as will be seen). A few years later Henry Oldham obtained the Evesham No 1 and No 2 contracts and the Worcester No 2 contract for the Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton Railway (OWWR) in the early 1850s. However, the OWWR ran into severe financial difficulties and was forced to stop all construction work and give notice of abandonment to all contractors. This led to a number of disputes as the company was unable to pay for work already done. Henry Oldham's loss of the Evesham contract and also his losses on plant purchased and work done on the Honeybourne to Stratford on Avon branch (part of the Evesham No 2 contract and authorised by an Act of 1845 but not completed until 1859) led to his claim for compensation which went to arbitration by I K Brunel, the OWWR's engineer.

Counsel's brief to the OWWR⁵ has luckily survived and the following extended extract explains the difficult situation in which Henry Oldham found himself:

The position of the contractor at that time was a most dangerous one – he had been working upon a mere tender. No contract under seal had been entered into and it was extremely doubtful if there was any legal obligation on the Company either to pay him for the work he had done or to allow him to finish the remainder. Treating it as if the contract deed were in existence he was bound to go on with the contract if required to do so by the company, even though the regular payments were not made to him (such a stipulation being usual in all Mr Brunel's contracts) and he would have been left with only his remedy by action against the Company for whatever monies might become due to him. On the other hand, treating it as if the contract deed were not in existence the understanding between him and the Company could scarcely be dignified by the name of contract. Even assuming the company to have been liable for the work which was done, it is clear he had no right to insist upon doing the remainder. He had performed a large amount of work upon which there was a sum of some £25,000 due to him and having regard to this fact he could neither safely relinquish the work nor proceed with it, and all his available means were exhausted. His own personable [*sic*] services were confined to this one unproductive contract and it was of the greatest importance to him to make some arrangements to extricate him

from all these difficulties. The most urgent applications were made by him to the directors for a settlement. He was constantly urging upon them that his creditors were pressing him and his plant was deteriorating. On one occasion Mr Oldham's father attended the board meeting at Worcester and besought the directors to make some arrangement with his son, otherwise the whole family would be ruined. He said that he was at a heavy cost of interest on borrowed money raised to assist his son Henry (the present contractor). That he had mortgaged the whole of his property which was intended for division among his children and unless the company came quickly to the rescue all this sacrifice and risk on his part would be insufficient to save him from ruin.

The OWWR had debts far in excess of funds and had already paid the contractors in debentures for work done. These were standing at a discount of 35 per cent to 40 per cent making it impossible for the OWWR to raise further monies. The engineering staff had mostly been discharged and the incomplete works were falling into a ruinous state. The other contractors had settled for small amounts of compensation and in one case none at all.⁶ Peto & Betts, one of the largest firms of contractors, had stepped in with an offer to complete the works on condition they were given the contract for whole line.⁷ This intervention, which included financing the operation against future profits, caused the debentures to rise in value. Brunel therefore decided that Henry Oldham was deriving financial benefit from the increased value of the debenture stock he held and awarded a reduced sum of £14,785 which was accepted by Oldham. However, Brunel also ruled that some of the rails supplied by the OWWR for these contracts had not been returned and others had deteriorated whilst in the contractor's hands. Henry Oldham was therefore required to pay compensation of £1,202 3s 7½d.⁸ In view of the lack of a formal contract it must be said that Henry Oldham came out of the dispute quite well. Nevertheless he was still endeavouring to obtain repayment of £1,000 which he had paid to the OWWR in 1852 in respect of his contracts as late as 1858.⁹

Later in life Henry is variously described as a proprietor of a house, a stone merchant and latterly a farmer.

Thomas Wright Oldham

The career of Thomas Williams Oldham's other son is shrouded in mystery. He married his first wife in Frankton near Rugby in 1850 but does not appear in

any census returns until 1871 when he was living in Dawlish with his second wife (his first wife had died in 1870 and he re-married shortly afterwards) and was described as a railway contractor. He died in Leamington in 1885. It may well be that he was working on railway or other contracts abroad prior to 1871.

Elisha Wright Oldham

Elisha was the most involved in railway work and undertook a number of contracts with his three sons, the first being GWR contract 5S from Swindon westwards to the parish of Lydiard Tregoz awarded to Messrs E Oldham & Son. This would have been Thomas Oldham, born c1812, as the other two sons were too young at the time.

In 1839/40 Elisha and his sons, Thomas Oldham and Elisha Wright Oldham, obtained three contracts for the building of the Cheltenham & Great Western Union Railway (C&GWUR) from Swindon to Kemble and the branch to Cirencester. They purchased several locomotives for use on these contracts and in July 1839 obtained a locomotive named *Excavator*. The *Railway Times*¹⁰ reported that it had arrived in Cheltenham, and being the first locomotive to be seen in that town, it caused something of a stir as it was hauled through the streets to the site of the railway by twelve horses. This may have been the locomotive Oldham ordered from Jones, Turner & Evans in March 1839 named *Vista*.¹¹ There is some confusion as to whether this locomotive was called *Vista* or *Vesta* as there is an entry in the C&GWUR minutes in October 1841 stating that 'Mr Brunel be requested to reconsider his valuation of the *Vesta* engine which broke down when first tried and despite repairs of upwards of £470 has been perfectly useless'.¹² It is just possible that there were two similarly named locomotives but no record of purchase a further locomotive has been found, nor for the one named *Excavator*.

On 26 September 1839 the *Cheltenham Journal* reported that while working an engine, Elisha Oldham junior (son of Elisha Wright Oldham) slipped and crushed his foot between engine and tender. This must have been *Vista*. In May 1840 the same newspaper reported that E Oldham & Son had ordered a further locomotive from Turner & Evans named *Volcano*.¹³ This latter could be the locomotive referred to in the local press on 29 June 1840 when it passed through Cheltenham by road to Cirencester for use on the C&GWUR. In the same month the

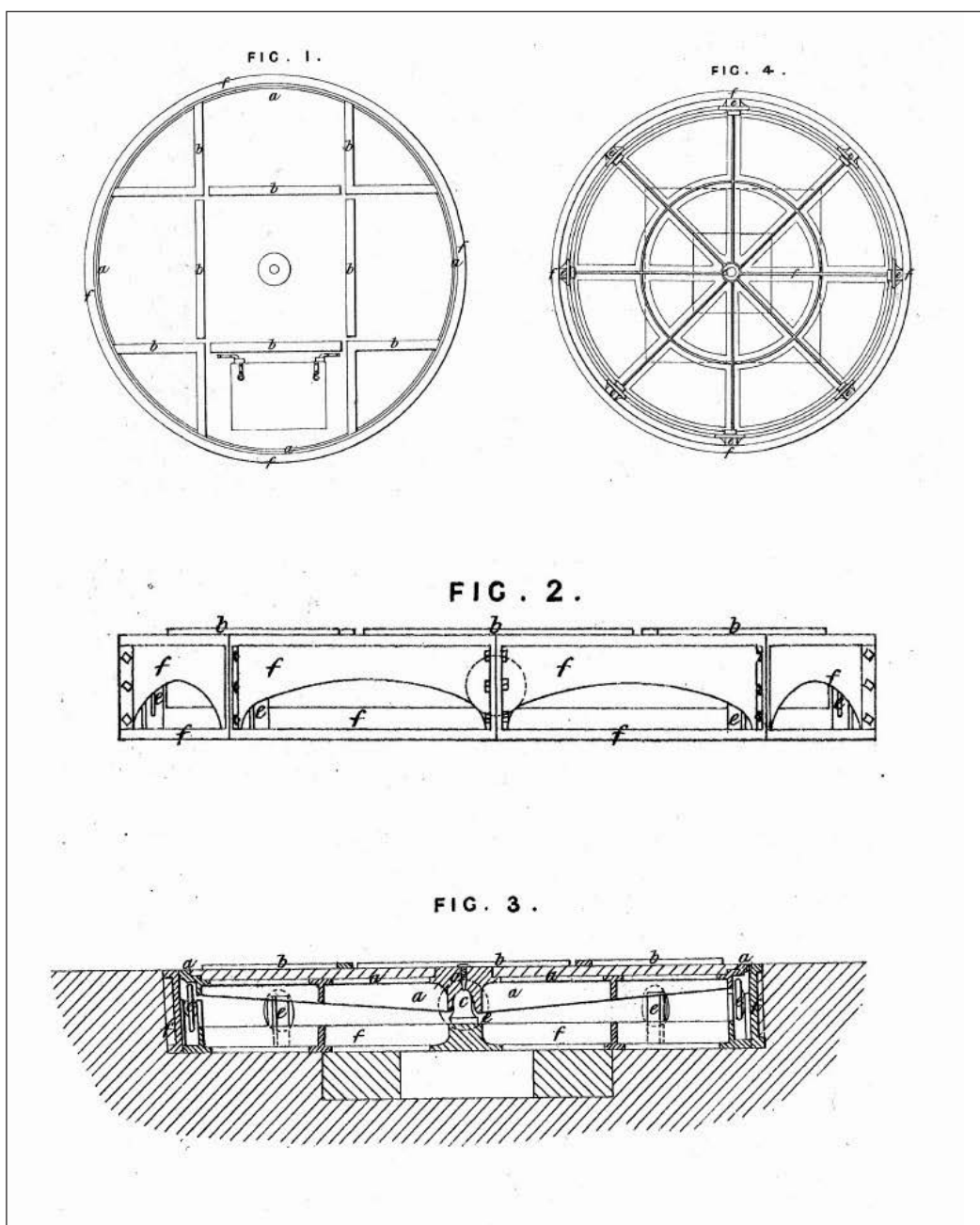
Cheltenham Journal reported that *Vista* was also involved in an accident when two quarrymen were fatally injured working on the Cirencester No 2 Contract.¹⁴

In August 1841 Elisha Oldham was granted a patent (No 8837 of 5 August) for a turntable. The main features were eight 'anti-friction' rollers fixed to the edge of the stationary cast-iron framing in the turntable pit, rather than the customary method of fixing them to the underside of the turntable platform to run on a rail in the pit. Oldham considered this would cause less friction and be less liable to jamming if anything fell into the pit. He also intended that the centre pivot should be made strong enough to carry the whole weight put upon it if equally distributed. It is not known if any railway company made use of this invention.

Also in August 1841 the Bristol & Gloucester Railway (B&GR) awarded three contracts (4, 8 and 10) to Messrs Oldham & Son amounting to £34,000: these included Wickwar Tunnel No 1 and the cutting south of Tunnel No 2.¹⁵ By December of that year there was a dispute between the Oldhams and the company regarding deductions and in the following April a further dispute over removal of plant from the works by Oldham's representative.¹⁶ A notice was served on them requiring them to complete their contracts. In the meantime, however, Elisha and Thomas Oldham had been declared bankrupt and although it is not completely clear which of their debts was involved, the financial troubles of the C&GWUR no doubt contributed to the Oldhams' difficulties. The company minutes show that payments for work done were often delayed in the latter part of 1841.

On 27 June 1842 a letter was sent to the B&GR directors by William Thomas Paris, the solicitor in Stroud handling the bankruptcy, requiring the B&GR to furnish him with details of all payments made regarding their contracts with the Oldhams. The Board minutes reported that Frederick Cripps of the Cirencester banking family completed the B&GR works under the three contracts.¹⁷ His brother Raymond Cripps was a director of the C&GWUR and involved in promotion of both these railways. They came from a long-established Gloucestershire banking family and were forebears of the politicians Charles Alfred Cripps (later Lord Parmoor) and his son, Sir Stafford Cripps.

After the bankruptcy of E Oldham & Son locomotives and plant used on the C&GWUR contracts were placed on sale at Swindon station, including



***Details of Elisha Wright Oldham's turntable (Patent no 8837,
5 August 1841)***

two six-coupled tender locomotives with 13 inch by 18 inch cylinders.¹⁸ These were *Excavator* and *Volcano* and were purchased in 1844 by the Dowlais Iron Company for £500.¹⁹

As has been alluded to earlier, disputes and sometimes bankruptcy were persistent features of this family's business life. Whilst railway contractors, especially the smaller firms involved in the earlier

phases of railway construction, were frequently in financial difficulties the Oldhams do seem to have been involved in more failures than most. The financial problems of the early railway companies were often partly to blame and the smaller contractors lacked the resources to weather the storm; indeed it became common practice for the larger contractors to finance the completion of lines against future profits. The OWR case mentioned above is a typical example.

During the period 1844 to 1849 Elisha Oldham and his sons obtained various contracts in Scotland and the family's activities at this time become somewhat complex. In 1844 Elisha Oldham's tender of £99,660 was accepted for improvements to Aberdeen harbour and he appears to have been joined by his son Thomas, one of whose daughters was born in Aberdeen around 1845.²⁰ The first dock at Aberdeen, the Victoria dock, was built during this period.

In 1845 the Strathearn Junction Railway (SJR) was proposed to connect the Scottish Central Railway, the Edinburgh & Northern Railway (E&NR), the Edinburgh & Perth Railway and the Dundee & Perth Railway between Newburgh and Bridge of Earn, but although a Provisional Committee was formed²¹ the company was never incorporated. In 1846 it was agreed that the E&NR would take over the project and build the line and the SJR agreed to abandon their scheme. However, a newspaper report of March 1847²² stated that

At Newburgh on Thursday last there arrived here upwards of 200 labourers from the island of Skye having been previously engaged by Mr Oldham, contractor for the Strathearn Junction Railway. On their arrival they were immediately put to work; but owing to such an influx at one time, lodgings could not be obtained for the whole in the town. Mr Oldham on learning of this procured some barns in the adjacent village of Abernethy and fitted them up with beds, bed clothes and other conveniences free of charge – thus opening the means of industry for a large number of his destitute countrymen who would have otherwise depended for their subsistence on the alms of the benevolent.

It would therefore seem that Elisha Oldham had been appointed as contractor to the SJR during its brief period of existence. Given the date of the newspaper report the undertaking should have been in the hands of the E&NR. Whilst it is possible that the labourers had been procured by Oldham before the SJR was wound up and the E&NR may have agreed to take them on, it is not clear why Oldham should have obtained accommodation for them

unless he was kept on by the Edinburgh & Northern, at least in the short term.

Despite evidence of a court judgement against 'Thomas & Elisha Oldham & Partners' in 1845,²³ between 1847 and 1849 Oldham & Co obtained contract No 5 on the Aberdeen Railway and Elisha Oldham won the Alloa contract on the Stirling & Dunfermline Railway, the section through Alloa opening in 1850, a second-hand locomotive being bought from the London & North Western Railway in 1847 for use on this contract.²⁴ However, Elisha was soon in financial trouble again as there were further actions against him between 1847 and 1849, one being by the British Linen Bank in Arbroath. On 6 April 1850 the *Railway Times* reported that progress on the Alloa contract was slow; Elisha was in dispute with the Stirling & Dunfermline company and an arbiter had been appointed. Hearings regarding the sequestration of the assets of Elisha and Thomas Oldham for debt took place in 1848 and 1849 and Elisha's sons Elisha Wright Oldham and John Bingham Oldham were offered as security for interim payments, which confirms that Elisha senior and not his son was the contractor for the work at Alloa. It is not clear whether this matter was in regard to the railway contract or other debts. This sequestration was not discharged until 1852 so it is all the more surprising that Elisha was able to negotiate further contracts during this period.

In 1846 Elisha Oldham tendered unsuccessfully for both East & West Yorkshire Joint Railway (E&WYJR) contracts. However, in the following year a Mr Diggle, the original contractor for the Kirk Hammerton contract, relinquished this contract after a disagreement with the company and Oldham then agreed to complete the work,²⁵ his sons Thomas and Elisha acting as sureties. While working on this contract Elisha was living close to the new line in Poppleton, near York, as was his youngest son, John Bingham Oldham, who was presumably assisting on the E&WYJR contract. Census records show that Elisha's eldest son Thomas, whilst still in Scotland in August 1850 at the time of the birth of his youngest daughter, was also living in Poppleton by March 1851; his younger brother, John Bingham Oldham, and his father had both moved south to Newark to work on a Great Northern Railway contract described below. The E&WYJR was in negotiations with the York & Newcastle Railway to work the line when completed and that company loaned an engine to Oldham in July 1848 to assist with completion of the works.²⁶ In September 1848 Elisha, who was in dispute

with the company over payments due to him, threatened to block the line and prevent it from being opened. However, the line was in fact opened on 30 October 1848 although Elisha's dispute was not settled until late in 1849.²⁷

Elisha Oldham next gained the contracts for the Great Northern Railway (GNR) from Hougham (north of Grantham) to Newark and from Newark to Retford in 1850.²⁸ Once again he purchased a redundant locomotive for use on the works. This time it was a former Leeds & Selby Railway engine, No 33, *Dart*, obtained from the York & North Midland Railway in November 1851.²⁹ Work proceeded more slowly than planned, slips in the deep cuttings caused considerable delays and the work was below standard. The Oldham family had moved into a large mansion in Newark and obtained substantial credit in advance of contract payments from the GNR.³⁰ Delay in payments to Oldham had caused the Yorkshire Banking Co to refuse further credit, stopping payments and obtaining the railway plant as security. Thus Elisha failed once again, being unable to fulfil these contracts and trustees were appointed. He had no funds to pay his men so work stopped on 12 March 1852. Solicitors on behalf of Yorkshire Banking Co, the trustees appointed to deal with the failure, took over Oldham's plant and paid the men, allowing work to resume. In July 1852, following near riots in Retford, Joseph Cubitt, the GNR engineer, took over the contract, paying the men as the trustees had not done so, and work then resumed once again. The matter was eventually resolved with no need to file for bankruptcy on this occasion.

It should be mentioned that Thomas Jackson,³¹ contractor for the Corby Glen to Hougham contract, also got into similar difficulties, being dismissed in 1852 following a bridge collapse caused by slips in a cutting. In August 1852 three locomotives, tenders and plant used on Retford to Hougham contract were offered for sale in Newark.³² In view of the earlier report of 200 labourers from Skye being used on the SJR it is interesting to note that a similar number were used on the GNR contract by arrangement with Elisha Oldham.

Elisha was living in St John's Wood in 1853 and Brandon near Coventry in 1858 when he wrote to his local newspaper regarding his low opinion of the Coventry Board of Health's sewage disposal plans and referring to his ignored scheme of 1845 which apparently processed manure to be sold at a profit.³³ The subject of sewage was obviously dear to his

heart as he petitioned the House of Commons regarding this in 1862 and 1868.³⁴

Thereafter he seems to have fallen on hard times as he was a builder living in lodgings near Great Malvern in 1861 and in 1871 he was described as a former railway contractor in lodgings in Southam, Warwickshire. He died there in 1879 aged 87. Elisha Oldham bid unsuccessfully for a number of contracts after 1839. The last such bid was as late as 1857 for the LNWR widening between Willesden and Watford.³⁵

As mentioned above, Elisha's eldest son Thomas was involved in GWR contract 5S and later the C&GWUR Cirencester contract. He was in Scotland between 1846 and 1850, as evidenced by the birth of two of his children, and joined his father in the Alloa contract for the Stirling & Dunfermline Railway in 1848-9. He was living in Poppleton near York in 1851 when he was described as a public contractor. After this no further trace of him or his family has been found.

The second son Elisha (sometimes given the middle name of Wright) was also involved in the GNR contract and was described as a railway contractor living in Cardiff in 1861 and 1871 and dying there in 1872.

John Bingham Oldham

Elisha's youngest son worked with his father on the E&WJR and GNR contracts. He was lodging with his father near Great Malvern in 1861 when he was described as a foreman of railways whilst his wife and children were living in Abergavenny. He spent a short time in Worcester Goal in 1866/7 for debt and was later variously described as a contractor and builder, a contractor and a contractor's agent. He died in Camberwell in 1899.

It is difficult to assess the expertise of the Oldhams but their success in gaining contracts over some twenty years does give some indication of their persistence, at least. The frequent financial problems of the early railway companies certainly impacted on the smaller contractors and the sheer amount of railway building in progress in the period covered meant that railway companies were obliged to employ contractors of varying ability. Apart from the contracts gained, the Oldhams unsuccessfully tendered for much other railway work in various parts of the country.

Notes and references

1. E T MacDermot, *History of the Great Western Railway* (London: Great Western Railway, 1927–31), vol. 1, p. 90; Charles H Grinling, *The History of the Great Northern Railway, 1845-1895* (London: Methuen, 1898), p. 123; Nigel Bray, *The Cirencester Branch* (Usk: Oakwood, 1998); David Clifford, *Isambard Kingdom Brunel : the construction of the Great Western Railway* (Caversham : Finial, 2006) citing The National Archives (TNA) RAIL 1149/44 ; John Wrottesley, *The Great Northern Railway* (London: Batsford, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 50,76
2. As Wright was their mother's maiden name it is to be assumed that Williams was also a family name although this has not been established. Bingham was the maiden name of Elisha Oldham's wife.
3. *Leamington Spa Courier* 13 October 1838 (payment to Thomas Oldham)
4. TNA RAIL 250/3, GWR Board Minutes, 17 January 1845, Bathampton contract 12S
5. TNA RAIL 558/1328, brief for OWWR in arbitration heard before I K Brunel dated 23 October 1851
6. Three of the contracts were let to Messrs Tredwell and three to smaller contractors.
7. Samuel Morton Peto became deputy chairman of the OWWR in 1856 and still had substantial OWWR debentures in lieu of payment at that time (TNA RAIL 558/26, OWWR Board minutes, 4 March 1856).
8. TNA RAIL 558/1360 and sundry other related documents in the range RAIL 558/1322–73
9. TNA RAIL 558/26, 6 August 1858, OWWR Board minutes
10. *Railway Times* 20 July 1839
11. *Journal of the Stephenson Locomotive Society* 26 (1950), p.131
12. Gloucestershire Record Office D3798/5, C&GWUR Directors minutes, 14 October 1841
13. *Journal of the Stephenson Locomotive Society* 26 (1950), p.131
14. *Cheltenham Journal*, 29 June 1840, 25 June 1840
15. *Railway Times* 8 February 1841; TNA RAIL 76/1, Bristol & Gloucester Railway minutes, 3 May 1841
16. TNA RAIL 76/1, 13 April 1842
17. TNA RAIL 76/1 27 June 1842; TNA RAIL 76/5, contract dated 21 April 1842
18. *Railway Times* 7 January 1843
19. *Industrial Railway Record* 56 (October 1974), p. 327
20. In 1847 Thomas Oldham, contractor of Bridge of Earn, Perth and Elisha Oldham of Dundee acted as sureties for their father's contract on the East & West Yorkshire Junction Railway.
21. National Records of Scotland (NRS) GB234/BR/STJ, minutes of meetings of the Provisional Committee, 1845-7
22. *Dundee, Perth and Coupar Advertiser* 23 March 1847
23. NRS CS275/7/183 1845, action of suspension and interdict
24. TNA RAIL 410/52, LNWR Locomotive Committee minutes, 9 September 1847, sale of small engine No 72 to Thomas Oldham of Bridge of Earn for £1,150
25. *Railway Times* 21 August 1847
26. TNA RAIL 169/2, company minutes, 26 June 1848, 20 July 1848
27. *Railway Times* 26 October 1848, 8 September 1849
28. Wrottesley (1979), vol. 1, pp. 50,76
29. E Craven manuscript locomotive notes, K Hoole collection at North Road Museum, Darlington
30. *Lincolnshire Chronicle* 26 March 1852, 2 April 1852
31. Not to be confused with Thomas Jackson (1808-1885) as there were two unrelated contractors of the same name
32. *Railway Times* 24 July 1852
33. *Coventry Times* 22 September 1858
34. *Royal Cornwall Gazette* 23 May 1862; *Worcester Journal* 7 March 1868
35. Notes of F D Smith at the Institution of Civil Engineers, London

John Cooke Bourne (1814-1896), lithographer: *Drawings of the London & Birmingham Railway* (1836-1838)

Chapter 4. Engineering – Kilsby Tunnel

John van Laun

Proceeding north from Blisworth, Bourne was at Kilsby in July 1837 where he produced six wash drawings in twelve days of which four were lithographed. He returned in October the following year to draw the completed Great Ventilating Shaft (Figs. 47) as a companion to the Working Shaft (Figs. 48) produced as one of the July drawings.

Bourne's drawings reveal much of this great engineering monument to the railway age. The layout of this achievement can be related to his drawings. From the south, the tunnel runs north-westward for 2,323 yards (2,242m). Apart from the portals the surface evidence comprises two giant shafts, their presence proclaimed by enormous round crenulated brick towers (Fig. 49) which, symbolically, suggest the conquest of the subterranean. To an extent this is echoed in the machicolations over the tunnel portals. Equally dispersed along the course of the tunnel lay nine plain circular brick shafts used for construction as witnessed by spoil which has either been spread or, in some cases, left in mounds.

An idea of the construction of the portals can be gained from a wash drawing produced elsewhere at much the same date (Fig. 46). In this we see centring supporting the roof but in the process of being replaced by voussoirs. These can be seen to have reached the height of the platform from which building continues upwards.

With regard to underground workings at Kilsby, only the Great Ventilating Shaft (Figs. 47) and a working shaft were illustrated (Figs. 48).¹ The former title may well refer to one or other of the two crenulated towers as shown under construction in Fig. 51 and Figs. 52.

As to the working shafts, Bourne shows a number of horse gins at regular intervals (see Figs. 52 and 53 in particular). These equate with the locations of some of the nine working shafts dispersed along the course of the tunnel. Although the subterranean size of Figs. 48 might suggest the illustration is of

one of the two large shafts, the small aperture throwing light down the shaft must indicate that it is one of these smaller shafts. The assemblage of workers, horses and a kibble confirm this as a centre of activity whilst the October 1838 drawing indicates completed works with track in place. Both Figs. 47b and 48b were placed on the same page in landscape format.

One of the greatest problems in the driving of the tunnel was that of flooding; in fact this almost put a stop to its continuation. To overcome this, pumping was essential and Figs. 50 provide some indication of the arrangements for this. The area shown corresponds to that shown in Fig. 53 but from the opposite direction where a group of beam-engines can just be seen in the distance. The driving power was provided by a substantial beam-engine housed in an engine house. Because of its weight the placement of the engine directly adjacent to the shaft was impossible. Instead the drive to the shaft was carried by wooden flat-rods which connected with T-bobs at the shaft which transferred the horizontal action into that of the vertical. The backward and forward movement of the flat-rods was supported by cast-iron rockers.

In spite of the undesirability of an engine close to a shaft it seems possible that the sparse survivals shown in the foreground of Figs. 50 represent earlier attempts at pumping. On the left lies a squared surround divided into two compartments in one of which lies a gearwheel. The other may have contained a flywheel which would have been fixed on the same shaft as the gearwheel. A crank on the gearwheel would have joined a connecting rod emerging from one end of a beam engine. There is clear evidence of a wrought-iron boiler for raising steam.

As indicated by the row of working shafts, the placement of the pumping shaft is not in line: this suggests that an adit connected into the main tunnel

with a sump placed along it into which water drained. As for the headgear, all these (excepting that in Fig. 51 with Fig. 52) were probably horse-worked. From Fig. 53 it seems that wooden drums were used with, in this case, a shaft either side for alternate raising and lowering in turn. The more common arrangement can be seen in Figs. 51 and Fig. 54 in which there were parallel pulleys over the same shaft for raising and lowering alternately.

Winding by steam power is shown in Figs. 50 and 52 but it is of interest that even at this late date an atmospheric engine was used at Kilsby. The single-working stroke that Newcomen engines provided was overcome by the use of balanced working as seen in the twin headgear in Fig. 50. In Figs. 52 we see this in operation with the left-hand part of the shaft being occupied by a kibble at the top which corresponds with the full part of the winding drum.² The other (near) is empty, as shown by the spokes, indicating that the right-hand section of the shaft is occupied by a rope at the bottom of the shaft.

The wooden-clad housing contains the vertical steam cylinder and piston which connects with one end of the beam. The other end can be seen merging

to connect with the drum by a system of gearing and a flywheel. Between the engine and the chimney stack lies an egg-ended boiler for raising steam with pipe-work running to the cylinder behind the wooden-clad house – the waste gases would have discharged into the stack.

The lithograph shows some additions to the wash drawing. A pulley lying beside the railway track appears in the foreground and a kibble has been added by the stack. Fig. 51c is a detailed study of the pulley. In the lithograph Bourne has also added detail of the outside of the shaft being laid to produce the end result as seen in Fig. 49.

The final drawing and lithograph (Figs. 54) show the countryside beyond the tunnel portal and the last of the working shafts. The temporary railway track may have been for removing spoil as shown by a branch line in Fig. 54a. The lithograph was modified to include a strolling couple and the branch line removed thus giving a more 'picturesque' atmosphere.

Bourne's involvement over the June and July period suggests he followed a loose campaign. For instance, while working at Blisworth and Kilsby in



Fig. 46. North Church Tunnel, London & Birmingham Railway, 17 June 1837 – wash drawing. National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7219)



Fig. 47a. Great Ventilating Shaft, Kilsby Tunnel, October 1838 – wash drawing. National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7240)

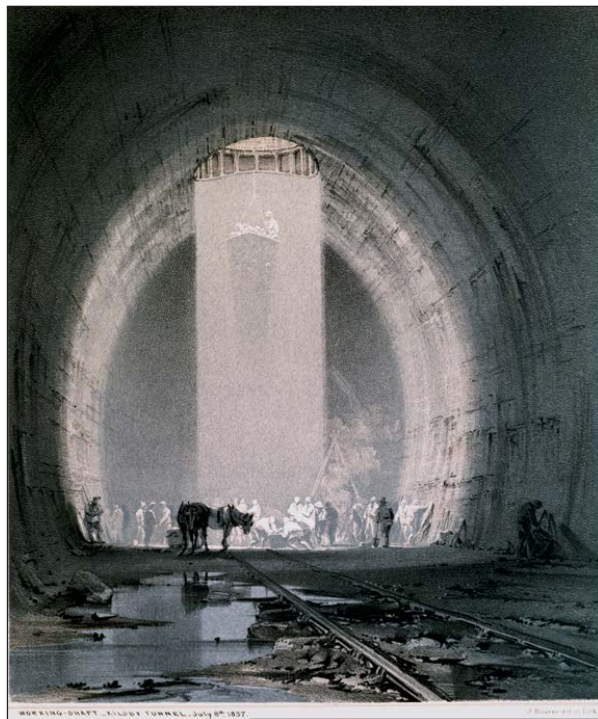


Fig. 47b. Great Ventilating Shaft, Kilsby Tunnel. London, Published Decr 1838 by the Proprietor J.C. Bourne, 19 Lamb's Conduit Street and Ackermann and Co. Printed by Day and Haghe, Lithographers to the Queen. [Printed on same page as Fig. 48b in landscape format]

July 1837, Bourne made time to produce the odd additional drawing: the last Blisworth drawing was made on 3 July and his descent into a Kilsby shaft was made on the eighth (Fig. 48a) – perhaps the most iconic of all Bourne’s L&B lithographs. Such was Bourne’s speed of working that he was able to intersperse the production of three more drawings around the immediate area in this period.

It seems likely that Bourne took his opportunities as they arose to suit his portfolio, but filling in with

others after the production of the lithographs had begun. Much of this is discussed in the final chapter.

References

1. These shafts are at NGR SP 574703 (just north of the M45) and 568708 (just north of the A5).
2. This was described in a review of December 1838 as ‘Engine and Head Gear for raising Skips in the Shaft to Kilsby Tunnel’ (J C Loudon, *Architectural Magazine and Journal*, vol. 5 (London, 1838), pp. 609–611).



48a. Working shaft, Kilsby Tunnel, Northamptonshire, 8 July 1837 – wash drawing. National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7238)

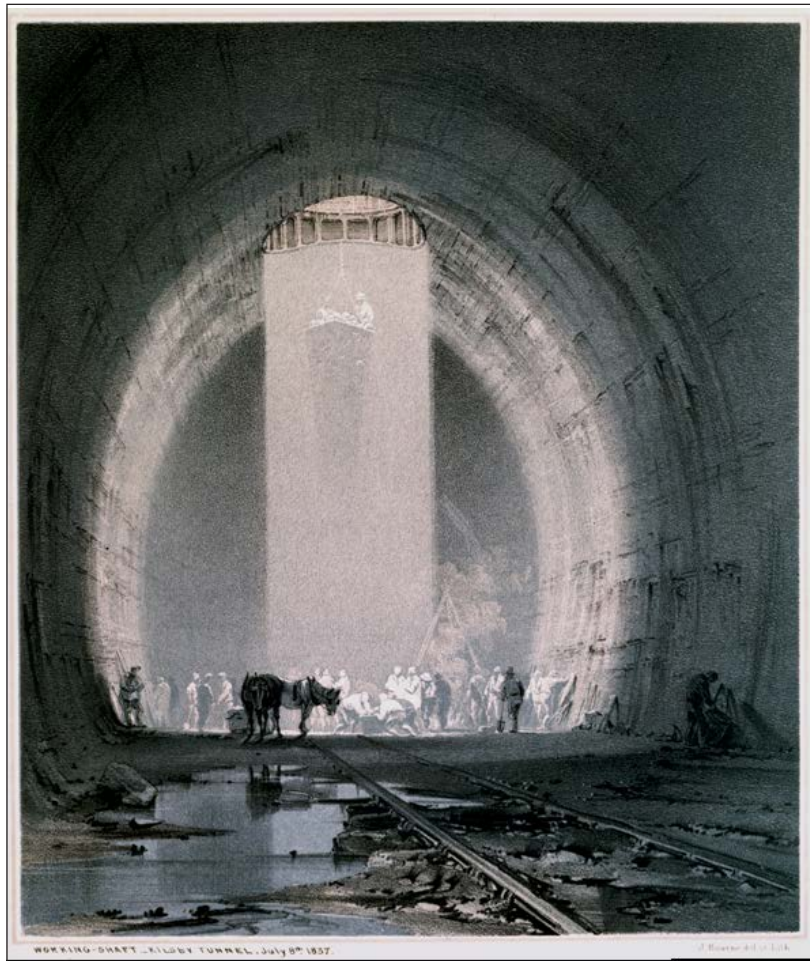


Fig. 48b. Working shaft, Kilsby Tunnel, 8 July 1837 [Printed on same page as Fig. 47b in landscape format]



Fig. 49. A view of one of the two giant stacks for the ventilating shafts



Fig. 50a Pumps, Ventilating Shaft, Kilsby Tunnel, Northamptonshire, 15 July 1837 – wash drawing. National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7241)



Fig. 50b Pumps for draining the Kilsby Tunnel. London, Published by the Proprietor J.C. Bourne, 19, Lamb's Conduit St and Ackermann and Co, Strand. Printed by C. Hullmandel. 1838



*Fig. 51. Great Ventilating Shaft and headgear, Kilsby Tunnel, 15 July 1837 – wash drawing.
National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7239)*



*Fig. 52a. Ventilating shaft and winding engine, Kilsby Tunnel, 18 July 1837 – wash drawing.
National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7243)*

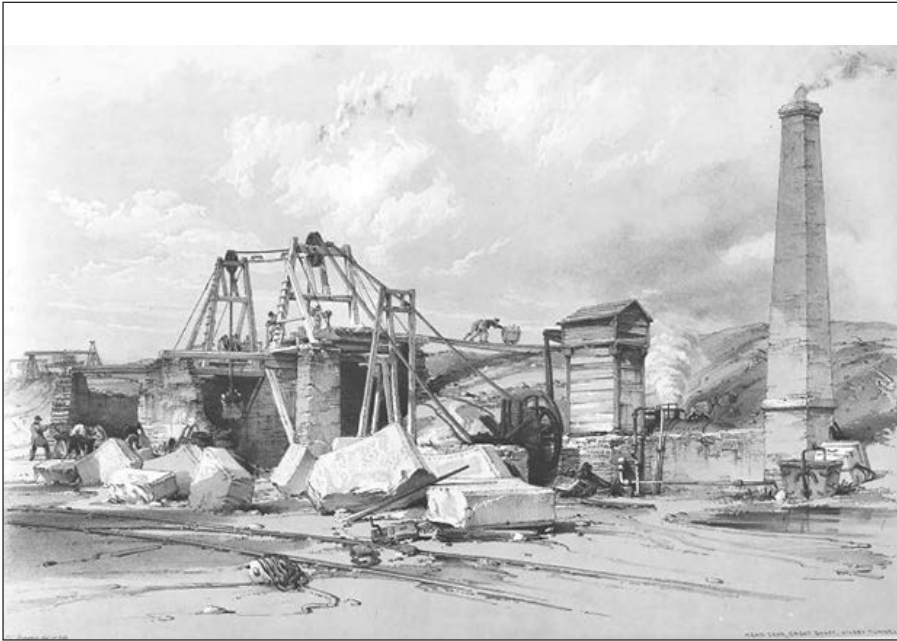


Fig. 52b. Head Gear, Great Shaft Kilsby Tunnel. London, Published Decr 1838 by the Proprietor J.C. Bourne, 19 Lamb's Conduit Street and Ackermann and Co, Strand. Printed by C. Hullmandel

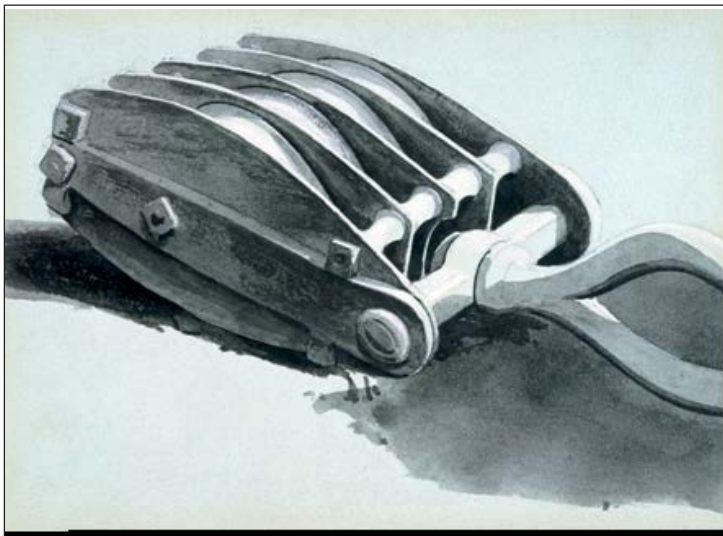


Fig. 52c. Pulley as seen in Fig. 52b – wash drawing. National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7254)



Fig. 53. Headgear and pumps at Kilsby Tunnel, Northamptonshire, 16 July 1837 – wash drawing. National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7242)



Fig. 54a. From above, Kilsby Tunnel, Northamptonshire 20 July 1837 – wash drawing. National Railway Museum / Science and Society Picture Library (1990-7244)



Fig. 54b. View from above Kilsby Tunnel. London, Published by J. C. Bourne, 19 Lamb's Conduit Street and Ackermann and Co, Strand. 1839. Printed by Day and Haghe, Lithographers to the Queen

Dickens' account in *Dombey and Son* of the effects of the construction of the London & Birmingham Railway are well known. He later returned to the same theme in chapter 55 of *Bleak House* (1853), albeit much more briefly, with a short description of the impact on the Lincolnshire countryside of the construction of the Great Northern.

Inspector Bucket of the Detective has not yet struck his great blow, as just now chronicled, but is yet refreshing himself with sleep preparatory to his field-day, when, through the night and along the freezing wintry roads, a chaise and pair comes out of Lincolnshire, making its way towards London.

Railroads shall soon traverse all this country, and with a rattle and a glare the engine and train shall shoot like a meteor over the wide night-landscape, turning the moon paler; but, as yet, such things are non-existent in these parts, though not wholly unexpected. Preparations are afoot, measurements are made, ground is staked out. Bridges are begun, and their not yet united piers desolately look at one another over roads and streams, like brick and mortar couples with an obstacle to their union; fragments of embankments are thrown up, and left as precipices with torrents of rusty carts and barrows tumbling over them; tripods of tall poles appear on hilltops, where there are rumours of tunnels; everything looks chaotic, and abandoned in fell hopelessness. Along the freezing roads, and through the night, the post-chaise makes its way without a railroad on its mind.

PRR

Memorials to railway and canal individuals

Robert Humm

In the *Journal* for March and July 1995 and for March 1996 Stanley Tyson provided an extensive list of plaques, statues and other monuments bearing the names of prominent railway and canal men.¹ Further information was provided by correspondents in several subsequent issues. In recent years the present writer has been researching on similar lines and visiting some of the locations; the following additions and corrections can be made to Mr Tyson's pioneering work.

Certain guidelines have been followed. Collective memorials, particularly railway war memorials and rolls of honour (of which there are some 250, listing some 15,000 or more names) are a large subject of their own and have been excluded, as are the many streets named after railway persons. Buildings named after railwaymen are included provided they have served an identifiable railway function. The many locomotives named after railwaymen, except where the nameplates have been preserved at public places as memorials in their own right, are excluded.

Casting the net a little wider, there are a number of public houses that fall in this category. I have listed those known to me so far. Nearly all are railwaymen and only two are named after canal personages: the *Thomas Telford* at Leegomery, and the *Gresley Arms* at Alsager's Bank, Staffordshire. The latter refers not to the well known locomotive engineer but to an earlier ancestor who was the proprietor of Sir Nigel Gresley's Canal.

Another category worth exploring further is that of persons such as authors, artists, photographers, architects, and politicians who, whilst not professional railwaymen, were involved with railways in a wider sense. I have included a first selection here.

At the time of Mr Tyson's articles the editor of the *Journal* was urging the members to become a little more internationalist in their outlook. In this spirit I have included a handful of American memorials, mainly culled from books I happen to have on hand.

Many of the memorials listed by Tyson and in the subsequent correspondence have now been included in the database of Monuments and Memorials on the Society's website.² Some of the personal entries in the following list can also be found in that database but I have included

additionally names of public houses and other buildings which have deliberately been excluded from that database and which I hope will be of interest.

Persons

Aberconway, Lord. Chairman of the Metropolitan Railway Company. At Baker Street station, London, is a **foundation stone** laid in 1912 by Lord Aberconway. Also named are Robert H Selbie (General Manager) and W Willox (engineer).

Arrol, Sir William. As well as the grave at Woodside Cemetery, Paisley, recorded by Tyson there is a **bronze memorial** at the Glasgow People's Palace.

Axon, John, GC. Locomotive driver on the occasion of the Chapel-en-le-Frith accident. His **George Cross** is on display at the National Railway Museum.³

Baldwin, Matthias. American locomotive manufacturer. There is a **statue** of him at the Pennsylvania State Railroad Museum, Strasburg, Pennsylvania.

Barclay, Andrew. Locomotive manufacturer. The former administrative offices in West Langlands Street, Kilmarnock, carries the Andrew Barclay name in **large cut-out metal letters** along the ridge of the roof. Still extant in September 2014.

Beames, Peter. A solicitor for the London, Midland & Scottish Railway (LMSR), killed during the battle for Tobruk. There is a **stained glass window** in his memory at Christ Church, Crewe.

Beck Harry. Devised the London Underground diagrammatic map. At 14 Wesley Road, Leyton, London E10 there is a **blue plaque**.

Brassey, Thomas. Railway contractor. Died 8 December 1870. His **grave** is at Catsfield parish church, Sussex.

Churchward, George Jackson. Chief Mechanical Engineer, Great Western Railway (GWR). His **grave** is at St Mary & St Gabriel churchyard, Stoke Gabriel, south Devon.

Colburn, Zerah. American, 1803–1870. Technical journalist, publisher and consulting engineer, worked mainly in Great Britain in the second half of his life. Editor of *The Engineer* and in 1866 became founding

editor of *Engineering*. Committed suicide at Belmont, Massachusetts, 26 April 1870. His **grave** is at Lowell, Mass. Headstone erected some years later is said to contain some minor inaccuracies.⁴

Cuneo, Terence Tenison. Painter, 1907–1996. There is a **statue** of him at Waterloo station, London.

Darroch, G R S. Assistant works manager, Crewe locomotive works and author of the book *Deeds of a Great Railway*. His **grave** is in the parish churchyard, Wigginton, Buckinghamshire.

Davies, David. Railway contractor and colliery owner ('Davies the Ocean'). There are identical **statues** at Barry Docks and Llandinam, Powys.⁵

Dobson, John. Architect. Designed Newcastle Central station and train shed. A **plaque** marking the bicentenary of Dobson's birth (1787) can be found adjacent to the main passenger entrance of the station.

Fryatt, Capt Charles Algernon. Merchant seaman, 1872–1916. Born Southampton and later moved to Harwich. Skipper of Great Eastern Railway steamer *Brussels* which rammed the German submarine U-33. Later captured, tried by court martial and shot at Bruges, Belgium, on 27 July 1916. Has more memorials than any other World War I individual. At Freemantle primary school, Southampton, is a **bronze plaque**, previously located at the place of execution. His **grave** is at All Saints Church, Dovercourt, Essex. There is a marble and bronze **memorial** at the foot of the main GER war memorial, Liverpool Street station. The *Captain Fryatt* public house at Parkeston and the Fryatt Memorial Hospital are included in the following sections. In Canada there are three topographical features named after him and his ship, *Mount Fryatt*, *Fryatt Creek* and *Brussels Peak*.

Gimbert, Benjamin, GC. Born in Ely 1903, died 1976. Driver of the WD 2–8–0 locomotive no 7337 at the time of the Soham bomb explosion on 2 June 1944. Seriously injured and awarded the George Cross for bravery, 25 July 1945. There are several memorials to Driver Gimbert (mostly joint with Fireman Nightall – see below). In Red Lion Square, Soham, there is a recent **memorial** with descriptive panels. A **commemorative tablet**, originally at Soham station, is now preserved at Soham Village College. There is a **tablet** at Soham parish church. Benjamin Gimbert's **George Cross** is on display at March Museum, together with the **nameplates** from the class 47 locomotive 47574 *Benjamin Gimbert GC*.⁶

Gould, Jay. American railroad financier and promoter. At various times he held a controlling

interest in Erie, Union Pacific, Missouri Pacific, Manhattan Elevated, Kansas-Texas and Texas & Pacific Railroads. His **grave** is at Woodlawn cemetery, New York.⁷

Gresley, Sir Nigel. 1876–1941. Chief Mechanical Engineer, Great Northern (GNR) and London & North Eastern (LNER) Railways. In the ticket hall of Edinburgh Waverley station is a large rectangular **plaque** recording his birth in the city and his achievements. A Derbyshire County Council **blue plaque** can be seen at The Old Rectory, Netherseal, where he grew up. At Kings Cross station is an English Heritage **blue plaque** beneath the window of Gresley's office.

Jarvis, Ronald Guy. Locomotive engineer, LMSR and British Railways. His **grave** is at St Peter's, Llanbedr, north Wales.

Marples, Alfred Ernest, Lord Marples of Wallasey. British politician 1907–1978, Minister of Transport 1960–64 responsible for appointing Dr Beeching as chairman of the British Railways Board (BRB). His **grave** is at the Southern Cemetery, Chorlton-cum-Hardy.

Matheson, Donald. Chief Engineer (later General Manager) of the Caledonian Railway. Responsible for the reconstruction of Glasgow Central station 1901–1906. An oval **plaque** was erected near the main station entrance in 2008.

Meikle, Sgt John, VC, MM. Clerk at Nitshill station, Glasgow, Barrhead & Kilmarnock Joint Railway. Enlisted in the Seaforth Highlanders in 1915. Awarded posthumous VC for conspicuous gallantry during the Battle of Scarpe, 1918. A **granite memorial** in his honour was erected at Nitshill station in January 1920, subsequently moved to Station Square, Dingwall. His **Victoria Cross** is on display at Dingwall Museum.

Nightall, James, GC. 1922–1944. Fireman of the WD type 2–8–0 no 7337 on the occasion of the Soham bomb incident and killed by the force of the explosion. For memorials jointly with driver Gimbert, see above. His **George Cross** and other awards are displayed at Soham Village College, Cambridgeshire.⁸

Pick, Frank. 1878–1941. Managing Director, London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB) and promoter of good industrial design. There is a **blue plaque** at 15 Wildwood Road, London NW11.

Pullman, George Mortimer. American, 1831–1897. Industrialist and promoter of civilised train travel through the provision of Pullman sleeping cars. The **towns** of Pullman, Illinois (location of his

manufacturing plant) and Pullman, Washington are named after him. There is also a Pullman Memorial Universalist **church** at Albany, New York. In Great Britain numerous **preserved Pullman cars** carry his name.

Renton, J H. Director of the West Highland Railway. In 1893 he gave part of his private fortune in the form of a bridging loan to enable the line to be completed. Tyson's reference to a statue is incorrect: the monument takes the form of a low relief **portrait** carved by one of the navvies from a boulder.

Robinson, J G. Locomotive engineer, Great Central Railway. Died 7 December 1943. His **grave** (large cross on a tiered plinth) is at Bournemouth North Cemetery.⁹

Ruddock, J G. Railway collector and writer, joint author of *The Railway History of Lincoln* and *Lord Willoughby's Railway*. There is a **plaque** in his memory on the main platform at Lincoln Central station.

Scott, Sir George Gilbert. Architect of St Pancras station. There is a **blue plaque** at Admiral's House, London NW7.

Smiles, Samuel. Secretary of the South Eastern Railway, biographer of the Stephensons and others. His **grave** is at Brompton Cemetery, West London.¹⁰

Stanley, Albert, Lord Ashfield. Chairman of LPTB and London Transport. A **blue plaque** can be seen at 23 South Street, London W1.

Stephenson, George. Railway engineer. As well as the items mentioned by Tyson, behind the *George Stephenson* public house, Great Lime Road, Killingworth, is an **information panel**.

Stephenson, Robert. Railway and locomotive engineer 1803–1859. There is a **plaque** on the wall of the surviving workshops of Robert Stephenson & Co, South Street, Newcastle. There is another **plaque** on the outside of Newcastle Literary & Philosophical Society building marking Stephenson's period of office as President 1855–9.

Sykes, Pte Ernest, VC. Platelayer on the London & North Western Railway. In 1917 at the Battle of Arras he rescued four wounded comrades under heavy enemy fire. There is understood to be a commemorative **plaque** at Huddersfield Town Hall. His *Victoria Cross* and the **nameplate** from the 'Patriot' class 4–6–0 are on display at the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers Museum, Alnwick.

Trevithick, Richard. Pioneer locomotive engineer. There is a **statue** outside the public library in

Camborne, Cornwall. There is also a **plaque** at the *Royal Victoria & Bull Inn*, Dartford, Kent, where Trevithick died in 1833.

Tunna, Norman, GC. Shunter at Birkenhead, GWR. On 26 September 1940, at great personal risk, he extinguished a fire in a wagon loaded with bombs. He died in 1970. There is a **memorial** to Norman Tunna adjacent to Birkenhead Woodside ferry terminal.¹¹

Vanderbilt, Commodore Cornelius. American railroad magnate, owner of the New York Central Railroad. His **grave** is at the Moravian Cemetery, New Dorp, Staten Island. He also endowed **Vanderbilt University**, Nashville, Tennessee.¹²

Van Sweringen, Oris and Mantis, J. Railroad magnates and property developers. By 1930 they owned or controlled over 30,000 miles of railroad including the Nickel Plate, Erie, Pere Marquette, Baltimore & Ohio, Erie, Chesapeake & Ohio and Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroads. Interred in a joint **grave** at Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Ohio.¹³

Volk, Magnus. Pioneer electrical engineer, builder and owner of the Volk's Electric Railway and the Brighton & Rottingdean Seashore Railway. There is a **plaque** on his house at 126 Dyke Road, Brighton. His **grave** is at St Wulfrun's Church, Ovingdean, West Sussex.

Walker, Sir Herbert Ashcombe. General Manager London & South Western and Southern Railways. There is a **stone cameo portrait** at Waterloo station.

Westinghouse, George. American, 1844–1914. Inventor and industrialist. Invented the railway airbrake and other devices. There is a **memorial** in Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the same city is the George Westinghouse Bridge, bearing another **plaque**.

Worsdell, Thomas William. Locomotive Superintendent Great Eastern and North Eastern Railways. His **grave** is at the Friends Meeting House, Yealand Conyers, Lancashire.¹⁴

Worsdell, Wilson. Younger brother of Thomas Worsdell. Locomotive Superintendent NER. His **grave** is at All Souls Church, South Ascot, Berkshire.¹⁵

Public houses

The writer has identified 32 public houses named after or associated with railway and canal individuals. Most are relatively recent namings. Because of the present high rate of pub closures and the tendency

toward frequent name changes it has not been possible to state with certainty which are currently active.

Aberconway, Lord. Sometime Chairman of the Metropolitan Railway. There is a **Lord Aberconway** at 73 Old Broad Street, London EC4.

Beeching, Dr Richard. Industrialist and physicist, Chairman, British Railways Board. There is a **Lord Beeching**, Alexandra Road, Aberystwyth.

Brunel, Isambard Kingdom. Railway and marine engineer. There are **Brunel** pubs at Bedminster, Chippenham, Crewe, London (Battersea), Pontyclun, Portsmouth, and Saltash. In addition **The Pioneer**, Keynsham, has a portrait of the diminutive genius on the inn sign. **The Brunel** at Bristol has recently been renamed **The Reckless Engineer**.

Cook, Thomas. Travel entrepreneur. There was a **Thomas Cook Inn** on Narborough Road, Leicester.

Crampton, Thomas Russell. Locomotive engineer and proponent of the 'Crampton' type express engine. There is a **Cramptons** public house at Station Road, Broadstairs, Kent.

Exeter, Marquess of. Proprietor of the Stamford & Essendine Railway. There is an **Exeter Arms** on the A43 near Stamford, Lincolnshire.

Fryatt, Capt Charles Algernon. Great Eastern Railway skipper and war hero. The **Captain Fryatt** is at 65 Garland Road, Parkeston, Essex.

Gooch, Sir Daniel. Locomotive engineer, later Chairman of the GWR, has two public houses named after him. The **Daniel Gooch** is at 40 Porchester Terrace, London W2, and the **Sir Daniel Arms** is at Fleet Street, Swindon.

Gresley, Sir Nigel. The earlier Sir Nigel Gresley, canal owner, is recorded by **The Gresley Arms**, Alsager's Bank, Staffordshire. The **Sir Nigel Gresley**, Swadlincote, Leicestershire, is named after the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the GNR and LNER.

Hackworth, Timothy. Locomotive pioneer. **The Timothy Hackworth** is at 107 Main Street, Shildon.

Howey, Capt J E P. Originator and owner of the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. The **Captain Howey Hotel** is in Littlestone Road, New Romney adjacent to the RH&DR station.

Hudson, George. Railway promoter and financier. A public house in Cambridge, near Hudson's Eastern Counties Railway is called **The Railway King**.

Mogg, Tom. Porter at Edington Junction station, Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway. At Edington Burtle

The Tom Mogg is named in his honour. There is a photo of porter Mogg in Robin Atthill's history of the S&DJR.

Peto, Sir Samuel Morton. Railway contractor and financier. There is a **Samuel Peto** in Rendezvous Street, Folkestone, recently converted from a Grade II Listed Baptist chapel.

Stephenson, George. Railway engineer. The **George Stephenson** public house is situated in Great Lime Road, Killingworth. There is also the **George Stephenson** in Stephenson Avenue, Walsall.

Stephenson, Robert. Railway engineer. The **Robert Stephenson** (now demolished) was at 17 Dock Road, London E16.

Telford, Thomas. A public house called **The Thomas Telford** at Leegomery, Shropshire.

Trevithick, Richard. Engineer and builder of the first successful steam locomotive. The modern **Trevithick Tavern** is located on the outskirts of Camborne, Cornwall.

Yarborough, Earl of. Landowner and Chairman of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway. Opposite Grimsby Town station is the **Yarborough Hotel**, now demoted to the status of a public house. At New Holland, Lincolnshire, there was another **Yarborough Hotel**, the building still extant as offices though much altered. The **Yarborough Arms** is adjacent to Ulceby station on the New Holland to Grimsby line.

Buildings

Allen, Sir Peter. Industrialist, railway collector and writer. One of the halls at the National Railway Museum is named **The Sir Peter Allen Building**.

Denison, Edmund. First chairman of the Great Northern Railway. An administrative building at Doncaster locomotive works was called **Denison House**.

Fryatt, Capt Charles Algernon. At Dovercourt, Essex, the **Fryatt Memorial Hospital** is named in his honour.

Gresley, Sir Nigel. The BR Eastern Region divisional offices, Doncaster, were called **Gresley House**.

Hamilton, Lord Claud. Chairman, Great Eastern Railway. The BR Eastern Region divisional offices, Bishopsgate, were at **Hamilton House**. An eponymous locomotive **nameplate** from a 'D16' class 4-4-0 was once displayed in the reception area.

Hoole, Ken. Historian of the North Eastern Railway. *The Ken Hoole Study Centre* is at Darlington North Road station.

Hudson, George. Railway promoter and financier. The BR Eastern/North Eastern Region headquarters at Toft Green, York, was named *Hudson House*.

Price, John H. Editor of *Cook's Continental Timetable* and writer of railway and tramway history. At the National Tramway Museum, Crich, the library has been named *The John Price Library* in his honour.

Rennie, George and John. George and John Rennie established their engineering works at Holland Street, Blackfriars, south London, in 1833. Sixteen locomotives were built there between 1838 and 1843, the firm subsequently turning to marine engineering. The *Rennie Dining Rooms* on the opposite side of Holland Street survived into the mid-1960s.

Stanier, Sir William. Chief Mechanical Engineer, LMSR. The London Midland Region divisional office in Birmingham was named *Stanier House*. The 'Coronation' locomotive *nameplate* 'Sir William Stanier FRS' was once on display there.

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Notes on the British Newspaper Archive

Paul Braithwaite

It is possible to study newspapers online at the British Library internet address <<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive>>. This allows one to research when convenient to oneself and for any convenient time span. This brief set of notes will introduce newcomers to this valuable research source. There is free registration for search access but for limitations see below.

The website is perhaps best suited to those looking for social history aspects of transport. This covers such events as proposals and objections to routes, opening ceremonies and accidents during operation. As readers are doubtless aware, journalistic sources are rarely reliable in regard to technical matters. Also, timescale references (such as 'recently' or 'will

soon') are often found to be of very limited use.

The site provides scans of newspapers, currently over 300 titles having been started. Be warned, however, that the runs seem rarely to be complete and haphazard as to subsequent scan additions. Note too that the papers are almost entirely from London and provincial newspapers and do not enter into the world of specialist periodicals (nor even the valuable *London Gazette*).

The website provides searching by use of an optical word scanner. In my experience it is somewhat irregular in what it will read, sometimes recognising plurals and adding or ignoring hyphens but mostly not so liberal. It takes patience to cover word or phrase variants to cover one's interest. In my case,

focussing on pre-1830 railed systems, the general options include words 'railroad', 'tramroad', 'tramway', 'waggonway' and 'railway', all variously hyphenated and in plural form. The search will pick anything up with the nominated search term and stuff relating to rails for fencing and road waggon ways, for example, will be shown. In the case of 'road' the quantity of results, mostly irrelevant to my wants, are brought up by the optical search. It will be appreciated that many pages of results will appear that then need careful review as to actual relevance to one's wants. To that end the general search button should be avoided as it will go through the entire newspaper stock, for all years, and come up with tens of thousands of results.

It is sensible to use the 'advanced search' command option. This allows selection of time span, of newspaper title and of word or phrase. The timescale theoretically allows from year 1700 to 1999. There is, in reality, little available before around 1750 and the bulk does not arise until well into the nineteenth century. I have found nothing after about 1950, presumably for copyright reasons. There are check boxes for 'filter' and for 'exact phrase' which I would recommend selection so as to limit the search. Even after doing that one will find unwanted results will appear. If, for example, one entered 'Little Eaton' the results will reveal that phrase together with uses of the separate words 'little' and 'eaton.' The results command pages allow selection by 'relevance,' by date order and by reverse date order. These options are very useful but start with relevance. Bear in mind my experience that it is not precise and I tend to go a page or so beyond what immediately gets listed to pick up stray but useful results further on. Thus far, the website has allowed free use.

In order to open up a page from the results listing and/or have a pdf download it is necessary to take up a subscription. There are period options of a month or a year. Straight sign up will be at main rates (about £95 per annum) but BL are almost always offering deals, so I would recommend that one waits for a suitable subscription offer (about £47 for year). Bear in mind the enormous time it takes to trawl through newspapers and then compare the subscription to the cost of time out of work to visit the library and for overnight accommodation, all to suit their opening times, and I think it is great value.

Those with a subscription, as mentioned, are able to open the pages to read on screen which allows a check on relevance. This is best if one's sub is for a particular amount of copying, rather than by time, as

it obviously avoids irrelevant downloads. My choice is to copy anything that seems relevant and then to study closely off-line and at my leisure. Here it should be noted that the BL have taken to scanning in page batches and the copy dialogue should be carefully checked to ensure that one is on the right page (not always the page on screen to be read) before proceeding to download.

Most users will have means to read pdf downloads but those without can readily get any number of read programmes by free download from the internet. The BL file name for every download is in entirely numeric form, starting with a newspaper title code, followed by date, another code, then the page number. One will need to adopt some means of recognising the source because the scanned pages, other than the first, rarely carry the newspaper title. It could be done by maintaining a register of codes and titles but my preference is to alter the file name at point of download to an abbreviated form of the particular newspaper title and keep in matching sub-folders on my memory stick (until transferred to final storage).

Old hands at research will know that words and their meanings change over time and so do place names. An example of mine relates to research on the Corris Railway. The place Aberllefenni has been spelled in about a dozen ways in various newspapers, due to local variation and ignorant journalism. The results have generally been discovered only by parallel searches such as 'slate quarry.' The point is to make sure that one's search word is relevant to the time period and think outside the normal names and try associations. To revert to my Little Eaton example where I found surprisingly few results but got answers under Derby Canal.

The website will probably be valuable to those with specific and narrow search needs, such as particular railway, where a limited subscription could be sufficient to get all that one can. Those with wider interest will perhaps need to exert much self-control to stop delving into subjects that crop up but were not part of one's original agenda. Further frustration is the regular addition of scans by the Library – great for new sources but means that one can never claim to have fully checked a particular source unless one is meticulous in recording every announced addition from the BL. Searches are very time consuming and often with little reward but after some years at this particular coal face I have identified a few dozen pre-1830 railed systems not previously known in any publication. Persevere !

The private property debate

Victoria Owens

In her *RCHS Journal* paper of July 2014, Lucy Lead deftly summarises the steps by which the duke of Bridgewater attempted to ‘remove the statutory protection’ which the 1766 Trent and Mersey Canal Act accorded Sir Richard Brooke.¹ Specifically, the 1766 Act provided that the canal should not pass within 360 yards of Brooke’s home, Norton Priory, and that no ‘Gravel, Sand, Clay or Earth’ was to accumulate anywhere within 500 yards of the house for longer than a year. To the Duke’s contention that the difficulty posed by the ‘Nature and Situation of the Ground, and Springs of Water’ made it ‘absolutely impracticable’ to keep within the course which the Act prescribed, the House gave short shrift.² By happy chance, a brief account of the Members’ actual deliberations survives in the writings of the Anglo-Irish politician and sometime member for Lostwithiel, Sir Henry Cavendish. Although Cavendish’s record does not so much show a debate in progress as give a series of opinions, it nevertheless offers valuable insight into the way in which the landowning Members of Parliament responded to the challenge of canal promotion in the early 1770s.³

From the outset, the members were adamant that the House should not allow itself to be inveigled into capriciousness. One Mr Curzon – probably Assheton Curzon, MP for Clitheroe – emphasised that Sir Richard trusted ‘to the faith of Parliament. ‘If Parliament can one day give, and another day take away’, wondered Curzon, what secure rights could there be for property-owners? Thomas Grosvenor, MP for Chester, saw nothing ‘peevish’ in Sir Richard’s refusal to accommodate the duke; Sir Richard, after all, had never wanted to have the canal ‘go through his grounds.’ Richard Pennant, MP for Liverpool, warned that breaking ‘the faith of parliament’ for one man’s convenience would breach all ‘confidence between ... the public and the legislature.’ Lord Strange – James Smith Stanley, MP for Lancashire – took a subtler view. On the one hand, contemptuously describing the duke as ‘a carrier with privilege on his back’ he deplored all notion ‘that private property should give way to public convenience’; on the other, he recommended referring his petition to a committee for further examination. Indeed, his remark that ‘no canal should be undertaken without a plan so drawn that everyone may know how far he will be injured

[by it]’ is neither unreasonable in itself nor suggestive of total opposition to all artificial inland navigations on principle. Cavendish, incidentally, took care to report his own speech to the House – a speech in which he was at pains, like many other Members, to uphold ‘the faith of Parliament’ while contriving also to show his support for the duke, whom he clearly admired, by suggesting that building the canal in accordance with the statutory terms might not be ‘impracticable at all’ and proposing that its construction ‘be carried on in troughs’. Quite what the Duke made of this ingenious notion no indication survives.

From Cavendish’s overall account, it is clear that the discussion was not entirely one-sided. Richard Rigby, MP for Tavistock, contended that Sir Richard should give way and the ‘plan laid down in the Act [be] accomplished’, regardless of expense while Robert Henley Ongley, MP for Bedfordshire, who took the opposite position to Mr Curzon, openly insisted that ‘Private property should give way to public convenience’, albeit with compensation. Herbert Mackworth, member for Cardiff Boroughs, sided with Brooke in his reluctance to see the canal cut through the Norton woods, but at the same time raised the question of just how far landowners’ influence should run. When he demanded to know whether Brooke should be permitted to ‘control Parliament by his *ipse dixit*’ he called into question how far the Members’ respect for land-owners’ long-established rights should govern their future decisions. Not surprisingly, Mackworth wished to see the Duke’s petition referred to a committee, but the issue he broached gave several MPs matter for reflection. Even before the sight of the ‘two parts of the [duke’s] canal ... waiting to be joined’, while Sir Richard sold off parcel by grudging parcel of land, giving rise to a tedious phase of unloading and re-loading goods on either side of the Norton Priory estate, parliamentary opinion was not wholly uncritical of the baronet’s stance.⁴

Intriguingly, the MPs’ discussion of the Duke’s aspirations also produced some colourful and not entirely complimentary reflections upon the character of his engineer James Brindley. ‘We are to have Mr Brindley’, anticipated a Mr Burrell, adding, in what sounds like rueful recollection, ‘and what an expense

that will occasion!’ Since Cavendish’s Mr Burrell was probably Peter Burrell, not only MP for Totnes but also Surveyor-general of the land revenues of the crown, he may well have encountered Brindley in connection with various other canal Bills. Yorkshireman William Aislabie, Member for Ripon, went so far as to allege that the duke of Bridgewater was in thrall to ‘the projects of a romantic engineer’ – that is to say, a practitioner given to building on an extravagant scale. This charge came to light in the early days of the Barton aqueduct’s construction when scoffers called it a castle in the air. Not only did it re-surface in the form of a grinding pun upon the name of the Harecastle tunnel but John Smeaton recycled it in his 1768 ‘Report on the Forth and Clyde Navigation’, when he suggested that Brindley’s aqueduct plans owed more to a liking for spectacle – ‘riding his hobby-horse’ – than they did to necessity.⁵

At the time of the debate which Cavendish recounts, Brindley’s influence with the Duke and his lavish expenses were side issues. The greater concerns of the House were private property and the faith of parliament, not to mention its annoyance at being asked to reconsider a piece of legislation it had passed only four years previously. Put to the vote, 142 members were in favour of referring the duke’s petition to committee and 175 against. Therefore it failed. As for James Brindley, the business of making surveys for a canal intended to run from Sonning to Isleworth at the behest of the

Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London, and the townsmen of Reading would soon afford a new outlet to his zeal for grand schemes.

References

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2. House of Commons Journal, vol. 32, p.768 (9 March 1770); Hugh Malet, *Bridgewater, the Canal Duke* (Manchester University Press, 1977), p. 124
3. Sir Henry Cavendish, *Debates of the House of Commons during the thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain commonly called the unreported Parliament*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1841) pp. 500–504
4. Lead (2014), p. 81
5. ‘That my brother Brindley should prefer the Printfield passage, I can readily comprehend: a late author has very solidly demonstrated that every man, however so great his genius, has a certain hobby horse that he likes to ride. A large aqueduct bridge over a large river does not happen to be mine, who am of opinion that a given sum of money is as solidly laid out for posterity in cutting through the neck of a hill as in building a bridge to carry water over water, though admirers of the wonderful may not be so loud in their applauses.’ *Reports of the late John Smeaton, F.R.S., made on various occasions in the course of his employment as a Civil Engineer*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, 1812), p. 119

Corrections

‘They flow for country and people’: correspondence

(*RCHS Journal*, November 2014, 197)

I must have drunk too well at Brindley’s water hole, *The Leopard*. This ‘haunted’ pub is in the centre of Burslem, not Leek.

Sorry!

Brian Mills

Closing a line before Beeching: the end of the Whitby–Loftus line

(*RCHS Journal*, November 2014, 149–158)

A very minor correction needs attention: on page 152 (right hand column), in the boxed 5 lines the third line should read ‘Whitby–Loftus’ and not Whitby–Loftus via Battersby.

Mike Williams

Obituary

Hugh John Compton (1928–2014)

Hugh Compton, President in 2004–06 and later Vice President, died suddenly at home on 29 September 2014. His funeral at Woking Crematorium was attended by a dozen or so members and by ‘Old Southeronian’ railway colleagues.

Hugh was born on 12 April 1928 at New Haw, Weybridge, Surrey, probably with an interest in waterways already in his genes; his maternal grandfather owned his own wharf on the Thames at Rotherhithe and was a Freeman of the City of London. However, Hugh was sent away during the war to King’s School, Bruton in Somerset, which had views across to the GWR’s Westbury–Castle Cary line, and here his interest in railways developed. The opportunity for collecting engine numbers was expanded when he caught scarlet fever and was sent to an isolation hospital beside the Somerset & Dorset Joint line. (The numbers passing on that line were written on a slip of paper which was secreted inside his tie, so that it wasn’t destroyed when his belongings were disinfected before he was discharged.) Following a recruiting visit to the school by a representative of the Southern Railway, Hugh was invited to Eastleigh works for interview and medical tests, culminating in a brief audience with Mr Bulleid himself. In the event he did not start on the railway until January 1949 after 2½ years National Service with the Royal Army Service Corps, mainly at the Middle East HQ in Cairo. (In World War I his father had himself served in Egypt in the Imperial Camel Corps.)

He was initially posted to the Southern Region rolling stock records office at London Bridge and used to recall the near panic in the office when Bulleid’s double-deck train had its door handles knocked off by a train on the adjacent line when going round the curve at Borough Market Junction. (Should the M&EE or the Civil engineer take the blame?) After complaining to the chief clerk that he didn’t have enough to do, he was sent on a 6-week typing course at Clapham Junction. Having been warned by fellow students not to show aptitude for

arithmetic, he avoided becoming a booking clerk and was sent to the London West District Traffic Superintendent’s office, then still in wartime wooden huts at Woking. Here he was given a series of jobs, including following-up the causes of train delays, chasing up coal merchants for failing to unload wagons promptly, and preparing documentation for TUCC hearings on branch line closures and withdrawal of facilities at stations. From there he went to the Regional HQ at Waterloo where he progressed through a variety of jobs in the parcels planning organisation, developing an expertise in mechanical handling methods and equipment. This involved him in planning of the Isle of Wight electrification, Sealink services to the Channel Islands and a proposed Victoria–Heathrow link. He took early retirement in 1984.

Hugh joined the Society in its first year, 1954, and remained a very active member to the end. He was a stalwart of the London Group, having been a very long-serving member of its committee and chairman from 1988 to 1998, organising many visits and a number of Society AGM weekends. (The method he devised for applying train-timing techniques to the timetabling of coach tours continues to be useful.) We shall miss his convivial presence at the Group’s meetings.

He made a significant contribution to transport history through his three books – *The Oxford Canal* (David & Charles, 1976), *The Military on English Waterways 1798–1844* (with Antony Carr-Gomm, R&CHS, 1991) and *Isle of Wight here we come: the story of the Southern Railway’s Isle of Wight ships during the war 1939–1945* (Oakwood, 1997) – and over twenty articles, chiefly on aspects of the Thames, the Oxford Canal and the Grand Junction Canal. He was also a frequent lecturer to audiences across Surrey and adjoining counties.

We extend our condolences to his wife, Jane, and family.

GAB

Obituary

Professor John Alfred Blyth Hibbs (1925–2014)

John Hibbs was born in Handsworth, Birmingham, the son of a Congregational minister, on 5 May 1925, but grew up on the Essex coast at Brightlingsea. His secondary education was at Colchester Royal Grammar School and Haileybury College.

Graduating in 1950 from Birmingham University (where his BCom dissertation was on *The place of the motor bus in the rural community*), he joined the Cambridge bus and coach company, Premier Travel, as personal assistant to the managing director. After two years there he was appointed Rees Jeffreys Research Student at the London School of Economics, analysing the economic consequences of the bus licensing system introduced by the Road Traffic Act 1930, for which he was awarded a MSc (Econ).

Returning to management, in 1956 he joined with a fellow Omnibus Society colleague to acquire the business of Corona Coaches at Sudbury, Suffolk, but the death of his partner and the rapid growth of rural car ownership forced him to re-sell it in 1959. In 1961 he joined the British Railways Eastern Region HQ at Liverpool Street as traffic costing officer and then market research officer, gaining experience of the early electronic computers.

Having started teaching on courses for the Workers' Educational Association, he moved in 1967 to full-time teaching and research at the City of London College, where he set up the first UK undergraduate course in Transport Studies. He also established a consultancy practice at this time, which he used to promote his liberal, sometimes radical, ideas on transport deregulation and privatisation. In particular his views were sought by the Liberal Party, of which he was a long-time supporter, and, in the 1980s, by the Conservative government.

In 1973 he moved to the City of Birmingham Polytechnic (now the University of Central England), becoming Director of Transport Studies and

subsequently Professor of Transport Management. In 1987 he was awarded the OBE for services to transport education and in 1990 the university conferred the title of Emeritus Professor.

In parallel with his professional life was his enthusiasm for the history of the British bus industry, of which he has long been regarded as the doyen. He was one of the academics working in other transport fields that Theo Barker invited to join the R&CHS when its objectives were widened to cover related transport modes. The outcome was the formation in 1991 of the Roads & Road Transport History Conference (now Association), with the R&CHS as one of its founder corporate members and John as chairman (and later president).

In 1999 John gave the annual Clinker Lecture at York, *Rail replacement bus services in the Eastern Region 1929–1969*, based on his own rare management experience in both the railway and bus industries. It records that, on John's recommendation, the proposed 'Beeching' closure of the branch to Sudbury was delayed until the effects of it becoming an 'overspill' town could be judged. It is still open.

The list of his writings is very extensive and is as varied as his career and personal interests. His chief contributions to published transport history are his trilogy of David & Charles books, *The History of British Bus Services* (1968, 2nd edition 1989), *The Omnibus: readings in the history of road passenger transport* (1970) and *The Country Bus* (1986); also his *A Country Busman*, a personal account of his involvement with Corona Coaches.

Throughout his multi-faceted life his open, approachable and genial personality was a unifying factor. He can be summed up simply as a very nice man. John died on 7 November 2014 aged 89.

GAB

Obituary

Stephen Lawrence Bragg (1923–2014)

To the rest of the world Stephen Bragg was an eminent engineer from a distinguished family of scientists, who was at home in both industry and academia. Educated at Rugby School, Trinity College, Cambridge and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the long list of his appointments that he recorded in *Who's Who* included Chief Scientist, then Chief Research Engineer, then Director of the Aero Engine Division of Rolls-Royce Ltd 1960–71, Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University 1971–81, and Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge from 1982.

However, further down the list of his appointments, between Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Falsework 1973–75 and Corresponding Member of the Venezuelan Academy of Science 1975, he made the point of inserting 'President, Railway and Canal Historical Society, 1998–2000' and under the heading 'Recreation' his sole declaration was 'Railway history'. For the story of how his early interest in railways, particularly railway geography, was planted and developed, and how he came under the influence of Charles Clinker and thus became one of the very early members of the R&CHS, readers are referred to Stephen's own article that appeared in *Journal* 212 (November 2011).

There was another aspect to his enthusiasm not mentioned in the article. After the end of wartime restrictions on travel, following the example of a friend he began to take every opportunity to travel over every line in Britain still open to passengers. This he completed in 1966. By then he had also travelled over many freight-only lines, particularly on those special trains organised in the 'fifties by W A Camwell. Wherever he went he recorded plans of the tracks and lineside features. Subsequently with the aid of the sketch plans produced by R E Charlewood, chiefly in the 'twenties, and a complete set of 1:2500 OS plans, he was able to produce plans

of all the lines in Great Britain as they had been in the period 1923 to 1948. In (semi) retirement he was able to devote more time to pursuing his personal interests. Continuing his observations of freight-only lines from enthusiast special trains and on foot, by 2000 he reckoned to have visited the site of virtually every station that had ever existed in Great Britain and to have travelled or walked over every accessible track bed in England, if not quite in Wales or Scotland. When failing eyesight prevented him from incorporating new information on his plans, he presented the complete set to the National Railway Museum.

In 1991 Stephen delivered the annual Clinker Memorial Lecture under the intriguing title 'Bizarre Station Layouts', which can be found, together with several of his articles in the pages of the *Journal* between 1982 and 2001. These reveal his special interest in the North Eastern Railway, which dated back to his courtship of a young lady from Darlington – his future wife, Maureen. His last publication was the *North Eastern Railway atlas 1922*, privately published in 2006.

It was in his warm nature to be encouraging and generous in offering help to fellow railway historians. During his presidential years he gave much time to furthering the Society's interests. In more-recent years he gave great encouragement to the development of the *Railway Record of the British Isles*, a digital database of the railway infrastructure from inception to the present day, facilitating, through his Cambridge University contacts, generous funding and software development by Microsoft Research Limited. This was close to his heart as it mirrored his own pioneering efforts. Stephen died on 14 November 2014, aged 90.

GAB

Reviews

***The Longmoor Military Railway: a new history, Volume 2: World War Two and the Cold War era* — Colonel David Ronald & Mike Christensen**

235pp, 280x220mm, approximately 350 b&w photographs, 40 maps & diagrams, hardback, Lightmoor Press, 144b Lydney Industrial Estate, Harbour Road, Lydney GL15 4EJ, 2013, ISBN 978 1 899889 77 8, £25

***The Longmoor Military Railway: a new history, Volume 3: the inevitable closure, locomotives and rolling stock* — Colonel David Ronald & Mike Christensen**

As above except: 283pp, approximately 413 b&w and 47 colour photographs, 33 diagrams, 2014, ISBN 978 1 899889 69 3, £30

These volumes bring to a conclusion the monumental (848 page), and surely definitive, 70-year history of this unique British military training railway. During the period of these volumes it extended some eight miles through Hampshire moorland from Borden to Liss with extensive yards and the unique Hollywater loop line over which continuous long running could be practised. Longmoor taught soldiers to use railways to supply the essential army logistic services before the more flexible motor transport made the railways' role obsolete.

Continuing from Volume 1 (reviewed in the July 2013) the story of the system and its operation is carried through the enormous expansion of the 1930s and 1940s to the slow decline and inevitable closure at the end of the 1960s. The narrative is as comprehensive as practicable given the fluctuating nature of the railway and lost records, particularly for wartime. Developing from the relatively modest early

beginnings to a huge training 'plaything' then to the point when, in the lead up to D-Day, the line became the core of a massive storage area and attained almost the status of a secondary main line.

As with Volume 1, these volumes are almost overfull with excellently produced illustrations and captions. Volume 3 contains a very simple index which, given the length of the three volumes and especially the importance of the illustrations and diagrams, could with advantage have been extended.

The work supplants an earlier book by one of the authors (with a different joint author) published in 1974. Seemingly originally planned as one, then two, then three volumes it has burst its bounds and this shows; better editing and cross-checking of some dates and facts would have been beneficial. None of the volumes should be regarded as freestanding but taken together they are nevertheless a major research and publishing achievement. BRIAN JANES

***Early Railways 5: papers from the Fifth International Early Railways Conference* — David Gwyn (Editor)**

xiv+362pp, 245x170mm, 178 figures (82 colour), 7 tables, hardback, Six Martlets Publishing, 4 Market Hill, Clare, Sudbury CO10 8NN, 2014, no ISBN, £55 including postage

It is difficult to sum up a collection of papers, originally presented in Caernarfon in June 2012, which range so widely – in subject and geographically – as do these. There is perhaps a little less than in previous conferences on pure technology – although a particularly full study of Brunton's enigmatic walking-engine is amongst the papers included – and a little more on the interface between business and technology, including a fascinating study of the Plymouth & Dartmoor Railway's purchase of iron.

The 'International' element is largely represented by a couple of papers from Australasia, and these are among several which warn against adopting a Whiggish view of history: technology transfers

according to local conditions and requirements, and the latest developments are not always the ones that are taken up elsewhere. A few of the papers revisit locations familiar to those with an interest in tramroads, but a glance at the date of the previous references cited shows that these are often due for reassessment.

This series of conferences has advanced our knowledge of railways before the Railway Age to an extent that could hardly have been imagined at the outset, and it is well supported by the presentation of the proceedings, here with greater use of colour in the illustrations. The depth of the indexing of this volume is particularly to be commended in a work that those

Pleasure Boating on the Thames: a history of Salter Bros, 1858 – present day

— Simon Wenham

227pp, 235x150mm, 29 photographs, one map, 50 tables & graphs, paperback, The History Press, The Mill, Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud GL5 2QG, 2014, ISBN 978 0 7509 5833 2, £14.99

Simon Wenham draws on the research undertaken for his Oxford University DPhil thesis. He adopts a thematic approach, which mirrors the evolution of the Salter Bros of Oxford. Chapters on The Sport of Rowing; Boat Building; Thames Pleasure Boating; and Thames Passenger Services are backed up with reviews of Property; The Workforce; and The Family.

The author details how the development of Salters' over the past two centuries fitted within, and contributed to, the socio-economic context of both the Thames and Oxford. He explains how Salters' evolved over more than 150 years and how those in charge overcame some of the difficulties that the business encountered on the way.

Their personal interest in rowing regattas led the Salter brothers into boat building and by 1861 they had become the leading builders of craft for the University Boat Races and for hire by boat clubs. Their market leader status facilitated progression into building a range of other craft, including barges for colleges. Between 1858 and 1980 they completed orders for some 17,000 vessels.

They were paternalistic employers and built up a

property portfolio, which they used to house their staff and to meet their operational needs. Bridging finance, to cover lean times, was achieved by using their property portfolio as security.

Steel craft were first introduced in 1888 when Salters' commenced river passenger services between Oxford and Kingston. Initially the construction of these larger craft was contracted out, but in-house fabrication commenced at an enlarged Iffley yard in 1900. Smaller craft construction continued in its other works. It was not until 1970 that the firm sold its first fibreglass boat. This allowed Salters' to drop its prices and quickly boost sales.

The depression of the 1990s forced Salters' to dispose of its rental fleet and Grandpont yard. In the twenty-first century Salter Bros Ltd became a property company, which was divorced from Salters' Steamers Ltd, which continues providing leisure services in what had become an area of high financial risk.

This book offers a significant contribution to the literature covering the development of the Middle Thames.

ROGER SQUIRES

Railways of the Great War — Colette Hooper with Michael Portillo

240pp, 254x192mm, 159 illustrations, 4 maps, hardback, Transworld Publishers, 61–63 Uxbridge Road, London W5 5SA, 2014, ISBN 978 0 59307 412 1, £20

This is very much a 'book of the TV series', and not the only one in this centenary year to attempt a general summary of the role of railways in what was perhaps the pre-eminent railway war. It is certainly not comprehensive. Even a survey at this level would require more than one volume to encompass that, since its scope is primarily Great Britain and the Western Front, and the reader will search in vain for the strategic importance of the Hejaz Railway or the Miracle Line of Verdun. Nevertheless, the stories which it tells, it tells very well, with many evocative, well chosen and well produced illustrations, at a reasonable price.

After a forward by Michael Portillo and an introduction by the author, the book is divided into five substantial chapters: A Railway War Begins; Rising to the Challenge; Keeping the War Moving; On track to Victory; and Railways and Remembrance – the titles are self explanatory. Each chapter is sub-

divided into a number of thematic sections; thus the first chapter has sections entitled: Europe's Railway War Plans are Born; War by Timetable; A False Start; Railway Sabotage; Mobilization; and Battle of the Marne – Railways and the War of Movement. The text is logical and lucid, with very few gaucheries noted, and it is soundly based, as the useful bibliography makes clear. There is also a comprehensive index.

One of real pleasures of this work, and where few readers will fail to find something that will be new and interesting, is in the vignettes of the interaction between people, war, and railways, which were obviously researched because of their good televisual content, and are not worse for that. The false start to the Schlieffen invasion, the Railway Poet, and the 1928 British Legion Pilgrimage are good examples of these, and there are many more that contribute to an enjoyable read.

***The North British Railway: a history* — David Ross**

287pp, 275x215mm, b&w pictures, 17 maps, 1 diagram, hardback, Stenlake Publishing, 54 Mill Square, Catrine KA5 6RD, 2014, ISBN 978 1 84033 647 4, £30

This is an example of the genre of what I have described in a previous review as ‘modern histories’. A large format provides plentiful pictures, the captions of which, to a greater or lesser extent, add to the actual text. The otherwise excellent index, however, has missed recording information contained in these captions.

Detailed area maps are extremely clear, and most places mentioned in the text are traceable on them (not, unfortunately, a universal attribute of railway histories).

Chronological chapters take the reader through the whole existence of the company, with illustrative statistics at regular intervals. A very short chapter sums up the general ethos and image of the company (mainly parsimonious). The final chapter covers locomotives and rolling stock, eschewing technical detail (‘available elsewhere’) and concentrating on the statistical. Two appendices give a snapshot of staff in 1901, and details of all company-operated ships. There is no family tree of the company, but a detailed timeline. The author’s industry is shown in the extensive footnotes and a bibliography covering every imaginable source.

The content appears to cover every major or not-so-major issue affecting the company throughout its existence. It would help concentration on the major details in the narrative if the extensive footnotes contained not only references but more minor details which were of interest mainly to specialised readers.

The book does lack the human face which would make it more attractive to the generally interested reader. It provides instead pithy summaries, an example of which is ‘If Lord Tweeddale had a particular expertise, it was in the mechanism of the stock market rather than in the operational details of railway management, but Wieland was the prime architect of the North British stock conversion scheme’.

Having said all that, the book is a treasure trove of historical information. Reading it, two examples arose, for example, in relation to my own research interests.

The published details of the Wigtownshire Railway say that Thomas Wheatley, the former locomotive superintendent who virtually saved the company, arrived from the North British under some sort of cloud. This book explains it.

Again, I have long tried to decipher what went on at the NBR goods station above the Caledonian suburban station at Stobcross, to the west of Glasgow centre. Personal information told me of a steep connecting line to the Caledonian, but no published details showed any connection there between the two systems. The references given in this book to the construction of that line would quite possibly lead to a resolution of this question.

This book should therefore be high on the list of any interested member of the Society.

DAVID PEDLEY

***Passenger Steamers of the River Conwy* — Richard Clammer**

224pp, 232x160mm, 127 b&w photographs, 30 line drawings, 2 maps, paperback, The History Press, The Mill, Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud GL5 2QG, 2014, ISBN 978 0 7509 5902 5, £14.99

This book is about a little-known but long-lived service on the River Conwy in Wales. The author, whose main publications have been about passenger steamers in southern England, states that he had not heard of Trefriw Quay or the Conwy steamers until the 1980s. His studies have produced not only a history of the steamers, but a detailed account of navigation on the Conwy and much about Trefriw Spa and tourism.

This service began around 1847, with some connections with canal packet services; the service became seasonal service after 1863, when the railway to Llanrwst opened. The author details the

subsequent tourist development of Trefriw and the expansion of numbers and frequency of boats into the Edwardian period. He shows how wartime disruption fostered decline in the 1930s, until regular services ended in 1959.

This is a history of boats as well as tourist transport, and the curious end of the last Conwy boat, sunk on the Sheffield Canal at Tinsley, is explained. There is much here about the human story, with accounts from visitors and those who worked on the boats. Photographs, maps and careful descriptions evoke an era about which only limited signs remain. Despite the seeming obscurity of its subject, this is a

Glasgow & South Western Railway: a history — David Ross

252pp, 273x210mm, 100 b&w photographs, 8 illustrations, 12 maps, hardback, Stenlake Publishing, 54–58 Mill Square, Catrine KA5 6RD, 2014, ISBN 978 1 84033 648 1, £30

The Glasgow & South Western, generally referred to as the Sou' West but usually as the South Western in this book, was a compact system serving the area encapsulated in its title. It ran via Dumfries to Carlisle, where it connected with its close ally the Midland. Further west it served Ayrshire, with its rich coalfields, and the Clyde coast, and reached Stranraer for the short sea route to Northern Ireland. It competed for some traffic with its larger neighbour the Caledonian, but quietly went about its business in an efficient manner.

This, the fourth similar volume from David Ross on Scottish railway companies, follows his established pattern of recounting the story in chronological order and in considerable detail. Sixteen chapters are devoted to this, starting with the Kilmarnock & Troon Railway in 1793 and concluding with the Grouping. Two chapters then deal with how the company met its traffic needs and the steamer services it ran. The final chapter considers its staff and public relations. A comprehensive set of references and notes is provided.

Whilst the basic chronological structure makes it more difficult to follow a particular thread, it does give the reader a flavour of the hectic life of the manager of a Victorian railway. From the references,

it is clear that the author has trawled extensively through the company's and other records in the National Records of Scotland, together with contemporary newspapers and related published works. The author has succeeded, in my opinion, to marshal all this material into a readable story.

Given that the book is the same size as the companion volumes on the North British and Caledonian, the G&SWR gets a more thorough treatment. We learn more of the commercial aspects of its development, of abortive proposals and discontent among the shareholders.

My comments on the author's Caledonian Railway (*RCHS Journal*, November 2012) regarding the way the publisher has presented the book again apply. The reader can easily miss a line due to the single column format. The majority of photographs have reproduced well, but some were from poor originals which do not justify inclusion.

Nevertheless, the author and publishers deserve to be congratulated on another fine volume on Scottish railway history. Many people may only know of the railway through David L Smith's incomparable 'Tales of the G&SWR' but this book provides the real story.

KEITH FENWICK

Wrexham & Shropshire: Open Access – the one that got away: the inside story of the Wrexham, Shropshire & Marylebone Railway Company, 2006–2011

— Richard Harper & Gordon Rushton

256pp, 274x210mm, 271 colour photos, 5 maps, 34 facsimiles, 15 tables, 5 graphs, Adlestrop Press, 15 Rycroft, Furzton, Milton Keynes MK4 1AH, 2014, ISBN 978 0 9571456 1 0, £33

Both authors of this book were on the management team for this brave and much-appreciated but fated railway operator's launch, and the views of others so involved – including chairman Adrian Shooter – are extensively quoted. This is therefore very much recent history from the inside, but it is also a 'warts and all' portrayal, and does not avoid self-criticism or clear exposition of the circumstances conspiring against the survival of this service.

A less partial editor might have edited out some repetition in the text and removed a few self-indulgences – this will probably remain the only transport history to include a photograph of a slice of rhubarb tart – but the decision to omit no fact is surely correct, bearing in mind the exchange between

the White King and Queen: 'The horror of that moment ... I shall never, *never* forget!' – 'You will, though... if you don't make a memorandum of it.' Any future historian wishing to investigate this episode will probably find more material here than in any official records, should any survive.

This book should be read alongside Hugh Jones's *The Chiltern Railways Story* (2010) to compare with the success story of Wrexham & Shropshire's associated company. It could probably also be read with profit by students of business studies. Perhaps it will also serve as an inspiration for others to set down their recollections of operating railways under the contemporary regulatory regime before time moves on.

MATTHEW SEARLE

***Beyond the Blaydon Races* — Alan Clothier**

424pp, 232x152mm, 84 b&w and colour photographs, 7 drawings, 1 location map, 48 plans (many in colour), hardback, Melrose Books, St Thomas Place, Ely CB7 4GG, 2014, ISBN 978 1 909757 40 0, £29.95

Subtitled 'a history of the waggonways and railways which served industries in the hinterland of Lemington Staiths', this work is the first of an intended series on the history of rail transport in the coalfield of south-east Northumberland. As such, it covers an arc of colliery areas from Wylam in the west to Holywell and Black Callerton in the north via Heddon, Throckley and Walbottle.

Unusually, the book opens with drawings and 48 plans: although easy to find, they cannot therefore accompany the text. The plans are generally very clear with a good use of colour, although a few are too small to be easily legible and two are effectively duplicated. An introduction to the series in general follows in which some telling points are made.

The author has researched extensively the rich Wylam colliery archive which is only now being fully opened. The Wylam waggonway is one of the most fascinating of the early railway period: a wide gauge; the successive use of wood, plate and finally edge rails; pioneering locomotives (two with particularly long working lives); the servicing of industry along the route; and the eventual absorption of part of the waggonway into a main-line railway.

Unfortunately, these core features are seldom discussed here to any substantial degree, and the

underground waggonways are not covered at all. Remarkably, the 'Puffing Billy' locomotives are dismissed in little over a page (and even some of this material is contentious) because, it is stated, others have written on them. As a result, the significance of the Wylam content has been minimalised. Instead, the author's intent to include 'as many different aspects as possible of mining and mineral leading activities' has resulted in dense and sometimes suffocating details of mining operations which seldom inform the core railway picture. Although complementary, production and transport are very different processes and frequently the book reads as a colliery rather than as a railway history. Here, context serves to overwhelm rather than to illuminate: it is telling that of the seven drawings given only two relate to railways.

The other, lesser-known collieries are given somewhat fuller coverage of their railways and overall, the discussion of complex route changes and amalgamations is useful, as are the locations of the numerous (and often short-lived) individual pits. The chapter on existing remains is exemplary. With sharper editing and proofing, but particularly with greater focus and analysis, this may yet be an effective series.

ANDY GUY

***The Royal under the Railway: Ireland's Royal Canal 1830–1889* — Brian J Goggin**

72pp, 234x156mm, 7 b&w photographs, 10 maps (1 in colour) & 5 illustrations, paperback, Railway & Canal Historical Society, 2014, ISBN 978 0 901461 61 2, available from RCHS Book Sales, 4 Broadway, Lincoln LN2 1SH, £10

Opened in 1817, Ireland's Royal Canal was built to link Dublin with the midlands and navigable Shannon. The arrival of the railway age to Ireland in 1834 was the precursor to a demise in the canal's commercial carrying and financial viability. It received a lifeline in 1845 when the recently formed Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR) bought the canal company with the intention of acquiring land it owned and occupied as a route on which to construct a main line railway. The MGWR's plans soon changed and the railway was constructed alongside, rather than over the bed of the canal.

The Royal Canal's history has been well documented in previous books. In his introduction to this recent publication, the author explains the book's contents are to complement previous histories by providing some new topics and further information.

Using online archives and sources he has researched and written about a number of diverse topics relating to the history of the Royal from 1845 onwards, following its acquisition by the MGWR. Eight chapters, each devoted to a specific topic, describe engineering works, canal carrying, boat types, and a surprising source of the finance used by the MGWR to buy the canal. One chapter written by Ewan Price provides a history of each of the Royal Canal's bridges within the city of Dublin. The book has an index and a comprehensive list of notes and references.

The subject material is interesting and the direct style of writing provides an enjoyable and easy read. Unearthing of this latent archive material provides a useful contribution to the histories of the Royal Canal and the MGWR.

GERALD LEACH.

***Fayle's Tramways: clay mining in Purbeck* — Chris Legg**

167pp, 280x210mm, 225 illustrations, 16 maps, hardback, Twelveheads Press, 2 Woodside Cottages, Chasewater, Truro TR4 8LP, 2014, ISBN 978 0 906294 79 6, £28

The Purbeck peninsula has long produced excellent ball clay for the pottery industry. In 1803 Benjamin Fayle, having taken over the ball clay mines at Norden and Norton, constructed a plateway a little over three miles long from Norden to Poole Harbour at Middlebere, the gauge being about 3ft 6in. This plateway continued operating until 1907. By 1830 a second isolated plateway about 1¼ miles long had been constructed from mines at Norton to a wharf at Goathorn. Small sailing barges of 20 or 30 tons burthen took the clay from Middlebere and Goathorn across to Poole for shipment.

The Goathorn plateway was converted into an edge railway in 1854 and a new pier was constructed into deeper water. Then in 1868 *Tiny*, the first steam engine built by the Poole Foundry, was bought to work on the Goathorn railway, the track being relaid to 3ft 9in gauge. A lightly constructed 3ft edge rail system developed at Norden around the various mines and the heaps where the clay was weathered; it also linked with the interchange sidings on the London & South Western Railway's Swanage Branch which had opened in 1885.

In 1907 the original Middlebere plateway was made redundant by the building of a new railway five miles

across the heath from Norden to the Goathorn railway. This line closed in 1939, leaving just the network around Norden. Then in 1948 the network was rebuilt to 1ft 11½in gauge and new locomotives bought. The railway finally closed in 1972 though mining for clay continued. This complex story is sometimes difficult to follow, and a chronological appendix would have helped.

The book is much more than the story of the railways. It is a comprehensive history of the business: the opencast and underground mines, how they were worked, the clay products, the boating links to Poole and beyond, the key personalities involved, and the economic aspects. The research is exemplary, not only from archives but also from photographs, mapping and oral sources.

There is an extensive bibliography and an index but sources are not referenced, possibly because most are not in the public domain. As always from this publisher, production quality is high: the book is well laid out and the photographic reproduction excellent. It can be strongly recommended to anyone interested in the industrial history of southern England or in narrow-gauge industrial railways.

PETER BROWN

***A Very Political Railway* — Wayne Asher**

184pp, 240x175mm, 20 monochrome & 32 colour illustrations, 6 maps & diagrams, hardback, Capital Transport, Ground Floor, 117 Old Roar Road, St Leonards-on-Sea TN37 7HD, 2014, ISBN 978 1 85414 378 5, £19.95

At the end of World War II the North London Line was in poor shape. Although the core passenger service from Broad Street to Richmond was still running, much of the rolling stock was 30 years old and many of the Victorian station buildings were semi-derelict and too large for the remaining traffic. The peripheral services to Poplar, Kew Bridge and Earls Court had been suspended 'for the duration' and were never resumed.

Subtitled 'The Rescue of the North London Line', the book starts with a brief historical outline to 1945. This is followed by ten chronological sections which bring the story up to date. The complex and often negative interplay between British Railways and various national and local governmental bodies, notably the Boroughs of Islington and Hackney, is clearly related. The BR Property Board was also anxious to dispose of the site of Broad Street Station. However, although the creation of interchange with

the Victoria Line at Highbury in 1968 is mentioned, its effect on the North London Line's traffic is, surprisingly, not considered.

For much of the period the gradual rundown of train services and the repeated threat of closure mean that the story is a depressing one. However, there was one positive factor – the rise of local campaign groups, certain of which were remarkably successful. The final section of the book is, understandably, more upbeat than the rest in that it tells the story of the line's recent upgrading as part of London Overground, leading to an unprecedented growth in traffic.

The author has made good use of the resources of the National Archives and the London Metropolitan Archives. The book is well written and will appeal to anyone who knows the area, or wishes to learn something of the complex machinations of railway-related politics. It includes a bibliography and index.

British Rail: the nation's railway — Tanya Jackson

256pp, 233x155mm, 23 colour & 41 monochrome illustrations, paperback, The History Press, The Mill, Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud GL5 2QG, 2014, ISBN 978 0 7509 6076 2, £14.99

This is a wide-ranging review of the fortunes of British Rail(ways) from its creation in 1948 to privatisation in 1994, concentrating mainly on passenger services. Aimed at the general reader, it is a good survey of its subject.

The first chapter summarises British railway history down to 1948. The remaining 13 chapters, in broadly chronological order, then look at particular themes. We start with nationalisation and the shortcomings of the BTC and the Railway Executive. Some of the long-vanished features of the 'old' railway – excursion traffic, through carriages and the like – are then examined, followed by the 1955 Modernisation Plan and its (expensive) failings.

Closures, both passenger and freight, inevitably feature in the 1960s. The introduction of the Corporate Image in 1965 is then considered. Chapter 7 focuses on technical developments, particularly improvements in bogie design and riding quality, leading to the introduction of the HST and the (unsuccessful) APT.

The 1968 Transport Act and the increasing

problems of recruitment are then examined, together with the problems of London, including the development of Thameslink. The 1980s included the introduction of new rolling stock; the electrification of the East Coast Main Line; and the final go-ahead for the Channel Tunnel. Safety is next on the list, including the introduction of AWS and references to a number of serious accidents including those at Hither Green and Hixon. Finally the various options for privatisation are considered.

The main conclusions, in Chapter 14, are that British Rail took too long to get a grip on its escalating costs; that the Regional structure was retained well beyond its 'sell-by date'; and that the pre-1948 companies, had they survived, could not have coped with the changes and challenges of the 1960s.

The book's tone is generally serious but there are occasional tongue-in-check asides. Much of the content is based on the relevant issues of *Modern Railways* and on contemporary articles and interviews. Sources are referenced but there is no bibliography as such.

GRAHAM BIRD

The English Railway Station — Steven Parissien

164pp, 285x266mm, 225 illustrations, hardback, English Heritage, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH, 2014, ISBN 978 1 84802 236 2, £25

A more appropriate title might be 'Building Styles of English Railway Stations' and, as such, the text provides a somewhat breathless introduction for the uninitiated – not RCHS members. An abridged version might provide a suitable introduction for a proper old-fashioned Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England volume, which would then have been completed with lots of plans, diagrams and detailed drawings. Instead we get not a single track plan, engineering drawing or building plan. There is no discussion of the ways in which different classes of waiting and refreshment rooms, together with staff accommodation, could be fitted into a limited space. The extant Manchester terminal of 1830 is mentioned in passing as 'little more than a stuccoed house', yet surely its layout is worth discussing. It might have been enlightening to show large stations at different stages in their development.

There are some excellent photographs of station facades, but others, such as Richmond (Yorkshire)

and St Pancras, aim for artistic atmosphere rather than information. Too many buildings are obscured behind a footbridge (Bradford-on-Avon), canopy (Wolferton) or porte cochère (Burton-on-Trent). Others are photographed from the far end of a platform, so that it is difficult to discern why Charlbury is 'important' or to see the 'Wrennian' style of Hatch End, for example.

The cut-price shelters of the 1950s and later are rightly condemned as architecture, but Coventry Station (1962) is described as 'an imaginative template for the larger station', a fact which cannot be discerned from the single, dull grey, photograph.

In summary, a disappointment after English Heritage's excellent *Carscapes*, last year's RCHS Transport Book of the Year. Instead it is (almost) a larger and updated version of Christian Barman's groundbreaking monograph *Introduction to Railway Architecture* (1950), but with less well-chosen illustrations.

DENNIS HADLEY

***The Development of Railway Financial Statements, 1827–1948* — Tony Sheward**

164pp, A4, Gostwick Press, 2014, ISBN 970 0 9565663 4 8, available from the author at 6 Grange Way, Willington, Bedford MK44 3QW, £15 (plus £2.80 p&p)

Railway accounts were progressively standardised by Acts in 1845, 1868 and 1911; other returns including financial information were required by legislation passed in 1840, 1844, 1866, 1871, 1888 and 1928. This was far in advance of general company accounting, where it was not until 1929 that there was a requirement to publish a profit & loss account as well as a balance sheet. Similarly for auditing: railways, 1867; companies, 1901. In the 1840s the main concern was whether railway companies were paying dividends out of capital rather than out of clear profits. The question in the 1860s was whether the companies' commitments exceeded their authorised capital. By the 1880s, the issues were potential abuses of monopoly power and hidden subsidies of ancillary businesses such as shipping.

The first third of the book outlines how and why railway financial statements developed, using six companies to illustrate the changes, comparisons being made with the requirements of the Companies Acts. The rest gives examples of the statements (but without figures inserted).

The book provides an interesting insight into this relatively unexplored aspect of railway (and accounting) history, showing how the developments were driven by government requirements rather than by shareholders or by railway managements. Indeed, one wishes it went a little further: did the Board of Trade actually use the extensive information provided to it? And is there any evidence of anyone using the comparative data for investment appraisals or to improve efficiency?

PETER BROWN

***The Eden Valley Railway* — Robert Western**

128pp, A5, 99 photographs, 20 maps & illustrations, paperback, Oakwood Press, P O Box 13, Usk NP15 1YS, 2014, ISBN 978 0 85361 735 8, £9.95

In the 1850s local promoters of a railway project running through the Eden Valley were anxious to maintain the importance of the market town of Appleby, the county town of Westmorland, which at that time was at risk of losing economic and social importance as a result of the opening in 1846 of the Lancaster & Carlisle Railway's (L&CR) main line through the Lune Valley and over Shap Fell to Carlisle. Initially the L&CR was cautious and defensive in response to the request of the Eden Valley Railway (EVR) for their line to connect with the L&CR line at Penrith, particularly as the EVR was also negotiating with the embryonic South Durham & Lancashire Union Railway, a potential competitor, which was planning a railway line from Durham over the northern fells to get access to the iron ore and

coal deposits in West Cumbria. Eventually the EVR's promoters were successful in achieving their original aim and in 1862 the EVR opened as a 22 mile branch running between Kirkby Stephen and Clifton Junction, where it connected to the L&CR south of Penrith.

Oakwood Press first published a definitive history of the line in 1997 which has long been out of print. This second edition updates the original and includes an additional chapter describing the formation and activities of two separate railway preservation groups which, over the past twenty years, have brought about a revival in the line's destiny with trains operating along parts of the branch. The book succeeds in providing a full history of the line. It is an interesting and enjoyable read and is well illustrated.

GERALD LEACH

***Railway Accidents* — Greg Morse**

72pp, A5, 71 illustrations, paperback, Shire Publications, P O Box 883, Oxford OX1 9PL, 2014, ISBN 978 0 74781 371 2, £7.95 (e-book also available)

Shire has done it again, that is by outlining so concisely and yet, considering its scale, so comprehensively, an aspect of railway history. The secret, I suppose, lies in the well chosen and well reproduced

illustrations ('one picture equals a thousand words'). There have of course been previous surveys of railway accidents, notably Tom Rolt's *Red for Danger*, first published in 1955. This volume generally covers

much of the same ground, if inevitably with many fewer disasters discussed. The story ends in 1990, with Clapham Junction (1988), consideration of which starts and finishes the book, and the slightly later Purley and Bellgrove accidents. Morse shows how disasters led to action, sometimes compulsory, which afforded greater safety. Absolute safety from accident may be impossible of achievement: as Clapham Junction and others since 1988 show, we can never be complacent.

Greg Morse doubtless found helpful his germane experience in the rail industry. I found few questionable points, though the 75 fatalities quoted for the Tay bridge disaster, long accepted as the death toll, has recently been challenged from official sources and may be fewer than 60.

There is a useful 'Further reading' page and an index. Strongly recommended as a brief introduction to its subject, as are Shire booklets generally.

PHILIP L SCOWCROFT

***The Steam Workshops of the Great Western Railway* — Ken Gibbs**

207pp, 233x158mm, 154 illustrations, 6 diagrams & 47 plans, The History Press, The Mill, Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud GL5 2QG, 2014, ISBN 978 0 7509 5912 4, £16.99

Swindon is briefly mentioned, but the bulk of the work surveys the other workshops including those acquired through takeovers, especially through the 1923 Grouping. It also includes some workshops which formed part of locomotive depots. No attempt appears to have been given to apportioning the size of sections in the book to the significance of the works: thus the works at Carn Brea, belonging to the West Cornwall Railway, receive nearly as much attention as Oswestry works.

The illustrative material is extensive and well reproduced, but the book lacks an index and the physical structure lacks clarity. Thus the works at Cirencester Watermoor inherited from the Midland & South Western Junction Railway appear to have been omitted, but are found in a table on page 16.

One of the great strengths of the plans is that they

show the popularity of round-houses for garaging locomotives on the Great Western. Brief details are given of the manufacturers who supplied locomotives to the Great Western, but this topic is much more fully covered in Lowe's *British Steam Locomotive Builders*.

In summary, this is an attractive book yet suffers from a lack of organization as will be shown by one final example: on pages 155–6 there is a plan and two photographs of the road motor workshop at Slough; how much better it would have been if those pages covered the missing Cirencester. KEVIN JONES

[Editor's note: *British Steam Locomotive Builders* by James Lowe has recently been republished by Pen & Sword. First published in 1975, in its 704 pages it details some 350 builders, their histories and products. ISBN 978 1 47382 289 4. Price £30.]

***The Hellingly Hospital Railway* — Peter A Harding**

32pp, 55 photographs, 2 diagrams & 3 maps, A5, published by the author, Mossgiel, Bagshot Road, Knaphill, Woking GU21 2SG, reprinted with amendments 2014, ISBN 978 0 9509414 5 5, £4 (plus 50p p&p)

In recent years there have been several books on railways built to serve Victorian lunatic asylums which were often built in rural settings. These railways, first laid during the construction of an institution, were subsequently used to take staff, patients and relatives to and fro, import coal for the boilers and bulky items for the kitchen, and, for some, to export the produce of a hospital farm.

The 1¼ mile line from Hellingly Station, on the LBSCR line from Eridge to Polegate, was initially steam hauled but in 1902 it was electrified. The motive power was a small steeple-cab locomotive for goods traffic and a twelve-seat tramcar for the passengers;

both took current from an overhead cable. Electricity came from the asylum's power plant, a system similar to that at Cheddleton Hospital. The route and use of the line is related, culminating in a gradual run down and demolition in the 1960s.

Perhaps one of the earliest books on these diminutive private lines, this brief volume first appeared in 1989. This reprint includes a few hitherto unseen photographs and a description of what scant remains survive in summer 2014. To include this new material and yet keep the same number of pages, some of the photographs are now quite small. On the other hand, many of them have been improved by lightening them.

JOHN HOWAT

***A history of the Hull and Scarborough railway* — John F Addyman & Bill Fawcett (editors)**

152pp, A4, 154 photographs, 12 line drawings and 35 maps & plans (some coloured), hardback, published for North Eastern Railway Association by Kestrel Railway Books, PO Box 269, Southampton SO30 4XR, 2013, ISBN 978 1 905505 30 2, £24.95

The North Eastern Railway Association's *A History of the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway, 1824 to 1870* won the RCHS Transport History Book of the Year award in 2010. This was soon followed by *A History of the Newcastle & Berwick Railway*, and now we have this companion volume on one of the NER's lesser lines, published in a similar format and to the same high standard of production.

The editors have wisely adopted a thematic structure, which makes for both an easy first reading and a convenient source of reference. Introductory chapters dealing with the promotion and construction of the line are followed by a series of chapters which allow full scope for Bill Fawcett to record his encyclopaedic knowledge of G T Andrews's initial architectural designs and the subsequent alterations at each individual station, as well as the passenger and goods traffics that they handled. (It should be noted that this book does not deal with the stations at each end of the line at Hull, Seamer and Scarborough, which had already been opened on earlier

lines.) The story is completed with chapters on passenger and goods train services, signalling, level crossings, 'other railways to be or not to be', and the proposed closure of the line. This last-mentioned chapter caught my attention, partly because it makes use of a file of local authority papers, not a source that is usually quoted in 'Beeching' studies, and because it apparently reveals BR opposing its own closure proposal.

The main achievement of this railway was the growth and development of Bridlington and Filey to cater for the seaside holiday business, which the line was largely responsible for creating. The ultimate manifestation of this was the branch built to serve Butlin's Holiday Camp. Although these are not ignored, they might have merited a chapter of their own, taking in more of their economic and social aspects.

The NERA has a reputation for publishing thoroughly-researched, well-written studies. This latest is no exception. GRAHAME BOYES

Rescued from Obscurity: the continuing story of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal

— Richard Skeet

200pp, A5, illustrated throughout in colour, paperback, Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust, 2014, available from H&G Sales and Promotion, 18 Coningsby Court, Coningsby Street, Hereford HR1 2DF, ISBN 978 0 9929441 0 0, £10 (plus £2 p&p)

The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Navigation got its Act in 1791 to link the cathedral cities of Gloucester (on the River Severn) and Hereford (on the River Wye), although the canal was not to connect directly with the River Wye but terminated at a basin in the north-east of Hereford. The route was to pass via Ledbury and Newent's nascent coalfield on the edge of the Forest of Dean. By 1798 the sixteen miles from Gloucester to Ledbury and the 1½ mile coalfield branch were open. Driving Oxenhall Tunnel had taken up a third of the budget and all had been spent when only half way to Hereford. The coalfield failed compared with the better quality Forest coal that could now be carried to Ledbury by water from Lydney via Gloucester.

Hereford was finally reached in 1845 by which time the railway age had arrived. The canal was leased to

the GWR who planned to convert the Ledbury to Gloucester section to railway. True to the rest of the canal's history this took its time and the canal was not officially closed until 1881.

The canal then slept for 100 years until 1979 when its historian David Bick proposed restoring a short section. The second half of this splendid little new book describes compellingly how since that time the canal trust has been able to raise funds for a variety of projects all to further the cause of creating a waterway amenity between the two cities.

The book is in full colour with interesting photographs, reconstructions and well-drawn maps. Its first half includes many extracts from primary documents and newspapers and these are included in colour-filled panels – a device that allows the text to flow and makes the whole a joy to read.

STEPHEN ROWSON

***Fife's Last Days of Colliery Steam* — Tom Heavyside.**

48 pp, 240x173mm, paperback, 50 illustrations, 1 map, Stenlake Publishing, 54–58 Mill Square, Catrine KA5 6RD, 2014, ISBN 978 1 84033 673 3, £9

This pictorial book illustrates the colliery traffic in Fife. Photographs, which are well reproduced on glossy paper and date generally from the 1960s and early 1970s, are a mixture of action and static shots. Inevitably some are of withdrawn locos, but there are also interesting shots inside the workshops. Much colliery detail is visible. Separate sections cover the NCB systems and the Wemyss Private Railway, which managed to escape nationalisation.

Captions are excellent, not only describing the

scenes but also detailing much of the mining history of this important coalfield. We are reminded how much was invested in the coalfield in the 1950s and early 1960s. New pits were sunk and facilities modernised at existing ones in the expectation that coal had a long term future.

The book would have benefited from a map showing the locations of the various collieries. There is only a plan of the Wemyss line. Apart from that, a pleasure to browse through. KEITH FENWICK

***Glamorgan's Lost Railways* — Peter Dale**

112pp, 276 x 212mm, 171 b&w photographs, paperback, Stenlake Publishing, 54–58 Mill Square, Catrine KA5 6RD, 2014, ISBN 978 1 84033 674 0, £16

Glamorgan's dense and complex railway network is often puzzling to those who do not know the area. Peter Dale has done his best to explain it by considering the area on a line by line basis, providing a brief history of each route together with a list of stations with changes of name and closure dates. There are, nevertheless, a few omissions such as the line from Aberdare to Bwllfa Dare which carried a workmen's service up to 1949; Hirwaun Pond Halt, an untimetabled station that was open to the public till 1964, is also unlisted.

It is impossible to ignore the opening sentence of the book which says 'Glamorgan is now part of the county of Gwent'. This bizarre error seems inexplic-

able but after that the book does improve markedly, although, in another misunderstanding, the author states the Barry Docks are named after the civil engineer, John Wolfe Barry. That is just a coincidence of names and it is more likely that the town of Barry is named after the Welsh saint, St Baruc, who is buried nearby. Landore High Level is identified in the caption as the Low Level station; Skewen station is misidentified as Roath, Cardiff. The closing date for Dowlais Junction station is exactly a hundred years adrift but that is presumably a 'typo'.

Probably the main attraction of this book is the photographs which, although some are familiar, have reproduced well and come from a wide range of dates.

RICHARD COULTHURST

***Trent Navigation Company Gauging Books, 1799–1919* — Hywel Maslen (editor)**

112pp, A5, paperback, Derbyshire Record Society, 9 Owen Falls Avenue, Chesterfield S41 0FR, 2014, ISBN 978 0 946324 01 8, £10

This Occasional Paper produced for the Derbyshire Record Society is part of a wider project to detail the history of the Trent Navigation. Its main content is an index to all the builders, owners and masters of boats registered by the Trent Navigation Company. Dr Maslen has tracked down and brought together all of these records, which were previously scattered in various collections. In a thoughtful introduction, he explains the basis of the system set up after 1798: it produced a means by which the river company could control the output at various canal-connected collieries, by allocating the amounts that could be carried. This system remained in place, despite railway competition, until 1919.

What is provided comprises partly-refined raw materials, which should answer many family history and 'boat genealogy' queries, but may also be used for more general transport history research. While it is commendable that details of such materials are published rather than left in raw form in record offices and other collections, it may be that this publication will be one of the last of its kind. Its contents would lend themselves ably to electronic form, accessible via the internet, perhaps on a subscription basis. Nevertheless this is a useful publication based on commendable research effort. JOSEPH BOUGHEY

***How Remote Was Our Valley Before Canal & Railway* — Peter Deeley**

138pp, A5, 15 pictures, paperback, published by the author, 2 Knapton's Croft, Market Square, Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire OX25 5NR, 2014, no ISBN, £5 (plus £1.25 p&p)

This is a very unusual book and a very interesting one. It is unusual firstly because it is privately published by the author. This leads to some manageable eccentricities in the layout and content such as the absence of an index and the fact that the picture captions are nowhere near the pictures. There is a good bibliography.

The subject is the Cherwell Valley as it passes through the Heyford villages, Upper and Lower, north

of Oxford. The book shows how the canal and the railway came into being. The influence of their arrival on the people of these villages and their occupations are perceptively described and analysed.

The author's research is seriously impressive. For example, the influence of the local gentry/landowners is fully covered. Contrasting personalities and what they did are the stuff of literature. Here we have both.

MARTIN BARNES

***The Abandoned & Vanished Canals of England* — Andy Wood**

224 pp, 233x155mm, 9 photos (including cover), paperback, Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud GL5 4EP, 2014, ISBN 978 1 4456 3916 1, £19.99 (e-book also available)

Forty-three years ago Ronald Russell's book *Lost Canals of England and Wales* awakened (for me at least) an interest in exploring derelict canals. Some of the waterways described in 1971 have been restored to navigation whereas others have disappeared more or less completely as a result of urban development or landscaping. This is a timely volume which, to a degree, expands and updates Russell's seminal work.

One hundred and one canals are documented alphabetically, each with a brief history, sourced from internet and published works of the last 50 years. For some there is a note of what might still be expected to be seen (often very little). Many of the waterways may be unfamiliar to all but the fervent enthusiast; included are obscurities such as the Adelphi, Exeter & Crediton, Woodseaves and Petworth Canals. Surprisingly there are many notable omissions. The St Columb, Ulverston, Hereford & Gloucester and Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canals are amongst those

overlooked, as are the extremities of the Lancaster – it is not clear what merits inclusion in this book.

There are no maps but instead the author has provided grid references suggesting that the reader consults maps online. I contend that this is a mistake, as for many, in the field, or sometimes even at home, this will prove impractical: maps showing the location of the less well-known enterprises would have been useful. Furthermore specific maps of the Arbury canals and those around Newcastle-under-Lyme, east Shropshire and the lost branches of the Ashton Canal would have made the text easier to follow. More photographs would have been nice.

In summary: a book with potential, but disappointing in execution. Despite these reservations I enjoyed the book as it drew my attention to canals I was unaware of. Hopefully the author will be encouraged to produce a further volume covering the rest of mainland Britain and perhaps Ireland.

JOHN HOWAT

***Waterways of the West Midlands* — Robert Davies**

192pp, 235x160 mm, 198 b&w photographs, 7 line drawings, 3 maps, paperback, The History Press, The Mill, Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud GL5 2QG, 2014, ISBN: 978 0 7509 6004 5, £14.99

This book comprises a miscellany around waterways in the West Midlands area. Opening with a chapter on the history of Stourport, it includes accounts of the author's experiences walking the Severn Way between Pool Quay (near Welshpool) and Bridgnorth, and portraits of Stratford-upon-Avon, Fradley and Fazeley. There are chapters on the pottery manufacturer Josiah Wedgwood and John Corbett,

the 'salt king'. One on water management draws upon a visit to the Bradley depot from which the hydrology of the Birmingham canals system is monitored and controlled. Another discusses horse-boating 'yesterday and today', with limited reference to the Midlands.

Perhaps the most interesting chapters for the student of history are two that recount the

experiences of former boatmen. The account of Jim Edwards, who operated mostly on the Shropshire Union Canal in the interwar period, is informative and insightful. That of Charlie Foster, who carried mostly in the West Midlands area between the 1920s and 1967, transcribes a handwritten account by Mr Foster himself, and it would have been interesting for this to be set in context.

Many of the illustrations are modern photographs

***The Davington Light Railway: a World War 1 narrow gauge railway in Kent* — M Minter Taylor**

48pp, A5, 41 b&w photographs, 3 maps and 2 diagrams, paperback, Oakwood Press, PO Box 13, Usk NP15 1YS, second revised edition 2014, ISBN 978 0 85361 734 1, £7.95

Faversham in Kent was for centuries a main centre of the explosives industry. By the twentieth century this had consolidated at a works originally founded by Huguenot migrants away from the town on the Swale marshes near Oare Creek in the parish of Davington, reliant on coastal sea transport.

The war caused it to expand greatly and workers, particularly women, were drafted in from a wide area. To alleviate the three-mile muddy walk across the marshes from Faversham station, lorries were used at first but proved inadequate. In the autumn of 1916, using Emergency Powers, a light railway was built from the outskirts of Faversham to the works with an unusual, for the United Kingdom, 3ft 3in gauge.

The railway, which for reasons unclear was

and these and historic ones have reproduced well, although clarity about dates would have been helpful.

Unfortunately, the text is marred by many errors in drafting and proof-reading. Thus Robert Aickman has become 'Alan Aikman', whilst 'Bunberry Locks' have replaced Bunbury Locks. A useful chapter about the Walsall historian Jack Haddock confuses the author's words and those of A P Herbert's Mr Haddock.

Nevertheless, the essays are entertaining, if somewhat miscellaneous. JOSEPH BOUGHEY

***narrow gauge railway in Kent* — M Minter**

operated by the Admiralty, and the specially built rolling stock are fully described. Perhaps the most unusual aspect of operating was that some trains were entirely segregated for the exclusive use of men or women. Plans to connect it to the main line never matured. The line was short-lived, closing in 1920, and together with most of the works was disposed of and sold.

Three of the locomotives associated with the line and works miraculously survive, preserved in Brazil and Wales; their tales are fully told.

In this enlarged edition the author has dug as deeply as possible into this short-lived and secretive railway. Recommended for those interested in ephemeral light railways with interesting characteristics.

BRIAN JANES

***Brunel's Bridges* — John Christopher**

96pp, 235x165mm, 146 illustrations, paperback, Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud GL5 4EP, 2014, ISBN 978 1 4456 3995 6, £14.99 (also available as e-book)

The fascination with Brunel continues. This latest arrival on the Brunel bandwagon is justified by the 150th anniversary of the opening of Clifton Suspension Bridge at Bristol in 1864.

This slim volume, presumably intended for the popular non-specialist market, has two particular merits. It is profusely illustrated by early photographs and prints, many little known, and some splendid colour photography from the author's own camera. Secondly, it provides a concise summary of Brunel's bridge works, including some useful hints on ease of access or otherwise.

Following an introductory piece there are four chapters on various types of bridges: suspension, brick and stone, iron, and timber. The last is scanty considering that Brunel built or designed well over 400 wooden bridges and viaducts. There is no index, understandably with so short a text. Instead of a bibliography there is 'Further reading', which surprisingly omits three authoritative works: John Binding's *Brunel's Cornish Viaducts* (1993) and *Brunel's Royal Albert Bridge* (1997) and *Brunel's Timber Bridges and Viaducts* by Brian Lewis (2007).

GORDON BIDDLE

Glasgow Underground: The review of this book in the last *Journal* said that the tracks were 4 feet apart. To clarify this, it was of course the rails which were 4 feet apart.

Brief Notes

The Great Western Railway, Volume 2: Bristol to Plymouth

— Stanley S Jenkins & Martin Loader

128pp, 170x248mm, 260 photographs, 2 maps, paperback, Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud GL5 4EP, 2014, ISBN 978 1 4456 3942 0, £16.99

About half of the photographs are from the steam era, illustrating every station on the route between Bristol and Plymouth. The rest are from the diesel era, many in colour, a significant proportion of them

being of railtours hauled by preserved steam or diesel locomotives. The majority of the photographs are quite small, typically 67x106mm; fifteen are full page. Each has a detailed narrative.

The following 'Middleton' books: 96pp, 236x166mm, about 120 photographs plus maps, timetables, tickets etc, hardback, Middleton Press, Easebourne Lane, Midhurst GU 9AZ, £17.95 (post free)

Branch Lines around Market Drayton

— Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith

2014, ISBN 978 1 908174 67 3

The line from Wellington through Market Drayton to Nantwich completes Middleton's encyclopaedic survey of the Great Western Railway which has taken 21 years. During this time images of few stations have eluded the researchers – one such is the short-lived (1935–41) Little Drayton Halt. Did nobody ever photograph it? A third of this volume is devoted to the North Staffordshire Railway's branch from Stoke-on-Trent, a complex of largely industrial lines serving Newcastle-under-Lyme, Silverdale, Apedale and Audley, and a quiet rural section westwards.

Berwick to Drem

— Roger Darsley & Dennis Lovett

2014, ISBN 978 1 908174 64

This 'Scottish Main Lines' volume covers part of the North British section of the East Coast Main Line and branches to Eyemouth, Dunbar Maltings and North Berwick. The section from Berwick to Reston duplicates the publisher's St Boswells to Berwick book, but features completely different photographs and captions. The main industrial traffic originated around Oxwellmains, but the differently-dated maps on the duplicated section show how little this rural area changed over the decades.

Birmingham to Tamworth and Nuneaton

— Vic Mitchell

2014, ISBN 978 1 908174 63 5

This collection of photographs covers the original Birmingham & Derby Junction line from Birmingham as far as Tamworth and the branch connecting with the London & Birmingham at Hampton in Arden. It

also covers the later line from Water Orton to Nuneaton. Captions are detailed and informative. Nearly all the pictures are from the post WW2 era. The picture of a rebuilt 'Royal Scot' hauling a coal train from Kingsbury Colliery was a catch.

Birkenhead to West Kirby and on to Hooton

— Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith

2014, ISBN 978 1 908174 61 1

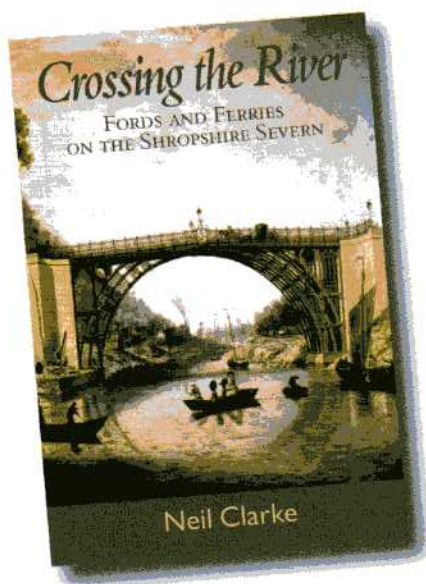
The Birkenhead to West Kirby line, described in slightly over half the book, has become a busy electrified commuter route. In contrast, the L&NWR and GWR joint line from Hooton to West Kirby declined into a rural branch and closed before the Beeching era. In addition Birkenhead docks are the subject of ten photographs and two maps, and a further five views show a modern tourist attraction, the Wirral Heritage Tramway.

Spalding to Grimsby

— Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith

2014, ISBN 978 1 908174 65 9

The East Lincolnshire line was the original route from Peterborough to Grimsby but closed entirely in 1970. The book picks up the route at Spalding with some pictures showing what an impressive station this was in its heyday but the bulk of the book is taken up with illustrations of small wayside stations where an old lady and a few bags of potatoes formed the weekly traffic. After a diversion to Boston Docks and a good few pictures around Firsby, there are some pictures of Louth, followed by the peculiarly unlovely Grimsby Town. Finally a few pictures of the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway, which might be more accurately called the Lincolnshire Marsh Railway as it isn't in the Wolds.



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Crossing the River Fords and Ferries on the Shropshire Severn by Neil Clarke

This book arose from a series of three annual lectures the author gave in recent years to joint meetings of the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum and Broseley Local History Society.

His initial interest had been river crossings in the Ironbridge Gorge, but he discovered that although the bridges had been well documented, there was little to be found on the earlier crossings. This appeared to be the case for the rest of the county, unlike other counties through which the Severn flowed.

In Montgomeryshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire works had been published on their fords and ferries. He felt the need to rectify this omission and put Shropshire on the fords and ferries map and this book is the result.

64 pages 25 illustrations, 4 in colour ISBN 978 0 901461 62 9 paperback
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