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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT ANNUAL MEETING, 1960.

From the point of view of the members of this Society - and certainly of its President - it is, perhaps, one of the disadvantages of our established procedure that the President may, if he is lucky or sufficiently thick-skinned, continue in office year by year almost indefinitely. That is a very bleak and forbidding prospect for all of us, and I am not sure it is wise to allow it.

But I beg you to consider the President's dilemma - or two dilemmas, I should say. He has to decide in his own mind whether he still has the confidence of the members or when he is no longer fulfilling his duties properly, whatever be the cause - incapability, illness or lack of time. It is no easy matter, I assure you, to have to decide whether or not one should accept office for a further year, knowing that by staying on some member better fitted for this elevated position may be kept out - possibly for ever.

The second dilemma is hardly less acute. Usage and tradition call for a Presidential Address each year - an address which, though unanswerable in open discussion, shall stimulate thought on some aspect of railway and canal history, suggest a new approach or, as is sometimes considered sufficient, merely put forth what are usually known as "words of wisdom".

During the year I face a number of difficult tasks - as we all do - but none so difficult as selecting a subject for this address. Ideas flow in a steady stream from mid-May to the end of June. Then all are forgotten until, in February, the Editor reminds me that he will soon need my manuscript for publication in the Journal. And so I set my mind to recovering - usually without success - those themes which seemed so suitable last Spring. They were, I know, most suitable - but I cannot now remember even one.

I have spoken from time to time on the subject of railway books, and there is good reason why I should return to them this evening. The past year has seen the usual spate of publications, but this time the spate has an unusual feature - within four months there have appeared two very notable works. One is the first volume of a trilogy which may well become the classic company history. The other is probably the most inaccurate railway book ever published - or the most expensive book of railway humour, depending on your mood at the moment. If you believe the stage and book critics' well-worn phrase "a laugh in every line" - then this is your book, but please take care that your guffaws do not disturb other readers in the library.

No words of mine are needed to extol the first mentioned volume. The critics have done it full justice, and rightly so. We look forward to completion of the story.

But the second book poses all sorts of questions. How did reputable publishers come to issue it? What damage has been done by its publication? Is there anything we, as individual members or as a corporate body, can do to prevent the repetition of such a disaster? The book itself may not profit us much, but perhaps answering these questions may do so.

Although some frank correspondence has taken place between the publishers and myself - culminating in a very sincere apology and near-admission that the book should not have disgraced their imprint - I cannot say for certain how they came to publish it, but I am bound to concede that it was done in good faith.

What damage has been done? Probably very little, partly due to the high price - three guineas - which must have deterred all but the larger libraries and most private persons from buying the book. But, as the index is virtually useless and the statements so confused and contradictory, it is impossible to locate any required fact - which is, perhaps, just as well.

Is there anything we can do about it? Yes, I think there is. One of the stated objects of this Society includes the words "with special emphasis upon the accuracy of published data". It would be unwise, and probably ineffective, if we, as a Society, protested at the publication of such a book. But there is everything to be gained by the personal protests of individual members. If only one-third

of our membership had written to the publishers in strong terms - I am, of course, assuming this was not done - they would undoubtedly, have been pretty seriously worried over their blunder.

Personally, I have for many years made it a practice to write a short note to an author whose latest book I have enjoyed or found pleasingly accurate - whether or not such author was known to me. I have also, from time to time, expressed very different feelings to both authors and publishers. This is a service which the majority of the members of this Society can, and I think should, render to the cause which we all have at heart - to raise the standard of every publication directly, or indirectly, concerned with railway and canal history. I suggest it is well worth consideration and expenditure of a few minutes in composing a suitable letter. It is right that an author or publisher should know the views of readers of their combined work, whether this be praise or criticism. And who better qualified to give authoritative opinions than our members?

You may recall that I have remarked before upon the weakness in reviewing books on railway and canal history. Indeed, I suppose this is common to all technical subjects which fall into the category of having both specialized and popular appeal. I am not, of course, referring to the transport press which, despite the need for watching advertising revenue, on the whole does its best to castigate when necessary.

My reference is to some of the national newspapers and non-specialist historical and kindred periodicals - in short, those who still think - if I may use a colloquial phrase - that "anyone can write about railways". Perhaps they are right, at any rate so far as their own publications are concerned.

Bearing all this in mind, it was rather pathetic to see how the national press and the B.B.C. handled this book. One national newspaper handed the book over to a person with no more than a dilettante "interest in railways". The last three words are those of the Literary Editor of the paper, with whom I had some correspondence. He explained that "specialists often find it difficult to adapt themselves to the approach of the non-specialist reader both in style and length". That was his reason for handing the book to a well-known poet, writer on architecture and television personality. I closed the correspondence by suggesting to the Literary Editor that it would have been better to ignore the book altogether if he did not know of a competent reviewer - which was pretty obviously the case.

The review itself visualized the author as - I quote - "an elderly man bowed down from poring over the files of Railway Acts in who knows what forgotten corners of little used libraries, his eyes strained from reading minute Victorian type, his fingers dusty from handling files unmolested for a century". Those of you who know the book will smile at the picture of an author of my own age.

That this ancient gentleman knew not Montague Place or Porchester Road is so obvious that even our dilettante reviewer should have noticed the fact.

The B.B.C. was no less extraordinary in its choice of reviewer. This individual, unknown to me even by name, was clearly oblivious of the historical defects, though as a geographer he noticed the absence of maps. He repeated two of the more colourful - but apocryphal - stories in the book and improved upon the author's error by misquoting the only date to which he referred. Altogether an uninspiring performance and wasteful of valuable programme time.

In my view there is little, if anything, to be gained from making one's views on matters of this kind known to the B.B.C. Except on rare, major, occasions the Corporation considers it always knows best. Like the reviewer, it goes its own way, oblivious of criticism and defects in its programmes. Seldom does it admit, much less correct, a mistake.

In using our knowledge to let authors and publishers know what we think of their products we must, I suggest, be careful to avoid allowing ourselves - whether as individuals or as a body - to develop into a collection of non-creative critics. There is a tendency - not among members of this Society in particular - to set up as critics of other people's work before we ourselves have had the experience of conducting research, assembling the results and enjoying its appearance in print. Not until we have known the labour necessary to get at the facts, the pitfalls to be met with in assessing, for example, the validity of one date as against another, or the reliability of a particular source, ought we to criticize the work of others. Criticism, favourable or otherwise, will carry much greater weight with the author or publisher if it comes from someone with even the most modest personal experience. If the critic is not so qualified, he should not take umbrage if his views are rejected or politely discounted.

Finally, let us do our best to be constructive critics, whether our criticism be published or not. If we are telling an author that he has erred in a fact or date, then we should make it out business - for his benefit as well as that of readers - to give the correct information and, in appropriate cases, the source of that information. I deplore the criticism which "suggests" that a statement is wrong, without offering a soundly-based correction. Let the critic produce his information and source; there is the possibility that he too, may be wrong.

If these points are kept in mind, I think many of our members could do a useful service by making their views known to authors and publishers. I commend the idea for your serious consideration.

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THOUGHTS ON RAILWAY BOOKS

By James I.C. Boyd

The advantage of putting these remarks into print in such a Journal as this, is that I can stress they are simply personal views made by someone who not only tries to please readers in the books he himself prepares, but also tries to "improve the breed" by producing books which satisfy a majority of their content balance. Among members I know I can rely on my opinions being accepted without the suggestion that I am banging my own drum ... I say this because when I last reviewed a narrow gauge railway book on behalf of a Society and at their request, I was maligned for giving the impression that I could have done better myself! (Though no one ever suggests I have a financial interest when I review in praise!)

It must be obvious to us all that there are far more railway books available than there used to be, despite higher costs and prices. Publishers tell me they have open orders to supply many customers with every railway book which appears, no matter the subject and cost. For myself I divide all railway publications into two categories: (1) Bedside and (2) Reference. I like to think that mine fall somewhere between the two and perhaps that desire has been achieved for often I am cheered (?) by the somewhat two-edged remark "I keep your so-and-so by my bed and often dip into it before I drop off to sleep". Be that as it may, there is a wider market for books on railways than ever before and young people, looking for information on subjects which passed before their time, and having more money to spend than their fathers, are as eager to buy such books as their elders. The average railway reader has no idea of the cost of preparing railway books, or the time and money which a conscientious writer must expend before he even approaches a publisher. One or two publishing houses (they shall be nameless), make a fantastic profit out of this business, books with few illustrations and doubtful content appearing at prices quite out of keeping with their quality. Even some otherwise reputable publishers fall down badly when it comes to a certain book or, if railway subjects are strange to them, when producing books on that subject. Many of the bigger houses are possibly frightened of a small demand. My first opinion would therefore be that even some of the best names in specialist railway literature are inclined to soak the public for what they offer - contents good or bad. Profit margins being what they are, it seems tough on the writer that his financial return is small compared with the publisher's well-covered risk and the retailer and his 33 1/3%.

Now let us look at these two categories of my own making. We all know the Bedside book; full of glossy pictures, brimming with well-worn anecdotes, churning up in just another way all that has been said before and many times - the sort of book where the pictures are everything and the text just holds the illustrations together. These books have become de rigueur in the USA where Beebe and Clegg

have certainly produced some expansive (and expensive) books, full of nostalgia and verbal diarrhoea but undoubtedly of the type where if convalescent yet strong enough to support the weight, they give one excellent reading in bed. But as books of further purpose, they end just at the point where the reader has seen all he wants of them. Many are read once and retired. Recently we have been proffered what might be called English counterparts of these glossy creations, where the picture is the main thing and trains without clouds of filthy smoke have no place. Most of these books fall well below the American standards for few can imitate their style. Now that photographs of the "steam age" and older equipment are becoming impossible to take it can be said for these "albums" that they give everyone a chance to acquire a fine set of pictures. My second opinion is that these books - and I suppose we can expect more of their nostalgic quality - fulfil a very limited purpose except perhaps they probably offer a quick financial return to their originators. However, they do interest a great many and they have the undeniable advantage of providing glamorous illustration which is easy to assimilate and appreciate; their immediate disadvantage is that they tend to skim all the cream off a subject and leave the hard core, the research and kernel of their subjects to railway writers, who can hardly be blamed if they feel that someone has pinched their banana and left them but the skin.

Most of us have but limited space for our books and limited means to buy them. My own preference is not for the here-today-gone-tomorrow gimmick books of temporary pleasure, but for books which are of lasting purpose and, let us be realistic, which will be of value to my successors. Falling into this category more than most of the better-known volumes, I value a bound set of the Locomotive from inception to 1939; of lesser usefulness come the Railway Magazine for a similar period. These collections have been bought as means allow and with due regard for their limitations when using them for reference. I also own many other valuable old books, perhaps more useful than valuable to me than in terms of hard cash, and as I have channelled my pursuits into a limited field of railway interest with a view to covering it properly, there are only a few books of general interest outside that field. Nevertheless, the collection takes up much footage of shelving. All these books have been indexed, but only on those subjects which come within my orbit. My third opinion is that money spent on old reference books will always repay their cost by reference and interest over many years.

A subject on which I wax indignant is the matter of titles. I see broad compelling covers reading "British Narrow Gauge Railways", "Light Railways", "Branch Lines", "The Great Western Railway" (agreed some of these are fictitious!) but when I open them they cover no such subjects ... in the Foreword I read: "This book does not really cover the Great Western Railway, but just those parts of the Great Western Railway which I knew when I was a bookies' runner in Slough", etc. etc. As a manufacturer myself, such titles as misdescribe would quickly find me prosecuted under the Merchandise Description

Act. How I wish railway authors could be suitably dealt with! Another opinion then; titles should neither mislead nor deliberately deter another writer from publishing on a subject which the title ought to have covered, but did not in fact do so.

On the contents of reference books there is more I could say than space will allow. Most readers require but a background of history to back up the story. In our Society we must therefore resist a tendency for history (our particular interest) to over-awe all other. The same weakness takes other forms for example, locomotive interest being what it is, histories of railway companies often contain a very unbalanced portion giving pride of place to motive power and to quote a case I have before me, dealing with the goods stock in about two lines. In my own books (forgive me!) I do try to strike the balance between all aspects of what is after all, a commercial undertaking with many facets. There is more actual railway line to a railway than any other one obvious thing - yet how often is it recorded or put down in plan form? Opinion therefore; no partisan feelings should be revealed in the contents.

Finally (though much remains unsaid): humour. We do not buy these railway books for study. If we learn from them it is through entertainment. There are far too many drab Society lecturers and soulless railway books. I hate them both. Life is what we make it and don't some railway writers take advantage of it!

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RAILWAY PASSENGER DUTY - A SIDE-LIGHT

By Michael Robbins

One of the afflictions of the railway accountant which has passed away completely is the Railway Passenger Duty, and in particular that aspect of the arrangement for collecting the duty which gave exemption to fares which were booked under the so-called "Parliamentary" arrangements dating back to the so-called "Cheap Trains" Act of 1844 (properly the Railway Regulation Act). "The Parliamentary Train" was a familiar feature of railway working, and so were tickets issued at "Parliamentary" or "Government" fares, in particular after 1874, when a legal decision brought under the duty many fares previously exempted from it. After the Cheap Trains Act, 1883, Parliamentary and ordinary third-class fares were assimilated on many railways, though the distinction persisted here and there well into the twentieth century. A brief survey of the Railway Passenger Duty and its effects is to be found in Chapter 5 of Mr. C.E. Lee's Passenger Class Distinctions (1946), pages 41-45.

The regulations governing Parliamentary fares are much too long to recapitulate here; but one particular feature which is not at all well-known was the "Parliamentary Compartment"; in fact, I have not seen it referred to anywhere before. This was operated on

the Metropolitan Railway under conditions which must have been equally difficult for the booking clerks and for the passengers to understand.

In a bundle of papers dated 1 May 1873 which has recently come to light the following instruction on the issue of Parliamentary tickets is included :

"On and after 1st May 1873 One Compartment will be specially reserved on each of the Metropolitan (Main Line) Hammersmith and St. Johns Wood Trains for passengers holding Parliamentary Tickets and the Booking Clerks must only issue one of these Tickets throughout the day by each and every Train to and from the following Stations:- Moorgate Street, Aldersgate Street, Farringdon Street, Kings Cross, Gower Street, Portland Road, Baker Street, St. Johns Wood Road, Marlborough Road, Swiss Cottage, Edgware Road, Bishops Road, Paddington (Praed Street), Bayswater (Queens Road), Notting Hill Gate, Kensington (High Street), Brompton (Gloucester Road) and South Kensington. Parliamentary passengers must only be allowed to travel in the compartments reserved for their use in this Company's Trains but they may be allowed to travel in the third class compartments of any of the District or Great Western Company's Trains. Passengers travelling in the ordinary 3rd class Compartments of any of this Company's Trains with Parliamentary Tickets must be exccessed the difference between the Parliamentary and ordinary fares. The first up and down Trains between the Westbourne Park and Hammersmith Stations will be Parliamentary and the present Parliamentary fares only must be charged between such stations.

1st May 1873."

Attached to the bundle is a series of lists of fares from the different Metropolitan stations (and also from two points, Camden Town, The Mother Redcap, and Regent Circus - now known as Piccadilly Circus - served by the Metropolitan's omnibuses) which show an extraordinary scale of fares by which at certain distances the Parliamentary single cost less than the ordinary third class, but higher up the scale it cost more; for example, from Moorgate to Kensington High Street was 4d. ordinary and 6d. Parliamentary. To complete the papers there is a specimen label bearing the words "PARLIAMENTARY COMPARTMENT" in black on white paper and a handwritten certificate from the Accountant of the Inland Revenue addressed to Myles Fenton, General Manager of the Metropolitan, in the following terms :

"1st May, 1873.

"I hereby certify that I have this day travelled over the Metropolitan and St. John's Wood Railways from Station to Station, and I find that all the Trains are running

in strict compliance with the provisions of the Cheap Trains Act in accordance with Board's Order 2828/2, 15 April 1873.

CHARLES RICKMAN

Accountant

Inland Revenue"

In view of all the complications involved it seems surprising that the Railway Companies waited as long as they did before they cut out the whole muddle about third class fares by adopting the Parliamentary rate as the standard third class rate. Passenger duty remained chargeable on first and second class fares until it was abolished by the Finance Act of 1929.

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WHICH?

Last Day on the Swansea & Mumbles

By C.F. Klapper

Many traps lie waiting for the historian who makes bold assumptions or relies too much on any particular source of information; most of them will be familiar to members. Just in case there are any who believe implicitly in the apparently factual records of events appearing in newspapers, it is worth while examining the case of reports of the closing of the Swansea & Mumbles Railway. As the world's oldest passenger-carrying line (it was probably opened for mineral traffic late in 1806 and passenger service began in March, 1807) its closure attracted considerable attention, not a little rumour and some theatrical antics.

One persistent rumour was that operations were to cease on Saturday, 2 January 1960, although for various reasons the closing ceremony was to be held on 5 January. In fact a full service was operated until after the morning peak hour on Tuesday 5 January. The last public train was 9.55 a.m. ex-Rutland Street, and its return working. The ceremonial last train, carrying invited guests, was due to leave Rutland Street at 11.40 a.m. and to return from Southend (to which point the line had been curtailed after 11 October 1959, in order to enable a road for buses to be laid on the site of the railway track to a new bus terminal at Mumbles Pier). These arrangements, needless to say, were carried out perfectly by the South Wales Transport Co., Limited.

Nevertheless, to the confusion of historians of the future and certainly to the surprise of some of those who had journeyed to South Wales for the obsequies, Western Mail for the morning of 5 January contained an account of the last journey, and described

it as having taken place in the rainstorm which swept South Wales in the late evening of Monday, 4 January. A heading to a photograph reads "It's the end of famous line"; the caption states, "Mrs. Veronica Barrington of Mumbles organized the 'mourners' who travelled on the last of the Mumbles trains, which left Southend at midnight for Rutland Street, Swansea." Alongside a column was headed "Mumbles Railway died in the rain" and the first paragraph of Frank Morgan's account of the event opens "Lashing rain did not discourage thousands of people from crowding fairy-lighted Oystermouth Station last night to see the last Mumbles train leave on its famous five-mile trip to Swansea."

One would have thought that the fact that the newspaper had been invited to cover the official event on the Tuesday morning might have prevented the error of mistaking the mock-funeral proceedings organized by a private person for either the last public service or for the official farewell. The moral for the student of history is plain to be seen; no doubt many confusions of dates in early railway affairs derive from similar exuberance in reporting and haste in editing.

Our member, Mr. Charles E. Lee, is author of a handbook to the history of the line. The Swansea and Mumbles Railway is published by Oakwood Press.

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SPECIAL EXCURSIONS

One is accustomed to reading every year of the special arrangements made by the railways to deal with the crowds visiting the Royal Show. These usually entail a good deal of improvisation, but one expedient that would certainly not be tolerated today was that adopted by the Great Northern and the Midland on the occasion of the Royal Show being held at Lincoln in 1854.

In connexion with an excursion which started from Tallington and called at all stations to Newark, it was announced that "the train will run to and from the Midland Station at Lincoln, and for the convenience of passengers it has been arranged that they shall change carriages at the point north of the Newark Station where the Midland and Great Northern Railways cross each other."

These unorthodox arrangements were advertised to apply on 19, 20 and 21 July 1854.

From R.A. DANE.

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WEST LANCASHIRE MYSTERIES

By M.D. Greville

On 14 August 1871 an Act was passed incorporating the West Lancashire Railway, for a line from Southport to Preston. It was a railway of little importance, "bankrupt from birth", whose only real achievement, after nineteen poverty-stricken years of working (mostly in the hands of the debenture holders - and even they got little out of it) was to get itself bought by the L.& Y. in 1897; this only on account of its nuisance value as a bridgehead for lines to Blackpool, generally promoted, assisted or encouraged by Sir Edward Watkin.

Nevertheless, from its short and sad history have emerged two interesting and, at present, insoluble problems.

The first section was opened on 19 February 1878, from Hesketh Bank, just short of the River Douglas Viaduct, to Hesketh Park, on the outskirts of Southport, to which it was extended on 10 June. There it stuck till 18 May 1882, when the viaduct was completed and it was opened from Hesketh Bank to Longton, and on to Preston on 16 September. A station was provided at River Douglas, just west of the river, and only just over a quarter of a mile from Hesketh Bank.

In an historical article on the railway, published in the Locomotive Magazine in 1918, it was stated that the company acquired a steamer called Virginia, and for some years ran a service between River Douglas and Lytham.

Now it is a fact that in an Act of 16 April 1878 the West Lancashire did obtain powers to operate steamers "between Hesketh-with-Becconsall and any other port where there is a station of the company, and Tarleton Lock, Preston, Lytham, St. Annes-on-the-Sea, Blackpool, Fleetwood, Barrow-in-Furness and the Isle of Man." It is also a fact that the Virginia - an iron paddle steamer of 46 gross tons - was in 1882 registered at Southport, as owned by the West Lancashire Railway. But, after intensive research, the author has been utterly unable to find anything further. Nothing can be traced in the local press - either as news or advertisement - neither is there any reference to the steamer or the service in the Company's minutes, reports or accounts. The table in Bradshaw shows River Douglas from the start in 1882; at first all trains called, but gradually fewer and fewer did so, until it disappeared in 1887, but all stops were conditional only. There was no reference to any steamer connexion, and the service did not appear in the very complete steamship list which was in Bradshaw at that time.

An inspection on the spot does not make things any clearer. The banks of the Douglas here are very high and steep, and there is no sign remaining of any way down. There are a few rotting stumps

in the river which might or might not be the remains of a pier or wharf. All of this seems to make it very doubtful that the service ever operated. On the other hand, it is difficult to see what useful purpose was served by River Douglas station - in fact, serving nothing, on no road, and within sight of Hesketh Bank. That is problem number one.

The second problem is in the same neighbourhood, as it concerns the Tarleton branch, which joined the West Lancashire immediately to the west of River Douglas station. The known facts about this are that it was built to overcome the tidal difficulties below Tarleton Lock, by carrying traffic from the lock to the West Lancashire; that it was purchased by the West Lancashire under Act of 3 June 1881; and that it was completely closed in November 1930. Its only use for passengers was when, in 1912, a rail-motor service was put on by the L. & Y., with seven services a day to and from Crossens (the first started, and the last finished, at Southport) but this lasted only a little over a year.

The problems are: when it was built, who built it and sold it to the West Lancashire, and on whose land it was built. Considerable research - embracing, inter alia, the minutes of the West Lancashire and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, and the Hesketh muniments (in which the author received valuable help from Messrs. Clinker and Hadfield, and from Mr. R. Sharpe France, the Lancashire County Archivist) has failed to produce the answers.

It is recorded in the Canal minutes for 4 July 1897 that the West Lancashire was proposing a tramway "from the Railway at Hesketh Bank, part of which would cross the property of this Company and terminate on the bank of the Canal above the Tide Lock at Tarleton," and that a letter had been received from the West Lancashire Secretary asking formal permission to lay down a tramway "through any of your property situated upon the route and also alongside the Canal at Tarleton Lock for the purpose of interchanging Goods from off the one system to the other and for which permission we shall be prepared to pay an annual rent." The Canal Company, evidently regarding it with favour, agreed to lease the land for 21 years at 20/- per annum. On 4 December 1879 a draft agreement was produced - not with the West Lancashire, but with its Chairman, Edward Holden.

At the half-yearly meeting of the West Lancashire in March 1881, the Chairman referred to the small line the company was seeking powers to obtain, to Tarleton Locks, and added that "these locks had been a source of revenue to the company, and would be in future, especially when the railway was completed from the River Douglas to Preston." So presumably the line was already in use.

Up to this point one might gather that the line had been built by Edward Holden but, in the book of reference to the Act of 3 June 1881, the owner is given as the West Lancashire Company.

An entry in the West Lancashire minutes for 21 February 1895 recorded that it had been arranged with Hesketh's solicitors "that on the marking out of the canal taken from the Tarleton Branch to the satisfaction of Hesketh's agent, this land should be conveyed to the Company without charge." So was the line built by Holden or Hesketh?

At any rate, the suggestion is that it was built on Hesketh's land, but, soon after the Lancashire & Yorkshire took over the West Lancashire in 1897, a correspondence was entered into with the Leeds & Liverpool Canal as to the ownership of the land, and in the canal minutes of 16 February 1898 it was stated that the L. & Y. admitted that the land on which the branch was laid belonged to the canal company, which was entitled to resume possession at once if it desired to do so; the canal company was willing for the railway to continue and would negotiate.

It seems fairly evident that the canal company was more anxious for the line to be kept open than was the railway company, as the latter intimated, in July 1898, its intention to abandon it, but in November wrote that if the branch was to be maintained it would want a lease for 999 years at a nominal rent for the land. The canal company offered to let on yearly tenancy at £10 per annum. Finally in 1900 (minutes of 14 February) the canal company agreed to sell the land to the L. & Y.

So - who owned the land, who built the railway, and when?

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LONDON GROUP MEETING

On 12 February Mr. H.G. Davis, Assistant to the Curator, B.T.C. Historical Relics, gave a most interesting and comprehensive survey of the History of Railway Architecture. The survey was ancient and modern - a subject which has been much neglected in the past. Mr. Davis emphasized how great a variety was to be found in different parts of the country, and how worthy a considerable number of remaining examples are of preservation. Of special interest was the tracing of the architects responsible for many of the buildings, Mr. Davis pointing out that, in a number of cases, these had been overshadowed by the engineers responsible for construction. The talk was well illustrated by slides.

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A FORGOTTEN WATERWAYBy A.H. Faulkner

In its early days the Grand Junction Canal Company built several branch canals to towns close to its main line. By this means Wendover (1799) Aylesbury (1814) Buckingham (1801) and Northampton (1815) became linked to the general canal system. But one town which did not manage to interest the Grand Junction into building a branch was Newport Pagnell.

On 2 January 1813 a meeting was held at the Swan Inn, Newport Pagnell "to consider the Propriety and local Utility of making a branch canal from the Grand Junction Canal at Great Linford, to the town of Newport Pagnell under the Powers and Provisions of the Grand Junction Canal Acts, or of applying to Parliament for leave to bring in a Bill for making a Railway upon or near to the present Road from Newport Pagnell to Great Linford." At the meeting a Committee was formed to conduct an application to Parliament for leave to bring in the Railway Bill. At the same time a request was sent to the Grand Junction Company asking them if they would be willing to build the canal. The Railway Committee called a meeting of the Land Owners for 13 January but after this meeting the railway plan appears to have been discarded. At the next meeting on 14 August the Committee was informed that the Grand Junction had declined to construct the canal. A public meeting was immediately summoned for 20 August.

At this meeting, which was held at the Swan Inn with William Selby Lowndes, M.P. in the chair, it was resolved that an application should be made to Parliament for leave to bring in a Bill for constructing a canal. A Committee was formed with instructions to obtain a survey and estimate immediately from a Mr. Bevan, or some other competent engineer. Those present were so confident about the success of the venture that they told this Committee that, when deciding on the line of the canal, they were to keep in mind that eventually it might be extended to Olney and possibly to the Ouse at Bedford. A subscription list was opened and £7,825 was subscribed in £100, £50, and £25 shares. Mr. George Cooch, a local lawyer, was appointed solicitor to the undertaking. He was destined to stay with the Company throughout its existence.

The survey was put in hand at once by Mr. Bevan, the engineer who was responsible for the Grand Union Canal, which was building at this time. In his report he estimated that £12,650 would be needed to construct the canal. The Plans were then considered by the Subscribers at a meeting at the Saracen's Head Inn, Newport Pagnell, on 9 November 1813. At this meeting Messrs. Olivers, Langhorn & Harrison, Bankers, were appointed Treasurers and a call of 2½% was ordered to meet general expenses.

On the whole there seems to have been little opposition to the canal, although the Grand Junction insisted on a clause restricting

the amount of water that could be taken from their canal unless the level was overflowing a certain weir. A local tradesman wrote three lengthy letters to the Northampton Mercury condemning the whole venture. He declared that the canal would be nothing more than a dry ditch for much of the year owing to the Grand Junction's refusal to supply water. He also pointed out that, by comparison with the Grand Junction, the proposed tolls were far higher and that even at these high prices it was doubtful if the shareholders could expect any return on their capital. In particular he ridiculed the proposed extension of the canal to Olney and Bedford maintaining that there was not nearly enough traffic offering to make it a commercial success. His appeal fell on deaf ears, however, for on 17 June 1814 the Act "for making and maintaining a navigable Canal from Newport Pagnell to the Grand Junction Canal at Great Linford, in the county of Buckingham" received the Royal Assent.

By the Act (54 George III Chap 98) a Company of 68 named persons was incorporated under the title of "The Company of the Proprietors of the Newport Pagnell Canal." Although the canal was to be only $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles in length through gently sloping countryside the Company were empowered to construct aqueducts, tunnels, reservoirs and feeders as necessary. The engineer can have had but little scope for such impressive works and, indeed seven locks formed the only major work on the whole canal.

The Company was authorized to raise £13,000 in £100 shares, although halves and quarters were allowed, together with a further £7,000 if this should prove insufficient. The following were allowed as tonnage rates.

For all Goods, Wares, Merchandise and Things ...	2/6 per ton.
For all Coal and Coke ...	1/6 per ton.
For all Manure ...	6d. per ton.

Land Owners were given the usual concession to carry manure toll free.

The Company held its first meeting at the Swan Inn on 6 July 1814, but construction work cannot have started until the end of December 1814 or more probably not until early 1815, for an advertisement appeared in the Northampton Mercury on 26 November requesting that tenders for the work should be submitted. This advertisement specified that the canal was to be of the same dimensions as the Northampton Canal, then being built and that all materials were to be of the same type as those being used on that canal. The closing date for the tenders was 6 December and the Company held its second meeting the following day, at the Saracen's Head, to consider the offers.

Very little is heard about the Company until an announcement in the Northampton Mercury on 23 November 1816 states that the canal was to open on Monday, 2 December 1816, from which date the Public

Wharf on the Green at Newport would also be open. A further announcement in the Northampton Mercury early in January 1817 describes the canal as "recently opened." (However, Pigot & Co.'s London and Provincial Directory, 1823-1824, states that the canal was opened in January 1817.)

The canal proved of great service to Newport Pagnell and the surrounding district; the principal traffics being coal, grain, timber and malt. The canal company must have felt quite confident about the future when their small canal would form a link between the east and west of the country for they adopted as a motto "*En nous ubique portus*." Despite this confidence it is doubtful if the shareholders ever received much in the way of dividends on their capital, for it was not long before the London & Birmingham Railway reached Wolverton.

In 1845 there was a proposal for a railway from Wolverton, through Newport, to Bedford. The railway was to cross the canal by an overbridge, with a span of 25 feet, and a height of 10 feet. This proposal came to nothing however, and it was not until the early 1860's that another proposal was made. This time the scheme was to construct a railway from Wolverton to Newport with possible extensions to Olney and Wellingborough and using the bed of the canal between Great Linford and Newport. The Grand Junction Company and various coal merchants who used the canal opposed the plan but the idea of a new form of transport met with considerable support in the district and on 29 June 1863, an Act was passed authorizing the closing of the canal and the building of a railway. In the Act was noted the fact that the canal had not made a profit for several years.

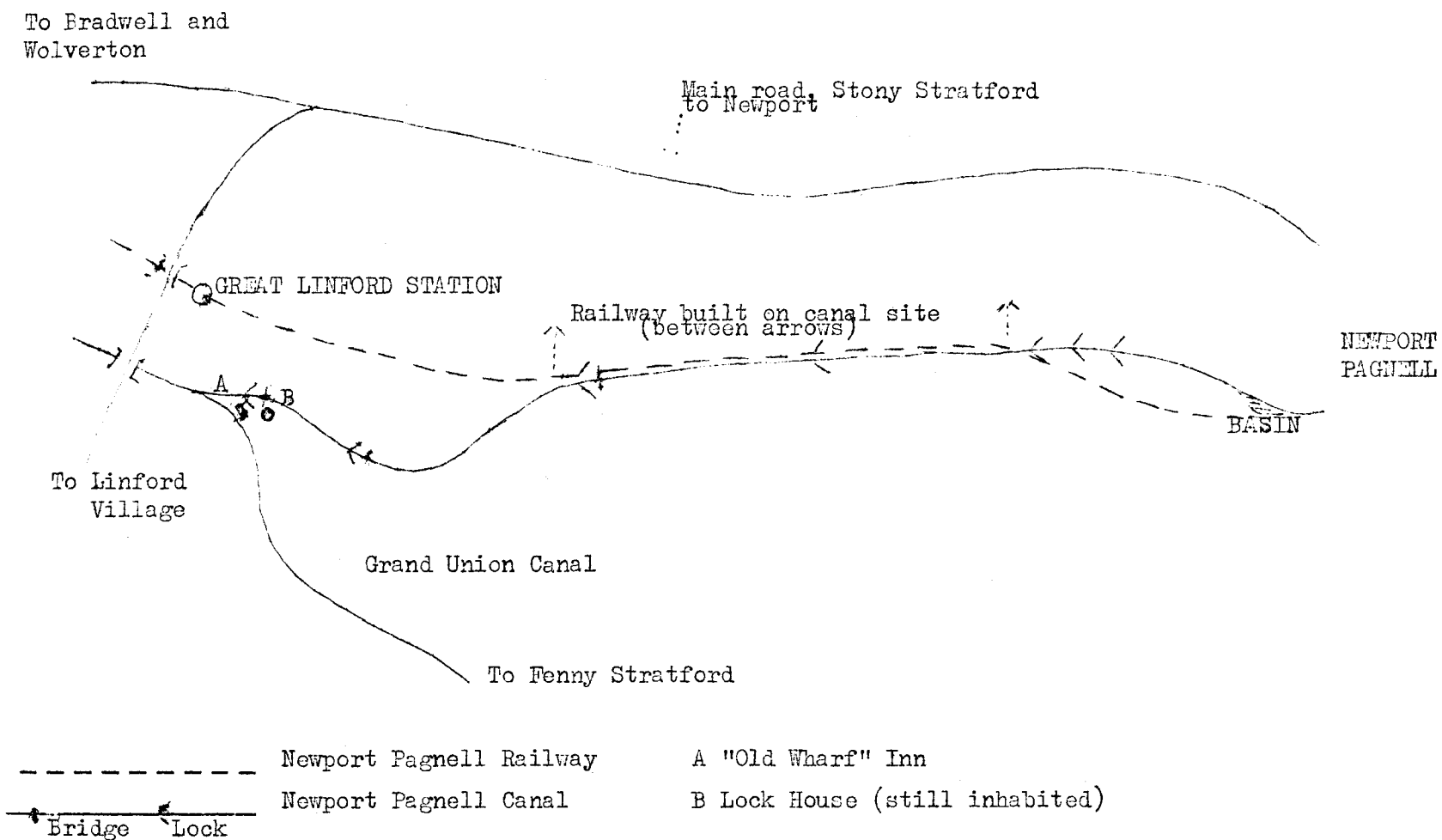
The canal was finally closed on Monday 29 August 1864. A closing down sale was held at Linford Wharf on 26 September at which the canal company disposed of much of its equipment including a new pair of lock gates, a flat boat and many smaller items such as ladders, chains, wheel barrows and a grindstone. The canal was then drained and most of its bed was used for the railway.

The total length of the canal from Great Linford to Newport was $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Over this distance there was a fall of 50 feet towards Newport. This was accomplished by 7 locks, each with a fall of $7\frac{1}{4}$ feet. These locks were of the usual narrow canal type with a width of 7 feet. There appear to have been four bridges crossing the canal, one of them being the bridge carrying the Grand Junction tow-path over the branch. The second bridge, by the first lock, took a footpath over the cut. The other two appear to have carried farm roads.

At Newport there was a large basin. Two short arms branched out from the basin and on these were the main commercial wharves. Pigot's Directory 1823-1824 named four wharves.

Today little remains to be seen of this once active canal. A widening of the Grand Union by Linford Bridge opposite the junction

SKETCH MAP OF THE NEWPORT PAGNELL CANAL



can be seen but an agricultural workshop has been built over the mouth of the branch. The lock-keeper's house still stands by the site of the first lock, but all trace of the structure has vanished. Just beyond there is a short stretch of the bed still holding water. The length is very overgrown but the course of the canal is easily followed until it becomes merely a depression in a field to disappear in the railway cutting. At the Newport end the site of three locks is now covered by allotments, and every now and then pieces of the lock walls are dug up, serving as reminders of days gone by. The railway station has been built over the basin and the goods yard covers the public Wharf but the warehouse that served the Old Shipley Wharf is still in use. At the present time the railway is still a going concern and although its finances have never been very strong it continues to serve Newport well, and in so doing carries on a tradition started by a now forgotten waterway.

Sources : Northampton Mercury 1813-1817
Croydon's Weekly Standard. 1864
A Historical Account of the Navigable Rivers,
Canals and Railways of Great Britain. 1831.
Pigot & Cos. London and Provincial Directory.
 1823-1824.

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BOOK REVIEWS

"THE ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH CANAL AND ITS RAILWAYS", by C.R. Clinker and Charles Hadfield. Reprinted from the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society, Vol. 34, 1958. Published by the Society, The Guildhall, Leicester. Price 3/6.

This is one of those worth-while offprints which societies often provide from their Transactions.

The Ashby Canal was about 50 miles long and its railways (i.e. tramroads) totalled $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles. It is stated twice that its Act was passed in May 1794, and the date 1795 in the opening sentence is evidently a misprint. It was a Canal Act, but as it permitted the conveyance of traffic by "rollers, inclined planes or in any other manner than by water", this was held to include the building of tramroads. These tramroads were laid out by Benjamin Outram to his usual gauge of 4ft. 2in., and the authors date their opening in 1802 and that of the canal in 1804. The undertaking was acquired by the Midland Railway in 1846, and some of the tramroad site was used to build a standard gauge railway which the Midland opened in 1874; part of this became the Melbourne Military Railway in 1939.

This well-printed offprint contains much evidence of the careful research which has been carried out on this undertaking. For 19 pages of text the authors provide 107 numbered references to original sources (mostly Minute Books) and a table of tonnage and revenue for most years between 1806 and 1906. There are also two maps, but the legend of the first one is incomplete and a dot-and-dash line has been used to indicate both a canal and a railway. The district is unknown to the present reviewer and he would have welcomed a few more place-names, especially the location of Ashby Woulds which is frequently mentioned in the text. He would also welcome a few photographs, although these would increase the selling price above the modest sum of 3/6d.

W.J.S.

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"THE RAILWAYS OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (INCLUDING THE SOKE OF PETERBOROUGH) 1800-1960: a list of authorising Acts of Parliament, opening and closing dates, with other historical information", compiled from original and contemporary sources by C.R. Clinker. 1960. C.R. Clinker, 9 Regent Place, Rugby. Price 5/6d. Duplicated typescript.

For this chronology Mr. Clinker has adopted an arrangement under companies' names which was used by Mr. Greville in his publications on Cheshire and Lancashire. Under each company are listed the various sections of line, with the date and citation of the appropriate Act and the opening date(s) for goods and passengers. The L.N.W.R. and the Midland were the principal railways in the area covered, but the Great Eastern, Great Northern and Great Central also served the area and the Great Western just comes in at the western fringe of Northamptonshire.

After the main section there are tables giving lines closed or with passenger services withdrawn; stations opened later than the line on which they lie; stations closed (this is the longest list); and changes in station names. All these have their appropriate dates. Throughout the work there are notes referring to train working, temporary closings, amalgamations and changes in companies' names. Every area has its imponderables, and the compiler is not afraid to admit that a few dates are unknown. Apart from these, one can confidently rely on this painstaking work to answer all questions of railways dates within the area covered.

If one must make any criticisms, they must be on the production side. The duplicating is neat but some pages are rather faint, and the headings of the tables at the end do not stand out enough. It would have been an advantage if a harder paper had been used for what will undoubtedly become a well-thumbed work of reference.

W.J.S.

RECENT LITERATUREWilliam J. Skillern

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- CLINKER, C.R. (Compiler). The Railways of Northamptonshire (including the Soke of Peterborough) 1800-1960: a list of authorising Acts of Parliament, opening and closing dates, with other historical information. 1960. (C.R. Clinker, 9 Regent Place, Rugby. 5/6) Duplicated typescript.
- CLINKER, C.R. &
HADFIELD, Charles. The Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal and its railways. 1958. (Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, the Guildhall, Leicester, 3/6). (Also in "Transactions of the Leics. Archaeol. & Hist. Soc." Vol. 34, 1958).
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- TATE, W.E. &
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- THOMAS, David St. John. The West Country. 1960. (Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, Vol. 1). (Phoenix House, 30/-).

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CORRESPONDENCE

Facts and Figures

Sir, - Referring to Mr. Foster Petree's letter published in the March Journal: I am grateful to a colleague, Mr. C.R. Francis (who like myself has been associated with the production of Some Facts About British Railways and its successor) for confirming that the first issue came out in 1924. It was specially produced for distribution at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley.

D.S.M. BARRIE

Sir, The University of London Library possesses the 1934 and 1936 editions of Facts About British Railways, published by the British Railways Press Office, and the 1953, the 1955 and subsequent editions of Facts and Figures About British Railways. Because few libraries have thought it necessary to record such ephemeral matter, it would be difficult to find a complete record of this publication. Consequently, the British-Union Catalogue of Periodicals does not record an edition of Facts About British Railways earlier than 1936, but does state that it was published under this title until 1943. The 1944 edition was published under the title British Railways in Peace and War, and the 1945 edition was called It can now be Revealed. The 1946 and 1947 editions came out under the title British Railways: Facts and Figures. In the foreword of the 1953 edition of Facts and Figures About British Railways, it is stated that publication was resumed with the 1952 edition after a lapse of five years, and it seems reasonable to suppose that it has been published annually since then.

MARTIN SMITH

Indefinable Railway Terms

Sir, - In the January Journal Mr. Greville takes Hyde Junction as an example of a station which was not a junction for passenger purposes, as it did not provide passenger platforms on the main line. Although the branch from the M.S. & L. main line to Hyde was opened on 1 March 1858, and extended to Marple on 5 August 1862, Hyde Junction did not appear in Bradshaw until February, 1863. The local paper, in 1858, referred to the junction as Newton Wood Junction, but it seems that later it came to take its name from the destination of the branch rather than the site of the junction, like the junctions at either end of Guide Bridge station, not far away, which are named Stockport Junction and Ashton Junction. An

interesting point is that although the station is now more logically named Hyde North, the locality, although known officially as Newton Wood, is commonly referred to as "Hyde Junction", and in local bus timetables even, Hyde Junction is a fare stage.

J.A. HALL

Sir, - Further to my letter (March Journal) respecting Mr. Greville's article on Indefinable Railway Terms: I can now say that as far as the Operating Departments are concerned a "cut and cover" is treated as a "tunnel" if it exceeds a hundred yards in length. It will be noticed that a hundred yards is also the length by which a bore is officially classified as a tunnel by the Civil Engineer.

F.W. WEBB

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Early Railway Fiction

Sir, - In the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Vol. LXV (1880-1, Part III) there is a lengthy obituary notice of Baron Christian Philipp Max Maria von Weber (1822-1881), who had much to do with the construction of railways in Germany and Austria and, between 1868 and 1875, is stated to have been "virtually at the head of railway affairs in Austria." He was a son of Weber the composer and moved in the artistic circles that this would suggest, but by training he was a locomotive engineer and worked for a time in England under Stephenson and I.K. Brunel. The memoir (admitted to have been taken largely from Die Zeitung des Vereins Deutscher Eisenbahnverwaltungen, 1881, No. 31) contains much else of interest but the passage which struck me as being especially intriguing states that "he lifted railway travelling from the domain of dull prose and surrounded it with a halo of romance. His railway novels stand forth unique among the literature of the century." Is there any member of the R. & C.H.S. who is acquainted with the works which aroused this enthusiasm in his biographer? It must be very unusual for a practical railway administrator to endeavour to surround his occupation "with a halo of romance" or, indeed, to write novels at all. I should like to know more about them, but unfortunately have not sufficient German to make it worth while to seek out the originals, and it seems unlikely that they were translated into English.

J. FOSTER PETREE

NORTH WESTERN GROUP

On 6 February, despite poor weather conditions in some parts of the area, 15 members and friends gathered at Stockport to hear the Group Treasurer, Mr. P.A. Norton, speak on "Photographic Field-work." Mr. Norton opened his talk by outlining his aims in combining his photographic interests with his researches into railway and canal history. He went on to illustrate his points with a display of excellent photographs of various items of railway and canal historical interest. Whilst displaying these photographs he related the circumstances behind each picture, and in so doing many humorous incidents were told relating to the taking of the pictures concerned. The standard of Mr. Norton's photographic work can be judged from the fact that many of the photographs shown had been successful in gaining awards at local photographic society shows. At the end of his informal talk, Mr. Norton projected a number of colour slides for the enjoyment of members present. A discussion followed which included the technicalities of photography as well as comments regarding railway and canal interest. A vote of thanks to Mr. Norton for an excellent and unusual evening was proposed by Mr. A.P. Voce.

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Mr. J.H. Boyes writes: "When Mr. Hadfield prepared the historical notes for the Regents Canal trip in April 1957 he said 'Because of the canal's route across a number of important lines running into London there were many attempts to turn it into a railway or to work it in conjunction.' An oblique reference to the former possibility is to be found in a document of April 1860 (P.R.O. T1/6245B/6125). Briefly the background is as follows.

"Before 1830 a market for the sale of hay and straw had been held in the area now known as Haymarket in London's West End, but in that year the market was transferred by statute to Cumberland Market near the basin at the end of the Cumberland arm of the Regents Canal. The tolls of this market were collected for the Government by a salaried clerk-in-charge, but when, in 1860, this clerk died, the Office of Woods &c., who were the controlling department, thought they would gain financially, which in fact, they did, by letting out the right to collect the tolls for a fixed rent to a contractor. A formal lease for seven years was drawn up for the contractor to sign and this lease contained a special clause 'enabling the Commissioner of Woods &c. for the time being having charge of the property, to determine the Lease on giving 6 months notice from any quarter day in the event of any Act being obtained by any Public Company for the conversion of the Regents Canal Basin into a railway or in the event of the areas or either of them being required for any Railways or for any public purpose.'"

From Railway Times, 2 June 1860: "LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE. - The new passenger station at Wigan, which has been in course of erection during the past winter, was opened on Saturday, the whole of the officials taking up their quarters in the new building. There were no formal proceedings ... but a number of fog-signals were placed in the track of each of the early trains, so that as it approached the station, it fired a salute in honour of the occasion. The new building is situated about 200 yards from the Wallgate, on the opposite side of the road to that on which stands the 'hovel' which until now has done duty for a station. It is about 70 yards in length, in front being a **spacious** covered platform. The rooms are all spacious, and fitted up in the usual manner"

From Railway Times, 19 May 1860: "NOTTINGHAM AND GRANTHAM. - The act for changing the name of 'The Ambergate, Nottingham, and Boston and Eastern Junction Railway and Canal,' to that of 'The Nottingham and Grantham Railway and Canal' and for other purposes, having received the Royal Assent on 15th inst., it should be noted that from that date the title of this company is 'The Nottingham and Grantham Railway and Canal Company.' By the same act the shares are reduced from £12-10s. to £12."

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THE LAST STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

By courteous invitation of the Chairman and Members of the Western Area Board, the President, Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer were present at the naming of the last steam locomotive to be built by British Railways, class 9F 2-10-0 No. 92220. The ceremony took place in "A" Shop, Swindon Works, at 11.30 a.m. on Friday 18 March, the name "Evening Star" being bestowed and a commemorative plaque unveiled by Mr. K.W.C. Grand, Member of the British Transport Commission. In addition to the invited guests, comprising many railway officers of other Regions, past officers of the Great Western Railway and representatives of the leading railway institutions and societies, the ceremony was witnessed by a large number of Swindon Works employees, many of whom had taken part in construction of No. 92220. An exhibition of locomotives and rolling stock included Caledonian No. 123, "City of Truro", a variety of diesel locomotives and multiple-unit sets. G.W.R. Rail Car No. 4 (A.E.C.) was also on view, showing that diesel power is no new thing to the Western Region. The Society's representatives are grateful to the Western Region authorities for the opportunity of being present at this unique ceremony, one certainly touched with sadness from the purely sentimental aspect.

C.R.CLINKER