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Historical Society

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LE2 1ZH

BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR: N. T. Pitts, 4 Siskin Road, Pedmore, Stourbridge,
West Midlands DY9 7HU (*To whom all items for review should be sent.*)

DISTRIBUTION OFFICER: J. R. Searson, 23 Bank Croft, Longton, Preston
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LOCAL GROUP SECRETARIES:

London—

North Western—E. R. Ll. Davies, Fron Fawnog, Hafod Road, Gwernymynydd,
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North Eastern—D. B. Slater, 8 Granger Avenue, Acomb, York YO2 5LF

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NG7 1EY

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Obituary: Harold Vernon Borley

H. W. Paar writes

With the death of H. V. Borley on 1 May 1989, at 93 years, the Society has lost perhaps the most meticulous railway historian of all time. He was the high priest of historical accuracy, particularly in matters of chronology; to him, an error of one day was important and he was delighted on at least one occasion to make just that correction to one of his own long-established dates. He was not heavily censorious of the occasional mistakes of others, however, generally contenting himself with publishing the correct version.

Borley's memory was long and accurate, and in 1983 he was able to give a short account of a Sunday journey from Hampstead to Sandwich in 1904—'Outside Charing Cross there were people with placards telling us to go home as we were travelling to Hell'. He entered the service of the London & North Western Railway in 1910. His date of birth was recorded as three years earlier than it was, and although this gross error would have horrified the mature man it had its advantages for, in his own words, 'I not only received a higher salary but occupied positions which I should not have done'. After a month's training he was appointed a booking clerk and was soon on the relief staff for North London stations between Broad Street, Poplar, and Kew Bridge. He spent his working life, it appears, on the North London line and his knowledge of all its aspects was truly microscopic, for he had not only worked in its stations and signal boxes and later graduated to the District Office, but had also examined the company records. During the first great war he served in the Railway Operating Division in France, where he met his future wife, Olga, who survives him.

He extended his definitive treatment of the chronology, services, tickets, and other matters to the whole of the vast and complicated London area, publishing (with A. E. Bennett) a book on London Transport Railways, a list of opening and closing dates, in 1963, but this was only a modest precursor of his *Chronology of London Railways*, published by the Society in 1982, which covers all the railways of the metropolis. Like many of the most reliable historians, Borley has no long list of published books to his name (the only other title known to this writer is *The West London Railway and West London Extension Railway*, with R. W. Kidner, 1968). He was, however, a prolific writer of articles, notes, and corrections to published work—including his own on the relatively rare occasions when it was necessary—and most of these contributions were far from light-weight. The indexes to our *Journal* attribute 102 references to him, the last published as recently as the March issue, and other journals would reflect similar figures, notably that of the London Underground Railway Society, for Borley was at his best in London and the south-east and he wisely confined his observations to that which he knew. In 1967 he produced (with Hamilton Ellis) a new edition of Grinling's *Great Northern Railway*, updating it from 1895 to the Grouping.

Borley joined this Society on 1 October 1954 as member No. 17. His other memberships included the Railway Club, which he joined in 1920, serving on its committee, as its chairman, and later as its honorary librarian, for many years. He was also President of the London Underground Railway Society in 1967-8. His rather gruff manner did not eclipse a deft sense of humour which surfaced in conversation and private letters—in 1978 he wrote 'Upon examining the accounts of the R&CHS I find that you as Research Officer receive £10,000 p.a. therefore if I give you information I consider I am entitled to some of this, but as I cannot reply fully to your letter I shall not, this time, make a charge.' In fact, he was a most generous correspondent and this was always the more appreciated when one recalled

that his information had not been clipped from articles or books but had been wrested mainly from the sources which he quoted in his introduction to *Chronology of London Railways*, viz. minute books, engineers' reports, national and local newspapers, and time tables. That is the right way for the railway historian who strives for accuracy; it is a hard way, but Borley demonstrated that it can be done, in that most effective fashion, by the example of his own work.

We share the sadness of his wife and family, and express our sympathy with them.

There's still limestone in them there hills!

Wanted, by the Peak Forest Canal Company, an Agent to reside at Chapel-en-le-Frith, whose business will be to superintend the working of their Limestone-Quarries and repairs of the railways in the Liberty of Peak Forest. Apply to Mr James Meadows, Manchester. *Stockport Advertiser*, 16.1.1824

Rail operation/supervisor. Dove Holes Quarry, a major limestone quarry, part of the RMC group, has a vacancy for the above position. The position entails control of the aggregate rail-loading facility, which includes liaison with British Rail personnel, scheduling of rail wagon fleets, the organisation and supervision of personnel and operation and maintenance of rail load plant . . . Apply to Mr S. Haines, Works Manager, Dove Holes Quarry, Dale Road, Buxton SK17 8BH. *Manchester Evening News*, 4.1.1988

(From William J. Skillern)

Railway termini in London

At a meeting of the London Common Council on Monday, a report from the City Improvement Committee, favourable to the purchase by the Direct London & Manchester Railway Company of Farringdon Market, and by the Birmingham Railway Company of the site of Fleet Prison, for termini, was received, and ordered to be sent to the Committee to be carried into effect. *Stockport Advertiser (Supplement)* 21.11.1845

(From William J. Skillern)

Crisis on the Louth Canal

W. M. HUNT

In October 1756, I was employ'd to project a Navigation to the Town of Louth, in order to which I first made Views of its Situation with respect to the Sea and River Humber, and the Course of the River Ludd, which runs through it, of the several Outlets or Harbours on the Sea Coast adjoining, and also of the low Grounds and Marshes between it and the Sea; and afterwards made a Survey and Plan, and took the Levels of the Country from Louth to Tetney Haven, which falls into the River Humber. . .¹

In this way did John Grundy, the Spalding engineer, begin a description of a survey he had taken for the construction of one of the great 'might-have-beens' of English canal history. The Sankey Brook Act was passed in 1755 and authorised the construction of what is usually regarded as one of the first English canals.² Most of the line of the Sankey Brook (St Helens) Canal was opened in 1757, but it was not until 1772 that the whole course was complete. The Louth Canal, on the other hand, took only four years to finish once it had obtained its Act in 1763 and so, if Grundy's original survey of 1756 had been acted upon, the Louth Canal could have been ready in 1760-1 and so found a major place in history textbooks, rather than being relegated, as it so often is, to a footnote.

Louth is situated on the eastern side of the Lincolnshire Wolds, a chalk escarpment excellent for sheep rearing, and, by the late eighteenth century, it had developed as an important market town for the sale of wool. It was the desire to extend this trade which prompted the suggestion of making a water connection with the sea some 12 miles distant. A canal would enable the wool to be exported easily to Hull and London, and abroad to the Continent. In return, much-needed coal and other bulk goods could be received. At the time the proposal was made, the road-links between Louth and the west were very poor and it was not until 1765 that a connection was made with the Great North Road at Bawtry Bridge.³

Grundy's plan was formulated only to test the practicality of a link with the sea and he proposed to use the River Lud for part of the canal, a river which passes through the town and then flows eastwards across desolate and flat outmarsh to meet the North Sea midway between the small village ports of Tetney and Saltfleet. Grundy noted that the Lud was crooked in its course and rapid in its flow, but, even so, could not be used to form a navigation as there was no terminal port: far better to make use of Tetney, from where Louth was already being supplied with

. . . Coals, Deals, Groceries and other kinds of Merchandize inwards; and to which a great part of the Corn, Wool and other Produce of the adjoining Country is convey'd by Land Carriage for Exportation. . .⁴

However, land carriage was very difficult, the land over which the produce passed was flat, drowned marsh,

. . . the Soil a strong Clay, and the Roads in Wet Seasons so deep; foundrous and bad, that it is with the greatest Difficulty and at an immense Expense that this Land Carriage is effected, to the great Detriment of Trade and Commerce and to the great Hurt and Disadvantage of the Landed Interest of all the Country adjoining. . .

At the North Sea end of the canal Grundy proposed a sea sluice and a 14-foot-wide lock.⁵ At this sluice the canal would begin, the cut being made westwards across Tetney Common to near Alvingham Mill. Between Alvingham and Louth Grundy proposed the erection of nine locks.

Whilst he was making his initial survey, Grundy generally resided at the home of a Mr Chapman. He seems to have had definite views as to the type of vessel which he saw as using his new waterway:

... Mr Grundy was generally at [Chapman's] house When he Plannd the navigation and that he always understood it was intended for Lighters only. . .⁶

These drew much less water than the larger Humber Keels, and Grundy modified his idea when he came to producing his report, advocating in it a depth for the canal of six feet. Many years after this time it was commented that

... it would seem as if a navigation for lighters was held out to the country and the admission of Humber Boats always intended by the undertakers. . .⁷

Grundy's survey report was not acted upon for nearly four years, a subscription list being opened only in January 1760 to pay for the expenses of a second survey and the costs incurred during the passage of an enabling Bill. Why the Louth supporters should have delayed for this length of time is not clear but one of the reasons may have been that they were not prepared to make the parliamentary application without the backing of an engineer whose opinion would carry weight in the Committee Stage of their Bill. While Grundy was a competent local engineer and could see the problems involved in the project quite as well as anyone else, the supporters wanted a second opinion before they were willing to subscribe and expend cash to make the canal a reality. A decision was taken in February 1760 to approach John Smeaton,⁸ but he did not view the proposed course until 7 August

... after the dryest Season that has been known in the Memory of Man. . .⁹

Smeaton concurred with Grundy's opinion in all respects as to the course the canal should take and with the choice of Tetney Haven as the outfall, it

... being both safest and deepest [c.f. for example, Saltfleet] and affording a Communication with the inland Navigation of Yorkshire, and the Trent for flat Bottom'd Barges, without going to Sea, which at some Seasons of the Year would be dangerous, or impracticable. . .¹⁰

With his report Smeaton included estimates for building the canal from Tetney Haven to four alternative termini, all within the final four miles or so of Louth. These were, Alvingham out Fenn, Keddington Old Mill, the Leather Mill, and the New Bridge at Louth. He considered that the final three-quarters of a mile, from the Leather Mill to the New Bridge, would be the most expensive in proportion to the distance involved and that a great saving could be made by terminating the navigation section at Keddington Old Mill. Smeaton's estimates were:

TETNEY to:	TWO BARGE CANAL	ONE BARGE CANAL	LIGHTER DRAWING 2'
New Bridge, Louth	£15,590	£13,686	£10,884
Leather Mill (near) Keddington	£12,968	£11,241	£8,931
Old Mill	£11,098	£9,481	£7,589

It can be seen that he also gave estimates for canals built to accommodate different sized vessels and this must refer back to Grundy's original plan for a lighter canal and the proprietors' idea for one which would carry Humber Keels.

Smeaton's report was accepted by the Louth promoters and the parliamentary progress began with the petition for leave to bring in a Bill being presented on 6 December 1762. The Act was obtained on 24 March 1763,¹¹ but it was another

four years before any substantial amount of construction work was completed, the reason being that the Act stipulated that money for construction could not be raised by any means other than on the mortgage of the tolls, and this was not readily forthcoming. However, by May 1767 five miles of new cut had been made, extending from Tetney Haven to Fire Beacon Lane, but it was not until 1770 that the works were made up to Louth. The canal was opened in May 1770, when the total cost of construction amounted to £27,500.¹² The canal built was a broad one with locks capable of accommodating 72-foot vessels.

The Louth Canal was managed by a Committee of Commissioners, foremost amongst whom was Charles Chaplin of Tathwell (1730–1792), a hamlet just south of Louth, and it was to him that the Commissioners contracted the tolls for seven years in 1770. When the time came for renewal negotiations between Chaplin and the Commissioners, he obtained the lease for a further 99 years. In allowing this the Commissioners were acting beyond their powers, but the contract went unchallenged for more than 50 years. Chaplin does not seem to have been a conscientious lessee as far as the maintenance of the waterway was concerned or in the regularity of his interest-payments to the Commissioners. This non-payment was brought to the attention of the Commissioners in 1782 and it was Chaplin's inactivity in performing the necessary maintenance duties embodied in his lease which brought Sir Joseph Banks actively into the affairs of the canal.

Sir Joseph's interest in the operation was not as intimate as with the navigations further south in Lincolnshire, and he does not seem to have played any part in the promotion of the scheme. His earliest involvement was in 1768, when he was appointed a Commissioner, but it was not until the 1780s that he appears for the first time participating actively.¹³ Banks owned land in the area of Marsh Chapel which lay along the Louth's course, and his earliest communications concern complaints made by one of his tenants at this place about the state of a bridge, Landike Bridge, and a culvert. These were in disrepair and restoration was promised by Chaplin in the spring of 1784. By the autumn there had been no action, and Banks wrote to Chaplin demanding that repairs be put in hand immediately. Having no notice taken of him he threatened to enforce the provisions of the Louth Act in order to have the repairs made. He was reluctant to do so as

. . . nothing would give me so much Pain as to find it necessary to enforce the Act of Parliament in any ('other', deleted) way ('than that of Friendship', deleted) that might appear hostile to the Commissioners. . .¹⁴

This sentiment preceded him to a meeting of the Louth Committee held on 13 October 1784 where Banks talked to Chaplin personally. Chaplin promised that both the bridge and tunnel would be reconstructed, and this episode would seem to have reached a satisfactory conclusion.

Between 1784 and 1809 Sir Joseph had little to do with the canal except for a brief time in the early 1790s when there were problems with water supplies.

Charles Chaplin died in 1792 and his son, took over the lease. On his death it passed to George Chaplin. Thus he was lessee when, just before Christmas 1809, Sir Joseph received a letter from Charles Chaplin of Blankey (1786–1859), Member for Lincoln County and a son of the original lessee, concerning a subject which was causing the Louth Commissioners some anxiety.¹⁵ It would seem that for the first time sea-borne coal duty was being demanded by the Board of Customs on the cargoes being brought up to Louth. The majority of the coal barges were coming from the Yorkshire collieries and travelling via, for example, the Don and Aire and Calder Navigations, into the Humber Estuary. From there they were making their way along the coast, past Grimsby, to Tetney Haven. On the occasion about which Chaplin was writing

a barge had been seized at Hull as it did not have coasting letters of clearance. This event had

. . . put the Town of Louth & neighbourhood into a great state of anxiety lest they should not get the. . . claim given up by the Customs House. . .¹⁶

This action on the part of Hull Customs had been prompted by a communication to them from William Brand, Customs' Officer at Boston, who claimed that Tetney was on the North Sea and not in the Humber Estuary.¹⁷ Chaplin claimed to Sir Joseph that this was incorrect, that Tetney was on the Humber and so was a river port, not a sea port. He justified this assertion by noting that this had been stated in the Louth Act for, when referring to the appointment of Commissioners, it said they

. . . shall be & they and their Successors to be elected in manner hereinafter mentioned and hereby appointed Commissioners for making [the] Canal or navigable cut from the Humber at or near a Place called Tetney Haven. . .¹⁸

Even before the Louth Act had been passed John Smeaton had said

. . . That Tetney haven is the most proper Outfall for a Navigable Canal, as being both safest and deepest; and affording a Communication with the inland Navigation of Yorkshire, and the Trent, for flat Bottom'd Barges, *without going to sea* which at some Seasons of the Year would be dangerous, or impracticable.¹⁹

Chaplin asked Banks to help in countering the claims of the Customs for he knew of

. . . no Person so able to assist in procuring or dictating. . . Documents in order to show that the Louth Navigation goes into the Humber not into the Sea. . .²⁰

Sir Joseph replied immediately and related his concern on the imposition of the tax, being

. . . well. . . aware [of] the destruction of the Louth Navigation which must be the consequence of the new measure proposed for enforcing the payment of sea borne duty on coals landed there. . .²¹

He was prepared to help in a positive manner, not being able

. . . to be an inactive Spectator of so extraordinary an alteration in the Conduct of Government but shall use every means in my power to assist the Country. . .

However, even before this reply had been written, a memorial had been sent to the Board of the Commissioners for Customs by the Louth Commissioners, and a petition, the result of a public meeting which had been held in Louth, had been drawn up and was awaiting signatures in the office of the Town Clerk of Louth to be presented to the Lords of the Treasury, the government department which had responsibility for the Customs. The meeting could not determine who was to present the petition, but the general feeling was that a John Loft should do so. This information could not have pleased Banks as he had had some unpleasant encounters with this man before, during his connection with the water supply problem on this canal in the 1790s. However, Loft claimed that he had the advantage of having a similar claim by the Customs taken off Grimsby. It was thought by some that Chaplin or Charles Pelham²² should present the petition, but as neither had attended any of the meetings held on the business others considered that Loft's offer should not be rejected, if only to hasten the conclusion of the matter as, by then, the whole traffic of the canal had come to a standstill. It was further thought that Banks's name would be effective on the petition and he was asked to sign.²³

Meanwhile, Banks had not been idle. On the day before Christmas Eve he wrote to Chaplin to tell him that he had been to the Treasury to enquire into the background

of the demand. The Customs had not been particularly helpful, but he did learn that for some time the opinion of the Customs was that Tetney was not within the Humber but they had refrained from applying the duty

. . . being in their opinion a harsh measure. . .²⁴

Why should this have been so, for surely the Customs could not discriminate in this way? Banks pondered the point and drew his conclusion. He reasoned that although coal barges passed through the Customs' jurisdiction at Hull and Grimsby, they stopped at neither. The boats were coming from inland rivers and canals where there were no Customs' officials to note the loading of coal—the coal was, therefore, travelling from the place where it was dug (Yorkshire) to a navigable canal (the Louth). Such a place of loading, Banks reasoned, was not one as mentioned by the wording of the sea-coal duty Acts, in particular that of 27 Geo. 111 c. 32 (the development of this legal argument is considered later). He further thought that the boats themselves in which the coal was carried fell outside the meaning of the Acts

. . . the word vessel appearing to me as meant to apply to Brigs Schooners Billanders &c that is all smaller vessels not properly ships tho usd in the Coasting Trade, but in no Case to Boats or Barges what are not usd in the Coasting Trade, tho in this instance they venture 9 miles To Sea from the Humber mouth into Tetney Lock.²⁵

He also discovered that the present situation had been brought about by an incident sometime in the past when the Hull Dock Company, hoping to be entitled to levy dock dues on vessels from Grimsby, had seized a boat from that port. In the ensuing enquiry, in which John Loft claimed to have taken a leading part, Trinity House and the Hydrographer to the Admiralty judged Grimsby to be within the mouth of the Humber and so free from sea coal duty. However, the case of Tetney had been raised in the discussion and, as Sir Joseph says,

. . . it became impossible to avoid noticing it. . .

Thus, the whole question became a legal one in which favour had no place and now it had been raised it could not be forgotten

. . . as no man or body of men appeard to have the power of dispensing wt it. . .

It was at this point that Sir Joseph learnt that Loft had had very little influence on the actual decision arrived at concerning Grimsby, although how he came by this information is not recorded. The decision made for Grimsby was that as barges coming from that port anchored in the Hawke Roads, immediately west of Spurn Point, it was judged to be within the Humber.

. . . Tetney on the other Hand is without or to the Seaward of the Hawke Road[.] if it is possible to convince the Sailors [Admiralty] that Tetney is within the Humber the matter will be no doubt given up if not I see no way of proceeding but a Trial at Law to determine whether the Sea Born duty on coals &c does or does not attach to Tetney Haven. . .

On 28 December Chaplin again wrote to Banks with some items of evidence which supported the canal's case.²⁶ He had obtained a copy of a letter written from Trinity House, Hull, on 13 February 1796. While not stating the essence of the communication, he quoted part of it,

. . . that House has always hitherto understood and are now of Opinion that Tetney Haven is within the Humber and as such within the Limits of the Port of Hull. . .

He had also been talking to some old men who had been 'common carriers of coal', ranging in age from 73 to 91 years, who told him that they had brought coals from the coast to North Coats, about a mile east of Tetney Haven, and had never been charged duty. Chaplin hoped that this information would be sufficient for the Lords of the Treasury at least to suspend the order for duty for a while until the question was finally settled.

In his attempts to discover the reasons for the imposition of the duty Sir Joseph tried to find out as much as he could about the past of the coal trade in the area, hoping that he might discover in that some facts which would be of use in pressing the case. He found that before the Louth Canal had been opened the coals for the district had been landed from sea-going vessels at Saltfleet and duty had always been levied. Banks was of the opinion that these pre-1770 coals had been shipped from Newcastle, so originating in the Durham coalfield, not from Yorkshire. When the Louth opened, for some reason this levy had been dropped. Therefore, the Customs must have been aware of this in 1770. This being the case, Banks considered that it was from the Customs that the answer would have to come. Whether in favour of levying the duty or not, as they must have had all the relevant information gathered together from their former consideration, this should be available somewhere now. Alternatively, he surmised, the Louth Commissioners might have a copy of the results of any examination on the subject which took place while the Louth Canal Act was in its parliamentary stages as he thought the matter must have been considered then and

. . . if these can be Found [they] will be the best Possible exhibits to the Treasury. . . .²⁷

By this time Banks was inclining towards the idea that, on examination, the duty would not be levied, a major reason being that the expenditure of the money involved in the construction of the Louth had been made on the good faith of the undemanded duty. Also, he thought—and here is a different view from that popularly taken of the later eighteenth century 'excise men'—that the

. . . Board [has]. . . at all times. . . shewed itself inclinable To lighten the burthens of the Subject. . . .²⁸

Throughout the time Banks had been communicating with Charles Chaplin he had been passing on Sir Joseph's opinions to his brother, George, the Louth lessee, and Banks would seem to have had some correspondence with him also, but this has not been found. On 20 February George forwarded to Charles Banks the idea that an engineer ought to be employed to ascertain the exact position of Tetney Haven in relation to Spurn Head, as this could be of some value to their case. George's opinion of the Customs was not Banks's. He noted that the Board's lawyers were unanimously against the Louth Commissioners but he was

. . . not surprized at it, because litigations of this Nature are a Harvest to those Rogues & their Bretheren. . . .²⁹

Sir Joseph had suggested to George Chaplin that an Act of Parliament securing a freedom from coal duties for Louth would be the only secure remedy to prevent further trouble, an idea which had already been made to Banks by Charles Chaplin.³⁰ George agreed with this and did not anticipate any difficulty in meeting the costs of such a move but, he cautioned, would not the action of applying for an Act, though probably the best thing to do, be admitting a great doubt on the part of the Commissioners as to being free of the duty?

About a week later Banks wrote to the Board of Customs in Montagu Street, London, requesting them to send him a copy of their report to the Treasury on

which they would be basing their case.³¹ He did this, he claimed, in order to enable matters to be settled as speedily as possible. Accordingly the Customs replied, but only to say that they were awaiting the report from Boston and, in the meantime, all duties at Tetney were suspended.³² They also informed him that their solicitors had said that the duty was legally due and that they could not take into consideration any mitigating circumstances, such as the non-application of it for such a long time.

That the Customs were waiting for a report from Boston is of great significance, as is the fact that at the beginning of the business it had been William Brand, the Customs' Officer at Boston, who had written to the Louth Commissioners telling them that they were liable for duty, in addition to informing the Hull Customs. This significance became apparent to Banks when he received the report of the surveyor who was ascertaining the positions of the locations involved in the dispute. From this and other details which he had received, it was obvious the Louth Commissioners' argument had been somewhat weakened. It had been found that before 1739 the port of Boston, at least as far as the collection of duties was concerned, extended from Cross Keys (midway between Long Sutton and King's Lynn) to Clee Ness, near Grimsby. Therefore, Boston included the ports of Spalding, Fosdyke, Wainfleet, and Saltfleet. The port of Grimsby extended from Clee Ness to the 'south side of the Humber', while the port of Hull extended from Hull along the north side of the Humber Estuary. However, Grimsby was considered as part of the port of Hull for duty purposes.

When the Louth Canal was opened and Tetney became the port, no duty was charged. Banks thought that the reason must have been that the coal was not 'waterborne for the Purpose of being Shipd. . .', as was stated by the Duty Acts.

From the results of the survey which had been undertaken to find the location of Tetney, Banks was told, as he could see for himself on the map, that

. . . Tetney Lock is Bonefide to the Eastward of the Spurn & therefore on the Coast & without the Humber. . .³³

In other words, it was part of the sea as far as the Acts were concerned.

The final blow to the Louth's case came with the discovery that the port limits had been changed in the past. This occurred in 1739, when an Exchequer Commission defined the dividing line between the ports of Hull and Boston as a line from Spurn Head to Clee Ness. Before that time both Tetney and Saltfleet, being north of Grainthorpe, had been in the port of Hull, but with the Commission decision Tetney became part of the port of Boston.³⁴ Thus Banks found that there were two overwhelming arguments for the imposition of the duty; that Tetney was geographically in the North Sea and that coals coming to it were, therefore, sea-borne and were being taken from 'port to port'.

With these revelations came the report of the Customs which summarised their case. Sir Joseph kept a copy of this and probably passed the original on to the Louth Commissioners. The Customs said

. . . The Navigation to Tetney was opened in the year 1769 but no Question respecting any Liability of Duties appears to have arisen till the year 1796 in that year the matter was first submitted to the Board by the Principal officers of Boston but for Some Cause which they are not now Enabled to ascertain, altho Special enquiries have been made for that Purpose, no directions were then given on the Subject, the duties were therefore never demanded at Tetney untill the Recent Representations to us when the same appearing to us to be legally due we directed the Payment thereof to be Enforced.³⁵

Significantly, this is dated 8 March 1810 and seems to show a lack of interdepartmental communication at the Board of Customs, for, even as Banks received this document, the Louth's case had been won. Going back a few months, a petition to the Lord Commissioners of the Treasury against the imposition of duty had been prepared by the Louth proprietors and signed on 14 December 1809.³⁶ Also, Charles Chaplin had used his position as one of the Members for Lincoln County to gain the ear of the Prime Minister, Spencer Percival, who directed that a full enquiry should be made.³⁷ This appears to have been done, but by March 1810 the decision was still in doubt. On 2 March the Board of Customs wrote to Banks saying that they were still awaiting the report from Boston; on 3 March James Green, the Secretary to Trinity House, wrote to the Louth Commissioners' solicitor, William Wilson, that it had been agreed that Tetney was within the Humber and so not subject to duty.³⁸ Thus not only was the Louth Canal freed from the payment of such coal duties but they also received back all those which had been collected up to that time.³⁹

The Louth Commissioners probably could not believe their good fortune and it is disappointing that the reasoning behind the reversal of what seemed to be a foregone conclusion has not been preserved. That the Commissioners were grateful is recorded in their minutes. As an undated preamble to a copy of the petition which was presented to the Treasury Commissioners in December 1810 there appears the following. From the wording it is obvious that it was written after success had been achieved.

... On that occasion the following petition was presented to the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury when the Right Honorable Sir Joseph Banks, Baronet, and Charles Chaplin. . . by their united exertions prevailed on their Lordships to direct that His Majesty's Commissioners of the Customs should order that the duties above mentioned be forborne and the same was accordingly forborne. . .⁴⁰

With the crisis on the Louth Canal over, the part played by Sir Joseph Banks in this episode can be examined in detail.

The Louth Canal was one of Sir Joseph's earliest connections with canals in an official capacity. He was appointed a Commissioner at the age of 25 and this was as a consequence of his landholdings and social position. Even so, the canal had been in operation for some four decades before he became involved in any major way.

In the early 1790s Banks helped to solve some problems concerning water supply on the canal and in this he worked with John Loft. Sir Joseph did not get on well with this man then or later, and in the sea coal controversy he continued to give Loft a cool reception. Loft claimed to have a great knowledge of the history of the Humber Estuary, its limits, boundaries, and charters, and it had been thought by the people of Louth that he could be of immense value in any possible legal battles which were to come. The inhabitants of Louth and the proprietors and Commissioners of the Louth Canal could not have known of the insignificant part he was later stated to have performed in obtaining the relief of Grimsby's coal duty—they assumed that what he could do for Grimsby he could also do for Louth. However, as has been mentioned, Banks had been informed of what was considered to be his true contribution. He probably passed this on to the Louth people and this would account for the reception Loft had received from the town when, expecting a warm reception from those he had come to aid, the reverse was the case. In the event,

... Having resided here many years of my life, first by receiving a several years Classical Education in this town [Louth]; it was hardly to be supposed that the people would entirely pass me unnoticed, particularly when I had come several miles at their own solicitations to attend their meeting. . .⁴¹

Banks decided to convey to Loft the reason for the reception he had received. This letter reveals an interesting aspect of Loft's character, as Banks perceived it, and Banks's reaction to it. Sir Joseph is particularly forthright. This may be understandable, for, with the water-supply episode in mind, Loft may not have been an easy person with whom to be associated and Banks may have had a distaste for him. Yet the letter he wrote remains extremely civilised, although it does illustrate, in this case possibly justified, a jealous side to Sir Joseph's character. He said,

... The Reason why I declind acting in Concert with you on this business is because you not only assumd to yourself the whole merit of Relieving the Town of Grimsby from the Novel Demand made upon them by the Customs but also calld upon the members of the County to declare that they had no share in Obtaining the Exemption which I am of opinion was granted in Consequence of Reports given by the Trinity house of London. . . I therefore concluded that if you & I actd together & the business was done that it would be likely you would have claimed a greater share of the merit than I should have been inclind to allow to you for little as I have been inclind to claim merit for any Public Service I should not like to see another make claim to gratitude due to myself. . .⁴²

This is a difficult situation to evaluate, as all the evidence against Loft is contained in Banks's statements. We do not know independently what he claimed and whether it was true, in total or in part, or false. We do know that Sir Joseph got him sent away after he had been invited by the people of Louth to help them.

In order to appreciate what the dispute was about, a consideration of the sea-borne coal-duty legislation is essential and it will illustrate what Banks and his associates at Louth were contending with legally. The earliest duties were imposed during the reign of Elizabeth I, when 1 Eliz. I c. 11 directed where merchandise should be landed and customs paid. The first Act specifically to deal with coal was 8 Anne c. 4, in which all coals shipped, or waterborne to be shipped, or laid on board any vessel to be carried by sea from any port to any port in Great Britain were to be taxed at 3/- a chaldron. 9 Anne c. 6, section six, stated that security was to be given to the Officers of Customs in the respective ports from where the coals were shipped. 9&10 William III c. 13, section six, placed the duties on coastwise-carried coals under the management of the Commissioners of Customs, while section seven stated that the duty payable to the Collector of Customs must be made before the bulk of the cargo was broken. It was one of the arguments against the Louth's case brought forward by the Board of Customs that the provisions of this Act had been repealed but the Louth Commissioners maintained that 49 Geo. III c. 98 re-enacted all this Act. This is the case, for, while making additional duties payable on coastwise coal traffic, this Act, 49 Geo. III c. 98, did not repeal former ones as section five states that all Acts relative to the revenue of Customs were to be applied in the execution of that Act where they were varied, and here there were no variations with respect to coastwise coal.

27 Geo. III c. 13, section two, raised the duty on coal to 5/6d a chaldron, while 27 Geo. III c. 32, section 21, noted that doubts might arise concerning the meaning of some passages of 27 Geo. III c. 13. This was clarified by the statement that duties on coals brought coastwise within Great Britain should be charged and paid on all coal which should be shipped or waterborne in order to be shipped or laid on board any ship or vessel to be carried by sea. From this it would appear that barges were not meant, but only sea-built vessels, such as Newcastle colliers, which were actually loaded for, and carried, coastwise by sea. Section 22 of this Act authorises the importer of coal to secure the duties on it by Bond, to be paid to the Collector within 16 days. Here it would seem that such an allowance of Bonding would imply

vessels with large cargoes and would be likely to be applicable to such small cargoes as were delivered from a barge which would, on the Louth, have been unlikely to exceed about 30 chaldrons.

Of greatest importance to Sir Joseph's opposition to the duty would have been 13&14 Geo. II. c. 11 which reinforced 1 Eliz. I c. 11 by appointing Collectors of Customs to reside actually at the port of collection. Commissioners were appointed to designate the extent of the limits of every port, but no Customs officer was ever appointed to reside at Tetney or, in fact, any further north along the Lincolnshire coast than Grainthorpe Haven. In 1810 a Mr Mails was Collector there, and at Saltfleet Haven, south of Tetney, the Collector was a Mr Sanderson. Some commission had fixed the sea-coast boundary at Grainthorpe, and it was noted by William Wilson, Clerk to the Louth Canal that

. . . it is rumoured that there was a long time ago 9 Commissioners came to Saltfleet & that 5 were for Tetney haven being part of the Humber. . .⁴³

This was the basis of the case of the Louth Commissioners for duty removal which was fought by Sir Joseph and Charles Chaplin but Banks at least probably realised that it was not a good one.

In each of these Acts the terms 'ship' and 'vessel' are used and this wording would seem to imply that only those such as were built for, and capable of, sustaining sea voyages were meant. 8 Anne c. 4 uses the wording

. . . laid on board any Ship or Vessel to be carried by Sea and which shall be carried by Sea in any Ship or Vessel from any Port of place within. . .

and this would seem to confine the regulation to ships or vessels built for the sea. If barges or keels, such as navigate rivers and canals, had been meant, the wording of the Act would have been more likely to read

. . . Ships, Barges, Boat, Lighter, etc., or other vessel. . .

22 Geo. II c. 37, 'An Act for better securing His Majesty's duties arising upon Coal, Culm and Cinders exported beyond the Sea. . .' again uses the wording 'Ship' and 'Vessel', implying sea-going craft.

15 Geo. III c. 27 implies that on and after 5 July 1775 only those coals landed on some

. . . Staith, Wharf or other place. . .

with an intent to be reshipped on board sea-built vessels, and actually so laid, to be carried abroad or coastwise, should be liable for duty.

In two respects his stated position seems to fail. In the first, the attempts to arrive at a definition of the term 'vessel' were somewhat spurious for surely the term was meant to imply just what it said—any 'vessel'—and trying to differentiate between different types was to embark on an erroneous course if it was not linked to the problem of defining what was the 'Sea'. This was critical to the argument. Here was the second failing, as expressed by Sir Joseph himself in his letter to Charles Chaplin of 19 December 1809, when he stated

. . . but in no Case to Boats or Barges what are not used in the Coasting Trade, tho in this instance they venture *9 miles to sea* from the Humber mouth into Tetney Lock. . .

By making this statement Banks shows himself as realising that Tetney was not part of the Humber and that the coal barges coming to it must be classified as 'sea-going vessels'. With this perception of the argument, he probably began to operate out of

the public eye and to exert his influence in having the duty removed, realising that the legal case was uncertain.

Of how much use was the influence of Banks and Chaplin? While the contribution made by each individual cannot be assessed, it must be said that it was considerable, considering the poor geographical case which the Louth Commissioners had. The result of this influence (or, rather, persuasion, as Banks was not making them do something which they did not consider was correct) can be seen in the course of events of early March 1810. On 3 March, James Green, Secretary of Trinity House, wrote to the Louth Commissioners that Tetney was not within the Humber and, therefore, not liable for duty but, in the preamble to the petition written after the duties had been removed, and presented to Banks in gratitude for his help, the Louth Commissioners said,

... the ... duties above mentioned have been foreborne. . .

From this statement, an exemption, or dispensation, from paying the duties is obvious. The duties were seen by the Customs as legitimate and, while they were not abandoning their claim, they believed that in the current situation it would be injudicious to pursue it. One can only speculate as to the part the Prime Minister played in this decision being reached.

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- 14 BS 17, Sir Joseph Banks (SJB) to ?C. Chaplin, 13 October 1784
- 15 BS 17/12, C. Chaplin to SJB, 16 December 1809
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- 17 He was known to Banks, having reported a curious animal being washed ashore, with a drawing and description, entitled, 'Some Account of the Narwhal, Monodon; Boston, Lincolnshire, 20 Feby 1800'. Banksian correspondence in the library of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, Vol. 2, 233
- 18 BS 17/13, C. Chaplin to SJB, 21 December 1809
- 19 BS 17/2, The Report of John Smeaton, etc., 1761, p. 17

- 20 BS 17/12, C. Chaplin to SJB, 16 December 1809
- 21 BS 17/12, SJB to C. Chaplin, 19 December 1809
- 22 Son of Charles Anderson Pelham, 1st. Lord Yarborough. This Charles succeeded to the title in 1823
- 23 BS 17/11, C. Massingberd to SJB, 17 December 1809
- 24 BS 17/14, SJB to C. Chaplin, 23 December 1809
- 25 BS 17/18. Banks originally wrote, 'a few miles To Sea' and then substituted '9' in place of 'a few'. Sir Joseph was recognising Clee Ness (Cleethorpes) as the mouth of the Humber, being on the same latitude as the tip of Spurn Head.
- 26 BS 17/15, C. Chaplin to SJB, 28 December 1809
- 27 BS 17/10, SJB to the Louth Canal Commissioners, 29 January 1810
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- 35 BS 17/32, ?Board of Customs to ?Louth Canal Commissioners, 8 March 1810
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- 39 LAO, LRA 5/1, J. Whitmore (Custom House, London) to W. Wilson, 31 October 1810
- 40 LAO, LRA 5/1, Petition dated 14 December 1809
- 41 BS 17/16, J. Loft to SJB, 3 January 1810
- 42 BS 17/17, SJB to J. Loft, 6 January 1810
- 43 BS 17/27, W. Wilson to SJB, 6 February 1810. Additional duties on coals were levied by 37 Geo. III c. 15 and c. 110; 39&40 Geo. III c. 5; 43 Geo. III c. 68 and c. 70; 44 Geo. III C. 53 and 46 Geo. III c. 42

The Location of the London (Maiden Line) Temporary Terminus (GNR)

ALAN A. JACKSON

In my book *London's Termini* I suggested that the temporary London terminus of the Great Northern Railway (opened on 7 August 1850 and closed upon the opening of King's Cross on 14 October 1852) was sited on the down side, between what were later Gas Works and Copenhagen Tunnels.¹ This statement was largely based on two illustrations published in *The Illustrated London News (ILN)* in August and November 1851. Both prints can be studied in John Wrottesley's *Great Northern Railway*.² The later one depicts the GNR passing under the North London Railway viaduct and entering Copenhagen Tunnel. In the foreground there are what appear to be platforms and platform lighting, extending almost up to the viaduct. These were taken to be part of a Maiden Lane terminus sited between the tunnels and *east* of Maiden Lane (later York Road/Way). The other picture shows the departure of

Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort for Scotland on 27 August 1851, illustrating the interior of the train shed and, in the distance, the NLR. A large crowd looks down on the scene from a higher level at the *west* side. This again suggests a site between the tunnels where the onlookers would be able to stand on the roadway at a higher level. It also seemed doubtful, if the station were further south, on the west side of Maiden Lane/York Way, that the artist would have been able to see the NLR through the end of the train shed, though of course he might have exercised the traditional licence. Finally, J. Medcalf, retired Outdoor Goods Manager, GNR, writing in *The Railway Magazine*³ of his memories of Maiden Lane temporary passenger station, where he started his railway career, refers to the 1851 Exhibition crowds waiting for trains 'on the slopes of a green embankment just outside the station', and to 'the tunnel outside our station'. These statements also suggested a site between the tunnels. (Incidentally it is Medcalf who provides the information that the platforms were of timber; he also mentions a carriage-loading platform when describing how the Duke of Wellington used the station and this is not included in either picture.)

However, RCHS member Mr Malcolm Tucker, a constructional engineer who is also a keen industrial archaeologist, has discovered some papers in the Institution of Civil Engineers' Library which indicate that the site was almost certainly further south than has hitherto been assumed. He has very kindly allowed me to examine his notes and copies of some of these papers,⁴ which consist of drawings and tender documents deposited at the Institution by Lewis Cubitt, the architect to the GNR. Dated March 1850, they refer to 'the permanent goods and temporary passenger station, Maiden Lane, Kings Cross' and the plans show separate arrival and departure sheds for the passenger station, the former alongside and against but staggered a little north of the latter. The south end of the departure shed comes within 150 ft of the north bank of the Regent's Canal and both sheds are *above* what was later Gas Works Tunnel and west of Maiden Lane/York Way. Both roofs are described as being 500 ft long with the span of the departure shed given as 45 ft and that of the arrival shed as 50 ft. Between the supporting pillars there are longitudinal, cast-iron girders with rectangular-pierced spandrels, generally of 25 ft span, the lower chord arched with a 1 ft 3 in. rise. The arrival shed appears to have provision for only one track, the departure for two, with platform widths varying accordingly. The general appearance of the structure is broadly similar to that of the train sheds at Euston Square, London & Birmingham Railway,⁵ but the construction technology of the latter differed (rolled tee rafters and angle purlins) and at Maiden Lane Cubitt added a clerestory to each shed.

The August 1851 *ILN* illustration shows roofing corresponding to that in Cubitt's drawings and Mr Tucker's site investigations have revealed fragments of roofing identical to the Cubitt drawings still surviving on the site of the largely-demolished Potato Market which evidently was later built around the temporary passenger sheds, re-using their partly-glazed roofs.

Since Cubitt's drawings are dated March 1850 and the passenger station was in use within four months, we may however question whether the roof was completed in time for the opening.

The new evidence seems to provide fairly conclusive proof that the temporary passenger station was on the southern site, almost in line with the goods depot buildings and between them and Maiden Lane/York Way, but some minor mysteries remain. In the August 1851 *ILN* picture, what of the crowd of people standing at a high level on the *west* side of the train shed? Were they really precariously balanced on the partially-built goods shed (later the Midland Railway Goods Sheds), the only possible position for them at the southern site, unless, somewhat incredibly, special

temporary staging was erected for the occasion, or did the artist simply sketch them in for effect? This picture appears to show both train sheds as in existence by August 1851, but, curiously, the Royal Train is lined up in the arrival shed on the east side of the station! As for the November 1851 illustration, we may perhaps surmise that the platforms were extended to the extent shown to cope with the exceptional traffic generated by the Great Exhibition.

I was prompted to write this note after hearing Mr Tucker's Birkbeck College lecture on the King's Cross Goods Stations of 26 November 1988 and I am indebted to him for subsequent assistance in its compilation.

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The Other Costs of Railway Building—A Note on Navy Casualties in South-Western England

DAVID BROOKE

The costs of railway building are usually measured in financial terms, that is, by an assessment of the amount of share capital, debentures, etc., required by a particular line or company during and immediately after the period of construction. But the process of railway development was accompanied by far greater sacrifices than those incurred by the shareholder who, having paid the instalments on his equities, had to wait for years before they produced a dividend. It also saw frequent loss of life and serious injury amongst those engaged in the labour of construction. The following note examines the sources of information available in the counties of Somerset, Wiltshire, and Gloucester for measuring the extent of this human loss as it occurred in the building of the Great Western, Bristol & Gloucester, and Cheltenham & Great Western Union lines in the years 1838–45. It will be seen that an exercise such as this may encounter problems that are as intractable as those found in the financial field.

An investigation of the most obvious source of information on casualties amongst navvies, the inquests held by county and borough coroners, immediately illustrates the nature and extent of these difficulties. None of the official reports on their inquiries has survived for this period in any of the three counties. Wiltshire Record Office has, however, the accounts or requests for fees sent to Quarter Sessions by John Edwards and William Adye, coroners of Corsham and for the County of

Wiltshire respectively, concerning several deaths at Box Tunnel in 1840 and 1841.¹ But the most interesting extant records in the area are two volumes compiled as a personal record by John Garlick Ball, one of the two county coroners of Gloucester. These contain his verdicts on 29 deaths on the B&G and C&GWU lines, including three at Sapperton and four at Wickwar tunnels, in the years 1839–45.² Ball confined his professional duties chiefly to events in the southern half of the county, where the majority of this railway building was in progress, in order to save travelling time, but reports on accidents in local newspapers show that he was not called to every railway death in that part in these years. At least one of his inquests highlights the irresponsibility of contractors. In December 1841 he adjudicated in the *New Inn*, Wickwar, following the deaths of three men in an explosion and found that it had been caused by gunpowder which the contractor kept in his blacksmith's shop. Three years later the death of Charles Workman, who fell into a cutting on the C&GWU, was a matter which affected him personally since he appended to his verdict of 'Blame Contractor' the comment 'A faithful servant of mine more than 13 years.'³ Coroners' records for this period may be as occasional and incomplete in other parts of the country. Even an apparently promising source, an unbroken annual series of returns on inquests for Cheshire in the PRO covering the years 1798–1891 (ASSI 66), contains verdicts on only seven deaths during the construction of the first Woodhead Tunnel; this has to be compared with 26 fatalities listed by Thomas Nicholson in his *Strictures*.⁴ Those who were injured during railway building sometimes received treatment in workhouses at the expense of Poor Law Unions or, more frequently, they were taken to the nearest hospital. Unfortunately, the registers of admissions for both 'In' and 'Out' patients for Salisbury, Bath, Bristol, Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Stroud hospitals give the names, ages, and condition of patients but not, being a matter of little relevance in this context, their occupations. Hospitals were, however, not wealthy institutions since they relied on voluntary subscriptions or donations for the bulk of their income, and so they kept a check on railway casualties in the hope that their costs would be defrayed by railway companies and contractors. These requests for financial assistance are the only evidence of the extent of the problem as it affected the area's medical resources. Thus Bath United Hospital's appeal to the GWR for help in meeting expenses which, its secretary claimed, totalled £330 in 1840 alone was answered by a donation of £50.⁵ Salisbury Infirmary admitted 67 injured men from the branch line between Bishopstoke and the city in the 15 months prior to August 1846 and spent £234 on their maintenance; this sum did not take into account the amount spent on medicines nor did it include the expenses of treating the 'Out' patients who came from the works. In return, the railway and its contractors subscribed £134 during the years 1844–47. According to the hospital's Management Committee, the poor of the district, for whom this establishment had been founded, had suffered as a result of the diversion of resources into the care of navvies.⁶ Donations were made by railway companies and contractors to all of the six hospitals referred to above, but they were in no way equal to the sums expended in meeting this new demand for their services.

Troublesome as they may have been, there is no evidence in these hospital records that navvies were ever refused treatment. The same cannot be said for the Poor Law Unions. The period under consideration was characterised by stringency in spending on the poor, and unions, mindful of the policies of the Poor Law Commissioners, did not include the relief of strangers to their parishes amongst their responsibilities. Bath refused to give either 'In' or 'Out Door' assistance to non-residents of the city and Gloucester provided food and lodgings for 'stout, able navigators' for one night only.⁷ Maidenhead (Cookham) Poor Law Union, Berkshire, accepted two navvies into its sick ward in 1838, probably because they had contagious infections, but refused help to others on the grounds that one had a son in railway employment and the other, because he could be maintained by the gang of men with whom he worked.⁸

An examination of the two sources mentioned above exposes some of the hidden costs of railway building but they are an inadequate base for the accumulation of statistics on deaths and injuries. A series of returns made on the orders of Parliament appears at first glance to be a more satisfactory approach to the problem of numbers. In 1840, the Board of Trade required railway companies to supply information on the accidents which had occurred amongst construction workers after 1 September 1839.⁹ From its inception this potentially valuable compilation was marred by the failure of two major projects of the time, the Edinburgh & Glasgow and London & Brighton, to make any sort of reply. Many other companies had no record of injuries and deaths, some only knew of deaths, and the Directors of the Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock & Ayr simply furnished the terse comment that what happened to the men was the business of the contractors and not their responsibility. The Board of Trade's interest in the hazards of navvying faded in the summer of 1840—thereafter, it concentrated on collecting information on accidents involving members of the public and company servants. Fortunately, in this welter of inconsistency and indifference the returns made by Charles Saunders of the GWR and those for the C&GWU are outstanding for their clarity and detail; it had apparently been the practice of the resident engineers of the former company to obtain information on accidents amongst the men.

According to the Board of Trade papers, 13 men were seriously injured and nine died on the part of the C&GWU between Swindon and Kemble (Cirencester) in the 12 months from November 1839 to October 1840. The terrain through which this section of track ran posed no great problems for railway building and the majority of the deaths occurred as a result of incidents during the routine conveyance of spoil and other materials. For example, on 5 March 1840, John Fox, aged 20 years, died when he slipped under a waggon, and Abraham Hescott was killed in identical circumstances a few months later. Others, both men and boys, had their limbs crushed under falling horses or when unhooking waggons.¹⁰ The lesson of these returns is that danger was not absent from even the most simple operations in railway building. In the same period on the GWR main line, chiefly between Wootton Bassett and Bath, 31 men died and 37 were seriously injured. The causes here were more varied since this section included two tunnels, high embankments, and deep cuttings. Thus, subcontractor David Lee died under a fall of rock in Box Tunnel in November 1839 and on the same day another man dropped to his death in a shaft; two men were crushed to death by a huge fall of soil in excavations at Brinkworth five months later and J. Atherill, aged 20 years and a stoker, had his leg cut off by a locomotive at Chippenham in October 1840.¹¹

Taking all the available sources,¹² the aggregate of casualties on the GWR between Maidenhead and Bristol in the period May 1838 to May 1841 is 65 deaths and 57 serious injuries. This includes newspaper reports of incidents on the very difficult stretch of track for construction between Bristol and Bath. It is not an excessive total—less than one death per mile—but it would clearly have been very much larger if the results of coroners inquests existed for any district along the route,¹³ if the Parliamentary Returns had been started at an earlier date, and if newspapers had not confined their reporting to the most horrific events. The result for Box Tunnel alone is 19 deaths and two serious injuries. The total of 100 deaths which is mentioned in many accounts appears to have its origins in a pamphlet written by Thomas Gale and published in 1884.¹⁴ Gale had been a foreman and subcontractor under the main tunnel contractor, George Burge, but for 30 years before the appearance of this publication he served the GWR as a porter at Bath Station. The figure of 100 is almost certainly an exaggeration although, it has to be admitted, Gale was in a good position to have obtained accurate information.¹⁵ However, there is no obvious reason why Box should have taken the lives of almost four times the number of men that

were lost at Woodhead, an equally difficult and much longer piece of tunnelling. If he was correct, then extant records are even more defective than the writer has suspected.

A concise description is all that is required for the remaining sources. The pages of local newspapers provide detail, often in a colourful form, which is not present in official reports of accidents and coroners' inquests; in the absence of other records, they may be all that is available. But their pattern of reporting was arbitrary and therefore they are no satisfactory guide to the total numbers of men involved. In the province of ecclesiastical muniments, parish registers record burials. However, on the evidence of the contents of the registers of some of the parishes around Box Tunnel,¹⁶ they do not in this period mention the occupations of deceased persons. Finally, a potentially outstanding source for deaths, the registers of births, deaths, and marriages in the custody of Superintendent Registrars, is not accessible to those intending to make a general search. Efforts are being made by various bodies concerned with demography and genealogy to have these registers deposited in county record offices, where there are facilities for their inspection by the public, but so far these have been unsuccessful.¹⁷ It is incongruous that whilst the Hundred Year Rule governs access to the census returns, only the indexes to the Registrar General's registers are open to the public. If the registers give a precise occupational description and do not, in common with many other records of the time, include railway navvies in the omnibus title 'Labourer', then it should be possible to compile a plenary list of deaths.

The loss of life and limb which accompanied the construction of the railway network is clearly a subject that deserves as much attention as has always been paid to the accidents which befell fare-paying passengers and company employees. But little concern was expressed over the safety of the navy in the years 1835–45 and, there being no statutory protection,¹⁸ the most flagrant negligence on the part of his employers went unpunished. The failure of railway contractors and most company engineers to record accidents when they occurred and the loss of papers such as the results of coroners' inquests since that time have conspired to make the question of casualties a perplexing matter in relation to the early railways of the South West. The same may be true for the lines of other regions.

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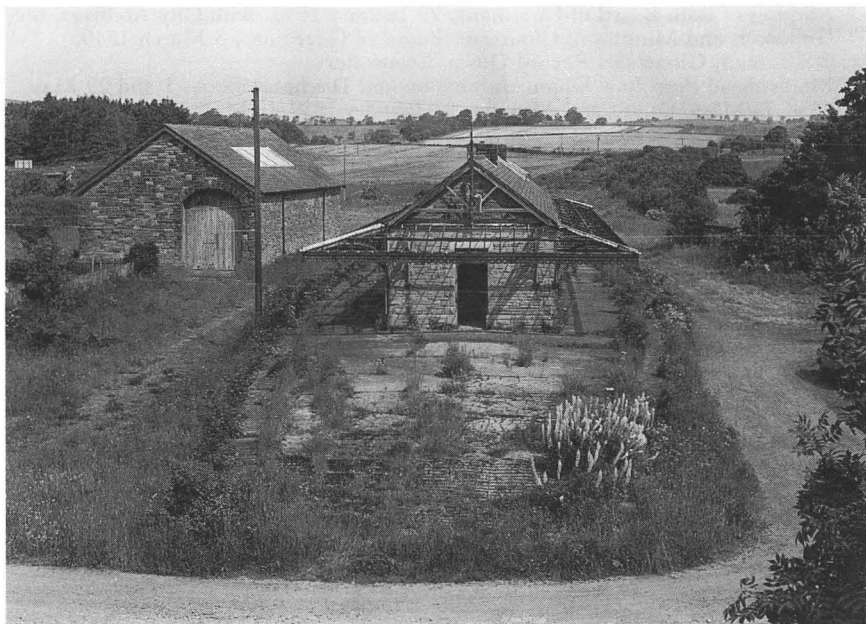
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- 9 Railway Returns, Parliamentary Papers, 1841, XXV
- 10 Accidents reported as having occurred on 7 January, 5 March, 16 July, and 27 August 1840, *ibid.*
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- 13 A number of returns on inquests are contained in the Sessions Rolls of Berkshire, Q/SR, but none of these is concerned with events on the railway
- 14 Thomas Gale, *A Brief Account of the Making and Working of the Great Box Tunnel*, Bath 1884, pp. 11–12
- 15 His words are: 'From commencement to finish just one hundred men were killed in different parts of the works and in different ways.' The discussion ranges over activities in the neighbourhood of Chippenham and he may, therefore, have included deaths on the adjoining stretches of track.
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- 17 Editorial, 'Further News from the General Register Office', *Local Population Studies*, No. 37, Autumn 1986, pp. 4–9
- 18 The question of accidents and employers' liability was discussed by the Select Committee on Railway Labourers, 1846, pp. ix–xi, Parliamentary Papers, 1846, XIII. Coroners or magistrates sitting in Petty Sessions very occasionally imposed a fine on contractors or ordered the equipment—waggon, horse, or loco—which had caused the death to be confiscated under the ancient law of *deo dandum*.

I am grateful to the staffs of the County Record Offices of Wiltshire, Berkshire, Gloucestershire, and Somerset, to the Local History Library, Trowbridge, and to the Archivists of Bath and Bristol for the assistance given during the preparation of this note.

Whittingham Station—a rural period piece

TIM EDMONDS

In recent years my activity in railway history has been of the 'fieldwork' rather than the documentary variety; exploring and photographing the physical remains of closed railways in general and their stations in particular. It is often the case that my expeditions end in an industrial estate, housing development, or simply wasteland with scattered rubble, but occasionally I come across a site where the richness of the remains makes up for such disappointments. During a holiday in Northumberland in June 1988 I visited such a site, and one which I now commend to members. It is a station which closed to regular passenger trains in 1930, and to freight traffic in 1953, yet which has survived remarkably intact after all those years and retains an atmosphere of the past. The station concerned is Whittingham, on the remote branch of the North Eastern Railway which was opened in 1887 from Alnwick to Coldstream.



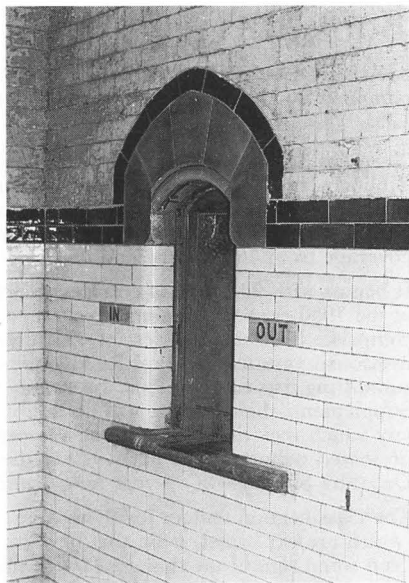
*Whittingham station, NER: view north from the road bridge
(Tim Edmonds)*

It is clear that this line was built to last. The substantial stone station houses and station buildings (designed by William Bell, the NER architect) survive at all the intermediate stations on the line, and there are also several goods sheds, numerous bridges, a viaduct, and a tunnel to be seen. What makes Whittingham different is that it was a passing station and, unlike those at Hedgeley and Wooler, it was built with an island platform. The main station building is isolated on the platform and so remains largely unaltered and intact; it has not been converted to other uses as has happened at the rest of the stations. The single-storey building is made of stone with a slate roof and has a tall finial at the south (Alnwick) end; although the windows are boarded up, many of the original doors are still *in situ* and there is no evidence of vandalism. On all four sides is a fine iron canopy, now glassless but with much of the original valancing surviving. The decorative ironwork incorporates a 'Star of David' design which I also saw in the canopy over the entrance to Alnwick station, which was rebuilt by the same architect for the opening of the branch.

Passengers approached the station via a boarded crossing at the south end of the platform and entered the booking hall through a sliding door. There were three of these, one in each external wall, and the east entrance is still *in situ*. To step through one of the doorways today is like stepping back into another era; it is as though little has changed since the last passenger booked his ticket in 1930. The stone floor and tiled walls are clean and there are two windows into the booking office, each complete with a wooden shutter and tray for the exchange of money and tickets. Beside each window are tiles proclaiming 'IN' and 'OUT', on the left and right respectively, although I imagine that passenger numbers were never sufficient to warrant such organisation.



*Whittingham station, NER: Alnwick-bound platform, shewing the decorative ironwork
(Tim Edmonds)*



*Whittingham station, NER: one of the two ticket-windows in the booking-hall
(Tim Edmonds)*

The station building is only part of the story, for the whole area surrounding it forms a complementary rural period piece. To the east of the platform is a row of railway cottages, still occupied and in a good state of repair. To the west of the platform is the station house, built in the style of those on the rest of the line and still with a distinctive finial on the gable. North of the station house is a substantial stone goods shed, again in an excellent state of repair, and to the west of that is a spacious goods yard which still contains a wooden buffer stop, loading platform, coal drops, and a small coal office. Of course no rural railway scene would be complete without an inn, and between the station and the crossroads on the A697 lies the *Bridge of Aln Hotel*.

A good view across the whole site can be obtained from the bridge which carries the Whittingham-Alnwick road over the trackbed at the south end of the station. By the roadside on approach to the bridge from the hotel is a letter-box and, with a fine sense of history, the Post Office still labels its location as 'Whittingham Station'.

I have found that an irony exists in railway fieldwork of this kind in that recently closed railways are often rapidly erased from the landscape while features of lines which closed many years earlier remain relatively unscathed. As an early closure Whittingham station certainly fits this pattern, but one can never be certain for how much longer a site like this will survive. If you are visiting the area don't miss it.

Book Reviews

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BRITISH RAILWAY HISTORY: SUPPLEMENT, compiled by George Ottley, 544pp, boards, HMSO, 1988, ISBN 0-11-290364-9, £35.

Turn first to the very last page and read the sonnet 'On the Completion of a Railway Bibliography' by C. Corney, which expresses so much more eloquently than your reviewer could what railway historians owe to George Ottley for his original bibliography, published in 1966. Now we have this Supplement, which extends its coverage from 1964 to the end of 1980.

It begins with 23 pages of corrigenda and addenda (including new editions) to some of the 7950 entries contained in the first volume. The main body of the book comprises 5005 new entries, of which about one third are for pre-1964 items previously omitted. Several RCHS members are among those acknowledged for submitting lists of omissions. Inevitably there will also be a few omissions from the Supplement; the compiler will no doubt be pleased if members will notify him of any which they discover. Among the new entries it is worth mentioning 500 papers presented between 1905 and 1970 to the GWR/Western Region London Lecture & Debating Society—'a 65-year-long oral history record of the GWR'.

The classification system for these new entries has changed in only minor respects (which are explained) from that devised for the first volume. However, there have been some significant changes (which are not explained) in the rules for allocating titles to classes. For example section L now covers the companies absorbed through the 'Big Four' into BR; other incorporated companies, such as the Festiniog, now appear in Section C. So, rather oddly, do all the main line Scottish companies and the Cambrian Railways (but not the other Welsh companies). Perversely the Metropolitan Railway has moved into section L from the London Underground Railways sub-class of C1. This is somewhat disconcerting for libraries and individuals who have adopted Ottley's classification system for their own collections. However, this is a minor criticism, since the starting point for any search is always the exemplary index of authors, titles, and subjects.

A useful feature of the Supplement is that the long classes are broken up into more digestible sub-classes. For example, the larger companies in section L have a separate sub-class for their locomotives.

Among the changes which have taken place in railway publishing since the original volume, Ottley highlights in his introduction the effects of the railway preservation movement and the ascendancy of illustrations over text in popular railway books (the result of technological advances in the printing industry). Many will agree with his rather melancholy views on endless albums of locomotives and trains. He does, however, note a general improvement in standards, particularly in works of depth and detail (although this is perhaps more true of the years since 1980).

Only those who have tried their hand at this type of work can appreciate the full extent of the 'loving labour' (to borrow the sonneteer's phrase) which is embodied in the level of detail annotating each entry. Few will be aware of the sorry tale of frustration and abortive toil which lies behind the eight-year gap between the final entry and the appearance of the Supplement in print. But everyone who has cause to use 'Ottley' will rejoice in the appearance at last of 'Ottley 2'. Surely no field of study has been better served by its bibliographer. GRAHAME BOYES

FORGOTTEN RAILWAYS: VOLUME II, SEVERN VALLEY AND WELSH BORDER, Rex Christiansen, 200 pp, 32 photo illus, boards, David & Charles, 1988, ISBN 0-946537-43-7, £11.95.

With Volume 11 Rex Christiansen has filled in the territorial gap between his West Midlands and North & Mid Wales volumes. An awkwardly-shaped area this, between West Kirby and Pontrilas (North to South) and Llanymynech to Stafford and New Radnor to Worcester (West to East); some truncations have resulted, but surprisingly few.

First a most important point. The gazetteer is very full and grid references are liberal. Clearly, the author has thoroughly covered the ground himself. But those who remember these lines in operation may feel, perhaps because many of them lay in some of the most beautiful country in Britain, that they deserve a rural panegyric. That they will not find here. The author's style, at least in this book, is factual and workmanlike: one must look elsewhere for steam rising lazily between the summer hedgerows. So it cannot have been easy to decide which facts should be included in the gazetteer and which in the eight main chapters.

There are generous references to source material throughout, a very full bibliography, and a folding map which could have been much more elegant with a border and a North mark. (Oakwood Press has lately taken to using extracts from RCH maps with very happy results). There is also a number of unhappy misprints.

Some of the photographs are rather dark and lacking in tonal contrast, but many are of considerable interest, such as those of the little-known Clee Hill Railway. It is perhaps surprising that Dr Edwin Course's successful formula of photographs 'then and now' has not been more closely followed in this series. Plowden or Leigh Court stations would be very suitable subjects.

Both the plates and gazetteer demonstrate the surprising speed with which whole sections of line, active a quarter of a century ago, have disappeared, or nearly so. How much will be left in ten years' time, even in 'the quietest places under the sun'? E. R.L. DAVIES

SR 150: A CENTURY AND A HALF OF THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY, D. St. John Thomas and P. B. Whitehouse, 208 pp, 220 x 284 mm, 180 illustrations, 3 maps, boards, David & Charles, 1988, ISBN 0-1753-9148-8, £14.95.

Books on railway history may be classified in many ways—the 'heavies' provide a standard reference, whilst others are noteworthy for attractive presentation rather than systematic analysis. *SR 150* belongs in the latter category, being so well produced that it seems almost unfair to worthy competitors for the purse at the same price. As one of the authors has stated by way of publicity, 'apart from anything else, it is probably the best value book of 1988'. With its high-quality paper and outstanding illustrations, this is palpably true, so it is perhaps more useful to comment on the 'anything else'.

The authors were able to draw on a pool of expertise, which is identified in the acknowledgments. The many and varied contributions are described as main chapters, 'fillers', 'snippets', and photographs. The 'snippets' consist mainly of well-chosen extracts from books and periodicals with the special merit in many cases of being contemporary. The range is such as to defy summary, but all are of interest.

Whilst the book concentrates on the Southern Railway, as the sub-title indicates, it includes reference to its pre-grouping antecedents and its nationalised successor. This

approach is well reflected in the choice of illustrations. Presumably because its 150th anniversary is celebrated by the title of the book, of the three principal pre-grouping constituents, the London & Southampton, as predecessor of the LSWR, is the only one to receive a specific 'filler'. However, as the piece is confined to two-and-a-half pages it is rather difficult to accept the claim that it is 'one of the best accounts published'. The idea of interspersing the main chapters with 'fillers' and 'snippets' is claimed to reflect contrasting aspects of the Southern, and this it certainly achieves.

The main chapters are arranged on a subject basis, including such aspects as people ('Personalities and Characters'), electrification, and rolling stock ('The Ultimate in Steam' and 'Coaches: Old, Rebuilt and New'). Other main chapters cover stations, passenger trains and freight traffic, running sheds, and ships and docks. Clearly, being the work of different authors, the approach and quality varies, but all are of a high standard. Despite the distinction of the contributors, inevitably slips occur. For instance, while steamers of all the companies mentioned used Southampton, only in the case of Cunard is the inference that it was their main port justified, (p.69). The standardised red-brick buildings mentioned are on the Brockenhurst to Christchurch line, not the Ringwood to Christchurch line, (p.86). Many of the examples of SR electric train codes, although perpetuating Southern practice, belong to the BR period, (p.112).

As these comments probably reveal, your reviewer is biased in favour of the 'heavies' compared to the 'popular', and *SR 150*, with its 'Pullman' production and star-billing by the talented David & Charles publicity machine is certain to be popular. As mentioned above, it is the 'best value book of 1988' and this reflects its modest price, made possible by a high print-run. It is a fascinating patchwork, reasonably coherent, but with a conscious effort to claim relationships where they hardly exist. For instance, after the chapter on the 'Southern at War' the 'filler' on traffic operations at Borough Market Junction includes such phrases as 'Years of conflict' and in a caption, 'The Borough Market battleground'. With due allowance for prejudice it must be said that this is an outstanding production with quite a remarkable collection of illustrations in half-tone and colour. It adds little to previous works, but is eminently readable and provides an almost ideal introduction to the Southern. EDWIN COURSE

THE RAILWAY AND ITS PASSENGERS, A SOCIAL HISTORY, David Norman Smith, 192 pp, 22 line illustrations in text, boards, David & Charles 1988, ISBN 0-7153-8651-4, £12.95.

This is a brief history of railway development, with particular emphasis on what the companies wanted to achieve, were allowed to by legislation, and did achieve in the interests of (a) shareholders and (b) the passengers, the latter frequently coming a poor second. It is compiled largely from sources that will be known already to readers of this Journal, but the author writes well and uses statistics meaningfully. He compares, for instance, miles travelled by the number of trains and passengers in them, thereby exemplifying trains that must have run at a loss and others that did not. He emphasises anti-social but pro-dividend axioms of directors and some of their excuses for poor service such as Watkins' opposition to extending third-class facilities in which he described the Midland's policy of 'driving together classes who do not naturally wish to associate' as a 'great public injustice'. That is one way of looking at the issue but a weakness lies in all-too-little response from the passengers. Their replies to such a comment would have helped, and while there is much of what companies thought of passengers there is little reciprocation. Maybe the passenger

was too humble to complain in the early days (for the book's emphasis is in the earlier development) and although we also get humanitarian views by other directors and learn of improvements made together with peripheral enticements ranging from 'Holiday Haunts' to Metroland development, some of us might like to have in addition to this useful book a sequel counter titled 'Passengers and their Railways' in which we see more clearly the other side of the coin. JOHN DENTON

THE LOUGH SWILLY RAILWAY, Edward M. Patterson, 189 pp, 4 maps, 22 track plans and gradient profiles in text, 69 photo illus, boards, David & Charles, 2nd edition 1988, £14.95

This is the second edition of a book originally published in 1964; it tells the story of a lengthy narrow-gauge railway which had an eventful history.

The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway started off as a standard-gauge line, opened in 1863, to Farland, on the south shore, where it connected with steamer services across the lough. This was soon followed by a line to Buncrana, on the eastern shore, and in 1868 the steamer services were transferred to the more convenient terminal of Fahan on this line. A branch to Letterkenny was opened in 1883—on the narrow gauge to save money—and to enable the system to be worked as one unit the line from Londonderry to Buncrana was converted to narrow gauge in 1885. These lines still left most of NW Donegal untapped, and two long extensions were eventually constructed by the Government and worked by the LLSR: one from Buncrana to Carndonagh (18 miles) was opened in 1901 and the other, from Letterkenny to Burtonport, in 1903. The latter followed a roundabout route of 50 miles yet perversely missed the principal villages and townships by anything up to 6 miles—Creeslough was the only place with a station in the village—and at Burtonport there was little but the harbour; it was hoped to develop it as a fishing port. Some powerful locomotives were introduced at this time, including two 4-8-0 tender engines and culminating in two 4-8-4Ts, the only engines of this type in the British Isles.

After the difficulties due to the 1914-18 war, followed by damage and holdups during the Troubles until 1923 and then the growth of road competition the LLSR early realised that its future lay with road transport, and it proceeded to take over by degrees the local road operators and turn itself into a bus and road haulage company. The last of its railways were finally closed in 1953.

The history of the line is well covered in Dr Patterson's book, and there are chapters on the locomotives and rolling stock and on the course of the line and its working. The second edition of the book, however, contains virtually no alterations or additions; it has the same number of pages and the same pictures and plans. Anyone who already possesses a copy of the first edition will thus find nothing new, but to those who have not got one the second edition is commended as a well-told history of a local railway which had many features of unusual interest.

H. C. L. TRICKETT

LNER 4-6-0s, R. P. Bradley, 96 pp, 250 x 175 mm, 41 photographs, 7 drawings, index, boards, David & Charles 1988, ISBN 0-7153-8895-9, £10.95.

This is the fourth book to appear on this subject and, as may be expected, there is little in it that has not been presented before. First came Part 2B of the RCTS *Locomotives of the LNER* in 1975 with its mass of detail backed up by 260 illustrations. Then in the same year Ian Allan produced *The LNER 4-6-0 Classes* by Clay and

Cliffe. Now, in 1988, we have two more. One, *LNER 4-6-0s at work*, was reviewed by the present writer for this journal only recently. The other is this slim volume in the D&C locomotive series. It is the only one of the four, other than the RCTS book, to include numerical lists of all the locomotives with dates, but the list of B16s, the ex-NER 3-cylinder engines, omits any reference to which were rebuilt to B16/2 and to B16/3, and rebuilding dates. Also it is the only one to provide details of valve events for all the classes. It is strange that the unique rebuild of the ex GCR 4-cylinder B3, formerly 6166 *Earl Haig*, into B3/3 No 61497 is not mentioned. With only 41 photographs careful selection was necessary, so it is disappointing to find that, although there are nine photographs of B1s and seven of B17s, there is none of the B6 or B9 4-6-0s of the former GCR, or of a B5 as running on the LNER. The book is good on details of tenders. Several mistakes appear which are simply the result of carelessness somewhere. The photograph on page 15 is a B14 not a B15. On page 24, it was the NER's, not the LNER's, need for more powerful locomotives which led to the design of the B16s. The B6, page 42, had the same boiler, not wheels, as the 05 2-8-0. At the beginning of Chapter 5 we are told that at grouping 'the LNER acquired a number of 4-6-0 designs 'mainly' from the Great Central, North Eastern and Great Eastern.' Where else? Several printing errors slipped through the net, as they will. Chapter 7, the last, repeats information already given earlier.

However, this is not a bad book; it is a sensible format, easily shelved, comfortable to hold in one hand and, for anyone wanting information on LNER 4-6-0s without having to sift through masses of minute detail, it is probably ideal.

JOHN MARSHALL

LOCOMOTIVES OF THE LNER PART 10A DEPARTMENTAL STOCK, LOCOMOTIVE SHEDS, BOILER AND TENDER NUMBERING, 208 pp, 200 x 150 mm, 150 b/w photographs, 6 pp diagrams, card covers, Railway Correspondence & Travel Society, 1988, ISBN 0 901115 65 7 £10.95

The compilation of the RCTS *Locomotives of the LNER* has been like building a cathedral, sustained by an indestructible faith in the project and in its ultimate completion. Looking back on that far-off summer of 1963 when Part 1 appeared seems like looking into another age, when many of the old LNER engines were still at work, including several pre-grouping types. Now, in an age when even the HSTs are beginning to look out of date, the first section of the ultimate part has appeared. As with the final work on the cathedral plumbing, this part, dealing with the 'odds and ends' which would not fit into the other parts, may seem an anticlimax. The four-wheeled petrol and Sentinel departmental shunters seem to belong to another world from the Pacifics of Part 2A, but they are given the same careful and detailed treatment as all the other locomotives. Besides other internal combustion locomotives and inspection cars, this part covers crane tanks and various experimental locomotives which were tested on the LNER, including the extraordinary Kitson-Still machine, turbine, and diesel-electric locomotives. Another chapter deals with preserved LNER locomotives and makes the interesting point that it was largely because so many LM, Southern, and Western Region locomotives found their way into Woodham's yard at Barry, where they stood until rescued for preservation, that we have so great a proportion of locomotives from these railways compared with the LNER whose engines were scrapped internally or by various contractors before the preservation movement was fully in its stride. An outline is given of the formation of the railway museums at York and Darlington, thanks to which many pre-grouping locomotives from LNER constituents have been preserved. A list of all preserved locomotives from the LNER and its constituents is included.

In a Chapter on locomotive policy details and drawings are given of various types which were proposed but not built. Chapters on boiler and tender numberings are important, though certainly not light reading. The longest chapter deals fully with LNER engine sheds. There is a numerical index of locomotives and a large folding section giving year-by-year statistics of the numbers of various types showing how the LNER reached its peak stock of 7471 steam locomotives in 1924.

As with all the other parts in this series this book is well produced and, with its mass of information, is good value. The final part, 10B still to come, will cover LNER steam and internal-combustion railcars, electric locomotives and multiple-unit trains and, may we hope, an index to the entire series. JOHN MARSHALL

BY LOCK AND POUND, Vivian Bird, 208 pp, 27 photographs, 9 maps, boards, M. & M. Baldwin, 24 High Street, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster, Worcs. DY14 8BY, ISBN 0 947712 06 2, £12.95.

This book is a record of several journeys on canals around Birmingham and on routes linking the area to the main river estuaries. The long delay since 1952-3, when most of the book was written, is unexplained, but presumably it has been issued as a 'period piece'.

The author, a Birmingham journalist and writer, describes a BBC radio cruise around the BCN, follows a Boys Club trip to London, and joins working craft in Birmingham and on the Shropshire Union Canal, the Severn, and the Trent. The accounts of the latter are the more valuable, as they cover barge journeys, complementing books about postwar narrowboat carrying, two of which appeared in 1988. The subject reflects an era of transition for British canals between transport and leisure roles, with some interesting details about early pleasure boating.

Craft and personal names are meticulously recorded. However, inaccuracies about places creep in, shown on Page 157, where he descends 'Agg Green' Locks and passes five locks at Hurleston. Such errors could have been quietly corrected without impairing the 'period' flavour.

The book does not provide much new information but does include much background knowledge, attractively presented. However, the price may well deter all but the postwar canal historian and devotees of travelogues from the past. L. J. BOUGHEY

CREWE SHEDS, Allan Baker & Gavin Morrison, 112 pp, 297 x 220 mm, 160 photographs, 12 maps and plans, boards, Ian Allan 1988, ISBN 0-7110-1809-X, £13.95.

One author (Allan C. Baker) served his apprenticeship within Crewe Motive Power Department in the 1960s and his detailed knowledge of the area is evident throughout the book. Part of it describes a fitter's life and work at Crewe North, with special emphasis being given to the 'Duchesses', of which the author is an unashamed admirer. We learn why members of this class spent all day in Perth doing nothing, and why some of the class had a different livery from their sisters in the late 1950s.

The book also contains a history of the development of Crewe's engine sheds from the early days to the present. Tantalisingly little is known about the size and location of Crewe's earliest sheds, with brief and ambiguous mentions in official minutes. The small NSR and GWR sheds are included, and the author makes the point that Gresty Lane would have closed much earlier than 1963 if the LMR had been

responsible for the line to Wellington. There are 12 diagrams, which are difficult to locate as this book has no index. They could beneficially have been grouped together.

Although virtually all the photographs were taken at Crewe sheds or station, they are well varied and of a high standard. Most contain locomotives, with the emphasis on express engines (including diesel and electric). Postwar views predominate, although there are some interesting pregroupping shots, including Crewe South shed newly built in 1896.

This book is a worthy tribute to the engine sheds at Crewe and the men who worked in them. ALLAN BRACKENBURY

LAST YEARS OF STEAM PADDINGTON TO WOLVERHAMPTON, Laurence Waters, 112 pp, 300 x 222 mm, 202 black & white photographs, 2 colour photographs on jacket, 5 route diagrams, 1 gradient profile, boards. Ian Allan 1988, ISBN 0 7110 1805 7, £11.00.

This book offers a portrait of the final years of steam on the former GWR Paddington to Wolverhampton and GWR/Great Central Joint main line. Following an outline history of the routes, which contains a few errors, the book concentrates on the period 1953–1965. It begins with a lengthy ‘Through the Window’ style journey description, supplemented by route diagrams, which shows a commendably precise relationship between its photographs and text. Subsequent chapters provide details of passenger and freight services, motive power, and the line today. Appendices also give details of stations, distances, tunnels, and water troughs. The photographs are well chosen and reproduced, making good use of expanded captions. The text’s strength comes from the author’s personal recollections; its weaknesses from some historical inaccuracies, and eccentric references such as to the ‘North Warwicks line’. The book makes excellent light reading and has some value as a work of pictorial reference. PAUL COLLINS

WESTERNS, WARSHIPS, & HYMEKS AT WORK, Geoff Endacott, 128 pp (approx 40 text) 180 photographs, 18 diagrams, boards, IAN ALLAN 1988, ISBN 0-7110-1535-X, £13.95.

This book, one of a series of ‘Locomotives at Work’, describes in detail the intended use, design, performance, and withdrawal of the Western Region’s diesel hydraulics. It was a brief, though in some areas intensive, activity: the first locomotive ran in January 1958; the last one (a *Western*) almost exactly nineteen years later.

The author tells the tale comprehensively and, on the whole, well. The logic behind the introduction of each of the five types, the design and development, the use that was made of them, the troubles they gave, their withdrawal, and the preservation of a few of them is all here.

The decision to end their use is only briefly described, but its inevitability is made clear. In 1967 the British Railways Board decided to rationalise their diesel fleet and with hydraulics comprising only 10% of the total they seemed certain to go. The laborious starting-up procedure is well described. It surely sealed their death warrant. A number have been preserved; impending withdrawal intensified the interest which novelty had engendered and long death-throes for two of the classes increased opportunity.

There are a lot of technical terms in the book and detail of individual problems sometimes obscures general clarity though the idea of considering the history of individual locomotives is a good one.

The photographs are good—many excellent technically—but with so many of such a limited subject there is bound to be a charge of heavy similarity. Three appendices usefully summarise specification (with drawings), lifetimes, and naming: it would have been helpful if the mildly-complex details of construction history had been included as a summary.

In short, a book for the seeker after detail, but despite an irritating habit of breaking out into a long series of short sentences, well compiled, logically ordered, and informative. I. P. MOSS

THE BUDE BRANCH, D. J. Wroe, 112 pp, 144 photographs, 2 maps, 17 diagrams, boards, Kingfisher Railway Productions 1988, ISBN 0-946184-43-7, £11.95.

Bude to Halwill Junction was one of the appendages of the LSWR's 'withered arm', but this book also deals briefly with the Meldon Junction to Halwill section which formed part of the Devon & Cornwall Railway's original 1879 branch to Holsworthy. A final chapter also covers the plateway and later tramway serving the canal basin at Bude.

As usual in these local histories, the book draws heavily on the memories of former railwaymen and other Bude inhabitants. A feature is the extent and variety of the freight traffic handled on the branch, which from prosperity as late as the 1950s saw total abandonment in 1964. Holiday traffic encouraged by the LSWR and SR (though surely not in the GWR's *Holiday Haunts* guide) at its peak required a Saturday complete train to and from Waterloo—but making the usual advertised stops at Salisbury and Exeter. Non-stop runs to Holsworthy are among the mistakes in the train service details. It is not made clear that the commencement of public traffic to Bude was on 11 August 1898.

One of the book's typographical errors has probably caused the sleeping car stationed at Bude during the 1950s to house extra summer staff to be described as ex-LSWR instead of ex-LNWR. An old 'howler' is the reference to the inspecting officer for the Bude extension, Major Marindin, as Mandarin on p.32.

The book concludes with a full complement of track and signalling diagrams and is fully illustrated throughout with informative captions. However, let us hope that the token being delivered at Dunsland Cross (p.22) is not really the Ashbury (to Halwill) one. J. N. FAULKNER

RAILS TO SHEFFIELD PARK, Michael S. Welch, 128 pp, 280 × 220 mm, 232 photographs, 5 maps and plans, 3 scale drawings of station buildings, reproductions of tickets, luggage labels and timetables, boards, Kingfisher Railway Productions, Southampton, SO1 2TA, 1988, ISBN 0946184 48 8, £12.95.

With the blurb claiming it to be a 'pictorial history' of the East Grinstead-Lewes line from 1882–1988 and the author more accurately and modestly describing it as a 'pictorial album' pending the comprehensive line history in preparation by Klaus Marx, this superbly-produced book is a judicious mix of illustrations of the 'real railway' and of the operating museum and public entertainment centre which has existed since 1960 at and between two of the former's stations. The text consists of a short historical survey by Klaus Marx (apparently first published in 1961), some brief notes at the head of some of the sections, and the captions to the photographs, which are in general adequately informative and often extended. At the end, some attention is given to the scheme to re-open the Horsted Keynes—East Grinstead

section, which, if it is successful, will end the long period of a line which carries its customers from 'nowhere to nowhere'.

An irritating feature is the lack of page numbers, an index, or even a list of contents, making it difficult to use the book for quick reference. For a book in this price range, the reader deserves to be better served. Editorial and layout work is otherwise reasonable, but one set of timetables is reproduced without any indication of its date, which makes it useless.

The value of the book rests entirely on its illustrations, which are carefully reproduced on high quality paper to bring out the best possible tones and detail. However those contemplating purchase may wish to be aware that something like half the photographs of the line relate to the post-1960 preservation era, during which, to say the least, the scene has not been particularly representative of pre-1960 operations. A mere two pages are given to the many films and television features and commercials made on the line since 1960; a list of these would have been useful, as would have been some data about the preservation operation over the years, such as passengers carried and financial results. Some will consider there are rather too many views of the preserved line at night and of the last day of BR working, with its untypical scenes.

To those who hold the Bluebell line in affection and are grateful for the rural LBSCR atmosphere that, thanks to devoted supporters and workers, still lingers at Horsted Keynes, if not at the much-expanded Sheffield Park, this book will fill a pleasant hour and a half, and they will no doubt find themselves returning to it from time to time to refresh their memories and their dreams. It will surely sell well to the more affluent visitors to Sheffield Park seeking background and scenes from the past, and it is perhaps to them, as much as any, that it is designed to appeal.

ALAN A. JACKSON

THE WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA BRANCH, S. C. Jenkins, 108 pp (including 30 pp of maps, time-tables, and line drawings), 210 x 150 mm, 68 photos, soft covers, The Oakwood Press, 1988, ISBN 0 85361 374 5, £5.95.

This is a pleasant book, with good photographs, dealing with the 33 mile line from Wymondham to Wells which was made by two companies, the Norfolk Railway and the Wells & Fakenham Railway. The appeal, clearly, is to local readers and to enthusiasts who want a general history rather than a highly-detailed account. The book achieves this end.

The story does not finish, as is the fashion, on the ballast, since most of the line is still in use for freight traffic. The various eras of ownership, services and stock, route and signalling, receive attention, as do the effects upon the line of floods and world wars; in an age when bookshelves creak beneath the memoirs of spies and code-breakers, we may marvel that the Second World War plans of the Home Guard for guerilla warfare in Norfolk are 'still secret' (p.61).

There is an interesting examination of the failure of Wells to develop either as a resort or as a port; it is surprising to see Southminster included in a list of GER Seaside Resorts, for it is only a village, over four miles from the coast.

The source list includes the *Railway Times*, *Bradshaw's Manual*, various twentieth-century magazines and books, most of the latter dated after 1945. The map is clinically clear, showing only stations and uncluttered by such details as intermediate sidings, the tunnel, and off-map destinations. The station layouts are bold, and the directions of the line can be worked out from the text.

This is a well-produced and useful first-pass account, and it is to be hoped that it will be supplemented from the company records at Kew, when such mysteries as the horse-working of the Harbour branch, the 'triangular junction' at Wells, and the tunnel removal may be cleared up. HARRY PAAR

BRANCH LINE BYWAYS; SOUTH WALES, Ian L. Wright, 48 pp, 5 maps, 58 photo. illus, soft covers, Atlantic Transport Publishers, Penryn, Cornwall, 1988, ISBN 0-906899-30-3, £3.25.

This book succeeds in establishing the character of the valley railways by considering eleven of them and giving a concentrated yet readable account of each, using summary chronology, text, maps, photographs with extended captions, sections of time-tables, and reproductions of tickets. The text is evocative, colouring and bringing to life the data provided by the other material; such writing is a luxury in a small book and can only be afforded when the words are coaxed into economical forms which not only describe places but express their atmosphere.

The lines chosen had their origins mainly in the Brecon & Merthyr, Taff Vale, Cardiff, and Alexandra (N&SW) companies. The material has been carefully chosen; the illustrations are by capable photographers, hence their composition is good, enhancing the interest. Both service and public timetables, dating from 1928 to 1951, are used, and as they relate to branch lines they are small, whilst being clearly reproduced they are legible so that they are reader-usable instead of being mere space consuming ornaments. Usually reliable secondary sources have been used for the essential dates. Assembling these varied components without muddle into an attractive whole is in itself no mean achievement, complemented by the use of good paper and clear printing.

At a time when so many books are, like Richard of old,

'Deform'd unfinish'd, sent before my time

Into this breathing world scarce half made up'

it is pleasant to be able to commend this one and to pronounce it good value for money. HARRY PAAR

COLLECTING RAILWAYANA, John Mander, 192 pp, 280 b/w photo illus, 17 colour plates, boards, Moorland Publishing Co. Ltd. 1988, ISBN 0 86190 164 9, £14.95.

The collecting of railwayana has become a major activity of a large number of railway enthusiasts. Mr Mander, who is curator of the Moseley Railwayana Museum, has produced the first book to describe every major class of collectable railwayana below the rank of locomotive and carriage. He has concentrated on what the ordinary collector can keep in his own house or garden, and in view of the truly enormous range of items embraced by the term 'railwayana' has restricted his selection to items produced by railway companies of Britain and of British Railways.

There are ten chapters, each devoted to one particular aspect of the subject. The first, entitled 'Station Railwayana' includes the main artefacts associated with passenger stations, station furniture, notices, nameboards, clocks, etc. The second chapter relates to goods transport, the third to tableware from refreshment rooms, dining cars, and railway-owned ships and hotels. Subsequent chapters detail material associated with locomotives, carriages, wagons, signalling, trackside items such as mileposts, gradient posts, lamps and so on, then railwayana of railway workers,

clothing, badges, pay checks, and also documents and publicity. A final chapter gives some indication as to how and where to acquire railwayana, naming the main specialist auctions as well as such sources as Collectors' Corner at Euston.

The examples described and illustrated are selected mainly from museums and similar collections. Inevitably some classes of material are covered more thoroughly than others. For instance, railway-company share-certificates are described and illustrated but company reports are not mentioned. Similarly the wide range of publications of the Railway Clearing House—maps, junction diagrams, and distance books, for example—are not referred to. Books produced by the companies, such as rule and rate books, receive but brief mention and little is said about public timetables and railway guide books. However, it would not be possible to go into detail about every type of publication. The serial numbers of some of the forms quoted in the book, often from quite small companies, gives an indication of the almost unlimited range of such items. Only a general selection can be provided—the line needs to be drawn somewhere. Even Bradshaw's timetable, not being railway-produced, does not get a look in.

Mr Mander has located, described, and illustrated an enormous number of items of railwayana. The illustrations, both in colour and monochrome, have reproduced well. Your reviewer feels that on p.20 listing the shortest names appearing on station totems Lye should be added to Rye and Wye—he lives within a mile of it! One other small point, on p.176 Bourneville is mentioned as a long-closed station. It is very much alive at the present time, enjoying a frequent service on the Birmingham Cross City service.

The book does not attempt to indicate values of the various items; this would be neither practical nor meaningful, bearing in mind the rapidity with which this kind of material increases in price nowadays. It is however a very good general guide to the subject. NEIL PITTS

THE BIRMINGHAM AND GLOUCESTER RAILWAY, P. J. Long and the Revd W. V. Awdry, 305 pp 235 × 155 mm, 27 pp maps, plans and drawings, 10 pp b/w illustrations, boards, Alan Sutton Publishing, Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1JJ, 1987, ISBN 0-86299-329-6, £11.95.

The Birmingham & Gloucester must be one of the most enigmatic main lines in England. Many of us must have wondered why it chose to leave the Birmingham plateau in one plunge down the 2-mile Lickey Incline at 1 in 37, providing operational problems which have still not been fully overcome, and why it seemed to go out of its way to avoid Droitwich, Worcester, and Tewkesbury and to pass near to Cheltenham, and why it entered Gloucester, as it were, by the back door, so that today a number of through trains miss it altogether by the direct avoiding line. Other matters which may have puzzled us are the use of Norris 4-2-0s on the Lickey and why these are depicted on the famous Bromsgrove tombstones when it was a different type of locomotive which blew up, and why the railway never managed to make a direct connection with Gloucester docks which were intended to be its southern terminus. Here at last is a book which answers all these questions and many more which may have puzzled us. The book covers the period from 1835, when the railway was projected, to 1846 when, together with the broad-gauge Bristol & Gloucester, it was snatched from under the nose of the GWR and amalgamated with the Midland. We are given the full story of the notorious break of gauge at Gloucester, the battles over access to Worcester, Cheltenham, and Tewkesbury;

relations with the GWR between Standish Junction and Cheltenham and with the Gloucester & Cheltenham Tramroad. A full account is given, by Revd W. V. Awdry, of the locomotive history, and a list of locomotives is given in an appendix. There are 27 chapters, some quite short, dealing with all aspects of the railway: development, construction, operation, engineers and staff, goods and passenger traffic, way and works, signalling, locomotives and rolling stock, accidents, and the railway at Birmingham, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, and Gloucester.

The authors have unfortunately been somewhat let down by the publisher. Although the book is well produced, materially, the publisher refused to include an index, the map pages are un-numbered and there is no reference to them, photographs are poorly reproduced, and the title of the gradient profile appears above a list of stations. But these are minor shortcomings in a book which is well written and is interesting and enjoyable to read. JOHN MARSHALL

Reviewer's note:

For his own reference the reviewer has produced an index and a list of maps, and added a brief errata. It runs to 7 A4 pages. Any reader who would like to have a copy should send a stamped, addressed envelope (for under 60 g) and 70p (cost of photo-copying) to John Marshall, 24 Maypole Close, Bewdley, Worcs DY12 1BZ. This is done with the approval of the authors.

SHORTER REVIEWS

FORGOTTEN RAILWAYS: Volume 8, SOUTH WALES, 2nd edn, J. Page, 207 pp, 32 photo illus, folding map & maps in text, boards, David & Charles 1988, £10.95.

The first edition of this work appeared in 1979. In this new edition there are a few changes in the illustrations. The historical text is virtually unaltered, somewhat naturally. The up-dating and additions are mostly in the gazetteer section, concerning changes in use of former railway land and buildings since the first edition and details of lines that have closed completely since 1979. There is a chapter entitled 'Postscript' describing the major closures which have taken place since the first edition and also mentioning the opening of the line to the NCB washery at Coedbach.

BRITISH RAIL IN COLOUR 1968-1980, J. Glover, 112 pp, profusely illustrated entirely in colour, boards, Ian Allan 1988, £8.95.

This is a sequel to the similar book by C. Boocock covering the period from 1948-1968. The same general pattern is followed. There is one chapter entitled 'Steam's Last Gasp' relating to the year 1968, the first year of the period covered. The rest of the book is devoted to diesel and electric motive power. As in the earlier work there is a short note on liveries used during the period covered. Besides locomotives rolling stock in all its forms is illustrated.

BR STEAM SURRENDER, R. Siviter, 96 pp, (not paginated), profusely illustrated, boards, Kingfisher Railway Productions 1988, £10.95.

Following an introduction by J. H. Bird the bulk of the book consists of a series of photographs of steam locomotives, mostly at work, in many parts of the BR network during the closing days of steam. Locations extend from the Isle of Wight to Montrose and the majority of the illustrations depict the trains, not merely the locomotives concerned, together with appropriate background scenery.

THE RAF CRANWELL RAILWAY, A. J. Ludlam, 64 pp, numerous photo illus, line drawings, maps & diagrams, soft covers, Oakwood Press, 1988, £4.20.

The RAF Cranwell Railway was a little-known line built during the first World War to serve the then Royal Naval Air Station at Cranwell. It was built by the contractors Logan & Hemingway and finally closed in 1956. This publication details the construction and working of the line, together with details of the locomotives which worked on the railway. Most of the engines used by the contractors were from Manning Wardle. There is also a brief reference to the neighbouring Belton Park Military Railway.

FERRIES IN SCOTLAND, Marie Weir, 204 pp, 48 photos illus, 10 woodcuts, card covers, John Donald Publishers Ltd, 138 St Stephens St., Edinburgh EH3 5AA, £8.50.

Ferry services have long been essential to life in Scotland. The present work surveys the story of Scottish ferries during the last eight centuries. Those on freshwater lochs, canals, and in Orkney and Shetland are excluded on the grounds of space. The book is divided into chapters on River Ferries, Forth Estuary Ferries, Clyde Estuary Ferries, Tay Estuary Ferries, Northern Firths Ferries, Sea Loch Ferries, and Island Ferries. Appendices list ferries still operating in 1988 and those which operated in the past. Much detailed information is given about individual ferries. A vast amount of research has gone into the production and the illustrations have been well chosen.

CONTRACTORS' LINES, L. Popplewell, 84 pp, 9 maps & diagrams, card covers, Melledgen Press, 71 Thornbury Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, 1988, £4.50.

This book is described as a first outline to and partial critique of the series of Gazetteers of Railway Contractors and Engineers produced over the last six years by Melledgen Press. It discusses the development of the railway system, particularly in the period 1851–1914. By 1850 the principal main line routes had been selected and largely constructed. After that it was to a great extent a matter filling in gaps often in undeveloped country. The area examined is that south of the London-Bristol axis as far west as Weymouth, and there are tables indicating the distribution of projects throughout the country by the main contractors for the periods 1841–1850, 1851–1870 and 1871–1914. The 12 pages of references indicate that the contents of the PRO files and local newspapers have been drawn upon extensively.

STUDIES IN THE BUSINESS HISTORY OF BRISTOL, C. Harvey & J. Press (eds), Bristol Academic Press, £16.50.

This publication includes a 28-page essay on locomotive building in Bristol during the age of steam, 1837–1958. It mainly concerns Avonside and Atlas (later Pecketts). There are other essays on various aspects of the industrial and commercial activities of Bristol including one entitled 'Sir George White and the Urban Transport Revolution in Bristol, 1875–1916'.

THE A4 PACIFICS, P. M. Townend, 64 pp, profusely illustrated, card covers, Ian Allan Ltd. 1989, £5.95.

The first of a new series of railway albums by these publishers. It consists of a selection of photographs, over 60 in number and all in colour, of various aspects of

this famous class of engine, on shed, in action, nameplates, etc. finishing with some views of the preserved members of the class. Most of the illustrations date from the late 1950s and 1960s, with a few from pre-war days.

HISTORICAL MAP OF THE BIRMINGHAM CANALS, compiled by Richard Dean, 1989, folding map in plastic wallet, 830 mm x 596 mm, obtainable from Mark Baldwin, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster DY14 8BY, £3.50.

This is a new publication by our member, based upon original sources. It includes all canals in the Birmingham region, not just those of the BCN, and depicts the system as it was at its greatest extent. Thus not all the canals shown were in existence at any one time. A vast amount of information about the respective canals is given, dates of authorisation and opening, location of locks, wharves, industrial branches, tunnels, with lengths, cuttings and embankments, etc. Individual canals are named and there is a number of enlargements of areas in which there were particular concentrations of canals. A most informative and useful map.

A companion map of the Shropshire Union Canals has been produced, based upon an official map of 1886. This map was first published by Mr Dean some years ago and is now available again from the above mentioned source, price £2.50.

ALL CHANGE FOR THE WEST. G. F. Gillham, 96 pp (not paginated), profusely illustrated, soft card covers. Kingfisher Railway Publications (associated with Ian Allan Ltd), £7.95.

This book consists of a series of photographs taken in the 1970s and 1980s at numerous locations along the WR line from Penzance to Paddington, commencing at the former and finishing at the latter. The photos are all in black and white except for those on the front and back covers, which are in colour, and all consist of trains at the various spots. Many different classes of loco appear, *Westerns*, *Hymeks*, 37s, 50s, HSTs, etc. The only steam engine shown is preserved *Manor 7827* near Paignton.

Correspondence

Accident in Canonbury Tunnel

Sir,—Reference page 372 of the *Journal*

Correction

The NLR adopted the RCH Code on Sunday 5 October 1884. H. V. BORLEY

Welton Station, London & Birmingham Railway

Sir,—The very interesting article which was printed in the November issue of the *Journal* appears to have some bearing on a similar situation at Rugby which was mentioned on pages 115/6 in my book on the Oxford canal.

From the many letters written to the Oxford canal company it has been possible to establish that the principal firm involved was the Wingerworth colliery near Chesterfield, whose owner was Joseph Machin, then residing at The Hights, Alfreton.

In July 1842 he wrote asking for credit facilities, as from his experience the boatmen he used were not entirely trustworthy (RAIL 855/96). So coal was already passing over the Oxford canal at that date, having first been conveyed by canal to Long Eaton Basin on the Erewash canal before being transferred to rail (note from Philip Stevenson). But what was in the mind of the Midland Counties Railway, for on 20 September 1843 the Secretary was instructed to write to the London & Birmingham Railway asking for coal rates from Rugby to Crick (RAIL490/5)? Alas, there is no mention in the Minute-book of a reply.

The story however soon took another twist, for on 29 October 1843 Machin wrote to the Oxford stating, 'Coal which is now passing via the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway to Glascote [Kettlebrook station] on the Coventry canal; I would like now to pass as from Rugby in view of the preferential terms now being offered by the Midland Counties Railway. Clay Cross company are already taking their coal to Crick and we would use this facility too if you are not prepared to reduce your rate'. (RAIL855/96). Evidently the reduction was forthcoming, as in January 1844 895 tons in 31 narrow boats was forwarded from Rugby, with a further 560 tons in 19 boats by 19 February. Machin, however, was not entirely happy with the arrangements, since some of the boatmen he sent to Rugby had not been previously 'gauged' on the Oxford before loading so the canal company fined them 16/-. Following intercession by an Agent at Leicester station named Thomas Rogers this particular flow ceased as from 1 July 1844 (RAIL855/98), presumably being diverted yet again, this time to Welton. HUGH COMPTON

Railway Research—Cobb style: Spink's Lane

Sir,—I had no knowledge of this station: I needed to know where to position it on the Atlas I am compiling. Clinker states it was closed in November 1845 and was on the Norfolk Railway; hence it was somewhere on the Great Eastern. Geoffrey Spence kindly looks it up for me, finds it was between Wymondham and Hethersett and was opened on 30 July 1845. He adds 'obviously not popular'.

My brother, who has some 80 summers of railway history and enthusiasm behind him, lives in Suffolk; so I asked him if he would kindly investigate Spink's Lane, next time he went to Norwich. We both have OS 1" maps of the 1950 era and I did not tell him, as he soon found out, that the area to be investigated was, typically, on 3 sheets.

This is his reply:

'I took my wife with me, on an extremely fine morning. The plan was to go to Wymondham and proceed along the A11 to Hethersett, turning right to the bridge immediately SW of Hethersett station. We should not pay great attention to the turnings right between Wymondham and Hethersett. I wanted first to get the lie of the land, and the two outer boundaries of the stretch of line to be explored. Exploration was hampered by the fact that between the railway and the A11 (now the *old* A11) there is a howling dual-carriageway main road, so we couldn't do any thorough investigation by going down the roads and tracks to the right of the Old A11 (facing towards Norwich). So we crossed the railway at Hethersett station and turned right at "Monument". Many of the roads in Norfolk have their names (nothing to do with finger-posts, which show where they lead) low down on a horizontal strip supported by two posts. Just after Ketteringham Park, by "P", a road goes off right, called Ketteringham Lane. We could see the railway bridge: it looked a blank and it was not called "Spink's", so we did not go along it. Then we went something over a mile and found a road to the right. My wife said it was only a farm track, but we went on it and it wasn't a farm track. It was a road. We came

to crossing gates with a small red/green light on them. You open both gates yourself and, if the light is still showing green, you drive across and shut the gates after you. On the Norwich side, on the North side, there was a small plot taking a rectangle off the farmer's field. An apple tree. Feminine logic—"There's an apple tree, there must have been a station house here." I said I didn't think the tree looked 150 years old. But there were undoubted remains of the foundations of a building and the "cutting", not more than 4 feet deep, did open out widely enough to accommodate a platform, however rudimentary. The long side of the rectangle lay along the line, not at right angles. We turned and went back to our road and soon joined another and crossed the line on a large level crossing. Within a few yards we were on the howling main road; we decided to get off it and go back to Hethersett along the old A11. Though we looked out on our right, we saw no likely road or track.

Lunch in the *King's Head*, Hethersett. New-fangled bar, new-fangled barmaid. No real gaffers about. An older barmaid came in; I said we are looking for Spink's Lane. "Yes", she said, "you go on the Wymondham road, the old A11, and you'll find it on the left." I asked if it was beyond the JET petrol station and she said yes, it was just beyond the ACORN. Ten minutes later she came back and said she was sorry she had misled us; it had been cut by the new road and we couldn't get through. But we'd find it all right; it was marked SPINKS LANE and NO THROUGH ROAD. We thanked her. But she was wrong in two details out of three. There was no ACORN garage, and the SPINKS LANE notice, if it ever had existed, had been removed. By the time we had discovered the insignificant entrance, we were too far to turn into it and had to go on into Wymondham to a roundabout and come back. We made the lane, but there was no sign that it was the right one, till we saw on a cottage gate "No. 2a Spinks Lane". We went on to the dead end, walked across the howling main road, and shortly came to the gates and the apple tree. That then is where Spink's Lane Station was. Going East from Wymondham to Hethersett on the old A11, turn right just before PH (there isn't one there now) and pass Milebridge Farm. It was all rather fun.' MICHAEL COBB

The Euston Propylaeum

Sir,—Mr van Laun is perfectly correct to refer to the Euston gateway in this manner, but I hope that those of us who remember it with some affection, and others, will continue to use the colloquialism by which it has been known since Hardwick's day and call it the Euston Arch—as I am sure we will. GORDON BIDDLE

Passenger traffic on the Cromford & High Peak

Sir,—In *Our Iron Roads* Frederick S. Williams records a friend's joyride over the Cromford & High Peak line in August 1877, adding that the service was ended soon afterwards, owing to the death of a traveller. This anecdote has been repeated more than once and is still in print in A. Rimmer's Oakwood Press book, despite a hostile review by Charles Clinker in the *SLS Journal*. Fortunately, we now have John Marshall's monograph. He found the LNWR Special Committee minute of February 1876 recording the decision to withdraw passenger facilities and he goes on to say that it came into effect at the end of April. Evidently Williams' friend had a poor memory for dates. Marshall also denies that withdrawal was due to 'a fatality' and says that falling traffic was the cause. Possibly true, but I have no statistics as Derbyshire is a foreign land to me. However, the long delay after the opening of the Buxton line makes me suspicious.

Yet fatality there was, and it is recorded in John Marshall's book. On 17 December 1875 two mineral trains collided, killing a fireman. The Board of Trade's findings

which were published in January 1876 are summarised admirably by Marshall, though he omits the concluding remark that the carriage of passengers was illegal and that the line ought to be submitted for inspection. The LNWR's decision came only a few weeks after the report, and here I feel sure is an unrecognised case of cause and effect. GEOFFREY WEBB

Great Northern Railway etc.

Sir,—Referring to correspondence in the November *Journal*, I was very interested in the notes on stations on the old GNR in Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Hertfordshire.

Arlesey station had connections to the LBC brickworks, to the Three Counties Asylum, and to the cement works to the south of the station. The tramway to the asylum was standard gauge and was laid along the street before getting to asylum land. It was worked by horses when I first knew it, but a farm tractor was used latterly; the traffic was mainly coal as far as I remember. There was a narrow-gauge railway from the cement works to the chalk pits. I never knew it, but the formation was visible for a long time. I believe that the gauge was something unusual.

There were sidings at Langford, north of Arlesey, and at Wilbury, just south of Arlesey. The road from Arlesey to Ickleford had obviously been diverted when the Wilbury sidings were put in, which resulted in the farm road to the fields to the east becoming excessively steep. As a consequence there were several lengths of heavy angle-iron laid like a platelay to make it easier for horse vehicles. I do not know whether it is still there, but it certainly was twenty years ago. There was also a private siding to the Hitchin lime works from the main line at the junction with the old Midland line which closed about twenty years ago.

With regard to the longitudinal stones laid in the A5 at Towcester, this arrangement was quite common in Edinburgh and Glasgow when I lived there in the 1920s. I believe it was much used in the Yorkshire woollen towns, although I have no personal knowledge of that. M. F. KEEF

[Pages 417-451 see Bibliography]

A railway AND canal accident!

On Sunday morning last, another of the series of accidents which have during the past fortnight proved of serious consequence to traffic on the Midland Railway, occurred about eight o'clock, between Marple and Romiley, on the large viaduct spanning the valley [of the River Goyt]. A Midland goods train laden with coals and empty mineral barrels, etc., was proceeding from Rowsley to Widnes, near Liverpool, *via* Marple Junction when, by some unaccountable means, an axle box on a laden wagon broke and the hind wheels came off, causing the wagon to snap the coupling and disconnecting two wagons and two vans from the rest of the train, which proceeded over the viaduct before it could be brought to a stand. The line was ploughed up and many sleepers were damaged, one of the wagons left behind was pitched off the rails and the buffer caught the parapet wall of the viaduct with such force as to pitch the immense stones of the wall into the canal and on to the bank beneath. Some of the large stones fell into a laden lime boat belonging to Messrs. J. & M. Tymm, which was moored to the canal bank. The side of the boat was crushed out and the boat sank, the cargo being of course lost. The wall of the viaduct was thrown down for about 20 yards, and the wagon which fell against it was also broken up. The under guard's van was likewise thrown off the line and the guard much shaken. The line was cleared during the day, and the trains were in the interval sent both ways upon the up-line. *Cheshire County News*, 7.12.1883

(From William J. Skillern)

Railway Surveyor's Fracas

On Saturday last an attempt was made by a party of surveyors to complete their operations over the estate of Mr Leigh of Adlington, for the London & Manchester Direct Railway, but that gentleman with a number of servants and others forcibly resisted the intention, and after a fight of some duration secured about a score of them who, on being taken before the Macclesfield magistrates charged with a trespass, were fined five shillings each, which with expenses amounted to 20s. *Stockport Advertiser (Supplement)* 21.11.1845

(From William J. Skillern)

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