

Boat Trains – the English Channel and Ocean Liner Specials: history, development and operation — Martyn Pring

384pp, 180x250mm, 208 photographs (97 colour), hardback, Pen & Sword Transport, 47 Church Street, Barnsley S70 2AS. ISBN 978 1 5267 6192 7, £30

This is a hefty book, worthy of its glamorous material which is supported by multiple illustrations of the fashionable trains and their stylish passengers. Many iconic posters are included, supported by interior views of many of the trains.

The author's interest is evident in his introductory comment that '[h]aving written the earlier text *Luxury Railway Travel* ... I was left with a wealth of unused material'. As a result, the least satisfying parts of the book are those dealing with the development of the Channel services up until 1900 – there is not enough room to discuss the experience of Channel travel for the 'ordinary' passenger, nor experimentation with intriguing designs like the *Bessemer*, nor routes via places such as Ramsgate, Sheerness/Queenborough or Port Victoria. Plymouth as a Channel port is briefly discussed, but not the vastly more significant Harwich – perhaps because this chapter is really about French connections.

After this, the author is on surer ground (apart from the spelling of Dover 'Straights' perhaps). The age

of luxury travel is his evident passion. The organisation here is to provide brief narrative chapters covering the main routes, followed by extended discussions of the principal expresses with the Ocean Liner boat trains receiving the most attention. The text is best when using memoirs to portray the atmosphere and excitement of travel. Plymouth gets the obvious attention here, but there is room also for Bristol and Fishguard. We are also helped to understand how Southampton came to replace Liverpool for the Atlantic traffic.

The stars, of course, are the pictures. The great days of the ocean liners coincided with a golden age of poster design, and the author has selected some that are familiar but also many that are less well-known. There are also some interesting scenes inside baggage halls and the like, such as at Bristol. A minor gripe perhaps, but on two occasions the same picture is reproduced twice in a couple of pages. Amidst all the glamour, St Mary Cray Junction with two filthy steam locomotives hardly bears looking at twice!

ADRIAN GRAY

The Liverpool and Manchester Railway: an operating history — Anthony Dawson

246pp, 180x250mm, 52 illustrations, map, 3 diagrams, Pen & Sword Transport, 47 Church Street, Barnsley S70 2AS <www.pen-and-sword.co.uk>, 2020, ISBN 978 1 4738 9912 4, £25

When the Liverpool & Manchester Railway was opened in 1830 the company and its staff had to work out how to run a double-track railway between two commercial centres when there was no existing rule book to follow.

Here, the author has trawled archives and digitised newspapers to uncover just how the railway was run and how it responded to the demand for its facilities. The result is a readable comprehensive review and examination of the railway's operating systems during its independent existence.

In presentation the book appears rather old fashioned, in that the text is printed on matt paper while the illustrations are reproduced on gloss coated paper. The latter mostly comprise contemporary lithographs; reproduced well enough, they are rather small and would have benefited from being given

more space than the 16 unnumbered pages allow.

This reader would have been assisted by the inclusion of diagrams of the layouts of the terminal stations, even if reproduced monochrome within the text, the descriptions provided being of most benefit to those familiar with the sites. A larger route map would have been beneficial, too.

Not all readers will appreciate a bibliography that runs to six pages and 35 pages of footnotes, but they do illustrate the scale of the author's research. There is a 7-page index.

As most previous writing on the Liverpool & Manchester Railway has concentrated on its construction and opening, and on the Rainhill Trials, this is a welcome addition to the bibliography and is to be commended.

PETER JOHNSON