

The Railways: Nation, Network and People

By Simon Bradley

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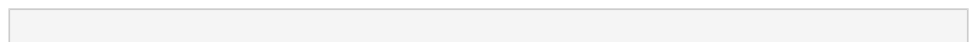
***Sunday Times* History Book of the Year 2015**

Currently filming for BBC programme *Full Steam Ahead*

Britain's railways have been a vital part of national life for nearly 200 years. Transforming lives and landscapes, they have left their mark on everything from timekeeping to tourism. As a self-contained world governed by distinctive rules and traditions, the network also exerts a fascination all its own.

From the classical grandeur of Newcastle station to the ceaseless traffic of Clapham Junction, from the mysteries of Brunel's atmospheric railway to the lost routines of the great marshalling yards, Simon Bradley explores the world of Britain's railways, the evolution of the trains, and the changing experiences of passengers and workers. The Victorians' private compartments, railway rugs and footwarmers have made way for air-conditioned carriages with airline-type seating, but the railways remain a giant and diverse anthology of structures from every period, and parts of the system are the oldest in the world.

Using fresh research, keen observation and a wealth of cultural references, Bradley weaves from this network a remarkable story of technological achievement, of architecture and engineering, of shifting social classes and gender relations, of safety and crime, of tourism and the changing world of work. *The Railways* shows us that to travel through Britain by train is to journey through time as well as space.



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The Railways: Nation, Network and People By Simon Bradley Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #565595 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-09-24
- Released on: 2015-09-24
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

Combining authority with intimacy, and technical grasp with humour and humanity, *The Railways* is by some distance the most ambitious and enriching book I have ever read on this subject. It is destined to become a classic of British social history. -- David Kynaston
Simon Bradley's *The Railways* is magisterial. It's both authoritative and absorbing. A first class journey. -- Michael Palin
'A superbly crafted, lovingly assembled tribute to our railways ... the current, tattered state of our railways should in no way detract from Bradley's narrative. This is a first-class, entertaining analysis of a great, albeit troubled, institution that has now been given a history worthy of its national significance.' -- Robin McKie
The Observer
A magnificent story both intricate and gripping ... Bradley has mastered the detail without losing touch with the romance. -- Matthew Parris
Times
A magnificent study ... Simon Bradley is not an ideal, but the ideal railway historian ... a rivetingly detailed technical history ... Masterly ... the joy of Bradley's book is that, by telling the story of railways, he has told the story of all of us British over the last 150 years. Turning the pages, we will cheer the ingenuity of the Victorians, curse the name of Beeching and Harold Macmillan, and recall the many moments of life - sobbing as one parted from a lover, delight as the train took us into new landscapes - in which the railways have played a central role. They made us what we are - both as a nation and as individuals, and this book is the classic, beautifully written, learned exposition of that glorious fact. -- AN Wilson
Sunday Times
It is testament to Bradley's tremendous frame of reference that he is able to write with equal authority on both Branwell Bronte and Timothy Potter ...fascinating ... The entire book is written with a rare combination of easy-going style and Olympian knowledge ... Bradley is one of that happy band of writers who are interested in everything, and also - rarer still - capable of making everything interesting ... this book concertinas the present and the past, the real and the imagined, and, by doing so, turns what might have been Timothy Potter's trainspotter's guide into something much closer to a work of art. -- Craig Brown
Mail on Sunday
Yields a plethora of delightful anecdotes and arcane facts. Bradley has a fine eye for the telling details ... a rich history ... as a work on railways and social life in the last two centuries it is a treasure trove. -- Jill Murdoch
BBC Who Do You Think You Are magazine
Rich and revealing ... [Bradley's] special delight is in ferreting out the telling, often surprising detail that brings the great themes of his story alive ... a monumental work. -- Tom Fort
Daily Telegraph
A superb and challenging work of railway history, but it is also so much more ... It goes way beyond conventional, introverted, train-spottery literature and deals with some very unexpected themes ... Dr Bradley explodes many myths about the railways ... fascinating ... elegantly written, magisterial and utterly enthralling. -- Gavin Stamp
Country Life
Books of the Year 2015: Bradley's compendious yet rattling *The Railways* achieves magnificently a difficult double. Learned and deeply researched, it will not only impress railway buffs but tell even them a great deal they didn't know; yet this is also popular history, which will engage and entertain any lay reader remotely curious about train travel in Britain. -- Matthew Parris
Spectator
Simon Bradley entertainingly provides as much social history as industry detail to help today's curious passenger make sense of their past and present "parallel universe". Refreshingly, unlike some railway tomes, he doesn't take his love for the subject too seriously, even referring to a *Viz* comic character that took the mickey out of trainspotters ... an encyclopaedic book
Scotsman Daily Mail
Books of the Year 2015: Now is probably a better time to read about trains than to ride in them. A magnificent, all-encompassing history ... It's a book that's both jaunty and scholarly - a rare combination - and packed with fascinating details right up to the present day. -- Craig Brown
Daily Mail
The Railways - history book of the year: Bradley's loving tribute to the golden age of the railway is a magnificent achievement ... a gorgeous Christmas pudding of a book ... Most eye-catching are the superbly crafted chapters on accidents and murders, yet where his book really shines is in its portraits of the British themselves ... His book is so colourful, so rich and engaging, that even if you don't like railways you should love it. -- Dominic Sandbrook
Sunday Times
Bradley's previous book was elegant enough, but here he

blossoms as a writer both elegant and droll ... boldly conceived, protean and frequently beautiful. -- Andrew Martin Times Literary Supplement The most enjoyable book I've read this year ... I was totally gripped ... I had more fun reading this book than any book I've read this year ... He writes with such love and enthusiasm, and when you get a writer who brings that degree of enthusiasm it's so infectious. -- Max Hastings BBC Radio 4 Front Row Bradley has written an authoritative and comprehensive history that entertains and informs in equal measure. This is a celebration of the railways that neither descends into nostalgia nor ventures into train-spotter land ... The reward for Bradley's ambition in writing a comprehensive social history of the railways is that his book will sit happily on the shelves next to railway classics such as Jack Simmons's *The Railway in Town and Country*, probably the nearest equivalent. This is definitely the book to give to that great uncle who you think is interested in trains. But it is also a fitting present for that railway buff who thinks he knows everything there is to know about the railways. This book will show he is mistaken. -- Christian Wolmar Spectator Magisterial -- David Torrance Herald

About the Author

Simon Bradley is joint editor of the celebrated Pevsner Architectural Guides, to which he has contributed a number of notable revised volumes. He started trainspotting aged eleven, and his interest in railways has broadened and endured. He is the author of *St Pancras Station (Profile)*, and lives in London.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eula Hunter:

The experience that you get from *The Railways: Nation, Network and People* is the more deep you excavating the information that hide inside words the more you get considering reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to understand but *The Railways: Nation, Network and People* giving you buzz feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood by simply anyone who read that because the author of this book is well-known enough. This book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this specific *The Railways: Nation, Network and People* instantly.

Gina Melton:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or go to the outside with them household or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read the book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent all day every day to reading a reserve. The book *The Railways: Nation, Network and People* it is very good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy often the e-book. You can more easily to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book has high quality.

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Blake Darden:

In this time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to your account is The Railways: Nation, Network and People this e-book consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. This book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some investigation when he makes this book. That's why this book appropriate all of you.

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