



The Railways: Nation, Network and People

Simon Bradley

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Sunday Times History Book of the Year 2015 BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week Shortlisted for the Longman History Today Book of the Year 2016 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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