

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT OF THE 1830's to 1860's

During my research I wondered how these families traveled such distances before the motor car. I looked into the railways of England and discovered my ignorance!

By the 1830's many small independent railway companies had constructed lines around the country. Initially these were built for industry. They connected the fast developing industrial towns of the north with ports; and made easy access to and from the natural resources, mainly coal.

In the south of England, after the Napoleonic wars, there was concern that the sea routes to the Port of London could be compromised. For strategic reasons alternative routes and ways to carry goods from the south coast ports were debated. Eventually though the southern railways developed on their own, through the passenger trade.

Passenger carriages were often added to goods trains, even so, in many cases passengers had to make connections between these railway companies by horse transport. However, passenger travel took off.

From the following account that I have put together from Wikipedia Encyclopedia, it can be seen that by the late 1830's the railways were developing into a profitable means of transport and a fashionable way of travel.

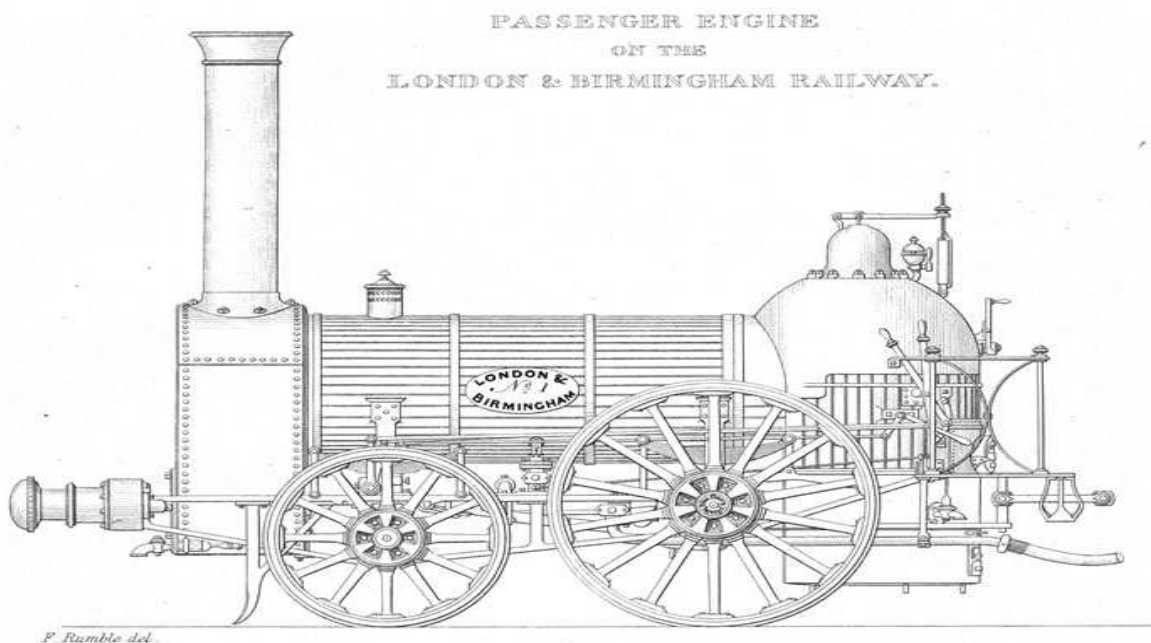
The 1830's: As Manchester had grown on cotton spinning, so Leeds had a growing trade in weaving. The Pennines restricted canal development, so the railway provided a realistic alternative, especially with the growth in coal usage from the mines in the North East and Yorkshire. A number of lines were approved in the area, such as the Leeds and Selby Railway, in 1830, which would link Leeds to the port of Hull. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway (L&MR) was completed the same year. While the L&MR had not ousted the Lancashire canal system from the transport of goods, there was an unexpected enthusiasm for passenger travel.



Opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 1825

Interests in London and Birmingham soon planned to build lines linking these cities together and with Liverpool and Manchester via the L&MR. These two lines were the London and Birmingham (L&BR) and the Great Junction Railway (GJR). The L&BR was designed by Robert Stephenson. It ran from Euston Square, London, to Curzon Street, Birmingham. In fact the idea of building a railway line from London to Birmingham had been mooted as early as 1823.

The London to Birmingham railway was completed in 1838.



A passenger steam locomotive of the late 1830's

The Grand Junction Railway ran from Curzon Street, Birmingham to an end-on junction with the Warrington and Newton Line, a branch of the L&MR. The Grand Junction was designed to link the existing L&MR and the new L&BR; it opened on 4 July 1837, with the L&BR following a few months later.

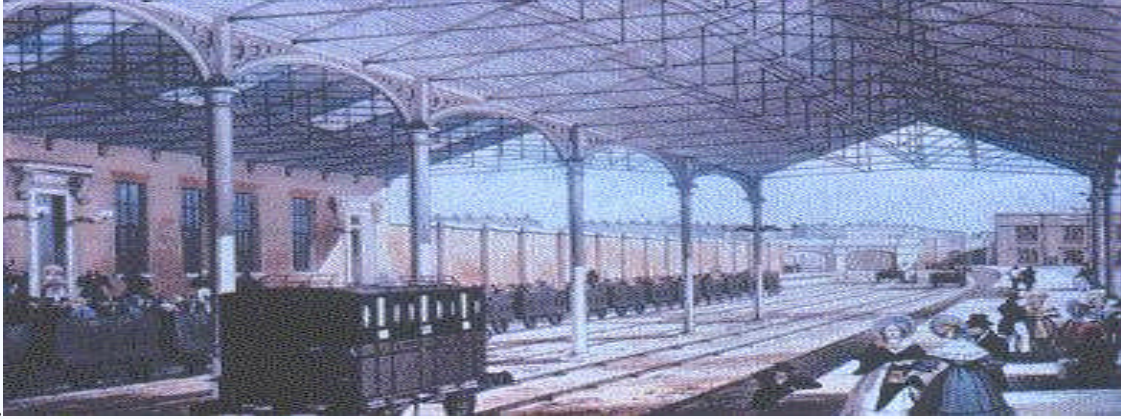
The financial success of the early railways was phenomenal as they had no real competition. The roads were still very slow and in poor condition less than 20 years after the Liverpool line opened, it was possible to travel from London to Scotland by train, in a small fraction of the former time by road.

In the picture below it is clear that the advent of the railway industry is looked upon with awe as the majority of people are focused inward towards the train. It presents a new and fascinating form of entertainment, and for the elite it is an extremely fashionable way to spend the afternoon. The carriage driver in the background has turned his head to examine the train and even his horse has pricked up his ears and turned to gaze upon it! Both are clearly impressed and admire the new invention and are oblivious to the role that it will play in determining their fate. There is nothing in the picture besides the small puff of smoke that would draw attention to the polluting aspects of the train. As a result, the train appears to be a clean object. They are dressed in their best attire and not soiled by either the dirt or grime of the train. It was still a novelty item restricted to mainly the upper class.



By the 1850s, many steam-powered railways had reached the fringes of built-up London (which was much smaller than now). But the new lines were not permitted to demolish enough property to penetrate the City or the West End, so passengers had to disembark at **Paddington, Euston, Kings Cross, Fenchurch Street, Charring Cross, Waterloo** or **Victoria** and then make their own way via **hackney carriage** or on foot into the centre, thereby massively increasing **congestion** in the city.

The **Metropolitan Railway** was built under the ground to connect several of these separate railway terminals. It opened in 1838.



Euston Railway Station (showing the wrought iron roof of 1837) (Note the open carriages)

Major pre-grouping of railway companies in England

Below are details of major pre-grouping of railway companies in England. They show how the railways developed from many small railway companies to eventually as we knew them before the Beaching cuts! With the improved roads and road transport of today, the rail network now only covers a skeleton of the area of the country compared to its hay-day during the early part of the twentieth century.

Great Eastern Railway (GER): This was an amalgamation of the Eastern Counties Railway and the Northern and Eastern Railway, and as its name suggests served the eastern counties of England: Cambridgeshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk to *Gorleston* and *Creting* in 1844 and 1846 respectively.. Its main London terminus was Liverpool Street.

Great Northern Railway (GNR): The GNR began as an amalgamation in 1846 of two rival schemes: the *London and York Railway* and the *Direct Northern Railway* (both started in 1844). The GNR main line ran northwards from King's Cross to a joint station with the NER at Doncaster. Other lines served Lincolnshire and *Derby* Friargate. The GNR also had joint ownership of the Cheshire Lines Committee, giving access to Liverpool; other joint workings led to West Yorkshire (Leeds and Halifax). The GNR, with the NER and the NBR, operated the East Coast Main Line between London and Edinburgh.

Great Western Railway (GWR): The GWR was incorporated in 1835 to construct a railway between Bristol and London. With the addition of several railways - among them the *Bristol and Exeter Railway* (amalgamated 1876); *South Devon Railway* (1878); and the *Cornwall Railway* (1889) - the GWR territory took shape. The major routes, apart from the original line, served Weymouth, Plymouth and Penzance to the west; Birmingham and Chester to the north-west.

London and North Western Railway (LNWR): The LNWR was formed in 1846 when four existing lines were amalgamated: the London and Birmingham Railway; the Liverpool and Manchester Railway; the Grand Junction Railway; and the Manchester and Birmingham Railway, making the LNWR the largest in the country at that time [420 miles (672 km)].

London and South Western Railway (LSWR): Promoted as the *London and Southampton Railway*, the first section opened in 1838. By 1850 a coastal line extended from Waterloo in London via Yeovil & *Exeter* to Plymouth. Other main towns served were Portsmouth and Bournemouth as well many of the south and south-west seaside resorts including *Wareham* with a branch line to *Swanage* by 1885

Midland Railway (MidR): The MidR was formed in 1844 with the amalgamation of three railways: the *North Midland Railway*; the *Midland Counties Railway*, and the *Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway*. In its early days it had no London terminus, using termini of other railways (the LNWR and the GNR) until 1862, when its grandiose London terminus at St Pancras was built.

North Eastern Railway (NER): The NER was incorporated in 1854, and was the amalgamation of three railways: the *York, Newcastle and Berwick Railway*; the *York and North Midland Railway*; and the *Leeds Northern Railway*.

South Eastern Main Line: The SER original main line was given sanction by Act of Parliament in 1836, running from London Bridge via Redhill, Tonbridge, *Maidstone* and Ashford to Folkestone and Dover. This circuitous route was the result of insistence on the part of Parliament that only one southerly route out of the capital was necessary; since the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway already had a line through Redhill, the SER perforce had to follow it. This ignored the fact that the main London - Dover road had, since ancient times, followed a much more direct route, and the fact that the other great railway building projects took direct routes whenever feasible. A train passenger to Dover had a journey 20 miles longer than by stagecoach. The main line via Ashford and Folkestone reached Dover by 7 February 1844 and the *Tunbridge Wells* line was completed in 1845.

One notable event of this period was the first large, organized excursion by rail, got up by the Nottingham Mechanics' Institute. A week later the Leicester Mechanics' Institute returned the compliment to Nottingham. The MCR began organizing excursions on its own account, on one occasion conveying some 2,400 people in a single train of 65 four-wheeled carriages and wagons.