



More Tales of the Old Railwaymen

Tom Quinn

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This follow-up to "Tales of the Old Railwaymen" features ten more railwaymen - all in their eighties or even nineties - looking back on a lifetime working on the railways, with a wealth of tales. These are memories of a long-lost era before World War II, when you could still follow quaint professions like under-shunter, wielding your 7-foot-long wooden shunting pole, or French polisher - lovingly polishing the wood-veneered interiors of Great Western Railway carriages - and when railway clerks stood in rows at sloping wooden desks appending "Your humble, obedient servant" in quill-pen to the bottom of every company letter. Here are stories of the Midland and Great Northern Railway - known to its staff as the "Muddle and Get Nowhere Railway" - where drivers were not unknown to stop their trains near Sandringham to help themselves to the odd rabbit from a poacher's snare, and of young engine cleaners' pranks that involved blowing up the cabin stove by dropping a detonator down its chimney. And, above all, here is the subtle, hot and sweaty, and even loving art of firing and driving a great steam locomotive, with its glowing firebox, Yorkshire Hard steam coal and gleaming brass.

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