

TRAIN  
TEASERS

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# TRAIN TEASERS

A QUIZ BOOK FOR THE  
CULTURED TRAINSPOTTER

ANDREW MARTIN

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PROFILE BOOKS

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## INTRODUCTION (AND A FEW TIPS)

The title of what follows, *Train Teasers*, is meant to reflect the fact that the book aspires to a playful, rather than an adversarial, relationship with the reader. The aim is not to catch the reader out but to encourage him or her to find the right answer.

Many of the answers are guessable by means of multiple choice or other forms of limitation. We confine ourselves to *British* railways, for example, although the 'Britishness' of a couple of questions is admittedly tenuous. Also, the questions are arranged roughly chronologically so that, even if no date is mentioned in a question, the answer is unlikely to involve some Victorian railway phenomenon if the immediately preceding question referred to the Second World War.

The book is informed by the idea that it might be more satisfying to guess the location of a statue of an eminent railway personage, based on the wording of the question, than to actually know it. And the questions are oriented towards the social, picturesque, artistic and eccentric side of Britain's railways, and away from the technical aspects, such as signalling or the various methods of electric traction (to name but two of the author's particular blind spots). So the right answers might well be lurking in the dusty corners of the averagely alert reader's mind. Of course, some railway knowledge is required, but knowledge of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social and literary history will also get the reader a long way. This is not a quiz for those who prize railway arcana for its own sake; it's for anyone who would like to engage in a conversation about railway history, mindful of the fact that in Britain it has impinged on so much other history.

## TRAIN TEASERS

It is also hoped that anyone who gets an answer wrong will be compensated by enjoyment of either the question or the answer, many of which are embellished with asides or digressions by way of a bonus. The reader's enjoyment might also be increased by a look at the Framework of Railway History provided below.

### Framework of Railway History

Britain's railways developed on the principle of *laissez-faire* – that is, chaotically. There were many companies in the early days, and in the 'Railway Grouping' of 1923 over a hundred of these were reduced to the 'Big Four' (of which more in a minute). Readers will not usually be asked to name a pre-Grouping railway company without some assisting clues, but the names of some of them do come up: the North Eastern Railway, for example, or the Great Eastern and the Great Northern.

The names of the Big Four come up more often. They were

The Great Western

The London & North Eastern

The London, Midland & Scottish

The Southern

'Great Western' was the name of a pre-Grouping company as well as one of the Big Four. It is also the name of a modern train operating company. Another modern train operator at the time of writing (and these companies come and go at a great rate) is the London North Eastern Railway, which has almost the same name as the old London & North Eastern Railway, but without the conjunction. Both are referred to as LNER, but in this book the context will make clear which is being discussed.

In 1947, the railways were nationalised as British Railways (later called British Rail). The railways were then privatised in 1994.



## INTRODUCTION (AND A FEW TIPS)

As mentioned, there is not much technical detail in the book, but the reader should be aware that steam locomotives (which survived until 1948) have a serial number, and that their wheel formations are usually mentioned in the same breath. A wheel formation involves three numbers. It might be, say, 2-6-0, which means two leading wheels, six driving wheels, and no trailing wheels. Some wheel formations have a name, and a 2-6-0 is a Mogul.

Steam locomotives also usually belonged to a *Class* of engines, meaning a series of similar types built at the same time by the same company or engineer. Sometimes locomotives also have individual names, for instance *Mallard*, which was a member of the A4 Class.

Some *trains* had names, and these were known as ‘named’ or ‘famous’ trains. In recent years, with the decline of the locomotive and the rise of the multiple unit (with power units distributed along the length of a train), the distinction between a train and an engine has become blurred, but there are not many questions touching on this complication.

Readers should also keep in mind that the answer to a question about a particular line might refer to a *preserved* (or heritage) *railway*, or a line of the London Underground.

The questions are grouped into five main sections; all the answers are at the back.

**PEOPLE (AND ANIMALS)**

# ENTREPRENEURS AND ENGINEERS

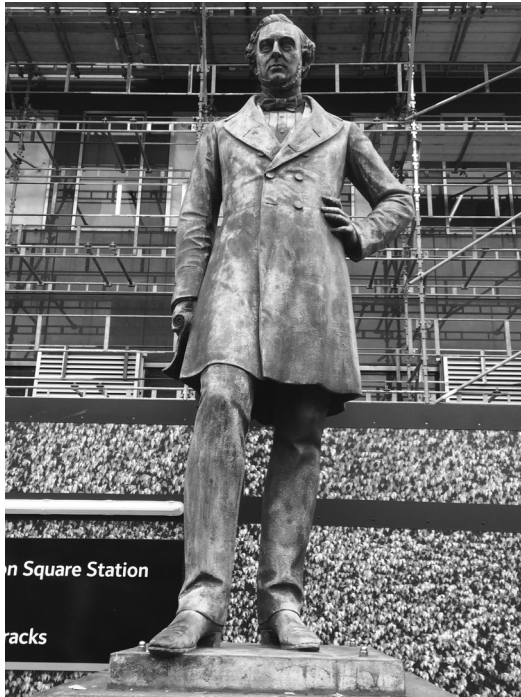
1. The statue of which British steam pioneer is on the roof of Gare du Nord Station, Paris?
2. Was George Stephenson the father of Robert, or was Robert the father of George?
3. In 1830, George Stephenson was cross-examined by a parliamentary select committee (a frequent event in his life) about his plans for the Liverpool–Manchester Railway. Towards the end of the interview, he was asked, ‘Now tell me, Mr Stephenson, will you go at thirty miles [an hour]?’ Stephenson replied, ‘Certainly!’ What was the response of the committee?
4. George Stephenson’s first locomotive was called *My Lord*. The name of his second was a north-eastern slang word for a heavy, blunt object. What was it?
5. Who, on 5 July 1841, took his first step in the leisure travel business by chartering a train to take 500 temperance supporters from Leicester to Loughborough?

## TRAIN TEASERS

6. Robert Stephenson was perpetually besieged by railway entrepreneurs wanting to sign him up to their projects. He took refuge from them behind what he metaphorically called ‘the house that has no knocker’. What was this in reality?
  - a. The Athenaeum Club, of which he was a member, and where discussion of business was frowned on.
  - b. His yacht, *Titania*.
  
7. George Hudson, the Railway King, was a railway entrepreneur who in 1844 was in charge of over 1,000 miles of railway. But he was dethroned after he was discovered to be a confidence trickster: he had paid dividends out of capital, not profits. He supposedly wanted to ‘Mek all t’ railways come to’ – which city?
  
8. Roughly how many cigars did Isambard Kingdom Brunel smoke every day?
  - a. Seventy.
  - b. Twenty.
  - c. Forty.
  
9. What is ‘Brunel’s billiard table’?
  
10. In which cemetery (within engine-whistle range of Paddington Station) is Brunel buried?

## ENTREPRENEURS AND ENGINEERS

11. *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History* speaks of ‘the great triumvirate’ of mid-nineteenth-century engineers. Two of them were Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Robert Stephenson, but who was the third?
- a. Daniel Gooch.
  - b. Joseph Locke.
  - c. John Fowler.
12. This statue is on the forecourt or ‘piazza’ of Euston Station (or it was, until recently put into temporary storage as construction work is carried on). Whom does it depict?



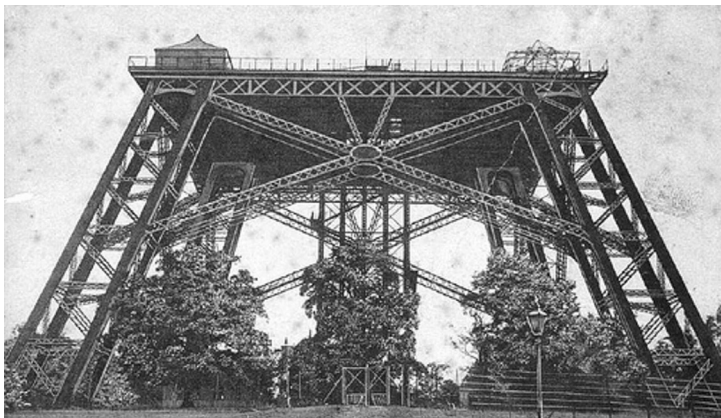
## TRAIN TEASERS

13. ... And why?
14. Where was the statue originally located?
15. What was 'Fowler's Ghost'?
16. Which advocate of 'self-help' wrote the five-volume *Lives of the Engineers*, a very sycophantic work of 1862?
17. This is George Leeman, who succeeded George Hudson as chairman of the York, Newcastle & Berwick Railway, and uncovered his shady dealings. Leeman was MP for York between 1865 and 1868 and highly regarded in the city. On which road in York does this statue stand?



## ENTREPRENEURS AND ENGINEERS

18. Supply the surname of this eminent railway personage:  
George Mortimer —.
19. Which railway magnate built this?



20. What did this man (see below) invent? He stands near the Bank of England and, more relevantly for our purposes, Bank Underground station.



## TRAIN TEASERS

21. Which London Underground line used to be referred to by some people (including John Betjeman) as 'the Whittaker Wright line', Wright being its original financier?
22. At the beginning of the film *The Flying Scotsman* (1929), there appears the following notice: 'For the purposes of the film dramatic licence has been taken in regard to the safety equipment used on *The Flying Scotsman*.' Who had insisted on this?
23. In what sort of business was Wenman Joseph Bassett-Lowke primarily involved?
24. Who was 'Concrete Bob'? He founded a construction firm that is well-known today, and carries his name.
25. What was bizarre about the death of George Jackson Churchward, who had been Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Great Western?
26. In 1949, after he retired as Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Southern Railway, Oliver Bulleid became the Chief Mechanical Engineer of Irish Railways for which he built a locomotive that ran on – what? (It seems logical, given the location.)
27. In 1963, Alan Pegler made a purchase that would lead to his bankruptcy and his taking cheap lodgings above a chip shop near Paddington Station while seeking work as an actor. What did he buy? (It cost £3,000.)
28. Which founder of a modern train operating company was ordained by the Universal Life Church Monastery?



## ENTREPRENEURS AND ENGINEERS

29. Which founder of a modern train operating company wrote a book called *Screw It, Let's Do It*?
30. Which sometime songwriter and record producer for Kylie Minogue revived the name of London & North Western Railway for various railway ventures, including a rolling stock maintenance company that is now (having been sold) Arriva Traincare?
31. Which transport group – formerly the operator of East Midlands Trains and South West Trains – was founded by Brian Souter and his sister, Ann Gloag?
32. Chris Donald was the founding editor of a successful comic publication. He is also a rail enthusiast, and he put some of the profits from his publication towards the revival of the Alnwick branch line in Northumberland, which ran from Alnmouth on the East Coast Main Line to Alnwick 3 miles away. What was the publication?

## CELEBRITIES

33. When did Queen Victoria make her first railway journey?
- a. 1831.
  - b. 1836.
  - c. 1842.
34. The trains on which Queen Victoria travelled were preceded by a pilot train, and no trains were allowed to pass in the opposite direction except for ... what sort of trains?
35. Of which painting by J. M. W. Turner (first exhibited in 1844) did *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History* write that it ‘not only demonstrates a mastery of chiaroscuro but reflects an ambivalence between the sublime past and infernal future: it was decades ahead of its time and pointed clearly towards Impressionism and Abstract Expressionism’?
36. Which famous American toured Britain by rail in 1902, 1903 and 1904?
37. Which author and war hero left the manuscript of a 250,000-word book at Reading Station waiting room in 1919, requiring him to write the whole thing again?
38. Which member of the cast of *Dad’s Army* wrote, in 1923, a successful play (later filmed several times) called *The Ghost Train*?

## CELEBRITIES

39. Not hard to spot the artist in this photograph. It's Eric Gill. The photograph shows something he supplied to the London & North Eastern Railway, in return for which he received (apart from money) a ride on the footplate of the *Flying Scotsman*. What was it?



40. Who voiced the station announcements in the film *Brief Encounter*?
41. Paul McCartney recalled that, early in their acquaintance, he and John Lennon tried to write a 'bluesy, freight train song' along the lines of 'Midnight Special' or 'Rock Island Line'. What was the result?
42. Who met at Dartford railway station on 17 October 1961, with important consequences for the 1960s?

## TRAIN TEASERS

43. Which actress, best known for appearing in *Carry On* films, grew up in the station house at Laindon in Essex, her father being the station master?
44. In 1966, Dora Bryan starred in a film with the word 'Train' in the title, playing a headmistress. What was the film?
45. Which knighted actor led a successful campaign in 1969 to restore kippers to the menu of *The Brighton Belle*?
46. Which cricket commentator assisted the railway preservationists who, in the early 1970s, began a campaign that would lead to the reopening of part of the Alton–Winchester line as the Mid-Hants Railway?
47. Who was the lead singer of the group, Trainspotters, who had a hit (nearly) in 1971 with 'High Rise'? He is also a former Radio One DJ.
48. Which presenter of TV history programmes (with the accent on architecture) founded the Euston Arch Trust in 1996 with the aim of restoring the Arch?
49. What do Rod Stewart, Hughie Green, Winston Churchill, Phil Collins, Roger Daltrey, Eddie Izzard and Anne Diamond have in common?
50. In 1970, a British singer-songwriter released his third album. Its title suggested the railways of the Old (or Wild) West, and the image on the record sleeve suggested a station of that time and place, but the station depicted was actually Horsted Keynes on the preserved Bluebell Railway. Who was the singer-songwriter?

## CELEBRITIES

51. Which railway-themed song of 1980, performed by Sheena Easton, was among John Peel's all-time favourite singles?
52. For which railway-related activity was Terence Cuneo well known?
53. Which comedian is commemorated with a plaque at Mornington Crescent Station?
54. Which British record label arranged a tour by train for some of its artists in 1978?
55. Which *Great British Bake-off* judge once served on the BR Board?
56. Which BBC news presenter has written of her love of *The Caledonian Sleeper*, which she uses regularly?
57. Which *Antiques Roadshow* regular has written many books about railways, and used to live in a 1903 Great Western railway carriage (or at least, in a house to which such a carriage was attached)?
58. *Paul Merton's Secret Stations* was a TV series about which type of small, out-of-the-way station? (There are about 150 of them on the UK network.)
59. Which comedian's most famous routine was called 'This train don't stop Camborne Wednesdays'?

# CRIMINALS AND CRIME

60. Which class of criminal is described here?

They often visit the various railway stations and are generally smartly dressed as they linger there – some of them better than others. Some of the females are dressed like shopkeepers' wives, others like milliners, varying from nineteen to forty years of age, mostly from nineteen to twenty-five; some of them attired in cotton gowns, others in silks and satins.

61. Every September from 1856, the South Eastern Railway ran special trains from London to rural Kent for a certain class of worker. According to *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History*, 'The trains began leaving London Bridge in the early hours of the morning, and were notorious for violence and drunkenness among passengers; in 1863, for instance, the mayoress of Maidstone was assaulted on the platform.' Which kind of worker?
62. What did Canon Victor L. Whitechurch have to do with railway crime?
63. Which builder of Underground railways in London had served time in the Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia?

## CRIMINALS AND CRIME

64. Which English prison, modelled on the above, and no longer used as a prison, is visible from a British main-line train?

65. Which comic opera features the following lyric?

The idiot who, in railway carriages,  
scribbles on window panes,  
We only suffer  
To ride on a buffer  
In Parliamentary trains.

66. How many murders were committed in railway carriages between 1830 and 1914? Answers two either way acceptable.

67. Name any one of the murderers.

68. What are (or were) Müller lights?

69. About which of her own novels did Agatha Christie write, 'Each time I read it again, I think it commonplace, full of clichés, with an uninteresting plot. Many people, I am sorry to say, like it'?

70. Why did Brighton Station's left luggage office become notorious in 1934?

## TRAIN TEASERS

71. In 1955, a Mr Dean of Southend was in a non-smoking compartment of a train going from Upminster to Shoeburyness. When another man in the compartment lit a cigarette, Mr Dean pulled the communication cord to stop the train. What happened to Mr Dean as a result?
- a. He was prosecuted for improper use of the communication cord, but found not guilty on the grounds that it was better to have stopped the train than confront the smoker directly, which might have resulted in a fight.
  - b. He received a letter from the General Manager of British Railways' Eastern Region congratulating him on his public spiritedness.
  - c. He was prosecuted for improper use of the communication cord, found guilty and fined.
72. Which Conservative transport minister fled to France, to escape prosecution for tax fraud?
73. The line between Grantham and Skegness has an alternative title, incorporating the name of a type of rural criminal. What is it?
74. What crime occurred in a school sports hall in Market Deeping in May 2019?





**ANSWERS**



**PEOPLE (AND ANIMALS)**

