

George Bradshaw and railway timetables

George Bradshaw was born in Pendleton, Salford, Lancashire, on 29 July 1801 and began his career working for J. Beale, a Manchester engraver. Bradshaw had become an accomplished cartographer after a short spell in Belfast and his first work, a map of his native county, was published in 1827. He published a series of maps of the canals of Yorkshire and Lancashire in 1830, known as *Bradshaw's Maps of Inland Navigation*.

In 1839 George Bradshaw published the world's first railway timetable in partnership with his London agent, William Adams. Sold with a cloth cover, *Bradshaw's Railway Time Tables and Assistant to Railway Travelling* (the title was shortened to *Bradshaw's Railway Companion* in 1840) was initially a fairly small publication of eight pages, costing 6d. (2½p), but as new railways quickly opened it grew in size until it had reached a staggering 1,000 pages by the end of the century. It was published monthly from 1841 under the new title *Bradshaw's Monthly Railway Guide* and included information on places to visit, hotels and shipping services, soon putting some order into the chaotic railway system.

From information supplied by the plethora of railway companies, Bradshaw compiled his updated timetable guide every month along with a map of Britain's rail system. Each line on the map was cross-referenced with the number of the page on which its timetable appeared. It was not an easy guide to use – there were so many companies that it was difficult to standardize the information and the multiplicity of footnotes and miniscule typography accompanying each timetable

added more confusion. However, despite being the butt of Victorian cartoonists and music hall jokes, it became a unique national institution and was often referred to in famous works of fiction such as *Sherlock Holmes* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*. It was an invaluable tool for the travelling public for over a hundred years.

His name already synonymous with railway timetables, Bradshaw quickly expanded his railway publishing empire by introducing the *Continental Railway Guide* in 1847 (discontinued in 1939) and, later, the *Railway Manual* and the *Railway Shareholders' Guide*, both of which stayed in print until the early 1920s.

Bradshaw did not face any real competition until the 1930s, when the 'Big Four' railway companies started issuing their own timetables – apart from the Great Western Railway's, even these were produced by the publisher of *Bradshaw* until 1939. Despite this competition, and the publication of regional timetables by the nationalized British Railways after 1948, *Bradshaw* was the only all-line timetable. It continued to be available until 1961 when the final edition, No. 1521, was published.

It was 1974 before British Rail first published its own all-line timetable and this was last published in book form (by Network Rail) in 2007. Currently Network Rail publishes an Electronic National Rail Timetable that is updated twice a year. There are also numerous printed leaflets on a company-by-company or route-by-route basis that are available free of charge at stations – almost taking us back to the pre-Bradshaw situation.

Bradshaw & Blacklock, George Bradshaw's printing house, became internationally renowned for its maps, guides, books and the *Manchester Journal*. In his private life in his native Manchester, Bradshaw was a Quaker, a fervent peace activist and a philanthropist. While on a visit to Norway in 1853 he contracted cholera and died. He is buried in the grounds of Oslo cathedral.

In more recent times a facsimile edition of *Bradshaw's Handbook* of 1863 has become a bestseller in the UK following Michael Portillo's long running BBC TV series *Great British Railway Journeys*.

LEFT: Printer and engraver George Bradshaw published the world's first railway timetables.

RIGHT: With counties picked out in pastel colours this map of Britain's railways and sea routes was published by George Bradshaw in 1843.



Railway corporate design and publicity

The post-war years brought nationalization of Britain's railways and a new period of corporate identity. Between 1948 and 1956 the lion rampant (nicknamed the 'Unicycling Lion') was chosen to adorn the sides of locomotives while a hot-dog sausage-shaped totem was selected to appear on BR publicity material and on station nameboards, colour coded for each of the six regions. With some variations – the 'ferret and dartboard' crest replaced the lion rampant in 1956 – these remained as the BR corporate identity until the introduction of the famous double-arrow logo in 1965.

By the early 1950s the newly formed British Railways' publicity department had got back into full swing after the post-war austerity period and were producing posters, holiday guides, brochures, leaflets and regional

timetables, all carrying the corporate identity logo. Numerous named trains, some reintroduced after the war but many brand new, received the full publicity treatment with personalized locomotive headboards and matching leaflets and restaurant car menus – the age of romantic rail travel appeared, at least on the surface, to have returned.

LEFT: From an original painting by Frank Wootton, this poster features a BR Standard Class 5MT 4-6-0 'somewhere in Wales' and was produced by the Western Region in 1960 to promote rail travel to the principality.

BELOW: From an original painting by Reginald Mayes, this 1950s poster was produced by the Eastern Region to promote its 'The Queen of Scots' Pullman service between London and Glasgow.



Terence Cuneo

Born in London in 1907, Terence Tenison Cuneo was without doubt the finest poster artist of the British Railways era. After studying at the Slade School of Art he started his career as a magazine and book illustrator before being appointed as an official war artist during the Second World War, painting scenes of aircraft factories and wartime activities. He continued his commercial work after the war, specializing in painting railway scenes before being appointed official artist of Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953. Cuneo then went on to be commissioned by British Railways to produce a large number of oil paintings of the railways, their locomotives and infrastructure. Often putting his own personal safety at risk when sketching on location (for example perching high on the girders of the Forth railway bridge), Cuneo's masterpieces always included

his personal trademark – a small playful mouse hidden away in a corner of each painting. His output continued into the diesel and electric era, and today his posters are prized and valuable possessions for collectors of railway ephemera. Cuneo died in 1996 and is immortalized, complete with paintbrush, palette and trademark tiny mouse, by Philip Jackson's larger-than-life bronze statue at Waterloo station in London.

BELOW: Terence Cuneo often put his life in danger when sketching his railway subjects. In order to produce this painting for a BR poster he tied himself to one of the high girders of the Forth Bridge, having to withstand biting 50 mph winds suspended above the track.

