

Constructing the past

Railway history from below or a study in nostalgia?

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This article seeks to highlight the importance of an underused and under-appreciated resource, namely working-class autobiography written by those who were employed in the railway industry. Because of the sheer number of such publications, a peculiar feature itself of the industry, I have chosen to focus this discussion specifically upon the autobiographies and oral histories produced by those who experienced employment in railway workshops. The article opens with an examination of railway historiography, and in particular the criticism made of it by academics and other writers who view the field as overly romantic and nostalgic. Close attention will be paid to what could be viewed as the inherent tension between such criticism and unexpected advantages of these very flaws, namely that the demand on the part of the enthusiasts for detail of railway operation creates a market for the publication of shopfloor reminiscences.

The second focus of interest will be the autobiographies themselves, written by employees from various railway workshops in England and Scotland, both public and private-sector. Questions will be asked as to how far these publications represent an important resource for the study of railway history, and the methodological problems entailed in their use will be examined. The article will conclude by attempting to locate these examples of autobiography within the wider historical debate on the use of qualitative material.

A creative tension?

The historiography of the railway industry is a fascinating subject in its own right. During the 1960s critical observations of it were made from several directions, tending to focus on the standard and subject matter of study. Firstly, there was concern at the academic standard of much of the work that had been, and was being, produced in this genre. J. R. Kellett, for instance, reviewing a selection of railway histories in 1969, observed:

None of the books quotes any sources or authorities for its statements, and all have pathetic indexes. That in Ellis's history, for example, runs to sixteen pages of which *eight* are engine names. The other works muster

indexes running to two, three and a half, and four pages. In fact, it is clear that they are books intended to be wallowed in rather than read, and certainly not to be studied, to be used for convenient reference, or serve as the basis for further work.¹ [Italics original.]

The second substantive criticism made, and one that follows on from the first, was the content of the subject matter. Michael Robbins, for example, was critical of the way general historians failed to acknowledge fully the role of the railways in the process of industrialisation. As he notes:

One reason for this is the patchy, and usually poor, way in which railway history has been presented. Historical writing about railways has generally (with some, not many, honourable exceptions) been narrow blinkered ‘company history’; or it has been concentrated on technological aspects, which though fascinating in themselves ... are not easily linked with the broad outlines of development and influence; or it has been over-dramatised round the figures of a few individuals who have stolen the limelight.²

More recently David Howell has made critical remarks on the subject, particularly with regard to the historiography of the Midland Railway:

In one tradition of railway literature, that of history written by enthusiasts and for enthusiasts, the Midland has typically enjoyed a good press. Photographic collections highlight immaculate crimson locomotives, comfortable carriages and architecturally striking buildings. Commentaries are often uncritical. But the limitations of this literature are often acute, neglecting the harsh experiences of company employees and ignoring the economic pressures on railway companies even before the start of serious road competition.³

These observations are of course directed at histories rather than specifically the subject matter of this article, autobiography and oral history, although this genre itself is not immune from attack. David Wilson in his latest book on the footplate grade, itself an example of popular railway history, comments:

Over the years, from the last century to today, a great number of over-romantic accounts – books, pamphlets and magazine articles – have been written about footplate life, and footplatemen themselves have contributed to this. What is perhaps most revealing about all these works is their very existence: after all there are few if any works entitled *How I became a Capstan Lathe Operator*, or *Ace Dustbinman*.⁴

Undoubtedly these criticisms are valid, and this article will explore some of the weaknesses associated with autobiography. However, it is possible to arrive at a more positive reading of some of the products that appear under the banner of railway history in its more popular form. The key to such a reading is the market for such literature and, therefore, the stimulus to its production.

Robbins acknowledges this fact in the concentration on locomotives:

It is idle not to recognise that the locomotive section is the most attractive part of railway history to many readers, and these readers make publication commercially possible.⁵

Kellett, likewise, acknowledges the reason for the existence of much of the literature he condemns:

They [railway enthusiasts] also help to explain the great proliferation and large sales of railway books, for no readers are more insatiable and compulsive than those who are seeking their own past.⁶

This market demand, therefore, witnesses the publication of many popular company and technical histories but, more positively perhaps, has stimulated a demand for primary accounts of working life ‘on the railway’. This literature itself has a relatively long history but was really to take off after the end of main-line steam in 1968. Within this area of autobiography, often referred to as reminiscences, certain grades have, until recently, dominated. The most appealing of these grades is indisputably the footplate workers, with signallers running second.⁷ Given the context and the audience, such a focus is entirely understandable. Latterly, however, there have also appeared welcome additions to this genre from other grades such as station staff and management.⁸ The further widening of this interest has led to the publication of a number of autobiographies of workers from railway works and factories. What is argued in this article is that for all the criticisms that are made of popular railway histories, with their many acknowledged deficiencies, what needs to be constantly remembered is that without that very market these examples of working-class autobiography would probably not exist. As the oral historian Paul Thompson remarks:

one of the great advantages of oral history is that it enables the historian to counteract the bias in normal historical sources; the tendency, for example, for printed autobiography to come from the articulate professional or upper classes, or from labour leaders rather than the rank and file.⁹

While the railways have generated such accounts from the ‘great and the good’ the desire on the part of the mass audience for tales of ‘a life on the rails’ ensures that the former are outnumbered by the latter.¹⁰ This is in contrast to the paucity of autobiography written from the shop floor in other industry, although it does exist.¹¹

Life in a railway factory

The sub-genre of working class autobiography from within Britain’s railway works is a small but growing literature. In purely chronological terms of publication date, Alfred Williams’s *Life in a Railway Factory* of 1915 represents

certainly the oldest example that this writer has come across.¹² Others under consideration were published during the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, their appearance, and the existence of a market for them, being perhaps explained in part by the rundown and closure of railway engineering plants across the network during this period.

The studies fall into two main categories. Firstly, there are the straight autobiographies which are usually written after the worker has left the industry through retirement or redundancy. Examples of this kind are, in addition to Williams's account of Swindon Works between the 1890s and the Great War, cited above, Ken Gibbs, a fitter/turner, also from Swindon, whose book details his apprenticeship from 1944 to his National Service in 1951; Charles Taylor from Crewe Works, again covering his apprenticeship from 1939 until 1945; Nigel Macmillan's account of the North British Locomotive Company at Glasgow from 1947, and Ron Spedding's insight into work at Shildon wagon works 1940–82.¹³ Secondly, there are the oral histories written by third parties which are in the cases considered here the result of multiple interviews which are subsequently edited. Examples of these are *Pullman Craftsmen*, from a group of employees from the Brighton works of the Pullman Car Company, and secondly in *Once upon a Line*, where workers from Ryde shed in the Isle of Wight were recorded.¹⁴

In all the accounts studied here the authors give a description of how they started 'at the works' and their initial socialisation into the world of work. In many cases this socialisation began before they ever set foot in the factory, with their expectation of what their working lives would be like informed by family or friends. As Taylor notes in his description of Crewe:

We were a family steeped in railway tradition, living in a three-storey house at the end of a row adjacent to Flag Lane railway bridge. My bedroom was at the top, with a wonderful view of the Works Yard so that the panorama of Chain Shop, Stone Yard, Brass Finishing Shop, Wheel Shop and the Melting Furnaces became very familiar, together with the fan of sidings serving them and providing stabling for the works shunting engines.¹⁵

Likewise, Gibbs stresses the importance of family:

I was destined to follow my father, grandfather and great grandfather into the service of the Great Western Railway at Swindon, without any thought that there could possibly be any other acceptable form of employment ... There was never a question of what did I want to do! I was destined to be a fitter, turner and locomotive erector like my grandfather¹⁶

The same author discusses the totality of the institution at Swindon:

We were a railway family, in a railway street, in a railway area, an area which you couldn't leave without going under, or, with care, over a railway line, and where just about every family had at least one member who worked 'inside'¹⁷

These points, made in a majority of the works cited, echo an interest that has occurred in industrial sociology's discussion of 'industrial districts' and 'occupational communities', with many studies being made into the quality of the interpenetration of work and family spheres.¹⁸ The importance here is the regularity with which these observations are made, and the degree to which the experience had an impact on the writers so that they found it necessary to discuss it. This raises interesting issues as to the trajectory of research agendas as well as object/subject relations within the labour process¹⁹

The interpenetration of work and family is also apparent inside the works when the actor started work, and throughout his career. Taylor notes the way in which family exerted discipline at the point of production:

He also asked the question I was to hear so many times – 'Are you Charlie Taylor's son?' My parentage was a mixed blessing, sometimes providing a bonus but there were times when I was told, 'I don't think your father would like to see you doing that.'²⁰

There are many accounts of the important role played by family members in getting the apprentice his job in the first place, and the later formal and informal connection between father and son. An illustration of this latter point can be found in Gibbs's account of the way his clean overalls were delivered not to the shop in which he was working, but to that of his father, because his father was easier to trace, being settled in a trade and therefore in a particular shop.²¹ It has been argued within the historical and sociological literature that this interpenetration of family and work acted as a powerful source of moral regulation in both the sphere of work and that of community. Such detail of the minutiae of workplace interaction, exemplified in the studies under consideration here, is a vital resource for rendering understandable the complexity of the employment relationship. What a life history approach offers is the sense in which such themes emerge from the day-to-day milieu of work, emphasising again the point that work meaning and identity are best understood as social processes.²²

Another aspect of these autobiographies is the inclusion of a description of the author's initial impressions of the works and the journey to them. Ron Spedding recalled his first walk to work at Shildon:

The streets were so very quiet that the steady tread of my hobnailed boots muffled by the ground frost sounded unnatural. As I proceeded, men appeared out of the shadows to move in the same direction as myself; a door would open to reveal a shaft of light and a figure silhouetted for a moment, then the door would close and the figure would move forward to join the general flow. As I approached the Works the number of figures increased rapidly, until I was surrounded by a mass of moving humanity ... As we entered the Works' gates the steam buzzer blew with insistent clarity, giving all present a loud reminder that another working day had just begun.²³

Such a description simultaneously emphasises both the profoundly mundane and the extraordinary character of many working lives. Taylor describes waiting to be allocated work on his first day:

We waited outside the machine shop office surrounded by the noise, smell and warmth of lathes, while away on the right showers of sparks rose from the polishing bench. It was going to be a long day.²⁴

Some of the most vivid and striking descriptions of the shops can be found in Williams's autobiography from Swindon works, here he paints a picture of one of them:

To view the interior is like looking around the inner walls of a fortress. There is no escape for the eye; nothing but bricks and mortar, iron and steel, smoke and steam arising. It is ugly; and the sense of confinement within the prison-like walls of the factory renders it still more dismal to those who have any thought of the hills and fields beyond.²⁵

Perhaps the most valuable contribution the autobiographies make to our understanding of working life in the factory is in the discussion of skill and craft. One of the most significant areas of industrial sociological research has been that carried out around the quality of the division between skilled and unskilled workers in and outside the workplace, and the demarcation disputes between skilled trades.²⁶ Gaining access to shopfloor interpretations and understandings of such complex social forms is difficult, yet most if not all the reminiscences give some flavour of such divisions. It is worth remembering, and significant in its own right, that these are the memories of skilled craft workers rather than the unskilled. Here Macmillan, who worked at the North British works in Glasgow, alludes to such division as he describes the operation of a particular turning machine:

These were spectacular machines to watch and I remember being surprised to find out the operators in charge of these complicated machines were semi-skilled, my first realisation that there was a rigid class structure within the factory precinct.²⁷

Williams discusses comparative skill levels:

At night, when the day's work is over and everything has been left neat and tidy for the succeeding shift, the forger stows his leather apron, cap and jack-boots, rinses his hands in the bosh, and leaves the shed, walking a little in advance of his mates and preserving the same temper he has displayed at the toil. His mates, however, together with the ingenuous and mischievous door-boy, are not so conventional in their behaviour.²⁸

Thus Williams hints at a different moral quality residing within the skilled worker that sets him apart from the unskilled. Again the social sciences have

long been interested in exploring such a divide within the working class, but an understanding of its full meaning can slip through the finest sociological net.²⁹ Demarcation between skilled workers is an issue raised in several accounts, and this was especially apparent to the apprentice moving around the works. Here Macmillan makes an observation:

Apart from apprentice blacksmiths, only *engineering* apprentices had a spell of three months in the forge. The apprentice turners and fitters, although moved around, were kept pretty well to their trade. Only in the forge were any concessions granted to the next generation of engineers.³⁰ [Italics original.]

In addition to divisions along the axis of skill and between trades, there is also a codification and respect for skill levels within a particular trade. Again Williams has left us with a vivid description of this phenomenon, as in his comparison of forgemen at work:

It is a pleasure to watch the skilful forgerman perform his heat and shape the ponderous bloom under the steam-hammer. If you observe him closely you will see that he scarcely moves his body. He stands in one position, easily and naturally, all the time, in a slightly stooping attitude, yet he has full power over the heavy weight in his hands. When he shifts the porter, or turns the forging round, his arms are the instruments; it is performed deftly and simply, with a minimum of exertion. There is a style in it the most casual observer must readily perceive. He cannot help being struck with the extreme simplicity and attractiveness of the whole operation, and he will at once recognise the skilful forger from the unskilful, the gifted craftsman from the mere amateur or improver.³¹

This respect for skill or craftsmanship is also apparent in Bill Smith's account of rivalry among apprentices on the Isle of Wight:

When I was an apprentice at the Ryde Works, there was a competition amongst the senior apprentices to see who could make the turning waste shavings, from the locomotive wheels, reach the furthest. My unbeaten record started when I had to turn a boiler tube on a wheel lathe. The shavings when rolled out ran past the doors, up through the permanent way and we stopped the train service to unwind it to the signal box. No one beat that one!³²

What these and other examples show is the way in which craft skill and technical competence are embedded in the social. Here skill is not simply an objective technical qualification that can be learnt, but rather is situated within the very labour process and relations of production. Another illustration of the admiration of other workers' skill and craft can be found in the memoirs from the Pullman works at Brighton. Not only do we get an appreciation of the skill involved in the work, but the text is also accompanied by an unofficial photograph of the event taken by one of the interviewed men:

Talking of burning paint off, when they had a proper overhaul, all the wooden cars that is, they had all their paint burnt off. Gas flame, it was. And I've got a good snap of a chap called Freddie Gates and he was very good at it. And the panels were anything of a couple of feet wide. I've got a picture of him stripping the entire sheet of paint off a car. I just went by when he was doing it, so I said, 'Hold it, Fred! Let me get the camera.' So I snapped him. And there was Freddie, and a whole sheet of paint rolling off. That was a bit of skilled work, that.³³

This use of illustration in accounts of life in a railway works is significant in several ways. Firstly, it emphasises what was important and of interest to the people who worked there, and secondly it adds detail to our understanding of the way the buildings and plant were used. In many cases this sort of detail would be entirely missing from the 'official' photograph of the works, or would be lost in the officially sanctioned caption underneath. In addition to the use of photographs, both official and unofficial, many of the books considered here also include drawings made by the authors to further illustrate their time at the works.

The above indicates just some of the aspects of working life that are mentioned in these autobiographies and oral histories, and as such they represent only the tip of the iceberg. Other themes that could have been discussed and illustrated from these works include the employment of women at the works, especially during wartime; the piecework systems and the unofficial ways in which they were coped with and modified by the workers; the experience of working shifts and the quality of life at work; and, finally, the type and style of management and supervision in the various factories. This list is by no means exhaustive and reflects the writer's own research interests working in the field of industrial sociology and industrial relations.

Like any example of oral history or autobiography the studies have both weaknesses as well as strengths. In terms of the difficulties, the autobiographies especially are prone to being too detailed, with in-depth portrayals of work processes in a railway career, but lacking sufficient contextual description of the general surroundings and events. Gibbs's description of his apprenticeship in Swindon works falls into this category. The oral histories can be problematic in terms of the editor's agenda being more prominent than that of the interviewed workers.³⁴

A more fundamental problem associated with the use of this type of resource is the question of representativeness. Firstly, one must question the extent to which writers of these histories represent a self-selecting group who have enjoyed a working life at the works and now reflect back on a 'Golden Age'. While the charge of romanticism can and has been levelled against such studies, it is important to recognise the significance of this type of attachment to employment, in order, as Patrick Joyce suggests, to apprehend the 'historical meanings of work'.³⁵ The sociologist Yiannis Gabriel has argued persuasively for the inclusion of the study of nostalgia within the growing literature on emotion within organisations, pointing out the need for:

a view of nostalgia as encompassing a range of distinct emotional orientations in organizations ... organizational nostalgia is not a marginal phenomenon, but a pervasive one, dominating the outlook of numerous organizational members and even defining the dominant emotional complexion of some organizations.³⁶

Thus romanticism itself needs to be contextualised within the class and social relations not only of the factory but also more widely in society. Put simply, we need to explore critically the emotional attachment to work which these publications reflect.

Secondly, part of the concern with representativeness is the question of the restricted nature of the group from which the accounts are drawn. As discussed above, they are the memoirs of skilled male craft workers, not those of semi- or unskilled workers, male or female. This issue would seem to be more intractable with the absence of these other groups owing to a variety of factors which need to be more fully explored elsewhere.

Another problem associated with such material is how it is to be deployed within academic work. Raphael Samuel argues that the division between 'real history', in Elton's phrase, and its more 'popular' form is perhaps overstated, and that a re-examination of some of the assumptions upon which 'real history' is built should be undertaken. Samuel rejects the notion that the oral historians are 'practising a naive empiricism in which the facts are supposed to speak for themselves'.³⁷ He also perceives the use of such material as part of the democratising process of the study of history, in that the definition of what counts as history is itself widened. In this sense, then, the kinds of material examined in this article represent a 'bubbling up' of history from below. Such evidence and material, if carefully handled and integrated with other complementary research, can only expand and add depth to our current knowledge.

Making their own history

What I hope to have demonstrated here is the enormous value contained within the working class autobiographies and oral histories that make up a small group of the larger tradition of railway autobiography. This genre is a much under-appreciated and underused resource. Railway historians, and social scientists generally, have largely ignored its existence. There are of course exceptions. In academic work there has been the occasional use of railway industry autobiography – a recent example being an article by Paul Edwards and Colin Whitston in the sociological journal *Work, Employment and Society*.³⁸ Their use of such literature, in a piece on disciplinary practice in the industry, is limited to the work of Adrian Vaughan.³⁹ More extensive use of autobiography in railway history can be seen in John Farrington's book *Life on the Lines*, Frank McKenna's *The Railway Workers*, Clive Groome's *The Decline and Fall of the Engine Driver*, and most recently with the publication of C. D. Wilson's *Forward! The Revolution in the Lives of the Footplatemen*.⁴⁰ All these books use quotations from this genre, with the

latter three interweaving such illustration with oral histories they themselves have generated. Few historians seem to have made much of the literature examined here and originating from the railway workshops, with the exception of Diane Drummond's use of Williams.⁴¹

The railway historian is therefore fortunate in being able to mine this deep and rich vein of material. It is worth comparing this treasure with the raw material with which social scientists have to work when researching other types of workplace. Very few autobiographies of a similar kind exist for other industries, echoing David Wilson's point above, and where they do exist they are usually found in collected reminiscences of work by historians and sociologists.⁴²

What has to be recognised, in the juxtaposition of relative richness with the paucity in other areas of work, is the fact that the accounts from the railway industry exist only because of the demand for information about the industry from below. This creates problems of quality, alluded to in the observations of Kellett and Robbins, but also has the effect of generating a fascinating and important body of literature concerned with the working lives of shopfloor employees. While acknowledging its limitations, such a body of work should be recognised, celebrated and more fully exploited by social scientists. Social scientists and railway historians, of both popular and academic persuasions, should take note of Spedding's point:

I think my main reason for writing this book is to place on record the daily life experienced in a factory (Shildon Shops) as seen from a workman's point of view and not through the eyes of someone who sees it as a collection of buildings occupied and worked by nameless robots.⁴³

Notes

- 1 J. R. Kellett, 'Writing on Victorian railways: an essay in nostalgia', *Victorian Studies* 13 (1969), p. 92.
- 2 M. Robbins, *Points and Signals: a railway historian at work* (1967), pp. 15–16.
- 3 D. Howell, 'Railway safety and labour unrest: the Aisgill railway disaster of 1913', in C. Wrigley and J. Shepherd (eds), *On the Move: essays in labour and transport history presented to Philip Bagwell* (1991), p. 130.
- 4 C. D. Wilson, *Forward! The Revolution in the Lives of the Footplatemen, 1962–96* (Far Thrupp, 1996), p. 3.
- 5 Robbins, *Points and Signals*, p. 26.
- 6 Kellett, 'Writing', p. 92.
- 7 In the British context examples of footplate grade autobiographies can be seen in A. E. Hooker, *Bert Hooker: legendary railwayman* (Sparkford, 1994); F. Mason, *Life Adventure in Steam: a Merseyside driver remembers* (Birkenhead, 1992); for examples from the signalling grade see D. A. Newbold, *Yesterday's Railwayman* (Poole, 1985), and J. Warland, *Light Relief: tales of a relief signalman in the 1950s* (Sparkford, 1992). In addition to these British publications there are international examples, including E. D. Hills, *Links: forty-six years on Queensland Railways locomotives* (Toowoomba, Qld, 1988), and R. E. Morgan, *Workers' Control on the Railroad: a practical example 'right under your nose'* (St John's, Nfld, 1994).
- 8 For examples of station staff and railway management autobiography see C. H. Hewison, *From Shedmaster to the Railway Inspectorate* (Newton Abbot, 1981); F. L. Hick, *That was my Railway: from ploughman's kid to railway boss, 1922–69* (Kettering, 1991); P. Rayner, *On and Off the Rails* (Stratford upon Avon, 1997).

- 9 P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: oral history* (second edition, Oxford, 1988), p. 125.
- 10 Several senior members of the nationalised industry have written their memoirs, including J. Elliot, *On and Off the Rails* (1982); P. Parker, *For Starters: the business of life* (1991). Trade union officials too have written accounts of their lives; see S. Weighell, *Sidney Weighell: on the rails* (1983). Despite the large number of accounts from the shop floor within the railway industry the issue of railway labour still appears to be a neglected subject, with some honourable exceptions. This absence is most marked in the popular railway magazines and journals. If it appears at all, labour figures only in articles on strike action or redundancy, and J. Simmons and G. Biddle (eds), *Oxford Companion to British Railway History* (Oxford, 1997), manage only a handful of entries on the subject.
- 11 It is not my contention that there are no examples of working-class autobiography from other industries, only that they are far rarer and that often they owe their existence to local rather than national publishers. The coal industry seems to have produced a market for slightly more ambitious publishing strategies: see H. Heslop, *Out of the old Earth* (Newcastle on Tyne, 1992); J. Robinson, *Tommy Turnbull: a miner's life* (Newcastle, 1996). Interestingly, other branches of transport have also produced contributions to the genre – which perhaps supports the argument being made here. See T. Foxtton, *Number One!* (Burton on Trent, 1991), or alternatively the recent collection of oral histories in this area, J. Stone, *Voices from the Waterways* (Far Thrupp, 1997).
- 12 A. Williams, *Life in a Railway Factory* (reprinted Far Thrupp, 1992). Williams was a minor celebrity in his day, the *Daily Mirror* calling him 'Swindon's poetic blacksmith'. His autobiographical work, first published in 1915, was compared favourably with the sociological works of Prince Kropotkin and the literature of Carlyle. In addition to the account of Williams's life in the edition cited above there is a biography of this colourful and complex character: L. Clark, *Alfred Williams: his life and work* (Newton Abbot, 1969).
- 13 K. Gibbs, *Swindon Works: apprenticeship in steam* (Poole, 1986); C. Taylor, *Life in a Loco Works: first-hand experience of a Crewe engineering apprentice in wartime* (Sparkford, 1995); N. Macmillan, *Locomotive Apprentice at the North British Locomotive Co.* (Brighton, 1992); R. Spedding, *Shildon Wagon Works: a working man's life* (Durham, 1988).
- 14 N. Wellings (ed.), *Pullman Craftsmen. Life in the Pullman Car Company's Preston Road works, Brighton, 1947–63: a view from the shop floor* (Brighton, 1992); A. Britton (ed.), *Once upon a Line: reminiscences of the Isle of Wight railways I* (Poole, 1983).
- 15 Taylor, *Life*, p. 11.
- 16 Gibbs, *Swindon Works*, p. 15.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 For a sociological account of the way in which labour is produced and reproduced within an industrial district see I. P. Roberts, *Craft, Class and Control: the sociology of a ship-building community* (Edinburgh, 1993). For a discussion around issues of occupation and extra-work influences see G. Salaman, *Community and Occupation: an exploration of work/leisure relationships* (Cambridge, 1974). Interestingly, this study compares and contrasts railway workers and architects.
- 19 For example, the academic debate over the labour process tends to stress issues of managerial control at the expense of other concerns. For a summary of this area see R. K. Brown, *Understanding Industrial Organisations: theoretical perspectives in industrial sociology* (1992), pp. 165–227.
- 20 Taylor, *Life*, p. 24.
- 21 Gibbs, *Swindon Works*, p. 66.
- 22 The influence of familial aspects of work can be found in both sociological and historical accounts – see, for example, Roberts, *Class, Craft and Control*, pp. 75–113 – talks about these issues were encountered at the point of production, and P. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: the culture of the factory in later Victorian England* (1982), provides a complex historical discussion of the way family ties overlay craft and occupational identities.
- 23 Spedding, *Shildon Wagon Works*, pp. 32–3.
- 24 Taylor, *Life*, p. 21.
- 25 Williams, *Railway Factory*, p. 19.
- 26 Accounts of the historical debate over the aristocracy of labour can be found in J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: early industrial capitalism in three English towns* (1979), and E. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: studies in the history of labour* (1986). See also R. Penn, 'Socialisation into Skilled Identities' (unpublished Labour Process conference paper, April 1986), for a detailed analysis of the way craft identities are produced and reproduced over time.

- 27 Macmillan, *Locomotive Apprentice*, p. 37.
- 28 Williams, *Railway Factory*, pp. 105–6.
- 29 Examples of where academics have tried to discuss this issue can be found in Roberts, *Class, Craft and Control*, and Penn, *Socialisation*.
- 30 Macmillan, *Locomotive Apprentice*, p. 31.
- 31 Williams, *Railway Factory*, p. 104.
- 32 Britton, *Once upon a Line*, p. 112.
- 33 Welling, *Pullman Craftsmen*, p. 13.
- 34 Gibbs's account, for instance, gives just one paragraph to nationalisation in a densely written volume of 192 pages, *Swindon Works*, p. 74. By contrast whole chapters are dedicated to the work carried out with individual machines.
- 35 P. Joyce (ed.), *The Historical Meanings of Work* (Cambridge, 1989).
- 36 Y. Gabriel, 'Organizational nostalgia: reflections on the "Golden Age"', in S. Fineman (ed.) *Emotion in Organisations* (1993), p. 119.
- 37 R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory 1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (1994), p. 4.
- 38 P. K. Edwards and C. Whitston, 'Disciplinary practice: a study of railways in Britain, 1860–1988', *Work Employment and Society* 13 (1994), pp. 317–37.
- 39 A. Vaughan, *Signalman's Morning, Signalman's Twilight* (1984).
- 40 J. Farrington, *Life on the Lines* (1984); F. McKenna, *The Railway Workers, 1840–1970* (1980); C. Groome, *The Decline and Fall of the Engine Driver* (1986); C. D. Wilson, *Forward! The Revolution in the Lives of the Footplatemen* (1996).
- 41 D. Drummond, *Crewe: Railway Town, Company and People, 1840–1914* (Aldershot, 1995).
- 42 See, for example, T. Blackwell and J. Seabrook, *Talking Work: an oral history* (1996); J. Burnett (ed.), *Useful Toil: autobiographies of working people from the 1820s to the 1920s* (1994); J. Common (ed.), *Seven Shifts* (East Ardsley, 1978); R. Fraser (ed.), *Work: Twenty Personal Accounts* (1968); R. Samuel (ed.), *Village Life and Labour* (1975); R. Samuel (ed.), *Miners, Quarrymen and Saltworkers* (1977); S. Terkel, *Working: people talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do* (New York, 1990); P. Thompson *et al.*, *Living the Fishing* (1983).
- 43 Spedding, *Shildon Wagon Works*, p. 72.

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