

# WILTSHIRE RAILWAYS

Colin G. Maggs

When 'Wiltshire' and 'railway' are mentioned most people think of the Great Western Railway (GWR) and of its works at Swindon in particular. Although the GWR and its centres were of huge significance, this is far from the whole picture. In fact the railways of Wiltshire can be divided into groups. The GWR and its associates served mainly the northern half of the county; the London & South Western Railway (LSWR) passed east to west along the southern border of Wiltshire; and the Midland & South Western Junction Railway (MSWJR) ran north to south linking the GWR and the LSWR. Finally there were a significant number of military railways and also a number of stone quarry railways in the Box and Bradford on Avon area.

Colin Maggs, the renowned expert on railway history, tells the fascinating tale of the railways and the impact they had on the lives of everyone in the county. The nostalgic branch lines with their small local trains and the main lines with their thundering expresses, are all part of a rich heritage which is explored in an expert text and in more than two hundred evocative images to present an absorbing view of Wiltshire's recent past.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin G. Maggs has published more than 70 books to date, has written countless magazine and newspaper articles and has appeared frequently on radio and television. Mr Maggs was awarded the MBE in 1993 for services to railway history and was awarded an honorary MA by the University of Bath in 1995.

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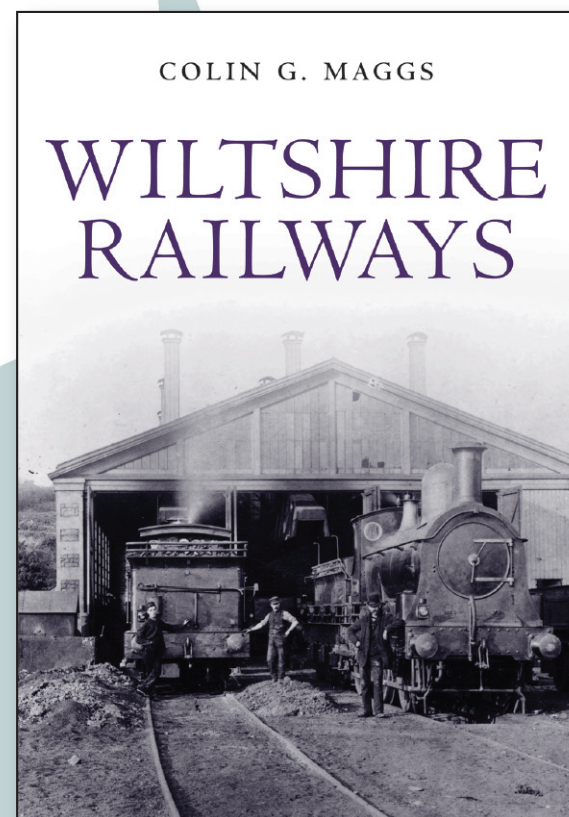
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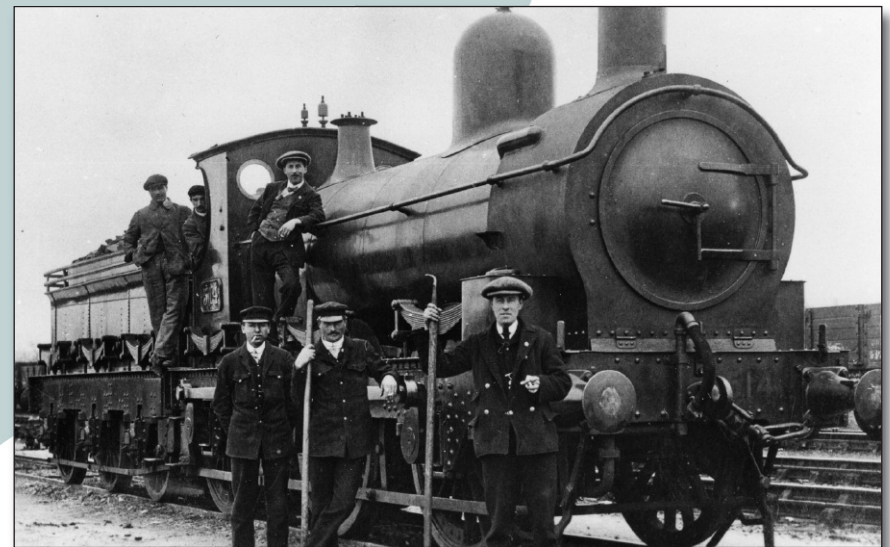
Swindon Junction view down circa 1891.



Downton, view towards Salisbury 2 May 1965. (D. Payne)



The picturesque ticket office for Wootton Rivers Halt, circa 1940. (Author's collection)



Standard Goods 0-6-0 No 514 at Codford circa 1914. (Gerald Quartley collection)

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4-6-0 No 7025 hauling Goods passes Box (Mill Lane) Halt with the down train on 2 April 1955. The platform is immediately to the right of the main line. (R. E. Toop)

Box, view up in mixed gauge days. The broad gauge 0-6-0ST is fitted with wide buffers enabling wagons of either gauge to be coupled. (Author's collection)

Beyond Box Tunnel's west portal was Box (Mill Lane) Halt opened 31 March 1930 and set much closer to the centre of the village than was Box station. A mile to the west Earleigh Down Siding served a stone quarry. In 1939 it was used for ammunition storage. Initially it was linked by an aerial ropeway but later a 2,200 yd long narrow gauge railway in a tunnel served the storage area. Beyond the siding the GWK entered Somerset.

Box, view up circa 1910. The shed for the banking engine is on the far left and cranes for loading stone are in the corner background. (Author's collection)

### 4 Branches from the Stratton Park to Box Line

#### The Highworth Branch

The Swindon & Highworth Light Railway Company's Act was passed on 21 June 1875. Shares were taken up slowly, so the directors offered the unusual incentive of two shillings and sixpence to anyone able to sell a £10 share. By February 1878 £12,000 of the £21,000 required had been subscribed. A further year passed before the company was able to find a contractor willing to take £8,500 worth of shares in part payment.

14NX class 0-4-2T No 5100 working the Highworth branch goods calls at Swindon circa 1958. The passenger platform seems generally wide. (T. J. Saunders)

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Example of a double-page spread.