

# DEVONSHIRE RAILWAYS

Colin G. Maggs

Devon's first railway was opened as long ago as 16 September 1820. This was the Haytor Tramway constructed by George Templar. Sections of the tramway are still extant and scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

The later railway map of Devon appears complicated, but is easier to comprehend when the history of the lines is understood. Basically two competing main lines thrust westwards to Plymouth – the Great Western Railway (GWR) and the London & South Western Railway (LSWR). As far as Exeter the GWR ran to the north of the LSWR, but west of that city the positions were reversed. South-east Devon, generally known as 'East Devon', was LSWR territory, South-west Devon, known as 'South Devon' was mostly GWR territory, while most of North Devon came under the LSWR's sphere. After reorganisation, the LSWR lines fell to the Southern Railway.

Partly due to its topography, Devon had an unusually large number of branch lines. Although many were closed either immediately following, or before the 1963 Beeching Report on Railways, some have reopened as preserved lines: Totnes to Buckfast; Paignton to Kingswear and the Plym Valley Railway. Much of the Seaton branch was relaid as a 2ft 9in gauge electric tramway. Some stations too have been reopened: Sidmouth Junction has opened as Feniton; Ivybridge, closed to passengers 2 March 1959, reopened 15 July 1994 as a park and ride station to reduce traffic to and from Plymouth, while Tiverton Junction moved to Tiverton Parkway to give improved road access.

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 Devon'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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