

MALCOLM ROOT'S RAILWAYS PAINTINGS REPRINT

Text by Tom Tyler

Malcolm Root is fast becoming one of Britain's most respected railway and transport artists. While his originals are much sought-after by collectors, his prints and books sell many thousands of copies to those who appreciate the artist's passion for recreating scenes as they were in the halcyon days of steam.

This book, for which Malcolm has created many original works, presents a wonderfully evocative record of the days of steam on Britain's railways, from the mighty express locomotives racing one another to the North, to the quiet byways of the railway system where aged engines potter along almost forgotten branch lines. Tom Tyler's light touch adds a perfect narrative to each scene.

Such is the detail of Malcolm's paintings that once again enthusiasts and railwaymen alike will be able to rekindle their memories of steam. But there is more than just accuracy here. Because of his understanding and love of railways, Malcolm's paintings are imbued with the very atmosphere of railway life; the bustle and roar; the smell of hot oil and steam combined, and the sound of approaching exhaust-beats on a clear calm day.

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MALCOLM ROOT

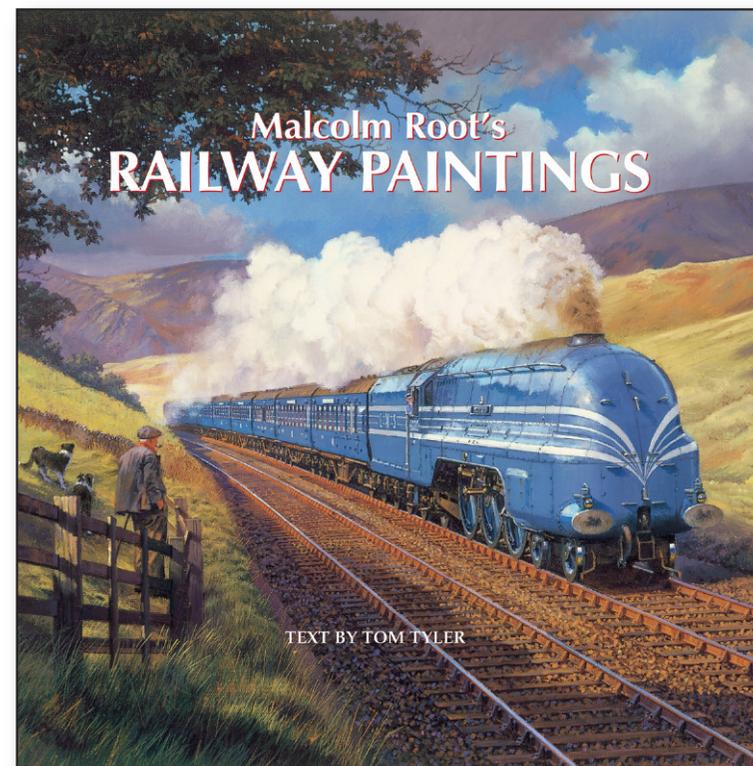
Malcolm Root was born in 1950 just in time to enjoy the last years of steam. Having been born and bred in north Essex he was always going to have a soft spot for the Great Eastern and especially the old Colne Valley Railway. On leaving school he joined the printing trade, and left to become a professional artist in 1981. During his childhood he played football on the fields adjoining the local railway. Sadly his playing days are over, and Saturday afternoons are spent watching Colchester United from the terraces. Today Malcolm's original paintings hang in many private and public collections, while also appearing on greetings cards, calendars, collectors' plates and jigsaw puzzles.

TOM TYLER

Tom Tyler was born in South Devon just before the Second World War and within earshot of the Great Western Railway expresses labouring up Dainton Bank from Totnes. Many childhood hours were spent on station platforms cadging visits to locomotive cabs, and hanging over bridges breathing in large quantities of smoke and steam. The model railway with the *Duchess of Atholl* was his favourite toy. Now in second childhood, the model railway continues, and he takes a great interest in the many preserved railways around the country, and in railway-related jigsaw puzzles.

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MALCOLM ROOT'S RAILWAY PAINTINGS

Right: *Nearing Departure*



Britannias at Ely

Right: *ivatt in the Snow*



Below: *Example of a double-page spread.*

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Foggy Arrival
Great 1916

However much we may look back to the 'good old days', and I do frequently, we have to admit that Clean Air Acts and anti-air pollution policies have made using a thing of the past. Where there was smoke in abundance, as for example at large railway stations, 1922 conditions were provided, particularly at night. Norwich, one of the finest periods of the day geographically, was connected to the rapidly expanding railway network by 1850, with lines via Ipswich to London, and across country to the west to meet the main northbound route at Peterborough. Further lines led in the next fifty years linked Norwich to Colchester and other towns in north Norfolk, making the station at Norwich Thorpe ever more important.

Station platforms were often neatly chilly and draughty places, and East Angles with their keen nose for a cold especially rare in the winter. With the onset of a foggy day, the front of a train, a smaller has been lit up at the sight of the approaching train. Few used to congregate in front of the small fire in the otherwise pretty cheerless waiting rooms, and as the train passed warmly, a comfortable seat, and with a bit of luck privacy as well. In the days when trains had compartments, the Englishmen – and women – would go to great lengths to secure a compartment and hold it against all comers. Luggage could be scattered on all the seats, and the blinds immediately pulled down. There was then only the door out to the corridor to be guarded – if the train had a corridor. Jan Fryer in *The Forty Hours* gives a lovely account of two children inventing a secret, horrible and wildly infectious illness to fill first compartment of an unreserved railway carriage. Having secured the coach against breakers, the children could sink back into those old padded seats – it was household news! It – it was household news! It – and try to generate the maximum fog until their destination was reached.

The Great Eastern Railway's Class Hamilton class of 4-6-0 locomotives were designed by James Holden and first introduced in 1918. They were intended for express passenger work, and in all over 100 were built. The class took its name from the original engine number 1920 which bore the name *Class Hamilton* after the chairman of the GER. Considered one of the most handsome designs, later rebuilt in the 1930s and did not replace their good looks, and the last one was scrapped in 1960, with sadly none surviving in preservation.

At the sight this scene appears relatively straightforward to paint, as there is little or no detail in much of the picture. However, it is to be shown in not including too much detail, for to do so would lessen the impact of the painting. It is however, said to include some features – in this case a rather long and single of spring elements to get the necessary depth, and to show the thickness of the fog. In the distance strategically placed lights highlight the locomotive front and add a welcome reflection to the rails.

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Norfolk Charabanc



Hepworth Hall Bridge