

LAST DAYS OF STEAM NORTHERN & EASTERN

Tony Butcher

In the 1950s a magnificent array of steam locomotives still operated on the lines that criss-crossed the North and East of Britain. However, in 1955 the Modernisation Plan was issued that showed that steam traction was doomed. By 1960/61 the Beeching Report was starting to have a major effect on the steam fleet and some major and well-liked classes disappeared entirely. All the Princess Royals were withdrawn by the end of 1962 and the Duchesses were eliminated south of Crewe by 1963. All of the 440s were gone by the end of 1962 and many well before that date.

Tony Butcher was fascinated by railways from a young age. His first reasonable camera was a Kodak which allowed him to take action shots in 1956. From that he graduated to a square bellows camera with a 500 shutter in 1957 and a 35mm camera in 1961. With this equipment, Tony amassed a priceless collection of images, recording the last, glorious days of steam, notably in the Northern and Eastern Regions which are the focus of this book.

Chasing Society Steam specials, which were often aimed at using last in class engines, as well as traversing colliery and ore lines and routes either freight-only or about to be totally closed, Tony Butcher's black and white images portray the poetry and the power of these living machines. From 1962 his colour images add a sometimes startling depth and immediacy to his collection, especially in the very last days of British Steam from 1965-1968.

Together, these classic examples from Tony Butcher's peerless picture archive, offer a nostalgic yet stunning view of the Indian summer of steam traction between 1956 and 1968, in what are some of the most fascinating Regions in Britain.

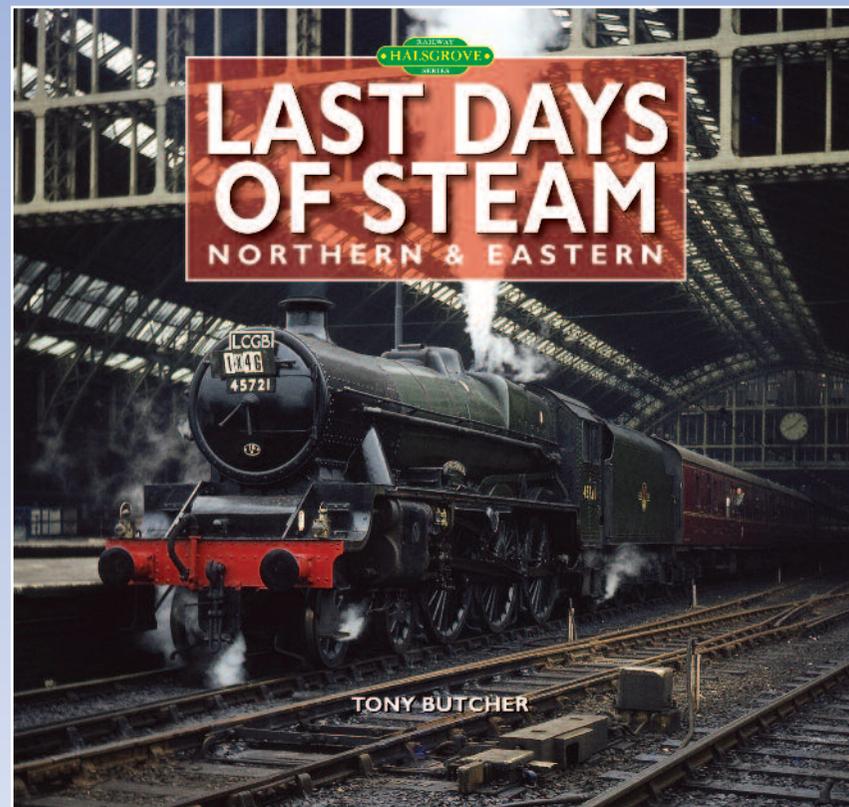
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tony Butcher's interest in railways and steam was reawakened at the age of seventeen by a visit of a younger cousin who wanted to go and see steam at Clapham Junction. From then on, throughout his life he has photographed railways in action. Following an Engineering degree and marriage, from mid 1961 onwards with his own car he travelled all over the country in search of steam. This interest has continued to this day. Tony Butcher photographed preserved steam on BR lines in the 1980s, but since the start of the '90s he has concentrated on photographic charters on the preserved railway lines, now well into the fully digital era.

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The Caledonian 2F "Jumbo" No.57375 runs through a gated crossing on the way down the line to Whithorn.

Below: BR Class 5 No.73077 again makes a spirited departure from Fort William Station on the shores of Loch Linnhe with the 5.10p.m. to Glasgow on another dull wet day.



Above: "Flying Scotsman" No.4472 in preserved LNER apple green livery, now in its original appearance with single chimney and no smoke deflectors at the coal tower at Cricklewood Shed.

Left: A very smart looking Stanier 2-6-4 tank No.42105 waits at Swanbourne.

Below: The Super G2A No.48930 pulls out of Buckingham Station with the SBLC "Banburian".



At Pacific No.51108 "St. Ralph Woodroffe" speeds down from Hadley Wood. Taken on 12 April 1957. Note the curved roof track, being rebuilt to take three tracks to the Glasgow. The blue line has only now been a loading bay.

Opposite: In the same direction No.48930 "Quiddehwa" leaves under the bridge at Wood Green Station with only a few miles to go to Strath Green.



Example of a double-page spread.