

RAILWAYS ROUND THE CHILTERN

Rudi Newman

The counties of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, encircling the Chiltern Hills, have long played a major part in national history. A key element has been transportation, both through traversing these hills and its position around north London – a gateway to the Capital. Featuring roads, waterways and even aircraft companies, it was another form that particularly stood out: the railways.

From 1838 to 1925 some 45 networked lines were built across this region by 35 individual companies. Each has its own history reflecting elements of rail development. The first were in days when railways were still a new technology, something to be feared. As their success and profitability became clear this turned to enthusiasm – exemplified by the three great 'Railway Manias'. Some lines built were indeed necessary, but others stemmed from rampant competition or civic pride with settlements clamouring for a station. Remarkably, only one third of all proposals were actually built – potentially worsening what was already a convoluted tangle of lines.

The Chilterns has a lengthy history, its railways playing an important role in that local chronology. This profusely illustrated book presents every railway in the area that was part of the national network – some large and nationally important, others small and scarcely remembered. Whether running to this day or just a distant memory, they helped make the Chilterns what it is today, and tell of the railways' role in the transformation of Britain.

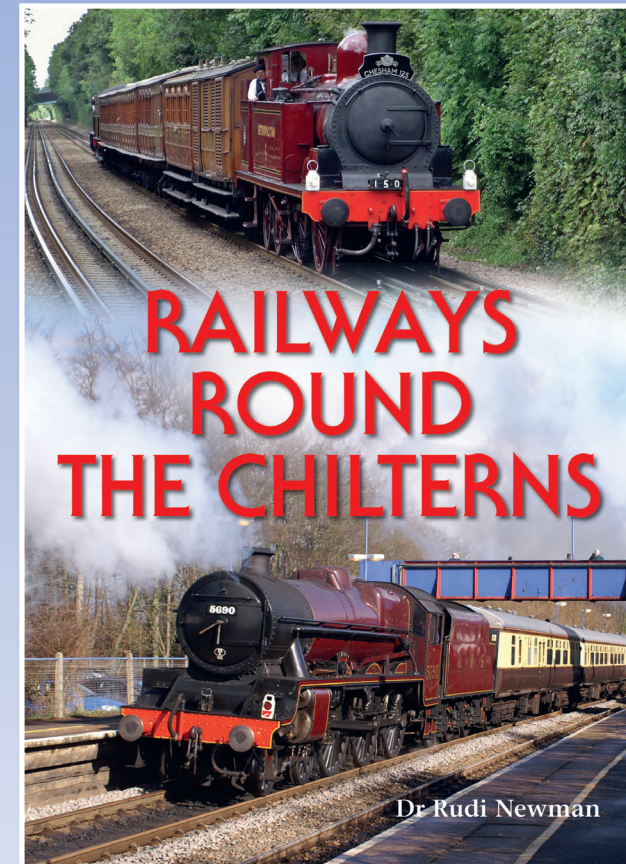
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Rudi Newman has a long-standing passion for all things historical, particularly in his specialist field of transportation. Having previously researched various maritime themes, his PhD centred on Victorian railways and their early impacts. A collector of transportation ephemera supporting his historical research, he has assisted with museums and exhibitions on a range of related subject matters and has presented numerous lectures and articles on transportation themes. He has also acted as a media advisor and been featured in numerous documentaries and interviews in Britain and across Europe.

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