

## Luke Howard on Early Travel by Rail

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My dear Sister,

I think I have not written thee a letter since the time of thy leaving home for the coast, and now I conclude this will find thee returned home : we are however in possession of information sent us at different times of thy stay out which has been acceptable. I have been rather more from home than usual, myself, having accompanied our friend Elisha Bates, first to Sheffield about a month since, of which I believe thou hast been informed. Then, after his being confined with us a few days by indisposition, to Dewsbury, Halifax, Brighouse and Highflatts : from the latter hospitable mansion we went accompanied by our kind host John Firth, over the mountain pass by Peniston to Manchester, lodged at Isaac Crewdson's. The next day (First day 15th) a large public meeting after the usual large meeting with Friends in the Forenoon. Lodged again at I. C's and on Second day was induced to try the Steam Conveyance (of which I had not a very favourable opinion) in company with my friend E. Bates and our guide D. Docwra, to Liverpool. We left Manchester at the usual afternoon hour—Two, arrived at Liverpool 30 miles by Half past Three, took Coffee with Isaac Hadwen and family, were in the Carriage again and in motion for return (leaving E.B. at Isaac Hadwen's) by a few minutes after five and reached Manchester again by half past six. I was quite satisfied by this trial, of the stability and comfort of the new conveyance, in which we went (as I found by the watch) mostly 20 miles an hour—sometimes faster, sometimes slower—not at all incommoded by smoke or other circumstances, as the too rapid passage of objects across the sight, of which I had entertained some apprehension. The latter might, I think make some giddy. When we come near a wall, for instance, there is the strangest flying out (if I may so speak) of the lines of the courses, in rapid perspective, as if the parts were really separating from each other ; and objects near the road, such as the walls of a cottage, or the fences of a small enclosure seem to dance in a circle—but the smoke I had dreaded was found to be no more than a cloud of steam which I thought added at times to the rain that was falling part of the way.

We had in our train—1. The engine. 2. Six of their treble bodied coaches carrying 18 passengers each 3. The mail coach. 4. Three private Carriages with their passengers set each upon a heavy carriage adapted to the Railway, all full—so that when we come to a pretty long ascent, there was sent after us an Engine to *push behind up the hill*, the impulse of which we sensibly felt at the moment it came up and joined our enormous mass by mere contact at certain points fitted for the junction.

The only thing that at all startled was the passing by of the first train we met—the apparent motion being 40 miles per hour and the passage very close. People must sit still and trust to their conductors, and then,

I believe, are safer in these vehicles than on the common highway, if crowded or in a laden coach. The motion is peculiar, a swing from side to side but within very short limits, and the whole train, when one looks out, is seen quivering and darting along like a great serpent. . . .

Thy affectionate brother,

LUKE HOWARD.

Ackworth, 3. x. 1833.

Addressed : Elizabeth Howard, Bruce Grove, Tottenham, near London.

#### NOTE

There appears to have been only one class—each compartment holding six passengers.

Early in the history of railways an Act was passed obliging them to send one train each day carrying third class passengers for 1d. a mile. This was known as the "Parliamentary Train" and stopped at all Stations.

The mention of "private carriages with their passengers—set each upon a heavy carriage" recalls the fact that for many years some persons preferred to sit in their own carriages paying second class fare in addition to the charge for conveyance of the carriages.

The Villa,

23 Sept. 1842.

My dear Sister,

I lose no time in replying to thy acceptable letter of the 19th in order to communicate our own news in return.

Last evening we had the pleasure of receiving my Son John and family, eleven in all—for whom we sent to the Station at Cudworth, our own carriage, a hired coach from Pontefract, and a cart for the luggage, all well occupied with the return freight—all through Divine providence in good health. How things are altered in this respect! When a boy, my journeys to and from Burford, 70 miles, occupied a night and great part of a day, in a crowded see-saw coach; or what was not much better, a long Postchaise day's travel—and such were the effects on head and stomach, that the next scarcely sufficient for recovery. I daresay my brother will remember his share of the suffering, and the noise, delays and other disagreeables of the ride, as well as myself. Now, after 200 miles of ground run over in 12 hours from door to door, the little things frisk and jump about as if they had come in from an airing—and all at less than half the cost!

Thy affte. brother,

LUKE HOWARD.

#### NOTE

The journey was then made by L. & N.W.R. from London to Sheffield or some other Station where it joined to Midland Railway—landing the party at Cudworth—a good many miles from Ackworth. When the G.N.R.

was opened some years later, there was a Station at Pontefract (3 miles off) and, later a line passed through Ackworth itself.

The journey from Tottenham (whence the party started) to Ackworth would now take under 6½ hours.

From the MSS. in the possession of Elizabeth Fox Howard, 1933.

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In 1840 Sarah Atkinson of Bristol travelled by train to Bath. She wrote of it: "I do not prefer it to coach travelling. When the line is open to the country, you are not aware of the speed at which you are travelling, but when there are high banks on each side of the line it is very painful to the head and eyes; were I to travel far by railroad I should be obliged to refrain from looking out of the windows."

From the *Families of Atkinson and Dearman*, by Harold W. Atkinson, 1933, p. 24.

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## Moone of Woodplumpton

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"The second chapter of Dilworth Abbatt's valuable survey of Quakerism in parts of Lancashire—*Quaker Annals of Preston and the Fylde, 1653-1900*,<sup>1</sup> deals with "The Moone Family of Woodplumpton." John Moone, son of parents who joined Friends about 1653, was born about 1620 at Woodplumpton. He became a prominent Friend, travelled to the south and took part in a controversy at Leominster and attended the Fox—Fell wedding at Bristol. He died at his home, Carr House, near Garstang, Lancs. in 1689.

Joseph Smith has five items under John Moone in his "Catalogue," but his description was probably in error. It was a nephew, John Moone, who lived at Bristol and emigrated to America. The elder John had also a nephew Paul Moone, of Bristol, currier, a prominent Friend.

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## Latin Class at Ackworth

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"The boys who have been but a short time in the Latin Class have a fair acquaintance with the rudiments of the language.

"The Boys who have been in the Class for a longer period exhibit a fair progress, and construe in the Delectus with considerable facility.

"The highest class is reduced to one boy & he was examined along with the junior Apprentices; their reading in Caesar and Virgil was satisfactory to the Committee.

"On behalf of the Examining Committee

8 mo. 29, 1844.

"JOHN BRIGHT."

*From the Martha Spriggs Collection.*

<sup>1</sup> London: Headley, pp. 168, sixteen illustrations. 7s. 6d. net.