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Full Steam Ahead: How The Railways Made Britain



Synopsis

The Age of Railways was an era of extraordinary change which utterly transformed every aspect of British life - from trade and transportation to health and recreation. Full Steam Ahead reveals how the world we live in today was entirely shaped by the rail network, charting the glorious evolution of rail transportation and how it left its mark on every aspect of life, landscape and culture. Peter Ginn and Ruth Goodman brilliantly bring this revolution to life in their trademark style, which engages and captivates. They explore the everyday lives and the intangible ephemeral history that makes up the stories of the people who built, worked and were affected by the railways. From the very first steam railways to the infrastructure that is still used in part today, they look at the men, women and children who lived and sometimes died constructing Britain's railway heritage. Immersing themselves in the story of how the railways made us what we are today, the authors uncover compelling social history along the way, exploring the railway's impact on everything from food and medicine to warfare and the class system. They tell the stories of the historic characters whose lives were changed by this radical mode of transport, describing the wider social history and geography of each particular region of Britain. As they trace the emergence of the Industrial Revolution across the country, the authors discover a hidden layer of social history, using rail transportation as a backdrop to reveal Britain's radical change in social attitudes and culture across the 19th and early 20th centuries, including the rise of the working class, women's rights, industrial growth, economic decline, warfare and the birth of the great British holiday. Full Steam Ahead is a passionate, charming and insightful look at Britain through the lens of one of its most momentous eras.

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