

The Last Road North.

Announcer.

The last road north. The story of the building of the Settle Carlisle Railway, told with music and song.

0.15. Engine sound for 15 seconds then mix in music.

Song.

0.30. Song; The Last Road North. After 30 seconds fade engine sound to verse.

0.25. One verse only. 25 SECONDS.

0.10. After further 10 seconds fade music to narrator.

Narrator.

By the eighteen sixties, the Midland Railway had become one of the giants among the railway companies. Due to some shrewd takeovers, and well negotiated leases, the Midland rolling stock was rattling merrily through England. Their carriages could be seen in London, Bristol, and serving the booming industries of the North.

Music.

(Mix to music. 5 seconds.)

Narrator

All this from such small beginnings and in less than forty years.

0.25.

Song.

1.10. Song; The Bold Midland Men.

Fade to narrator.

Narrator.

Yet though the Midland did control such a large volume of traffic, it did not have direct access to Scotland. Commercial rivals controlled the lines in the East and West, and though

To sheet two.....

though/

Narrator (Contd.)

trading agreements did exist, the Midland felt that it was getting a raw deal. Fresh negotiations with their rivals failed miserably, and much time was lost in political manoeuvrings. But the solution when it came was remarkably simple. The Midland reached an agreement with the proposed North of England Union Railway who had introduced a Bill in Parliament to build a line from Settle to Hawes. The Midland modified the Bill and re-introduced it as a Proposal to build a line from Settle to Carlisle with a branch to Hawes. In 1866 the Bill was passed, and the Midland were ready to move.

0.55.

Song.

0.35.

Song; The Bold Midland Men. Last verse.
Fade to narrator.

Narrator.

The Midland planning offices were soon feverishly busy. Their chief engineer, John Crossley, agreed to postpone his retirement and see the new line through to completion. Edward Ellis, the Midland chairman, was determined to get the project started as soon as possible, but in spite of a good head of steam, the Midland Railway still had problems. Their policy of rapid expansion had been a huge drain on their resources,

To sheet three.....

resources, /

Narrator (Contd.)

and the board of directors were under constant pressure to reduce expenditure. So when the London North Western Railway, who controlled the existing route over Shap Fell, suggested new talks, the Midland gladly accepted. Though long drawn out, the talks progressed very well indeed. The London North Western were prepared to make concessions to avoid a new competitive line, and for a time it appeared as if the high Fells between Settle and Carlisle would remain undisturbed. But the proposal for abandonment (Mix in music. Philimiooreay.)

Music.

was rejected by Parliament, leaving the Midland with no alternative but to build the new line. In November 1869, just North of Settle, the first sod was cut and the advance guard of engineers and navvies began to arrive.

1.05.

Song.

3.25.

Song; Philimiooreay.

0.15.

At end of song, continue music for 15 seconds, cut to narrator.

Narrator.

The new line was to run for seventy two miles through some of the wildest and most remote country in England. Making clever use of the valleys and dales of the Pennines, the route was never to be far from rivers or streams. From Settle it was

To Run North.

To sheet four.

north/

Narrator(Contd.)

through the dale to Ribbleshead, passing the mountains of Pennyghent to the east, and with Ingleboro and Whernside to the west. From Ribbleshead, over and through the moors to Dent Head, Garsdale, and so to the highest point of the line as Ais Gill, 1169 feet above sea level. Skirting Wild Boar Fell, the route went on past Kirkby Stephen, to the rich fertile valleys of Westmorland around Appleby, and so finally through Cumberland to Carlisle. The seventy two miles had been divided into four sections, and each contracted out. Contract number one was for Settle Junction to Dent Head. Number two from Dent Head to Smardale. Number three from Smardale to Crowdundle, with ^{Contract} number four taking in the last stretch to Patteril Bridge, ~~near~~ Carlisle. This called for a ^{overall} total labour force of over five thousand men, six hundred horses, ~~and~~ five locomotives, and thirty steam engines. The (Mix in music of Drill ye Tarriers Drill) work to be completed within four years at ~~an~~ ^{an} estimated cost of two and a quarter million pounds. Early in 1870, work was started on the viaduct at Ribbleshead, and men started to tunnel through Blea Moor.

Music.

Narrator(Contd.)

1.15

Song:

3.00:

Song; Drill ye Tarriers Drill.

To sheet five.....

Drill./

Song (Contd.)

Narrator.

Fade last chorus to narrator.

As the work gathered momentum, men tramped to the workings from all over the country. The navvies in their distinctive clothing of moleskin breeks, canvas shirts, velveteen coats and hobnail boots. These were the men who did the hardest and most dangerous jobs and were proud of it. Navvies from Lancashire and Yorkshire, the Irish and the Scots, stone masons from Wales, all hoping to earn up to ten shillings a day on the new line. The men who worked hard, lived hard and died very young.

0.30

Song.

0.10.

Song; I'm a Navvy. Voice only, no music. One verse.

Narrator.

Carrying their possessions, and with their women and children in tow, they tramped into Settle, Dent, Kirkby Stephen and Appley. Known by their nicknames of Gypsy Joe, One eyed Pete, Knobby Jack, the rural areas had never seen anything like them. They soon overflowed the little market towns, and set up their own shanty towns. All had names, Salt Lake City, Belgravia, Battle Barrow Bank, and Sebastopol - so named after the part the navvies had played in assisting the British Army in the Crimea. Batty Green was the largest town, sited near to

To sheet six.....

to/

Narrator (Contd.)

Ribblehead, and was well provided with amenities. It was far superior to the shanty towns of the past. Boasting a hospital, library, mission house, day and Sunday school, it also had the inevitable grog and Tommy shops, striving

Background sound.

(Mix in sound of men shouting and singing) to satisfy the insatiable appetites of the navvies, whose daily consumption was ^{at least} a gallon of ale and two pounds of beef.

Music

(Mix music to background sound)

For six days a week the navvies worked hard and long, often up to sixteen hours a day, but on Saturday nights the townships would explode with drunken, fighting men.

1.10.

Song;

Song: Champions of the Moor.

Fade to narrator.

Narrator.

The drinking bouts could last several days until the money ran out, and only then would men

0.10

stagger back to their jobs.

Song;

0.10.

Song: I'm a Navvy. Second verse only. Voice only.

Narrator

Background sound.

Silence for approximately 3 seconds, then sound of explosion.

Narrator.

While men tunelled through mountains using dynamite at £200.0.0 per ton, other gangs were encountering the difficulties of building a

a/

Narrator(Contd.)

railway through such inhospitable country. Clay, hard as rock one day and needing blasting, would turn into a thick sticky soup after just a few hours of rain. The tearing winds halted work on the viaducts. In winter, deep snow filled the half completed cuttings, making work impossible. Bog carts were designed to traverse the swampy areas near Ribbleshead, and often the horses sank up to their necks in mud.

Background sound.

(Mix in sound of wind and weather)

North of Dent at Dandry Mire, the plans called for an embankment, and in two years over a quarter of a million cubic yards of earth were tipped into the bog; the embankment failed to advance one yard, and in the end they had to build a viaduct.

(Fade out background sound)

In Cumberland, it was another world to that of the high fells, and work progressed steadily on contract number four, but the southern contractors faced endless delays.

Music

(Mix in music of Philamiooreay played slowly)

Narrator(Contd.)

Men drifted away for easier jobs in more hospitable areas. Accidents were numerous. The navvies were brave but foolhardy. Cave - ins were common. Men were drowned, crushed, and suffocated. In 1871 the dreaded smallpox was detected in the shanty

shanty/

Narrator (Contd.)

towns, but never reached epidemic proportions due to prompt medical attention. At Rise Hill, on a September day in 1873, a tramway wagon careered downhill out of control, beheaded a drunk asleep

Background sound.

(Fade music to background sound of slow moving horse and cart.)

on the line, and crashed, killing two women occupants. A navvy at Batty Green doubled as the town's undertaker, carrying the dead to the small church at Chapel le Dale; the little graveyard was

1.35. soon full.

Song.

0.10. Song; I'm a navvy. Last verse, voice only. Cut sound of horse and cart at end of song.

Narrator.

While the navvies went out to work and sometimes to die as they struggled with the railway's birth throes, their women worked and lived their lives away in the shanty towns. Some were married, some were not. The navvies had their own traditions and even had a marriage ceremony. If a woman lost her husband due to accident, then the navvies would take up a collection on her behalf. The money wouldn't last long, and if she had no friends or relatives near by, then she would have to get herself

0.30. another husband merely to survive.

Song.

3.00. Song; Alice White.
Cut to narrator.

narrator./

Narrator (Contd.)

As the work continued and the years passed, to the ever growing grumblings of the Midland shareholders, the line slowly took shape. By 1873 many of the smaller viaducts and tunnels had been completed. It had been obvious for some time however, that the original estimates of costs and duration had been totally inaccurate. Not until 1875 were the major works completed, and Blea Moor Tunnel alone had cost £45.0.0 per yard by that time. Early in 1875 some sections in the North and South were being used for local traffic, and in April of that year the directors went to see the newly completed line for themselves. In 1875 too, John Crossley was pleased to inform them, that a goods service had been inaugurated on the 2nd of August, though there was still a section of single line traffic near to Ais Gill. On the first of May, 1876, the line

Background sound.

(Lix engine sound in background.)

was finally declared open for passenger trains. It would take another two years for the branch line to Hawes to be completed, but the Midland directors gave a hearty sigh of relief, for the costs had soared to just under three and a half million pounds.

to sheet ten

pounds./

Narrator (Contd.)

The navvies packed their gear and tramped away to look for their next job. They left their dead in the churchyards at Settle, Chapel le Dale, Dent, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby. Their deserted shanty towns ~~were~~ soon disappeared without trace. But after six and a half years of backbreaking labour, (Mix music of the song Last Road North, to background engine sound.)

Music.

their monument was a railway line, which was almost the last to be built by men and muscle alone. An iron road with a maximum gradient of one in a hundred, snaking through cuttings and tunnels, rising over embankments and viaducts, just over seventy two miles long.

1.30.

The last road North was finished.

Song.

0.25.

Song: The Last Road North, final verse.

Continue mixed sounds for further 15 seconds, then fade to credits.