



A Life on the Lines: The Grand Old Man of Steam

R H N Hardy

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During much of his early career, from 1944 through to the early 1960s, Richard Hardy took hundreds of pictures of life on the railways and the men he knew and worked with on a daily basis, using his trusty Brownie 620 box camera. These unique behind the scenes images form a fascinating and hugely evocative portrayal of Britain at the height of the era of steam, during the time of the 'Big Four', and after 1947 when the sprawling nationalised network known as British Railways came of age.

The second edition contains many new unseen photos which capture the railways in wartime, providing a valuable social record of the nation at war. In addition there is a sequence of rare photographs of French engines, railways and railwaymen, offering a superb contrast to the British rail network (it quickly becomes evident that the British rail system ran on tea, whereas the French system ran on wine). Great characters are the unifying theme of the pictures, and they include famous figures associated with the railways, such as the poet John Betjeman.

This wonderfully illustrated book sets Richard's personal photographs and text alongside a carefully collated selection of ephemera, artworks and photographs drawn from the National Railway Museum in York. Collectively these images and artefacts tell the stories of the great brotherhood of railwaymen, brilliantly evoking the speed, heat and dust of the footplate.

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