



Railway children? Not everyone uses trains today, yet we all live in a world transformed economically and socially by the railways. The physical legacy of the railway age is all around us, now familiar enough to be overlooked or framed as nostalgia. Yet if we imagine Lincolnshire before the railways, it is still possible to recapture something of the heady mix of excitement and fear that accompanied the arrival of the first steam locomotives and the unprecedented opportunities they brought for fast travel and new destinations.

FACING PAGE: **bus stop ladies by The Station Inn, Habrough**

RIGHT: **former Rippingale station and present owner.** The station dates to 1879 but became redundant with the closure of the Sleaford to Bourne line to freight in 1965. The building has been lovingly restored by a Lincolnshire railway enthusiast and is now a private residence. The present owner, Marc Maitland, is strongly committed to maintaining the character and railway heritage of the site.



Lincoln to Grimsby opened in 1848, followed by Gainsborough to Grimsby in 1849. The MSLR also built new docks at Grimsby in 1852, though the town's rapid Victorian growth was probably due as much to the expanded market for fish that the railways created (*Bennett & Bennett, 2001). The MSLR added new lines to serve industrial and urban development at Scunthorpe and Immingham, as well as to Cleethorpes where it invested heavily in the town as a holiday resort. The Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway of the 1890s was a late example of a coal-focused railway, though the planned continuation east of Lincoln to a new coal port at Sutton-on-Sea never materialised.

Two joint lines developed in Lincolnshire following attempts by other rail companies to expand into the county – the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway from Bourne to Sutton Bridge, connecting to King's Lynn, and the Great Northern & Great Eastern Joint Railway from Doncaster to March via Lincoln, Sleaford and Spalding. Many branch lines were built by local companies and subsequently taken over by the two main companies.

One late railway outside the two big players was the Isle of Axholme Light Railway, built in 1902 - 08. This was important in transporting the produce of the area's peat industry and farming, particularly celery (Stennett, 2016).