
Synopsis

Anticipates the benefits the railway will bring and makes reference to the objections to its building

Themes:

Impact on rural life;
Tourism
Competition between railway companies
Anticipated economic benefits
The telegraph.

Text

Oh! After years of toil and care
With money wasted here and there
In seventy-three we did prepare
To get the Denholme railway
Great opposition did arise
And Corporations found supplies
Money and council, which surprised
The men who won the railway

Chorus: Cheering, steaming, puffing along
 Trains well filled with old and young
 Joining in a chorus long
 Upon the Denholme railway

When the telegraph news it came
The old and young with joy was seen
Our band did play, the bells did ring
For winning the Denholme railway
The church bells rung a merry peal
Which did our bygone trouble heal
We did not then our joys conceal
For we had got the railway

When our new line is made we'll see
This village in prosperity
Upon that point all did agree
That worked for Denholme railway
E. Foster and J. Knowles did go
With other gentlemen to show
They wanted traffic to and fro
Upon the Denholme railway

Our local wants will be supplied
From market towns both near and wide
All kinds of goods will be supplied
To come by Denholme railway
Then good potatoes they'll roll in
From Morcombe fresh fish they'll bring
Salmon turbot Haddock or Ling
Upon the Denholme railway

Grand Cheshire cheese from farmer's stocks
Belfast eggs – in many a box
Will much improve our humble cots
Success to Denholme railway
The fruit of those who daily toil
Now fathoms down beneath the soil
Will come by rail our pots to boil
Upon the Denholme railway

Our large hotels of course will be
Houses of call for the gentry
Who come our moorlands for to see
Upon the Denholme railway
Cabs will drive both to and fro
The station, which will be below
For travellers our shops we'll stow
Who come upon the railway.

All friends around excuse my song
Which you may think is far too long
But facts I had to dwell upon
About our Denholme railway
In chorus all now join with me
Wishing health and prosperity
To the gentlemen who did agree
To lay the Denholm railway

Glossary:

Source of Text: Bodleian Library, *allegro* Catalogue of Ballads; Firth c.26(271)

Music. To the tune of '*When we went out a shooting*'

Source of Music: Tune not found

Date: 1873-1884

The text suggests that the song was written after the Halifax Thornton & Keighley Railway act was passed on 5th August 1873 but before the line opened to Keighley goods depot on 1st April 1884.

Printer: Not known

Where Printed: Not known

Author : Smyth, John

Notes on the song and Its Historical Background

The Halifax Thornton & Keighley Railway act was passed on 5th August 1873. Passenger services ran between Bradford and Thornton from October 1878. A single track goods line opened as far as Denholme in 1882. The first passengers were carried in January 1884. The Line opened to Keighley goods depot on 1st April 1884. A station opened at Wilsden on 1st July 1886.

ref : <http://www.lostrailwayswestyorkshire.co.uk/Queensbury%20Keighley.htm>

Although the song is entitled the *Halifax, Thornton and Keighley Railway* it consistently refers to the line as the "Denholme railway". Given that the song is looking forward to the arrival of the line, it may be that the song comes from the area between Denholme and Keighley, the last section of the line to be built.

The "*Great opposition*" mentioned in the first verse is probably a reference to the petitions of the Midland Railway Co., the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Co., and the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway Co against the Bill. The opposition of pre-existing railways is typical of the period. By the time that the Halifax Thornton & Keighley was approved, the most profitable lines had already been built and railway companies were competing aggressively for the remaining business.

In the 6th verse, the author expresses confidence that the line would be used by tourists ("*Our large hotels of course will be / Houses of call for the gentry / Who come our moorlands for to see / Upon the Denholme railway*"). His confidence may have been boosted by the use of the nearby Keighley and Worth Valley railway (opened in 1867) by literary tourists visiting the home of the Bronte sisters. ref http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keighley_and_Worth_Valley_Railway