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Book Review – Making Tracks

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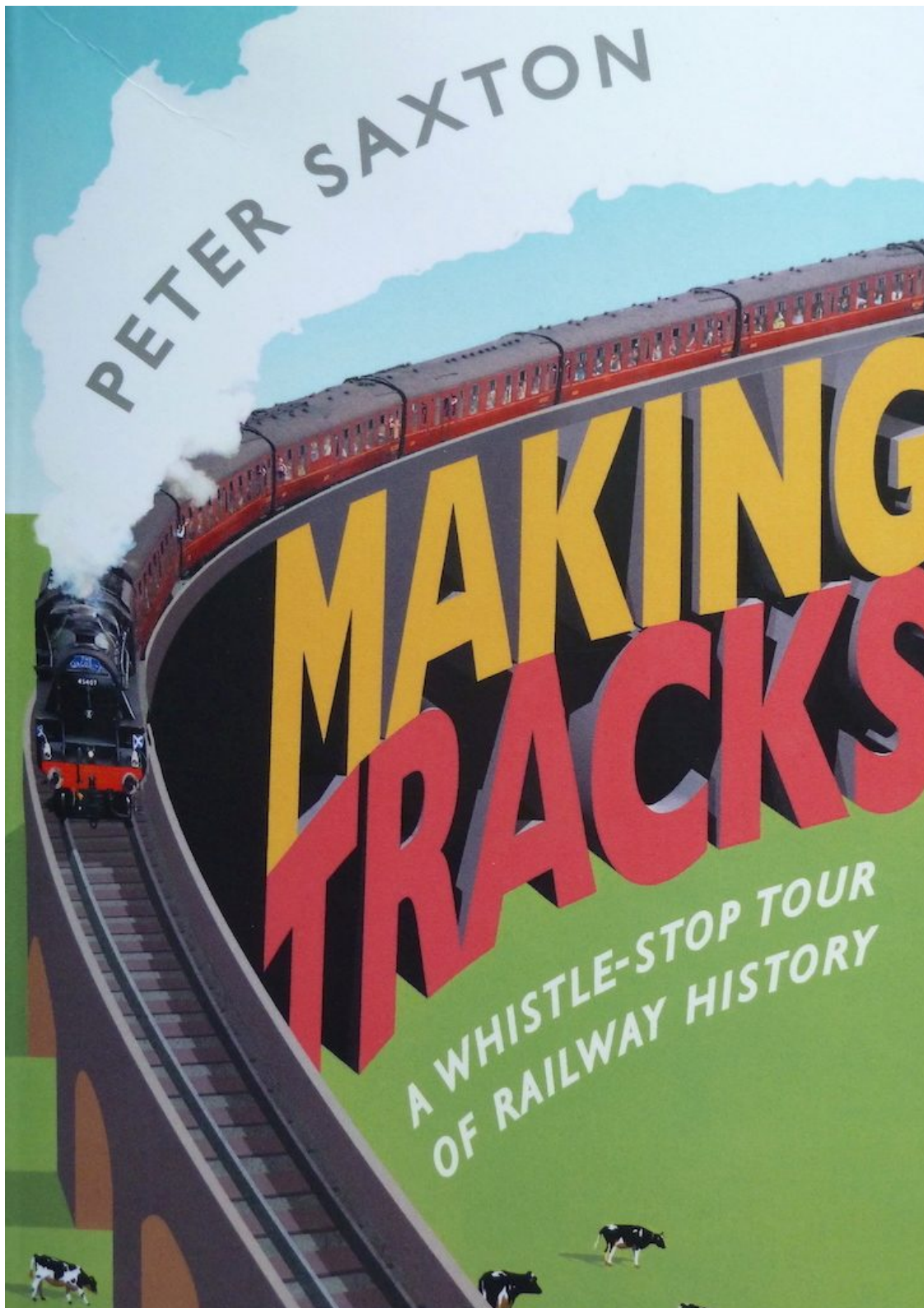
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Book Review



- Making Tracks - A whistle-stop tour of railway history.

Reviewed by Kim Henson.

Title: Making Tracks - A whistle-stop tour of railway history

Author: Peter Saxton

Published by: Michael O'Mara Books Limited

192 pages; softback

Price (UK): £7.99 for printed version

ISBN: 978-1-78243-768-0 in paperback format; 978-1-78243-332-3 in e-book format

Of course Wheels-Alive is primarily a motoring magazine website, but I know very well that many of our readers are also interested in other forms of wheeled transport, including motorcycles, bicycles and trains (as well as, for example, aeroplanes and boats!). Therefore occasionally on this website I deliberately include articles about other modes of transport...

I too am interested in trains, having had a fascination for steam locomotives for as long as I can remember. I was therefore looking forward to reading this book, which is a compact volume but within its pages it packs a huge amount of information about trains and railways.

It starts by covering the history of railways and how and why they developed, including, for example, the short-lived but amazing 'atmospheric' railway system of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and many other engineering/railway building feats that astonished the world in the 19th Century (and have done ever since!). Included too is information on how the various railway companies/operators evolved in Britain.

The book then takes the reader through railway developments over the decades and how



the systems have varied in different parts of the world.

Underground systems are covered too, in addition to which there are enticing chapters on, for example, 'Tunnelling and Climbing', plus 'Art and Culture' and the part played by railways.

There's also a look at the speeds of trains over the years (including the record-breaking British steam locos of years gone by), and the author writes too about people and animals who have been important in the history and development of railways, locomotives and trains.

Railways are a captivating hobby for many people, and this aspect is covered too.

Although a compact volume, within it there's a huge amount of information that I found interesting, and much that I had been unaware of.

Without wishing to spoil things for anyone reading this book, one quote from within it, and that I particularly like, reads as follows, and the wording is taken from a railway sign seen in Agra, India, during the 1990s: "The time indicated on the timetable is not the time at which the train will leave; it is the time before which the train will definitely not leave".

VERDICT

I read this terrific little book from cover to cover, and during that time was reluctant to put it down! A well-written, highly readable and informative publication.

Well worth reading; good value too at £7.99.