



Tiny Stations: An Uncommon Odyssey Around Britain's Railway Request Stops

Dixe Wills

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An eccentric look at lost Britain through 40 of its most intriguing railway request stops, each with its own fact-is-stranger-than-fiction story

Perhaps the oddest quirk of Britain's railway network is also one of its least well known: around 150 of the nation's stations are request stops. Take an unassuming station like Shippea Hill in Cambridgeshire—the scene of a fatal accident involving thousands of carrots. Or Talsarnau in Wales, which experienced a tsunami. This is the story of the author's journey from the far west of Cornwall to the far north of Scotland, visiting around 40 of the most interesting of these little used and ill-regarded stations. Often a pen-stroke away from closure—kept alive by political expediency, labyrinthine bureaucracy, or sheer luck—these half-abandoned stops afford a fascinating glimpse of a Britain that has all but disappeared from view. There are stations built to serve once thriving industries—copper mines, smelting works, cotton mills, and quarries where the first trains were pulled by horses; stations erected for the sole convenience of stately home and castle owners; stations created for Victorian day-tripping attractions; and many more.

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