

CORK, BANDON & SOUTH COAST RAILWAY



OVERVIEW

In 1804, the first self-propelled railway steam engine was built by Richard Trevithick in Wales. It revolutionised transportation and industry in the 19th century and the subsequent development of rail networks meant that goods could be transported over long distances faster and cheaper. People could now travel in safety and comfort leading to changes in lifestyles.

WEST CORK RAILWAYS

Construction of the rail line commenced in 1845 using mainly English labour. The first section between Ballinhassig and Bandon opened in 1849 and the entire railway from Albert Quay to Bantry, with extensions to Kinsale, Courtmacsherry and Baltimore completed by 1893 - almost 50 years later. The work was complex - many embankments had to be built, tunnels excavated, pillars and bridges constructed, tracks laid and stations built along the route.

The Waterfall area proved particularly challenging. The Chetwynd viaduct had to be constructed to span a 450-foot valley with 90 foot tall pillars each supporting 1,000 tons of metal. A road bridge (the 8th bridge from Albert Quay) had to be built over the rail line in Ballymah, the station itself was built and opened in 1851 and 2 stone railway bridges were constructed (Waterfall and Abbey Bridges) as well as a 900 yard long tunnel at Gogegins hill.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Goods could now be transported to and from Cork City and beyond speedily. Local agriculture produce, industrial

ECONOMIC IMPACT

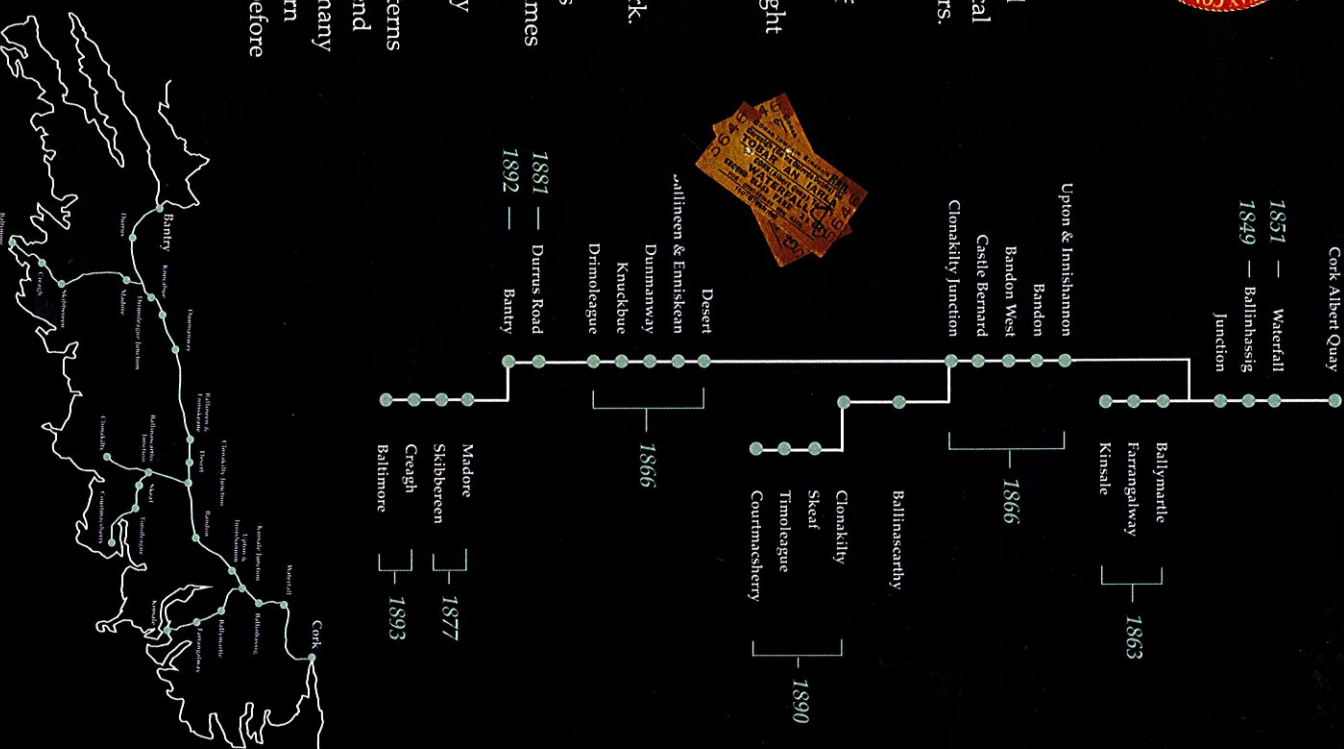
products and seafood could be brought to the city and towns along the route expanding opportunities for local producers. Farmers could bring their cattle to local fairs. Merchants could order goods for their stores, thus expanding the range of products offered for sale. Beet could be transported to Mallow sugar factory and turf could be transported economically. Ships arriving in Bantry and Timoleague could unload their cargo straight to the waiting freight wagons

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

The railway changed the lifestyle of many in West Cork. Country shows attracted large attendances. Visits to Cork City for shopping or visiting exhibitions became possible and sports fans could travel to big games in Cork and Dublin. People from the city could go on holiday to West Cork and many used the trains for day trips to the seaside. Lifetime friendships were made, people could travel to funerals, plays, dances and patterns and many a marriage followed! Parents could now send their children to secondary schools in nearby towns, many could travel to colleges or work in Cork City and return the same day - which would not have been possible before the railway.

CLOSURE

The entire railway line was closed on March 31st 1961 amid controversy, with the rail lines and sleepers shipped to Nigeria and the railway land was sold to adjoining land owners.



In Association With

