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Reviewed Article:

All Aboard! A re-enactment approach to Victorian Railway Guard's Clothing

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Author(s): Anthony Dawson [1]

[1] Independent researcher, 40 Somerford Road, North Reddish, Stockport, Sk5 6QB, UK

This paper examines the form, function and practicality of the clothing worn by late nineteenth century railway guards in Britain. It does so by taking a re-enactment approach, involving the commissioning, wearing, and reporting of replica garments in an appropriate workplace. It demonstrates that whilst such uniforms were smart and created an impression of authority in the wearer and potential viewer, they were not practical, and in fact, elements such as bandoliers and pouches could have been dangerous to the wearer.

> Railway companies in the nineteenth century did not provide shirts, socks or any other underwear: these were private purchase items. A few companies did issue red ties, which, in the case of an emergency were to be used as a red 'danger' flag.

Introduction

This project seeks to understand how practical the uniforms worn by nineteenth century railway guards in Britain were. Hitherto, the study of railway uniform in Britain, and in Europe, has focused solely on its aesthetic value with no attempt to place it in its socio-historical or dress history context, rather than understanding the lived experience of the railway worker who wore them (Froggat, 1986; Henneking and Koch, 1980; Vité, 2003).

This project will work to this aim by creating replica garments, and by placing the participants in the role of a railway guard working with a set of original late nineteenth century railway carriages. The experiences of both the wearer and viewers was collected orally and in reflective journal with a standard set of questions to prompt reflection. The results of this experiential work were then compared with the lived experiences of nineteenth century railway workers through their letters to Railway Trades Union newspapers and the domestic press.

There are several contrasting, but at times overlapping, methodologies available for the reproduction and study of historic clothing: experimental archaeology, experiential archaeology, re-enactment and costumed interpretation (Hartford, 2016; Jeffery, 2004, pp.13-14; Lee, 2023, pp.8-15). Experimental archaeology seeks to 'fabricate materials, behaviours or both in order to observe one or more processes involved in the production, use, discard, deterioration, and recovery of material culture.' (Skibo, 1992, p.18). It thus explores specific research questions and offers a high degree of control of variables but does so within the limitations of the experimental method, and suggests one probable methodology (Ferguson, 2010, ´pp.1 - 4; Agnew, 2004, pp.327-339). Experiential archaeology is concerned with realistically performing tasks as they may have been in the past, to experience an 'ancient way of doing something' (Jeffery, 2004, pp.13-14), whilst re-enactment tends to be public, providing an immersive experience for the participant and viewer, attempting to create an appearance of the past (Agnew, Lamb and Tonman, 2021, pp.1-10; Lee, 2023, pp.9-10). Historical costumed interpretation whilst being visually similar to re-enactment is primarily driven by education and engagement with visitors through physical interaction and interpretation (Lee, 2023, pp.13-15). Re-enactment as a methodology, has valid criticisms, primarily as it places a modern person within a fictitious and fabricated historical setting, being essentially performative (Dyer, 2013; Agnew and Tomann, 2021, pp.21-23; Johnson, 2021, pp.169-172). Furthermore, the participant brings their own modern knowledge which historical participants did not possess. For studies such as this it is then even more pertinent to consider an approach to how the recreated garment can be placed in an appropriate

historical context as well as to recognise that limitations of the experiment particularly, in the case of this study, regarding modern safety requirements (Hatch, 2015, pp.17 - 25; Davidson, 2019, pp.329-362).

Cooper (2013, pp.17-23 and 125-126) notes that taking a re-enactment approach can be potentially misleading due to use of inappropriate fabric types; inappropriate constructional techniques; modern body shapes and attitude to clothing. However, he also demonstrated the value of a rigorous experimental approach in replicating historic garments based on the examination of contemporary iconography; surviving garments; study of contemporary clothing and textile technology; as well as an embodied approach learning about making and the makers of garments, as well as what they were like to wear (Cooper, 2013).

Nineteenth Century Railway Guard's Clothing

The clothing worn by nineteenth century railway guards was some of the most elaborate civil uniforms of the period. It invariably consisted of a double-breasted frock coat, vest, trousers, a képi for head dress, and a patent-leather bandolier, used to carry his time-keeper, worn over the right shoulder. The dignity and pomp of these uniforms (See Figure 1) is shown by one astonished French visitor to London who gushed:

> *There is no more picturesque figure in modern English life than the North-Western passenger guard, with his dark-hued semi-military garb, bright with silver braid, and adorned with glossy, silver-mounted, shoulder belt, as he stands erect blowing his whistle or waving his flag, or with a stately courtesy... A French comrade of mine, paying his first visit to England some years ago, was quite overpowered by the dignified and quietly-polite bearing of one of these guards. He was so command in look ... that my friend was quite captivated. He stood in admiration on the platform at Euston, and was in doubt for a little while as to whether he had been introduced to the Commander-in-Chief or our land forces, a propriétaire of the railway. I tried to explain he was "only a Railway Guard" but he [replied] "Ouf! - ah - oui - you mean ze maréchal? He is grande, magnifique!"*
> (Pendleton, 1894, pp.148-149)

As Anthony Dawson has shown (Dawson, 2022, pp.156-173), nineteenth century railway companies preferred two main fabrics for their uniforms: wool broadcloth and cotton corduroy. Corduroy was almost exclusively worn by junior grade members of staff like railway porters who handled passengers' luggage, as well as being the favoured cloth for other junior grades with some degree of messy or outdoor work, such as use for trousers by signalmen or the guards of goods trains. Thus, broadcloth was a clear and visible denominator of rank and function of railway employees: the lowest paid, often doing physical outdoor work wore green corduroy whilst guards, ticket inspectors, station and supervisory staff were dressed in broadcloth. In terms of colour, the majority of porters wore green corduroy whilst green as

also preferred by most companies for the broadcloth uniforms of more senior staff, with blue and red also being occasionally worn. (Dawson, 2022, pp.161-162)

These uniforms were made by major clothing contractors, most notably John Compton of London, Crewe and Swindon which supplied some of the largest railway companies in Britain including the London & North Western Railway [LNWR], Great Western Railway [GWR] and Great Northern Railway [GNR], as well as the British Army (Chaloner, 1950, p.87; London & North Western Railway, 1864-1865; Great Northern Railway, 1898-1903; Great Western Railway, 1902-1905). Garments were not tailor made, nor were they specially designed for each company. Garments were made from a basic set of measures: height, neck size, chest size, arm length, nape to waist, waist measurement and inside leg. (Reynolds, 1910, pp.304-309). Numerous complaints from railway employees in trades union magazines note that the fit of these garments was not the best. Nor was the quality very high and the style distinctly out-of-date (Father Peter, 1896; Blocks and Bells, 1896; Locks and Bolts, 1896; Two Pause One, 1896; Signalman, 1896; South Wales Daily News, 1896). These were uniforms ordered from a pattern book of standard designs: the only truly unique items being buttons and any other insignia.

Each garment had a specific wear out period: trousers were regulated to last six months, with two pairs being issued in a year (spring and autumn); frock coats and vests two years and caps twelve months. Any garment which required replacement or repairing outside of those regulated periods had to be paid for by the individual to whom it was issued, other than perhaps in the case of theft. At the end of the regulated wear-out period, garments were to be returned to stores and then re-sold to the contractor. Those in usable condition were then re-issued to personnel, and those which were unusable were destroyed after having had their buttons and other insignia removed (Dawson, 2022, pp.165-167).

Bandoliers and Pouches

One of the most distinctive elements of a 'First Class' mainline Passenger Guard was the wearing of an elaborate bandolier over their right shoulder, supporting a pouch containing their timekeeper. It was Peter Lecount of the London & Birmingham who suggested that Railway Guards should carry such timekeepers supported by a leather bandolier. This was in emulation of the Mail Guards of the General Post Office who, from the late 1780s, wore a leather bandolier and pouch supporting their timepiece (Wilkinson, 2007, pp.116-121). It was therefore part of the visual language of the Guard - either by road or rail. The practice of wearing a bandolier soon spread to other railways, so much so that the Guard wearing his bandolier became synonymous with a Railway Guard. Not only did they emulate the bandolier worn by Mail Guards, but also the bandoliers and cartridge pouches worn by many officers in the army, especially those in the Rifle Brigade and light cavalry regiments such as Hussars and Light Dragoons (Dawson, 2021) (See Figures 2 and 3) .

Despite the apparent ubiquity of these bandoliers and pouches in contemporary iconography and cartes de visites, very few of them were made and issued. The LNWR, for example, only issued 145 in 1904 out of a total of 629 passenger guards showing that their use was restricted to top-link expresses only. The figure of 145 represented an increase of seven on the previous year and were valued at £304 (London & North Western Railway, 1905). That so few were ever made also explains why so few have survived to enter the preservation record. A unique North Staffordshire Railway [NSR] bandolier and pouch exists within the collection of the Foxfield Railway which formed the basis of a replica item used in this study (See Figure 4) .

Methodology

This project uses the methodology laid out by Cooper (2013) for a re-enactment approach to understanding historical clothing. Cooper describes the following stages: *material authenticity* (materials should be appropriate to the object being replicated); *production authenticity* (the object being replicated should be made using a historically appropriate method); *investigative process* (any research on a surviving object should be undertaken concurrently with detailed documentary or visual research); *repeatability* (the experiment should be repeatable); *Dressing the body* (acknowledging the body and its variations in an appraisal of any garment and critical practice); *Recording the dressed body* (recording the subjective experience of the participant dressed in a replicated garment, which may include photographic or video recording) (Cooper, 2013, pp.28-30).

It was initially decided to attempt to recreate uniforms belonging to the NSR as they would be appropriate to the restored nineteenth century NSR carriages which would be used as part of the practice. However, there are no surviving garments to be studied and the company's archive at The National Archives yielded no further information as to the clothing of the NSR which was not already known from other textual sources including newspaper descriptions which mention the wearing of blue double-breasted frock coats with silver plated buttons and silver embroidery. The lack of availability of original buttons and running out of time to make reproduction buttons, was also a mitigating factor in deciding against the NSR. Therefore, due to production lead times, and from the availability of blue cloth and blue frock coats 'off the peg', it was decided to recreate 'semi-generic' rather than company-specific uniforms based on knowledge of uniforms worn by other railway companies. Those worn by practitioners A and B, due to the availability of original buttons and their interest in the LNWR, elected to finish their uniforms as belonging to the LNWR - despite being in error in terms of colour - whilst practitioner C from his interest in the Caledonian Railway [CR] and having original CR buttons, as a CR uniform. Despite the Midland Railway wearing blue, and availability of original MR buttons, creation of an MR uniform was discounted because, unlike the LNWR or CR, they did not use bandoliers which would be a key part of this study. It was felt that whilst the colour was incorrect, the experience of wearing the garments whilst carrying out

appropriate tasks, and using it to engage with the public, was the overriding factor for this study.

Due to no nineteenth century guard's coats having entered the preservation record, cartes de visites and contemporary iconography were studied to identify key features of nineteenth century passenger guard's clothing, which included:

- Double-breasted frock coat with fall collar, closing with between ten and fourteen buttons.
- Cuffs, closing with either two or three buttons.
- Trousers the same colour or darker than the frock coat, with side seams piped in a contrasting colour.
- képi type head dress with a straight peak; chin strap; and a variety of embroidery and piping in a contrast colour.
- Bandolier worn over the right shoulder.

Archival research was able to confirm the use of such garments as depicted in photographic images and contemporary iconography. This archival research provided lists of fabrics used as well as colours (London & North Western Railway, n.d.; London & North Western Railway, 1893-1895; Taff Vale Railway, 1865).

Due to the 'off the peg' way in which nineteenth century railway companies purchased their uniforms, it was decided that tailor-made, bespoke garments were not appropriate. Therefore, garments used in this practice were purchased 'off the peg' made to a limited set of measurements, from Bournemouth-based 'Nineteenth Century Tailoring' as this best represented how uniforms were supplied to nineteenth century railway employees in Britain (Midland Railway, 1883; Midland Railway, 1898). This also represented the best value for money due to the limited budget for this project.

Garments purchased from 'Nineteenth Century Tailoring' included modified American Civil War Union Army double-breasted frock coats from the period 1860-1870 in indigo blue. Also purchased were single-breasted sleeveless three-pocket vests; and dark blue officer's trousers although the author made his own hand-finished waistcoat and trousers. The manufacturer notes that the garments were made from pure wool Hainsworth cloth. Linings and any interfacings were specified to be cotton or natural fibres. Trousers were made from the same fabric, and colour as the coats and vests which is now understood to be in error as most companies adopted 'Oxford mixture' doeskin trousers, which woven from black and undyed fibres at a ratio of 20:1. It was a colour worn by undergraduates at the University of Oxford and favoured by clergymen and for 'above stairs' servants. Doeskin is a type of twill weave cloth with a 'blind' finish, and would be harder-wearing than the broadcloth of the coat. The darker colour would also hide dirty more easily (See Figure 5).

All the garments were machine made but with hand worked buttonholes, a reflection of how the original garments would have been made. Buttons were original nineteenth century items, and embroidery was carried out by hand using ecru worsted thread, coping examples in the author's collection. Whilst original embroidery was either hand-made gold work, or machine-made worsted, the cost of gold work embroidery and availability of machine-made worsted embroidery was prohibitive, so hand-embroidery was resorted to. This also had a better appearance than machine-made embroidery which was available in cotton.

An original NSR guards' bandolier was used together with a replica bandolier - this was hand-sewn using a high-grade vegetable tanned leather copying the original. Whereas the original bandolier has silver-plated fittings, the reproduction had them cast resin in an early version and later pewter was used as a more affordable substitute for the silver-plated fittings of the original item.

Head-dress in the form of képis were made by hand by the author copied from two original items in their collection. The body was made from two layers of modern buckram glued together with fish glue. They were covered with Hainsworth indigo-blue broadcloth colour-matched to the original cap. However, the modern cloth was less dense and much thicker than the original, which made reproducing the very tight (1mm) piping around the crown of the cap difficult. Cloth used for the crown was interfaced with a piece of French canvas to provide some rigidity. The lining was made from polished black cotton. The caps were entirely hand-sewn, whereas the original was machine made, other than how the peak was attached. The peak was made from vegetable-tanned black cow hide and whip-stitched in place. It was then painted with gloss black enamel paint on the upperside and matte dark green on the underside to reproduce the 'glazed' appearance of the original. Original buttons were used to secure patent leather chinstraps.

Railway companies in the nineteenth century did not provide shirts, socks or any other underwear: these were private purchase items. A few companies did issue red ties, which, in the case of an emergency were to be used as a red 'danger' flag. Therefore, vintage 'Army Red' wool ties from the 1930s - 1940s were purchased to reproduce these. Replica bib fronted nineteenth century shirts were purchased from Darcy clothing. Modern socks and underwear were worn by two participants with the third (A) wearing flannel 'drawers' and woollen socks. Due to twenty-first century safety standards, modern steel toe cap boots were worn, which was felt to detract from the overall appearance of the practitioners. A list of equipment used by late nineteenth century railway guards was created through study of the contemporary rule books, which provided the following 'essential' items (Midland Railway, 1871, pp.51-52; Midland Railway, 1876, p.165; London & North Western Railway, 1889, pp.161-163):

- Watch
- Whistle

- Carriage Key
- Red and Green flags
- Tin of 12 detonators
- Hand lamp capable of showing red, white and green.

Nineteenth century turned-horn pea whistles were used to despatch trains: a deep-toned whistle marked to the North Eastern Railway and a smaller, much higher-pitched whistle from the Midland Railway [MR], the latter proving as effective as a modern Acme 'Thunderer' whistle. Nineteenth century MR and LNWR wrought-iron carriage keys were used to secure carriage door locks and a nineteenth century MR oil hand lamp was also part of the equipment. An MR detonator canister for exploding fog signals, with inert replica detonators, was included as they were part of a guard's equipment. Modern signal flags had to be used for safety reasons.

It became readily apparent that nineteenth century railway guards would have required, as their successors were issued under British Railways (1948-1997) a leather bag or satchel in which to carry their flags; detonators; lamp; notebooks; and any other personal gear including food and drink. A carte de visite of a railway guard c.1900 (Fig. 11a, b) shows them carrying a tin box with flags strapped on the side. Presumably this was a private-purchase item, and not regulated by any of the railway companies. Another carte de visite (Fig. 12) shows a porter or goods guard carrying a small wicker basket and flask presumably containing their meal but it is not clear if they are photographer's props or the subject's own equipment.

To confront the criticism that re-enactment based experimental archaeology can place the practitioner(s) in a fictitious or fabricated setting, it was decided to use restored Victorian railway carriages dating from 1870-1890 with all three participants fulfilling the role of guard. The three participants (A, B, C) were either qualified or trainee-guards on a heritage railway and were thus fulfilling their regular duties as a guard on a steam-operated railway. In reply to the criticism that re-enactors have knowledge beyond that which those in the period represented did not, participants B and C were not made aware of textual sources which described nineteenth century railway guards removing their caps, coats and bandoliers in their brake compartments or being admonished for being poorly dressed on the platform. It should be noted, in terms of historical accuracy, that participant A (the author) is two inches short for railway service as most railway companies in the UK had a minimum height requirement of 5ft 6in; participant B was of a considerably larger frame than historically accurate for the period whilst C wore a ponytail, albeit tucked up under their cap. Of the participants A and B are experienced re-enactors, A having also served in the Sea Cadets as a cadet and as an adult uniformed instructor with the rank of Petty Officer so has experience of wearing a uniform as part of a disciplined organisation.

A standard list of questions was used to prompt oral and written reflection. This was in the form of videoing the participants at the end of the day using a mobile phone and a more formal reflective journal. There was also much discussion between the three participants about their experiences via social media. The participants were asked:

- How the uniform made them feel - did they feel smart, were they comfortable?
- Did the uniform feel practical - was it too hot, was it too heavy or long, did it keep them dry?
- Did any part of the uniform or equipment make them feel unsafe?
- Did the uniform make them think, or move differently, or approach the carriages in a new way?
- How would you have felt as a nineteenth century railway worker wearing this uniform?

The Train and Duties

The train consisted of four vehicles: an 1880s Midland Railway first-class saloon; two North Staffordshire Railway third-class carriages and an NSR brake-third, i.e. a third-class carriage with a compartment for the guard dating from the 1870s -1880s. Accommodation for the guard consisted of a small, unheated compartment and fixed equipment including a handbrake, and a valve and gauge for the train's vacuum brake. Seats were provided in the two look-out 'duckets' on either side. Duties performed by the guard or trainee-guard whilst wearing replica uniforms included:

- Fitness to run examination - examining if the train is fit to run by checking the wheels, brakes, vacuum pipe connections, doors, locks, etc are in working order and reporting any defects.
- Brake test - testing the vacuum and handbrake are in working order.
- Placing the tail lamp at the end of the train to show that the train is complete and made up.
- Boarding and seating passengers, and ensuring their safe exit from the train, as well as the use of a wheelchair ramp as appropriate.
- Ensure passengers have the correct ticket and are travelling on the correct train and in the correct class compartment.
- Safety checks, ensuring doors are properly closed, and giving permission to despatch the train.
- Completion of paperwork regarding fitness to run, passenger loading, timing of train despatch, arrival, and at specific parts of the route.

Those duties carried out which were not part of those performed by nineteenth century passenger guards included ticket inspection and clipping; the operation of points; use of a

wheelchair ramp. Equally, nineteenth century passenger guards were often responsible for parcels and other packages and their resulting paperwork but which, for modern operational and safety reasons, did not form part of the re-enactment project.

The low speed (15mph), duration between stops (18 minutes), and short length of the train would not be out of place on a nineteenth century branchline, secondary line or commuter train, and was thought to best represent the typical experience of the nineteenth century railway guard. There was frequent climbing in and out of carriages to the platform, which although higher than those used in the nineteenth century still necessitated a step of approximately 30cm between the carriage and platform. There was also climbing to ground level to carry out the fitness to run examination, and also in order to work a set of points. There was also frequent use of the use of steps on carriage-ends and grab rails in order to place and remove lamps from the ends of carriages at the end and start of every trip.

The main body of experimental practice took place on 14 - 16 July 2023 at the Foxfield Railway in Staffordshire with all three participants present, and then one Sunday per month for three months during 2023 with only two present at one time. A further practice took place on 5 May 2024 with all three practitioners present.

During the period 14 - 16 July the weather was torrential rain over the first two days of the main practice, and sun over the third, which provided an opportunity to test how practical and waterproof these garments were. The weather on 5 May 2024 was very hot with bright sunshine, which allowed the properties of frock coats to be compared to serge jackets for summer wear. There was much discussion during the three-day practice as the participants became accustomed to their clothing and their surroundings and started to inhabit or embody the nineteenth century railway guard's experience.

The discussion which follows is based on experience and observation from wearing these uniforms.

Discussion

1. Frock Coats

They look smart, especially the double-breasted style, compared to either a single-breasted frock coat or a sack coat or jacket. All three practitioners reported that they make the wearer feel smart and created an air of authority in both the wearer, and the viewer. They also made the wearer stand differently - straight, erect, chest out, shoulders back. A stiff, regimented or regimental pose. The closeness of fit was also noted, which helped with maintaining posture and bearing.

At a time when social status was clearly demarcated through the clothes one wore, wearing a double-breasted frock coat marks out the passenger guard as a 'cut above'. Not just above

other railway workers who were wearing jackets and a lot of corduroy, but also the passengers as well. Despite being working class, by wearing such a garment, the railway guard was dressed as a middle- or upper-class gentleman in a frock coat and trousers; their wearing apparel marking them out as superior to other railway employees. Although perhaps this represented a superficial superiority due to the low pay received by such grades: whilst being high compared to other railway workers, passenger guards were still working class, although at the upper end.

The double layer of fabric over the body means that they are warm in cold weather, and from their length, also pretty much shower proof and protect a considerable amount of the body from getting wet. In hot weather their weight (from the amount of fabric) and double thickness over the body can make them unbearably warm, especially as they were worn over a waistcoat, and were meant to be always fastened, meaning there was three layers of wool cloth across the front of the body.

Their degree of practicality - or lack thereof - was noted, however. For a start-stop trip such as that experienced on slow, stopping trains (often third-class) a frock coat was found not to be practical. The long skirts can easily get caught on grab handles or in doors and thus presented a safety risk. They also easily lend themselves as something to wipe the hands on. They are also uncomfortable to sit in for any long period of time due to the amount of cloth in the skirts and if the pockets in the skirts are being used. The respondents concluded that they are clearly intended for show, for Mainline and 'Top Link' expresses. They are not suitable for slow stopping trains, when a shorter, more practical jacket would be more appropriate (See Figures 6 and 7).

All three participants - who had not had sight of the following letter to the *Daily Telegraph* - unconsciously fell into the pattern described by the correspondent:

> *It is quite a mistake to think that the guard, as a rule, has an easy time of it. The well-brushed coat with the polished buttons and untarnished braided collar, is doubtless in great degree responsible for the popular delusion. He does not look a hard-worked man as he steps out of his Break [van] on the train's arrival at the station... but the handsome coat is more for the public gaze than the guard's comfort. He takes it off whilst at work and slips it on when his platform presence is required... he toils in his shirt-sleeves. He would never get through his work if he did not strip so far to it*
> (East Kent Gazette, 1871).

It is easy to see why the London Brighton & South Coast Railway admonished passenger guards for wearing their coats open: J. P. Knight, General Manager of the LBSCR ordered in July 1876 that coats were to be buttoned up; particular attention be paid to cleaning both the garment and its buttons, and that guards at all times should wear their bandoliers (London Brighton & South Coast Railway, 1868-1878). Equally, the Great Western Railway ordered that

hats be always worn when the guard was on the platform - implying that head-dress was removed once the guard was comfortable at his desk and not always worn on the platform (Macdermot, 1927, p.675). The participants all agreed with several Great Central Railway Stationmasters who opined in 1906 - and which was not disclosed to the participants - that frock coats were 'all that could be desired for Parade' but were impractical when being worn in an office; during the summer; or doing any practical work (An Admirer of the New Cap, 1906, p.161; Frock Coat, 1906, p.82; One of Them, 1906, p.106; Ubique, 1906, p.106; Floorcloth, 1909, p.92; Nemo, 1909a, pp.73-74;) (See Figures 8 and 9).

2. Headdress

Whilst ubiquitous in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, very few railway képis have entered the preservation record. Those which have tend to be from higher grades (usually station masters) and many have lost their peaks. Képis were issued to last twelve months and were often very cheap - in some cases 1s 6d. This means that they were not meant to last, being replaced after only one year of wear, which means those which do are statistical outliers. This cheapness of construction and materials is borne out how they perform in wet weather.

All three practitioners found that képis are useful in good weather. They're practical in the sun and keep the sun off, shade the eyes and keep the head cool. They also offer protection from light rain. In the two days of torrential rain experienced during the main body of this practice it was found that once they got wet, they remained wet. The buckram stiffening - despite using size to provide additional stiffening and waterproofing - gets saturated and collapses. Lack of any facilities within the guard's compartment to either get warm or dry out garments was quickly found to be a major problem.

Whilst only one example of an oil-cloth rain cover for a railway képi survives as part of the Vintage Carriages Trust collection at Ingrow, West Yorkshire, experience shows that such covers must have been issued and were an important part of any railwayman's clothing to keep themselves, and their uniform, dry and in good condition.

3. Bandoliers

The patent leather bandoliers with silver fittings worn by 'First Class' Passenger Guards on mainline trains look beautiful and add to the martial air of the wearer. They are eye-catching and create a sense of theatre, of spectacle in the wearer and viewer. They create a heightened sense of authority in the wearer, and in the observer. The three participants reported that wearing a bandolier made them stand differently - standing up straight, chin up, chest out, with a swagger in the step. They 'make the wearer feel smart and important', 'like an army officer'. They further emphasise the air of authority created by the frock coat.

However, in practice, they are not practical and could be lethally dangerous: they are very easy to get caught or trapped on door handles or grab handles. The Great Northern Railway, after only a brief trial period withdrew belts and pouches for precisely that reason (Great Northern Railway, 1896-1899). Participant A reported in his notes:

> '*You had to constantly check where the bandolier was, especially getting out of the van in case it got caught on anything*'

Whilst Participant B notes:

> '*The Frock Coat and Bandolier even get in the way putting the lamp on the last carriage. The Bandolier slips round and can get caught*.'

The danger of wearing a bandolier getting caught when alighting from a passenger train meant that many guards did not wear them and left them in their compartment. But his led to complaints from railway companies ordering guards to always appear on duty and in particular on the platform wearing their bandoliers and pouches (London Brighton & South Coast Railway, 1868-1878). It was clear to the three participants that bandoliers, whilst impressive to look at, were like the guard's frock coats, impractical for the duties of a stopping train. They were items for show, to impress passengers on 'top link' expresses and not for ordinary services.

4. Serge Jackets

Participants A and B both possessed reproduction 1860s single-breasted serge jackets. Such garments, both single- and double-breasted were issued to passenger brakesmen, goods guards, goods brakesmen and signalmen who were involved in hands-on railway work where a more practical garment was required (See Figure 10).

Serge jackets were found to be immediately more practical than a frock coat for the duties being performed as part of this experimental practice. They were found to be looser fitting, and the numerous pockets (three outside and one inside) made them very practical. Their shorter length (mid-thigh) meant that they had less fabric to get out of the way in order to sit down, and less fabric likely to get caught on or in doors, door handles etc. They were much more practical, functional garments for those railway workers involved in a more hands-on job than a 'first class' passenger guard. Being more akin to a modern lounge suit jacket, they were easier to wear under an overcoat with much less 'bulk' being experienced, especially around the legs. In summer they were far cooler than a frock coat, but only being single-breasted they were less warm than a double-breasted frock coat and offered less protection from light rain due to their shorter length. This experience was confirmed by the opinions of railway workers in the period: 'there is more pocket accommodation, and that is very necessary' (Nemo, 1909b, p.125). Frock coats were 'certainly not fit for wear in summer',

whilst jackets were more practical because there was less cloth 'flipping about his legs'. (Floorcloth, 1909, p.92) (See Figures 11a,b and 12).

Conclusion

This is the first attempt to study the performance of the clothing worn by nineteenth century railway workers. Where replica railway clothing has been made it has been part of 'set dressing' for anniversary events with no publication at the end of the process. The present author has previously made two examples of early nineteenth century railway uniforms for wear as part of costumed interpretation with the replica 'Planet' locomotive at the Science & Industry Museum in Manchester, which have been used in a piece of experimental work examining early railway (2017) but this has never been published.

There is clearly a good deal more research required on surviving garments from the period, archival work, as well as more experimental work to validate the results of the experiments at the Foxfield Railway. It became apparent as the practitioners became more comfortable in their uniforms and work environment that a certain pattern began to emerge. Coats, caps and bandoliers would be worn when on the platform and attending to passengers: an occasion when formality and smartness were required. However, as soon as the train was on the move and the guard settled into his private compartment away from public gaze to do his paperwork, off came his coat, cap, and bandolier to be hung up to have them ready to hand. It was found hanging the bandolier off the handbrake handle so that the timekeeper was always visible whilst the guard was sitting in his seat was advantageous, only having to glance up to check the time. As soon as the train arrived at the next station, the cap and coat were quickly put on and platform and train duties attended to.

Whilst frock coats and bandoliers in particular look smart and reflect well visually and sartorially upon the railway company who supplied them, they are not practical apparel. They are clearly intended for show, for conspicuous consumption, and in the case of bandoliers were potentially dangerous and may have resulted in railway accidents, although none have been recorded in the database of the Railway Work Life & Death Project run by the University of Portsmouth.

In terms of future work, leg wear made from appropriate 'Oxford mixture' Doeskin with side-piping will be made, to be assessed compared to broadcloth trousers. An appropriately coloured LNWR uniform will also be made. Further work would also see the re- manufacture of képis together with manufacture of period-appropriate rain covers for them. Period appropriate Mackintoshes will also be sourced. This re-enactment approach, coupled with archival research, helps us understand why we see what we do in a) the preservation record and b) minutes and circulars about the wearing of uniform. These garments, particularly head dress, had a limited life expectancy, were made from low quality materials and could be ruined during a period of potential rain.

A follow up practice will examine the corduroy clothing worn by nineteenth century railway porters and signalmen and compare the experiences of re-enactors wearing and working in such clothing with experiences recorded by their nineteenth century counterparts.

Keywords interpretation
living history
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Corresponding Author

Anthony Dawson
40 Somerford Road
North Reddish

Stockport, Sk5 6QB
United Kingdom
E-mail Contact

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FIG 1. THE EPITOME OF A NINETEENTH CENTURY RAILWAY GUARD IS SUMMED UP IN THIS CABINET CARD OF A LONDON & NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY 'MAINLINE' PASSENGER GUARD C.1890. HE IS WEARING A DOUBLE-BREASTED FROCK COAT, A KEPI TYPE HEADDRESS AND ELABORATE BANDOLIER OVER HIS RIGHT SHOULDER, THE POUCH RESTING ON HIS LEFT HIP. WITHIN THE POUCH WAS HIS TIME KEEPER. PRIVATE COLLECTION ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 2. OBVERSE VIEW OF A NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY GUARDS' BANDOLIER. IT IS MADE FROM BLACK PATENT LEATHER, WITH NICKEL SILVER FITTINGS, ONE OF WHICH IS MISSING. THE POUCH WAS USED TO HOLD HIS TIME KEEPER, THE FACE OF WHICH WAS VISIBLE THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOW ON THE REVERSE OF THE POUCH. THE LEATHER IS VEGETABLE-TANNED BLACKENED COW HIDE, WITH NICKEL-SILVER MOUNTINGS. THE MOUNTINGS ARE CASTING RATHER THAN PRESSINGS. BUCKLES ARE SILVER-PLATED COPPER. PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 3. REVERSE VIEW OF A NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY GUARDS' BANDOLIER. IT IS MADE FROM BLACK PATENT LEATHER, WITH NICKEL SILVER FITTINGS, ONE OF WHICH IS MISSING. THE POUCH WAS USED TO HOLD HIS TIME KEEPER, THE FACE OF WHICH WAS VISIBLE THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOW ON THE REVERSE OF THE POUCH.

THE LEATHER IS VEGETABLE-TANNED BLACKENED COW HIDE, WITH NICKEL-SILVER MOUNTINGS. THE MOUNTINGS ARE CASTING RATHER THAN PRESSINGS. BUCKLES ARE SILVER-PLATED COPPER. PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 4. SUCH A BANDOLIER AND POUCH BEING WORN BY AN NSR GUARD, C. 1890. PRIVATE COLLECTION ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 5. PRACTITIONERS A AND B DRESSED IN REPLICA NINETEENTH CENTURY GUARDS' UNIFORMS CONSISTING OF KEPI TYPE HEAD-DRESS; DOUBLE BREASTED FROCK COAT WORN OVER A WAISTCOAT; CLOTH TROUSERS AND BANDOLIER OVER THE RIGHT SHOULDER. PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 6. PRACTITIONER B SEATED IN THE LOOK OUT WINDOW WHICH PROJECTS FROM EITHER SIDE OF THE GUARD'S VAN. WINDOWS FORE AND AFT PROVIDE A VIEW ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE TRAIN. THE LOOK OUT, OR 'DUCKET' IS VERY NARROW AND CONFINED. IT WAS FOUND THAT SITTING WAS DIFFICULT AND CERTAINLY UNCOMFORTABLE WEARING A FROCK COAT AND BANDOLIER. PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 7. REMOVING A FROCK COAT AND BANDOLIER MADE THE EXPERIENCE FAR MORE COMFORTABLE, AND PROBABLY ACCOUNTS FOR WHY SO MANY GUARDS WERE ADMONISHED FOR NOT WEARING THEIR COATS FASTENED OR THEIR BANDOLIERS ON PLATFORMS – THEY HAD TAKEN THEM OFF FOR THE JOURNEY AND HAD RAPIDLY PUT THEM BACK ON FOR THE STATION STOP. PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 8. PRACTITIONER B CHECKING THE TIME WITH IS TIMEKEEPER, BEFORE GIVING THE ‘RIGHT AWAY’ FOR THE TRAIN TO DEPART, BLOWING HIS WHISTLE AND WAVING HIS GREEN FLAG. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT, MODERN SIGNAL FLAGS WERE USED DUE TO SAFETY CONCERNS BUT NINETEENTH CENTURY WHISTLES WERE USED. THE BANDOLIER WAS FOUND TO GIVE THE WEARER A SENSE OF IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY, BUT WAS NOT NECESSARILY PRACTICAL COMPARED TO WEARING A POCKET WATCH FROM A CHAIN ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE COAT. . PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 9. PRACTITIONER B CHECKING THE TIME WITH IS TIMEKEEPER, BEFORE GIVING THE ‘RIGHT AWAY’ FOR THE TRAIN TO DEPART, BLOWING HIS WHISTLE AND WAVING HIS GREEN FLAG. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT, MODERN SIGNAL FLAGS WERE USED DUE TO SAFETY CONCERNS BUT NINETEENTH CENTURY WHISTLES WERE USED. THE BANDOLIER WAS FOUND TO GIVE THE WEARER A SENSE OF IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY, BUT WAS NOT NECESSARILY PRACTICAL COMPARED TO WEARING A POCKET WATCH FROM A CHAIN ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE COAT. . PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 10. PRACTITIONER A WEARING A SERGE JACKET. A FAR MORE COMFORTABLE AND PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO A HEAVY FROCK COAT. ALL THREE PRACTITIONERS COMMENTED ON THE UTILITY OF THESE GARMENTS IN COMPARISON TO THE MORE FORMAL FROCK COAT WHICH THEY THOUGHT WOULD BE A 'FULL DRESS' OR WINTER ITEM. SERGE JACKETS WERE FOUND TO BE MORE PRACTICAL THANKS TO THEIR SHORTER LENGTH, COOLER IN WARM WEATHER, AND MORE FUNCTIONAL THANKS TO PROVISION OF MORE POCKETS, OR AT LEAST POCKETS IN A USEFUL PLACE COMPARED TO A FROCK COAT WHICH HAD POCKETS IN THE SKIRTS AND AN INSIDE BREAST

POCKET – THE SKIRT POCKETS WERE MORE OR LESS USELESS IF THE WEARER HAD TO DO ANY AMOUNT OF SITTING. PHOTO BY ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 11A. CARTE DE VISITE OF A RAILWAY GUARD C.1900 SHOWS THEM CARRYING A TIN BOX WITH FLAGS STRAPPED ON THE SIDE. PRESUMABLY THIS WAS A PRIVATE-PURCHASE ITEM, AND NOT REGULATED BY ANY OF THE RAILWAY COMPANIES. PRIVATE COLLECTION ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 11B. CARTE DE VISITE OF A RAILWAY GUARD C.1900 SHOWS THEM CARRYING A TIN BOX WITH FLAGS STRAPPED ON THE SIDE. PRESUMABLY THIS WAS A PRIVATE-PURCHASE ITEM, AND NOT REGULATED BY ANY OF THE RAILWAY COMPANIES. PRIVATE COLLECTION ANTHONY DAWSON.

FIG 12. CARTE DE VISITE SHOWS A PORTER OR GOODS GUARD CARRYING A SMALL WICKER BASKET AND FLASK PRESUMABLY CONTAINING THEIR MEAL BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR IF THEY ARE PHOTOGRAPHER'S PROPS OR THE SUBJECT'S OWN EQUIPMENT. PRIVATE COLLECTION ANTHONY DAWSON.