Inside: Pictorial Timetables on the Bass Coast
Designing Time (Part II)
Soapy Sponge
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The Design and Use of Nineteenth-Century Transport Timetables (2)
by MIKE ESBESTER, with letter from CONRAD SMITH

Letter re Part I

Conrad Smith writes:

Great to see the exhaustive article by Mike Esbester in this month's Times.

It may seem churlish to point up an error but this is a measure of how difficult timetables can be to appreciate.

His caption for Fig. 6, Reid's Guide, 1913 reads 'It is possible that Reid had intended to set every time, but failed to allow enough space -- an error only realized part way through the expensive process of setting the type'.

In fact the rule applies only from 5.30 p.m. since one of the 'extras' appears just before then, so this is an ideal display for this direction, using as it does the full width available to the printer. It is most certainly not a mistake in production.

I suppose this is where the art of timetable production diverges from its science: it is always possible to use alternative displays when there is a measure of regular service.

Full service listings vs. space-saving 'regular-pattern' variants ('and every x minutes' or 'then at the following minutes past each hour ... until') both have their aficionados among operators and publishers alike. One objection I have heard from an operator against a full listing of a truly regular frequent service is that it requires the reader to check along the whole line in order to see whether or not a regular pattern exists.

There is only one possible way to show a full service listing; that is self evident. Space-saving variants, on the other hand can be as flexile as a pair of curtains; either a minimal-space choice is made, or one of the perhaps many, many compromises between the two extremes, with some full listing where space-saving could apply being sacrificed to present a 'tidy' page where the otherwise unused latter part is duly used up.

This is the art as practised by Bradshaw's composers who took the space-saving measures to extremes, but were not averse to putting this process into partial reverse in order to fill up the page 'nicely'.

Of course the extreme 'space-saving' brought Bradshaw not a little notoriety from the mid-nineteenth century, being regarded as incomprehensible by significant sections of the population.

Part 2

Representing time — and space

Although it is difficult to link the design of time-tables directly to the ways in which time and space were conceptualized in the nineteenth century, it is likely that the two areas were related. Although timetable designers were explicitly concerned with selling transport services to the public, they also unintentionally reflected notions of space and time — particularly a more acute awareness of the nation as a whole and of a standard time. Some of the difficulties that both timetable designers and users faced were a result of the complexity of the concepts involved in producing and interpreting information about time and space — especially at a time when the ways in which the majority of people understood and used time were changing.

Although the timetable did not create new notions of time, it did offer a site at which time and space could be understood. Significantly, railways and timetables helped to tie Britain together as a unit, in terms of both space and time: for example, an 1859 guide claimed that the railway system had 'given force to our national character'.

During the 1840s, the operational demands of the increasingly dense, increasingly rapid, long-distance network ensured that the railway companies favoured a single national system of timing. In addition to a single time nationwide, the railways — via the timetables — offered people the chance to reach far-distant places, seemingly drawing everything closer together and creating a more expansive understanding of nation. Even if the railways were uneven in their impact upon consciousness of time and space — some areas were virtually untouched whilst others were well served — Drummond has concluded that the railway 'did have some role in introducing elements of the modern, industrialised ... entrepreneurial identity into ... concepts of nationhood'.

The timetable came to signify the railway; together they provided another locus for conversation or reading — or attempt to do some work. Therefore, they could exist simultaneously in (timetabled) clock time and leisure time or work time. Following Glennie and Thrift, these are different 'time-senses' shaping day-to-day experiences whilst coexisting with clock time.

Non-clock times also produced demands that shaped timetables. The religious values placed on Sundays resulted in separate train services, reflected in the design of timetables. Market days, seasonal festivals and special events also produced services that were 'non-standard' and had to be indicated as such in timetables. The spread of railways and timetabled time did not simply adapt 'local time' to (national) 'railway time', but rather resulted in a complex interplay of times. Thus, although time might have been represented in the timetable in a standard notation, the con-
tinued existence of multiple times could still be discerned. We can see that the timetable was a complex reflection of the multiplicity of times, seemingly rigidly bound to the clock but actually rather more fluid.

Even if they did not construct new notions of time, timetables did contribute to a modernization and nationalization of space and time. As rational, precise, abstract representations of railway time, timetables came to be seen as a marker of the modern (along with such bodies as the Post Office and the Ordnance Survey). Harvey notes that space ‘came to be represented, like time … as abstract, objective, homogeneous, and universal in its qualities’ (even if this was a social construction which obscured the multiplicities of both space and time). A 1912 poem commented on the cold rationality of timetables: ‘through seas of figures then we wade/And hieroglyphic signs unfeeling’. Similarly, Angus Reach claimed in 1848 that ‘we at once confess, that we do not know a more tremendously unjokeable subject than railway tables of fares, hours, trains and distances’. The precision apparently offered by the timetable — to the minute — meshed well with the nineteenth century ‘culture of precision, of rigorously scheduled time’. In this light, timetables can be understood as more than service information. They performed ‘a rhetorical manoeuvre, in the sense of a set of rules for making information eloquent’ — a means of persuading people of the ordered nature of railway travel: controlled, dependable, knowable in advance.

The time and space of timetables were industrialized and commodified. The timetable marketed and sold the speed of service and the distance travelled.

Time was, increasingly, assigned a monetary value by an advancing capitalist economy — a value signified in the precision of the timetable: ever smaller units of measurement became valuable. In 1866, one passenger called for compensation for every five minutes a train was late; as early as 1846, the view was expressed that ‘my time is rather valuable, but it is most terribly murdered in the ups and downs of my short journeys’. If the timetable informed people about the possibilities of travel — the where and the when — it also represented a chronicle of the constraints of the system. Trains left at the moment specified, to the rhythm of the company and its delivery in services that passengers experienced. As seen in the complaints above, trains did not always run to scheduled times. In 1884, one passenger suggested that if the trains could not reflect timetabled times, then ‘surely the timetable can be made to agree with the actual running of the trains’. Here, the negotiability of railway time and timetables was acknowledged: the timetable was an idealized representation of space and time. This disjunction once again reflects how time was not simply homogenized by the railways; rather, the timetable offered the passenger one version of time.

Although timetables did not construct new notions of time, they did help introduce new understandings of space. Early railway travellers were concerned that the railway represented a rift — a disconnection with the environment through which they were travelling. Whilst these fears subsided with time and with some aid from railway guidebooks, “the timetable symbolically tore places from their surroundings and placed them within the artificial linearity of the railway system”.

Rather than the often-meandering physical course of the railway line, timetables (and timetable maps) rendered route information as ‘linear’. Each place was abstracted from its existing locale and given a new relationship in space, with the neighbouring stations on that route. Rather than connecting with the landscape, the train ‘propels us like an arrow/along an iron road … /to our journey’s end’, what Schivelbusch calls the ‘mathematical directness’ of the railway. Janin Hadlaw has argued that maps provide ‘a presentation of space which is removed from any real experience we are able to have of that space … it orders priorities’. If the railway created a set of new places — those with stations — then the timetable placed them in an order.

According to Bartram, one problem with timetable information is that ‘the layout of
The Times lists bears no spatial relationship to the layout of the town or city’. Often the routes listed in railway timetables bore little or no spatial relationship to the landscape as it had been experienced before the railways. Reading the list of stations — typically vertically, down the page — did not necessarily bear any relation to the physical direction of travel. Landscape and timetabled spaces were not necessarily coincident. Proposing a ‘railway geography’ in 1847, Punch suggested that rather than naming ‘the chief towns in the West’ the substitute would be to ‘[n]ame the chief stations on the Great Western’. The railways opened up new routes that did not necessarily follow existing roads, rivers or railways opened up new routes that did not necessarily follow existing roads, rivers or canals; the timetable represented these new spatial relationships and offered a new way of understanding space — railway space. As with time, however, existing understandings of space (for example, landscape, religious or social) continued alongside railway space: a multiplicity of spaces and times circulated.

**Reading and using time**

As would be expected, it is difficult to reconstruct how understandings of space and time were influenced by timetables. Lack of evidence is a key problem. Despite this, it is possible to offer some comments on how timetables were read and used. With vast quantities produced each year, timetables brought many people into contact with graphic design; the responses that some of these people left indicate that, consciously or not, people critiqued the design of information.

As I have shown, timetables dealt with topics that were difficult to understand — space and time — and often featured designs with a high density of information. Because of this, timetables were potentially confusing to the reader; yet they rarely featured instructions for use. This is perhaps surprising: possibly timetable producers simply did not consider the reader, believing directions unnecessary. All the design features that were employed — which tried to clarify the specific details of individual services — contributed to make an extremely cluttered timetable that could be difficult to understand as a visual whole.

Even one of the men responsible for compiling timetables confessed in 1909 that ‘to the uninstructed (as well as to the instruct- ed) the time table affords many puzzles’, and would resent, as a breach of the rules of the game, any attempt to help him. Clearly, design could not aid every reader. This ‘rationality’ of the timetable makes it an interesting artefact with which to explore gender. As with other seemingly neutral artefacts (such as maps), although timetables were not in themselves gendered, evidence suggests that they formed a site at which gender identities were constructed and negotiated. Direct evidence is difficult to locate, but underlying much of the discussion of timetables in the nineteenth century was a perception that the user was male. This mirrors the assumption that timetables were abstract, logical and rational; given the contemporary association between maleness and rationality, it is unsurprising people believed that men would ‘naturally’ understand timetables.

Glennie and Thrift note that, in feminist critiques of the ways in which time has been constructed, ‘linear clock time is seen ... as male time’. In this vein, an 1862 guide to railway travel observed that women ‘do not enter into the spirit of the straight-laced punctuality observed by the railway authorities, and if the timetable sets down the departure at 1:20, they instinctively read 1:45’. This advice was addressed to men, suggesting that they should not allow women to organize journeys. Similarly, women in novels were often portrayed as incapable of understanding timetables: Arnold Bennett has Hilda Lessways attempt to read a timetable, only to surrender it to her future husband ‘tacitly admitting that a woman was no match for Bradshaw’. Even after this, as she again attempted to decipher the timetable, she soon gave way and ‘became humbled before him, for in the space of a few seconds he had grown mysteriously and powerfully masculine to her’. Clearly, there was an element of performativity here, with characters fulfilling prescribed gender roles (despite an apparent attempt at transgression by Hilda). The ability to read and understand time and timetables was presented as a male preserve.

Yet, the female passenger certainly existed from the start of rail travel — even the lone female, who was constructed as a source of particular concern. In 1868, it was suggested that ‘for ladies, travelling alone, and without previous experience of Routes ...’ this book will be found very useful, especially if some of the information they require for the journey be previously filled in for their guidance’. Presumably a man would assist with gathering the advance information about the journey. Similarly, handwritten advice on an 1853 poster timetable expressed concern for lone female travellers: ‘perhaps the 9.0 am would be best for ladies alone, [as being] the least crowded’. The timetable gave the bald detail; it did not, other than with its indication of the class of service available, provide qualitative or social information. This comment seems likely to have been a response, by the company, to a communication from a concerned passenger. The physical form of the timetable became a site for the negotiation of gender relations, marked up to preserve the ‘sensibilities’ of the lone female from the ‘danger’ of busy trains. At the same time, this also reflected the increased freedom that women were able to secure during the nineteenth century: albeit slowly, ‘respectable’ women were understood to be able to travel without a chaperone.
Nonetheless, the gendering of timetable information and use was not as stable as these examples suggest. In 1869 ‘an unprotected female’ — presumably lone — complained of inaccurate timetable information that meant that she was ‘condemned to wait for three-quarters of an hour in the dismal Chelsea station’. Taking issue with the booking clerk at the station, the woman was able to turn to the timetable to prove her case: ‘I at once bought a timetable, was able to turn to the timetable to prove my case: ‘I at once bought a timetable, turned to page 30, pointed out the train marked 9.29’. Although drawing upon contemporary notions of femininity, the ‘unprotected female’ also moved against the gender roles that prescribed that she should not be able to read a timetable correctly.

On occasion, gender roles were reversed: men were assisted by women. Wilkie Collins has Arnold Brinkworth try the timetable: ‘“Here’s the information I want … if I only knew how to get at it. ‘Down’ – ‘Up’ – ‘A.M.’ – ‘P.M.’ What a cursed confusion! … ” Anne joined him … “I understand it—I’ll help you. … She followed the intricate network of lines and figures with her finger’ and found the time that Arnold was after. Clearly, some women were more than capable of reading timetables — just as some men were: but not all. Rather than seeing timetable reading as innately masculine or feminine, it is more productive to understand timetables as a literary puzzle.

Some timetables were evidently not as complete as passengers desired. A pocket timetable of 1907 shows evidence of the user’s additions to make the timetable more relevant to their needs [11]. The details of an evening service to Barry Pier station have been added in, as have the details of a morning service between Grangetown and Cardiff. The additions followed the dominant conventions of the timetable: the ‘p.m.’ to indicate evening; the underlining of ‘7. 3’ service to show that it terminated at the Cardiff (G.W.) station and did not continue to the Clarence Road station. These additions again reflected the design trade-offs between space available and completeness of information. There was no layout that would cater for all people and all purposes.

Finally, timetables were not always used in ways that were envisaged by the designers. As early as 1844, newspapers included letters of complaint about unpunctuality. Timetables — and the information they contained — were used against the railway companies to try to hold them to account for late-running services. Time was already a fiscal matter; now the representation of time became a legal matter. In 1851, ‘a constant reader of The Times’ asked whether it was possible to pursue the companies in the courts for damages suffered as a result of late-running trains and ‘whether any penalty attaches to the publication of that monthly mass of fiction called the “ London and South-Western Railway Time Table? ”’. It was later suggested that ‘[the] timetable ought to be in law a contract on the part of the company, entered into as soon as they receive the passengers’ money. … such time-table to be evidence in a Court of law in all matters concerning the arrival of trains’. Timetables became a mechanism through which time was contested.

### Conclusion

It should be remembered that, however
This article adds to the growing literature that explores relations between design and everyday life. As this case study has shown, by concentrating upon a specific item — the timetable — we can access wide conceptions of the past. This focus adds further depth to our understanding of daily life and mobility in the nineteenth century, clearly demonstrating how timetable design played a crucial role in guiding people through the complex railway system that they might encounter, from the 1850s onwards, almost daily. It becomes possible to see how design could encourage — or hinder — travel. Yet, the history of design opens up further avenues: analysis of the symbolic meanings of timetables has yielded interesting insights into how multiple spatial and temporal understandings were promoted and disseminated through graphic design. Design reflects — and possibly produces — changing mentalities.

The focus on the production of design is, however, only half of the story. A crucial element, until recently so often disregarded, is the application of design. Again, by concentrating upon timetables, we have seen some of the ways in which documents had unintended/unexpected uses — whether as vehicles for communication of readers’ comments, as a means to hold companies to account or as a site for performing gendered identities. By concentrating upon users’ marks on documents and the difficulties experienced in using timetables, we can see how designed information did not necessarily meet the needs of its audiences and how users could become designers.

Further research could usefully explore the relationships between timetables and other forms of transport information, such as cab guides. Further research could usefully explore the relationships between timetables and other forms of transport information, such as cab guides. Further research could usefully explore the relationships between timetables and other forms of transport information, such as cab guides. Further research could usefully explore the relationships between timetables and other forms of transport information, such as cab guides. Further research could usefully explore the relationships between timetables and other forms of transport information, such as cab guides. The focus on the origins of such functional documents as timetables is important: it historizes the discipline that has become known as ‘information design’ and can provide pertinent lessons to contemporary designers. Changes in the design of timetables since 1914 show that designers have considered passengers’ needs, even if only to a limited extent. Yet, the continuities — particularly the matrix structure — show that some designs have persisted despite demonstrable flaws and evidence to suggest that they might not be the most effective ways of communicating complex information to passengers. A greater awareness of the precedents and design solutions of the past might produce benefits for readers of the present.

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If you have any comments to make in relation to this article, please go to the journal website on http://jdh.oxfordjournals.org and access this article. There is a facility on the site for sending email responses to the editorial board and other readers.

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Fig 11. Barry Railway Pocket Timetable, May 1907, inside pages, detail 132 x 52 mm, from page 100 x 325 mm. The passenger’s additions — a substantial intervention — include the addition of a station (Barry Pier, in the column ‘Stations’, added between Barry and Barry Island) and the addition of an extra service between Grangetown and Cardiff at 6.59. Reproduced by permission of The National Archives: Rail 981/22.
sions of this paper.

Notes

50 The Railway Travellers’ Handy Book, op. cit., p. 22.
52 Drummond, op. cit., p. 38.
53 Dickens, in noticing railway time replacing natural time in Dombey and Son, also noted timetables as markers of the new railway order that was displacing the old Britain. Dickens, op. cit., p. 155.
54 Simmons, The Victorian Railway, op. cit., p. 247.
56 On the American experience, see Zerubavel, op. cit., p. 10.
59 For more on these points in the American context, see Marrs, op. cit., pp. 441 – 52.
60 Simmons, The Victorian Railway, op. cit., p. 190. See also, Zerubavel, op. cit., pp. 7, 19; Turner, op. cit., p. 185.
64 Turner, op. cit., p. 186.
66 The Times, 3 January 1866, p. 7, col. f; The Times, 17 April 1846, p. 2, col. f.
67 The Times, 29 August 1874, p. 9, col. c.
68 The Times, 21 October 1884, p. 12, col. b.
72 Schivelbusch, op. cit., p. 58. See also pp. 24 – 7.
74 On the role of the railway in the standardization of place names and the creation of new towns, see Simmons, The Victorian Railway, op. cit., pp. 190, 345 – 59.
75 Bartram, op. cit., p. 305.
77 Railway Geography’, Punch, 6 February 1847, p. 59.
78 Transport timetables are today recognized as extremely complex and typically provide users with directions as to the meanings of the constituent parts of the timetable.
79 Instructions were only included when the complexity of information increased — and even then these instructions did not explain how to read the timetable, but were typically restricted to explanations of the various symbols that were used in the table.
80 Railway Gazette, 12 March 1909, p. 356.
82 Burnand, op. cit., p. 46.
84 The Times, 20 September 1890, p. 9, cols. d-e.
86 The Times, 29 September 1950, p. 5, col. e.
89 The Railway Traveller’s Handy Book, op. cit., pp. 32 – 3.
92 Bradshaw’s Traveller’s Diary and Route Record, W.J. Adams, London, 1868, p. 2.
93 TNA Rail 981/599, London and North Western Railway timetable poster, September 1853.
94 Pall Mall Gazette, 8 July 1869, p. 3.
96 The Railway Travellers’ Handy Book, op. cit., p. 22.
97 This is in part at least a consequence of the institutions which have preserved timetables: copyright libraries, such as the Bodleian or the British Library, received pristine copies direct from the publishers. Those timetables which were owned and used were ephemeral; they were produced for a purpose, used and discarded when the information was outdated (often on a monthly basis).
98 TNA Rail 981/22, Barry Railway, pocket timetable, May 1907.
99 For example, The Times, 1 October 1844, p. 5, col. f; The Times, 17 April 1846, p. 2, col. f; The Times, 3 August 1846, p. 2, col. f.
100 The Times, 22 August 1851, p. 8, col. a.
101 The Times, 3 January 1866, p. 7, col. f. Such comments continued at least until the First World War. Particularly significant in this vein were the discussions in The Times, 10 October 1852, p. 7, col. d; The Times, 22 November 1873, p. 9, col. e.
102 Burnand, op. cit., pp. 25, 26. See also, The Railway Traveller’s Handy Book, op. cit., p. 100. This solution to finding timetable information is seen in the recent withdrawal of the printed national timetable: instead, passengers can use the telephone- or internet-based enquiry systems which provide information specific to the individual passenger and their needs.
103 Dobraszczyk, op. cit.
“A picture tells a thousand words” – bus timetables with a difference in Bass Coast

By STEVEN HABY

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT 90% of timetables are published in a strictly tabular format enabled so helpfully by software programs like Microsoft Word and Excel. The standard format more or less is the timing points, stops or stations down the left hand side and times running along the rest of the page towards the right edge.

Back in December 1999 I wrote an article for The Times on Transborder Express’ Canberra to Yass service which was presented in an innovative format blending the elements of the traditional tabular format with a more visual design. I wrote at the time that I believed that this timetable was quite unique for the time. To be fair I have not come across such interesting examples. Until now.

In December 2015 I moved from Melbourne to Wonthaggi and during my transition period spent considerable time looking at prospective places to live and with a (somewhat hopeful) view of even being able to catch public transport to work.

Perusing the Bass Coast Shire website I discovered that the Council had prepared a series of pictorial bus timetables for all services that operate within the Shire. These are a mix of V/Line services provided under contract by Westernport Road Lines and Ventura to the local town and inter-town runs provided by South Coast Bus (a subsidiary of Moreland Bus Lines).

Each timetable on the website is a PDF document containing a photograph of every single bus stop and the times that it is serviced. An example of such a timetable is shown in the diagram below of the Wonthaggi to Cape Paterson run.

To the tourist or newly arrived resident or even in fact a long term local this approach to providing a visual cue to the prospective passenger is invaluable particularly when local town service buses have tended to have a reputation of providing little to no information in the past. Indeed it would almost be a truism to suggest that such information is (or was) considered to be secretive.

The webpage for the timetables in pictorial form is here at http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/Services/Roads_Parking_Transport/Transport/Pictorial_Bus_Timetables. All of them can be downloaded as PDF files.

As somewhat of an irony in the last few weeks the local town services have been operated by buses other than the regular unit which has an electronic destination display on its header. The replacement buses have just an A3 piece of paper with “WONTHAGGI TOWN SERVICE” shown rather than the actual destination shown.
Soapy Sponge—The First Anorak?

BRENDAN WHYTE

ROBERT SMITH SURTEES (1805-1864), a sport (i.e. fox-hunting) journalist, wrote a number of humorous horse-and-hounds novels in the mid-19th century, most famously Jorrocks’ Jaunts and Jollities (1831/1838). His second most famous title was Mr. Sponge’s Sporting Tour, serialised 1849-51 in Harrison Ainsworth’s New Monthly Magazine and published as a book in 1852. ‘Soapey’ Sponge is, as his surname suggests, a sponger, surviving as a horse jobber by attending local hunts, inveigling the owner of the pack to invite him to stay for weeks on end, and, by his own sheer riding ability, inducing unsuspecting hunting gentry to offer to buy his cheap and nasty mounts. He is a cad, and an anti-hero, but by no means as brutal or deserving of being conned as many of his hosts. Set on rural estates in an unnamed shire, the book includes the typically Dickensian features of social satire, humour, and descriptively-named characters, but without Dickens’ sentimentality.

Sponge has no hobbies or interests beyond ensuring a roof over his head and food on his plate... and that both are provided by someone else. But for an outdoorsy horsey-hunting man, his choice of reading matter is surprising, and Surtees introduces it to us in chapter 19 (of 70) while Sponge awaits breakfast time on a wet day at the home of Mr. Jawleyford, at which he has just spent his first night:

“Must get through the time as well as I can — girls to talk to — house to see. Hope I’ve brought my Mogg,” added he, turning to his portmanteau, and diving for his “Ten Thousand Cab Fares.” Having found the invaluable volume, his almost constant study, he then proceeded to array himself in what he considered the most captivating apparel; a new wide-tail coatee, with outside pockets placed very low, faultless drab trousers, a buff waistcoat, with a cream-coloured once-round silk tie, secured by red cornelian cross-bars set in gold, for a pin. Thus attired, with “Mogg” in his pocket, he swaggered down to the breakfast-room, which he hit off by means of listening at the doors till he heard the sound of voices, within,...

Mr. Jawleyford looked out on the terrace, upon which the angry rain was beating the standing water into bubbles, and observing that there was no chance of getting out, asked Mr. Sponge if he could amuse himself in the house.

“Oh, yes,” replied he, “got a book in my pocket.”

“Ah, I suppose — the ‘New Monthly,’ perhaps?” observed Mr. Jawleyford.

“No,” replied Sponge.


“No, nor that either,” replied Sponge, with a knowing look; “a much more useful work, I assure you,” added he, pulling the little purple-backed volume out of his pocket, and reading the gilt letters on the back; “‘Mogg’s Ten Thousand Cab Fares, price one shilling!’”

“Indeed,” exclaimed Mr. Jawleyford, “well, I should never have guessed that.”

“I daresay not,” replied Sponge, “I daresay not; it’s a book I never travel without. It’s invaluable in town, and you may study it to great advantage in the country. With Mogg in my hand, I can almost fancy myself in both places at once. Omnibus guide,” added he, turning over the leaves, and reading, “Acton five, from the end of Oxford-street and the Edger-road — see Ealing; Edmonton seven, from Shoreditch Church — ‘Green Man and Still,’ Oxford-street— Shepherd’s Bush and Starch Green, Bank, and Whitechapel — Tooting — Totteridge — Wandsworth; in short, every place near town. Then the cab fares are truly invaluable; you have ten thousand of them here,” said he, tapping the book, “and you may calculate as many more for yourself as ever you like. Nothing to do but sit in an arm-chair on a wet day like this, and say, If from the Mile End turnpike to the ‘Castle’ on the Kingsland-road is so much, how much should it be to the ‘Yorkshire Stingo,’ or Pine-Apple-place, Maid Vale? And you measure by other fares till you get as near the place you want as you can, if it isn’t set down in black and white to your hand in the book.”

“Just so,” said Jawleyford, “just so. It must be a very useful work indeed, very useful work. I’ll get one — I’ll get one. How much did you say it was — a guinea? a guinea?”

“A shilling,” replied Sponge, adding, “you may have mine for a guinea if you like.”

So with Edward Lear we ask: who, or where, or why, or what, are the cab fares of Mogg? Edward Mogg was a real-life 19th century London publisher, engraver and map seller. Nothing is known of his personal life (Tooley’s Dictionary of Mapmakers (rev. ed., 2003, v.3, p.265) cannot even supply life dates). But between 1803 and 1860 he issued a number of maps and travel guides to London, and road maps of England and Wales, particularly helpful for travellers to avoid gouging by the private providers of the various public transport services in London. His works (some of which ran over a dozen editions) include:

- Street Directory, being a list of all the Streets, &c in London (1800);
- Mogg’s Twenty Four Miles Round London [Map] (1850);
- Mogg’s New Hackney Coach Fares (1810?);
- Stranger’s Guide to London and Westminster (1817);
- Mogg’s Table of the New Watermen’s Fares (1828);
- Mogg’s New Plan of London [Map] (1834);
- Mogg’s Handbook for Railway Travellers, or, Real Iron-road Book (1840);
- Mogg’s Omnibus Guide, and Metropolitan Carriage Time Table (1844);
- Mogg’s Ten Thousand Cab Fares (1849); and
- Index to the Streets, Squares, and Cab Stands, Comprised in Mogg's New Cab Fare, Distance Map, and Guide to London (1859).

Advertisements in the London Times newspaper in the 1840s proclaimed that the cab-fares book alone “will repay the purchaser the money expended to procure it more than a hundredfold in a twelvemonth.”; and as late as 1875, Mogg is mentioned in the same way the A-Z is today as the quotidian London street map, at the end of chapter 6 of The Naggletons (1875) by Punch columnist [Charles William] Shirley Brooks (1816-1874):

Mrs. Naggleton, with a triumphant smile, takes out “Mogg” from the sideboard drawer, and placing the map before her, measures the distances between various places and one point to which she always recurs, a Terrace near Hyde Park.
Gardens. We wonder whether we shall meet her there.

But with Sponge, rather than being a one-off joke, Surtees, who often spends up to a page describing Sponge’s dress each day, returns to the character’s lectorial fixation with Mogg, until the reader is unsure whether Surtees is simply reinforcing Sponge’s obsessional character, mocking Mogg and his readership, or perhaps getting paid by the word for product placement:

Having again got himself into the killing tights and buckled pumps, with a fine flower-forward shirt, ere he embarked on the delicacies and difficulties of the stancher, he stirred the little pittance of a fire, and folding himself in his dressing-gown, endeavoured to prepare his mind for the calm consideration of all the minute bearings of the question by a little more Mogg. In idea he transferred himself to London, now fancying himself standing at the end of Burlington Arcade, hailing a Fulham or Turnham Green ‘bus; now wrangling with a conductor for charging him sixpence when there was a pennant — “Conduit-street, George-street, to or from the Adelphi-terrace, Astley’s Amphitheatre, Baker-street, King-street, Bryanston-square any part, Covent Garden Theatre, Foundling Hospital, Hatton Garden” and so on, till the thunder of the gong aroused him to a recollection of his duties.

Mr. Sponge sat moody in his chair, alternately studying Mogg’s “Cab Fares” — “Old Bailey, Newgate-street, to or from the Adelphi, the Terrace, Islington for.”

…

… Jawleyford, too, who was more hospitable at a distance, and in imagination than in reality, had had about enough of our friend. Indeed, a man whose talk was of hunting, and his reading “Mogg,” was not likely to have much in common with a gentleman of taste and elegance, as our friend set up to be.

… The smirking housemaid, who was just rolling the fireirons up in the hearth-rug, greeted him with a “Please, sir, we’ve shifted you into the brown room, cast,” leading the way to the condemned cell that “Jack” had occupied, where a newly-lit fire was puffing out dense clouds of brown smoke, obscuring even the gilt letters on the back of “Mogg’s Cab Fares,” as the little volume lay on the toilet-table.

… Mr. Sponge was sitting in solitary state, in the fine drawing-room, studying his old friend Mogg, calculating what he could ride from Spur-street, Leicester-square, by Short’s gardens, and across Waterloo-bridge, to the Elephant and Castle for, when the grading of a vehicle on the gravelled ring attracted his attention.

Sponge finally seems to meet his match in chapter 60, when invited to stay with Mr. Facey Romford:

“Shall we have a game at cards? or what shall we do to pass the evening?” at length asked our host. “Better have a game at cards, p’raps,” continued he.

“Thank’e, no; thank’e, no. I’ve a book in my pocket,” replied Sponge, diving into his jacket-pocket; adding, as he fished up his Mogg, “always carry a book of light reading about with me.”

“What, you’re a literary cove, are you?” asked Facey, in a tone of surprise.

“Not exactly that,” replied Sponge; “but I like to improve my mind.” He then opened the valuable work, taking a dip into the Omnibus Guide — “Brentford, 7 from Hyde Park Corner — European Coffee House, near the Bank, daily,” and so worked his way on through the “Brighton Railway Station, Brixton, Bromley both in Kent and Middlesex, Bushey Heath, Camberwell, Camden Town, and Carshalton,” right into Cheam, when Facey, who had been eyeing him intently, not at all relishing his style of proceeding and wishing to be doing, suddenly exclaimed, as he darted up — “B-o-y Jove! You’ve not heard me play the flute!”

“Indeed,” replied Sponge, now passing on into Mogg’s Cab Fares — “Aldgate Street, Hare Court, to or from Bagnigge-Wells,” and so on, when Facey struck up the most squeaking, discordant, broken-winded “Jump Jim Crow,” that ever was heard, making the sensitive Sponge shudder, and setting all his teeth on edge.

“Hang me, but that flute of yours wants nitre, or a dose of physic, or something most dreadful!” at length exclaimed he, squeezing up his face as if in the greatest agony, as the laboured — “Jump about and wheel about” completely threw Sponge over in his calculation as to what he could ride from Aldgate Pump to the Pied Bull at Islington for.

“Oh, no!” replied Facey, with an air of indifference, as he took off the end and jerked out the steam. “Oh, no — only wants work — only wants work,” added he, putting it together again, exclaiming, as he looked at the now sulky Sponge, “Well, what shall it be?”

“Whatever you please,” replied our friend, dipping frantically into his Mogg.

At the end of the novel, Sponge meets Lucy Glitters who can ride as well as he, and abruptly marries her, settling down to establish a business in London — Sponge Cigar and Betting Rooms — but not before much mental agony as to what honest trade he can turn his hand: He thought over all the ways and means of making money without capital, rejecting Australia and California as unfit for sportsmen and men fond of their “Moggs.”

Thankfully times have changed and the acceptance of the present paper by the ATA’s journal “The Times” comprehensively proves that Australia is no longer so backward as to be considered “unfit for men fond of their Moggs”!

**MOGG’S NEW HACKNEY COACH FARES**

Calculating from & accompanied by, an entirely New and Correct Admeasurement

**ARRANGEMENT OF THE Several Distances contained in the Work; To which is added, An Abstract of the Law, and a Summary of the Rates of Platings.**

PUBLISHED BY EDWARD MOGG.

No. 54, Clergy Cross.

This 1810, 248-page, edition of Mogg’s New Hackney Coach Fares, begins (pp.1-8) with some interesting regulations, remarkably similar to those applying to taxis today, over 200 years later:

Number of Hackney Coaches.

The commissioners may licence 800 coaches by 9 Ann. c.23 [i.e. the 23rd act passed in the 9th year of Queen Anne’s reign, that is, 1710]; 200 more by 11 Geo. 3. c.24; and 100 more by 42 Geo. 3. c.78; total 1100.

Abusive Language.

By 9 Ann., c.23, the drivers of coaches, and carriers of chairs, on demanding more than their fare, or giving abusive language,
are to forfeit not more than £5, and, in
default of the payment, they are to be sent
to the house of correction seven days.

Extortion.
By 1 Geo. 1. c.57, coachmen refusing to
go on, or extorting more than their fare, are
to forfeit not more than £3, nor less

Not only commissioners, but also
justices, may determine offences, and
inflict punishments.

Obligation to go
And they shall be compellable on every
day, and at any hour of the night, although
they may have been out twelve hours, to
go with any person or persons desirous of
hiring them, and no more than the regular
fare allowed on such occasions.

Off the Stand.
Hackney coachmen, whose coaches are
standing in the streets, although off the
stand, are compellable to go with any
person desirous of hiring them, and, in the
case of refusal, are liable to be fined,

unless they prove they were hired at the
time. And in case of leaving their coaches
unattended, whether hired or not, are liable
to a penalty not exceeding five pounds.

Not Stage Coaches.
By 48 Geo. 3. c.8, hackney coachmen are
not to ply for promiscuous passengers
when returning from the country, on pain
of £3, nor less than 20s. but this is not to
prevent their taking up regular fares.

Option of Fares of Distance.
Fares to be calculated for time or
distance, at the option of the coachman,
and not by the day, as heretofore.

Time of Sunset.
Since the period of sunset has been found
constantly liable to dispute, it is therefore
now regulated that the sunset hours shall
be after nine in the evening between Lady-
day [25 March] and Michaelmas [29
September], and after seven in the evening
between Michaelmas and Lady-day; and
the back-carriage, after such hours, shall be
taken to the carriage-way pavement, or
next standing beyond which the coach was
hired from (if hired at an stand of the said
pavement) at the full fare back to either, at
the option of the party discharging.

And so on at the rate of 6d. for every half
mile, and an additional 6d. for every two
miles completed.

General Rules for Time
And so on at the rate of sixpence for every
fifteen minutes further time.

After this regulatory summary, the volume
tabulates distances and fares to the two
major London theatre districts on pages 9-
13 (Opera House, Drury Lane and Covent
Garden; and Vauxhall, Sadler’s Wells,
Astley’s and the Circus), probably the
most popular purpose for which it was
consulted. Then comes a list of London’s
principal cab stands (pp.13-16), then
comes the main content (pp.17-242), the
listing of distances and fares to and from
notable locations, listed alphabetically
beginning with Aldersgate Street:
And so on through the alphabet until the last tabulation, to and from Tottenham Court Road. The alphabet is rounded off with half a dozen more locations, from ‘Tottenham Court, New Road’ to ‘Whitechapel Bars, Aldgate High-Side’, having only a two-line entry each, noting their proximity to a previously tabulated location, from which “Fares may be readily computed”. The guidebook ends with half a dozen pages (pp.243-248) tabulating chairmen’s and watermen’s fares:

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### Chairmen’s Fares

For the first hour (if paid by the hour) 0 1 0 0 0 6 0 0 0 6
For every hour afterwards 0 0 0 6
For any distance not exceeding 1 mile 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 1 0
And so on at the Rate of Sixpence for every Half Mile afterwards.
Chairmen travelling are subject to similar penalties with Hackney Coachmen; and are under the control of the same Commissioners.

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### Fares of Watermen.

From London Bridge, Westward.
The following distances are chargeable: for

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### Oars 8d. Scullers 6d.

From London Bridge, to Temple or Old Barge House.
Three Cranes, to Strand Lane or Surrey Stairs.
Queenhithe, to Somerset Stairs, or Cuper’s Bridge.
Paul’s Wharf, to Adelphi.
Blackfriars Bridge, to Whitehall, or King’s Arms Stairs.
Temple, to Westminster Bridge.
Hungerford, to Lambeth Stairs, or Horseferry.
Lambeth Stairs, to Nine Elms.

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### Oars 1d. Scullers 9d.

Lon. Br. to Westmin. Br. or Wonden Br.
Blackfriars Bridge, to Lambeth Stairs, or Horseferry.
Street Lane, to Vauxhall, or Feather’s Stairs.
Hungerford, to Nine Elms.

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### Oars 2s. Scullers 1s.

From London Bridge to Nine Elms.
Temple, to Chelsea Bridge.

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### Watermen’s Fares.

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[The rest of the text is not transcribed due to the page limit.]
While hardly riveting reading, for someone familiar with London, as Sponge certainly was before the commencement of his countryside sporting tour, perusing Mogg could offer hours of interest, not only to fictional characters like Sponge, but to real-life 19th-century Londoners and visitors, and even to modern collectors of transportational documentary ephemera. Perhaps Sponge should be retrospectively elected an honorary historical member of the ATA?

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