

again an innovation closely linked to the restrictions of the ferry operation, in that it allowed quick coupling and splitting of the individual units to minimise time losses and allow a fast, direct service to different destinations in Jylland. In 1997, another quantum leap was taken when the fixed Great Belt link replaced the ferries, but the DSB has stuck to DMU operations (and now also electric ones) into the present day. Two short supplementary chapters discuss maintenance facilities and the procedures for ticketing and reservations, which were an essential part of the service.

Other topics take second place in the book, but there is reference to the policy context of the time in that budget restrictions and management priorities had their influence - indeed, the IC3 concept is said to have been instigated by a politically driven liberalisation of long-distance bus services. Several of the new technical concepts took their time to really work - in this respect, not that much seems to have changed. We also learn something about the people who used the trains, though usually indirectly through remarks about service concepts like the (limited) on-train catering, business and family compartments. From the perspective of cultural, social and political history, the information provided on these aspects seems of course rather limited, but in this respect one must accept that the author's priorities were different. The only real omissions are the lack of figures on passenger volumes to give at least some idea of the service's popularity, and a very short rushing through the origins of the Lyntog concept - the book basically starts with the opening of the service.

Denmark continues to have a high level of passenger rail use despite the rural character of much of the country and the limitations imposed by its geography. The Danish example is less comprehensive and less well known than the Swiss, but nevertheless remarkable. For those able to follow the text, this book gives a good impression of what it takes to provide an efficient and attractive passenger service.

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Richard Vahrenkamp, *The Logistic Revolution: The Rise of Logistics in a Mass Consumption Society*, Cologne, Josef Eul Verlag (2012), 7 + 281 pp.

This translation of Professor Vahrenkamp's magisterial survey, *Die Logistische Revolution* (originally published in 2011), will be widely welcomed. It integrates transport history (particularly twentieth-century road-rail freight competition) with the broader story of the development of mass production, mass distribution and mass consumption from the late nineteenth century to the present. In particular, the author shows how the development of new distribution channels and the proliferation of branded packaged products by manufacturers, department stores and retail chains changed the logistic imperatives of warehousing centres and networked distribution to the benefit of truck transport. The emphasis is on the German experience and chapter six summarises the firm views the author developed in his separate 2010 book on the early autobahn network. Europe-wide perspectives on (surprisingly uniform) interwar rail policy responses and differing political sympathies for the plight of small shopkeepers are also evident. The European view is particularly well developed in the post-war chapters, where Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia and Alpine crossings receive special attention. The usual frame of reference - for both distribution and intermodal transport competition - is the US experience, since development of supermarket chains and replacement of rail by truck (and latterly air) transport came later in Europe. The postwar removal of inefficiencies in national road transport regulation often required the intervention of the European Commission and European parliament, enabling the creation of Europe-wide distribution networks, but that left the railways seriously disadvantaged by their national focus. The wooden spoon went to eastern Europe, whose leaders' continuing devotion to the railways and related heavy industry and neglect of innovative logistic services were major causes of late, putrefied and damaged merchandise, wide consumer

dissatisfaction and the eventual collapse of the communist political system.

The omission of an index in a book of this kind is a deplorable false economy. The translation into English is somewhat idiosyncratic and occasionally non-existent ('Forth' is not a Scottish river but an ordinal number and, for the puzzled, a 'roman' is a 'novel'). However, the historical exposition is largely free of jargon and the meaning is usually clear enough with a little lateral thinking. Inevitably in a work of this ambitious scope it is easy to find lacunae. Harrods, Debenhams, John Lewis, Selfridges, Woolworths and some Co-ops would no doubt have been surprised to learn that, in the department store sector, 'Official trading organisations for officers in HM Forces dominated in England' or that stores 'targeted the upper classes' (p. 16) in contrast to their French and German equivalents. Since the important works on UK retailing by Peter Mathias and J. B. Jefferys (and some by Peter Scott and John Benson) are missing from the bibliography, the reasons for that particular misjudgement are clear. The date given for the nationalisation of French railways is also a decade adrift.

Nonetheless this excellent book is a good starting point for course reading on the subject and is also recommended as a bibliographic guide, particularly to the extensive German literature, for anyone wanting to delve deeper.

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Christopher W. Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History*, Seattle, University of Washington Press (2012).

Christopher Wells' environmental history of the automobile in America to 1960 fills an important gap concerning our knowledge of the complex relationship that evolved between the adoption of the car and changes in the land. Indeed, both rural and urban use in the US experienced a profound transition during the

first half of the twentieth century, much of it due to the widespread diffusion of the automobile. But it was not a one-way street, so to speak, as landscape changes did much to prepare the way for the automobile to be at the centre of American life. As highways and byways were constructed in response to the needs of numerous constituencies and resulting traffic, the nation became covered with concrete and asphalt, its non-renewable energy reserves depleted, and its air fouled. Concurrently, however, in the trade-off, Americans reaped the benefit of sustained economic growth, flexibility and freedom for the constraints of space, a psychological obsession with speed, and the conveniences associated with a saving of time.

Beginning with a survey of transportation during the late nineteenth century and ending with the emergence of a full-blown automobile-dependent Car Country in 1960, Wells takes us on a rather relaxed journey that centres on the built environment, arguing that the evolving constructed environment resulted in an America where for most individuals, cars became indispensable to everyday living. Thus what we are left with is a classic case of path dependency. Yet imbalance rather than authentic flexibility was the dominating characteristic inherent to American transportation options by the mid twentieth century. And in attempting to understand how and why this happened, Wells subsequently pursued a line of scholarship that takes us to this book.

Divided into four sections and held together with a chronological thread, the author's main argument is that land use in America was the key to determining American driving patterns. Land was set aside for various types of thoroughfares (the infrastructure), and traffic laws, policies and practices were negotiated amongst a group of technical specialists, urban planners, business interests, politicians and the public. What ultimately emerged was a monoculture 'that sacrifices environmental resiliency and complexity', and that this 'lost complexity is not just ecological, but social, technological and economic as well' (p. 289). The spirit of this book, then, borrows much