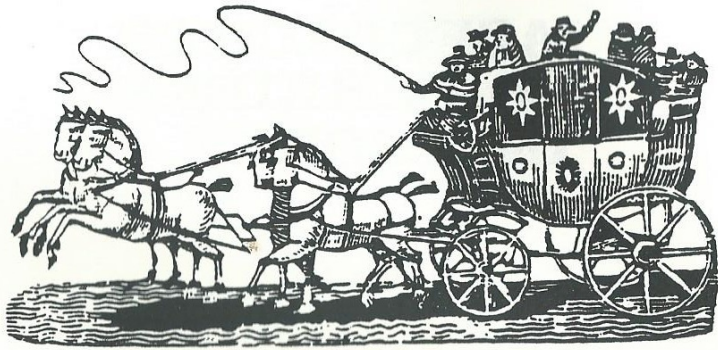


*NINETEENTH CENTURY
STAGECOACHES
AND CARRIERS
IN THORNE*

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Stagecoaches and Carriers in Thorne



From the Nineteenth Century, printers and newspaper publishers kept in stock a number of standard blocks which could be used whenever appropriate. One which featured a coach could be added to announcements by proprietors and also by the inns which provided the hospitality to travellers.

This illustration has been used by the printers in Thorne for over a century, under the successive managements of Messers Whaley, Wrigley, Tate and Thompson.

It is shown enlarged; the actual width is 66mm.

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STAGE COACHES AND CARRIERS IN THORNE DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Doncaster was a major coaching centre in stagecoach days, its importance in this respect reaching its apogee in the years 1815-35⁽¹⁾. However, Thorne, 12 miles away, and a town in its own right, made its own individual contribution to coaching history. In this it was not of course the equal of Doncaster, which lay on a major trunk route, the Great North Road, and at the junction of several important branch roads from it. But the coaching industry required facilities in many places, often as little as ten to twelve miles apart. These facilities, or infrastructure as I prefer to call them, included inns for the refreshment of passengers and the changing of horses, coachbuilders for the repair and maintenance, as well as the building of vehicles, harness makers and blacksmiths to shoe the large number of horses.

During the coaching age Thorne never had any coachbuilder of significance that I have been able to discover, although James Parkinson,

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coachbuilder and wheel wright, resident in Ellison Street/South End, was active in the 1850s and 1860s, just after the great coaching days, and was succeeded by Edward Parkinson, perhaps his son, during the 1870s. It did have suitable inns and blacksmiths in sufficient quantity. The number of inns reflected the fact that Thorne was a market town, from 1658 when it received a market charter, if not earlier; there were five blacksmiths in the town centre in 1822 and nine in 1837. In those years two saddlers and harness makers were active in Thorne, Robert England figuring in both years. It was a place of some size with 2655 inhabitants in the census of 1801 more than half the size of Doncaster.

Thorne thus had sufficient infrastructure to support coaching operations. But before the 1780s its traffic, certainly by land, was for the most part, essentially purely local, although there is a reference in a petition of 1748 relative to the bridge over the old river Don, to Thorne being on the 'direct Post road from London to Hull'. However during the latter half of the 18th Century Waterside had developed as a port, not

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least as a transshipment centre for traffic going higher up the River Don. One fancies there was from this time some kind of carrying service between Waterside (Thorne Quay) and Thorne town centre, but there was apparently not felt to be any need for a regular public coach service even from Doncaster until the steam packets began sailing between Waterside and Hull in 1816. (Sailing packets had operated the route since 1809).

Admittedly the road between Doncaster and Thorne at that time was probably not in the best of repair. Not until June 1825 did a Doncaster – Thorne Turnpike Act reach the Statute Book, although as early as 1809 a Doncaster - Hatfield turnpike had been proposed. The Doncaster – Thorne was one of the last turnpike trusts to be set up in the Doncaster region, although it went into decline after scarcely thirty years once the railway had reached Thorne in 1855-6. This road nevertheless saw a considerable amount of coach traffic before 1825. On 7 May 1787 we hear of a twice weekly Hull – Doncaster – Sheffield service which must have passed through Thorne, as a Mr Eyre of Thorne, probably a local

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innkeeper, (but of which inn I do not know), was a partner in it.



At that time Hull – London coach services proceeded via York. But on 14 June 1799 the *Rodney* coach (Hull to Doncaster via Howden and Thorne) was advertised as connecting at the Reindeer Inn, Doncaster, with the *Paul Jones* coach to London, thus saving 30 miles on the York route. On 2 August 1799 another ‘direct’ Hull to London service was announced, taking 34 hours via Thorne and Doncaster (Black Boy

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Inn). Both services were thrice weekly and between them covered five days of the week. The latter's advertisement stated that it was quicker than via York and 'safer' than a possible alternative via Barton Waterside (and the Humber ferry) and Lincoln. The Thorne stop in this latter service must surely have been at the White Hart, in the Market Place, as Thomas Vause, its landlord, was stated to be a partner in it. It seems likely that the *Rodney* coach also stopped there at that time. In any event it is probable that the two services were quite soon amalgamated into one, under the *Rodney* title, which continued for many years.

Vause had taken over the White Hart in June 1794, having previously been landlord of the White Hart in Crowle. He and latterly his widow Elizabeth remained there for at least forty years. Vause must surely be reckoned the great name in Thorne coaching. The White Hart's association with the London – Hull coaches was not its only interest in local transport in Vause's early days as landlord, because the Bawtry and Selby Turnpike Trustees held some of their meetings at

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the White Hart⁽²⁾ although other times the Red Lion⁽³⁾ was also used; likewise inns in Snaith.

Both of these Thorne inns were even then not new. The White Hart bears the date 1737; the Red Lion dated from the early 18th Century. A room in the latter was used from 1723 for vestry meetings; the Vestry purchased this in 1819 and the room was later used by the Thorne County Court and even the Magistrates' Court. The Bawtry-Selby Turnpike, which of course ran through Thorne, and whose Act received the Royal Assent in 1793 was of significance in Thorne coaching as for a time the London-Edinburgh Mail Coach was apparently transferred to this route at Bawtry, and thus bypassing Doncaster through which it had previously travelled. ⁽⁴⁾ Pressure from Doncaster soon restored the *status quo ante*, so the story goes, but before that happened, it is likely that Thorne – possibly the White Hart – was a stage in the Mail's journey. Horses for Mail coaches were changed every 15-20 miles and Thorne is 14 miles from Bawtry.

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In 1816 the Thorne – Hull steam packets began sailing from Waterside.⁽⁵⁾ The packet's owners were Darley & Co., but its agents were stated to be Thomas Varley, or more probably Barley, the landlord of the Blue Boar Inn in Thorne Market Place, and Thomas Downing of Thorne Quay. Downing was probably at that time, and certainly was in 1822,⁽⁶⁾ the landlord of the John Bull Inn there, which was doubtless called after the first of the Thorne steam packets, a vessel originally built at Gainsborough and at first used in the Gainsborough – Hull steamer service for about a year after August 1815. The name *John Bull* was also assigned to many of the connecting coaches to the packet sailings from Doncaster, and later from Sheffield, though probably not to the first one, owned by W. Iredale & Co., which ran for a time after 11 October 1816 from the Ram Inn in High St., Doncaster to Waterside. Another connecting coach, from Leeds and Wakefield met the packet at New Bridge on the Dutch River, in both directions. Iredale's coach had apparently ceased to run by March 1818 as there was then said to be a 'want of a regular conveyance' to and from Doncaster. Consequently the *John Bull* coach

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was at that time advertised to run to Waterside thrice weekly (on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and back on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, in connection with the packet's return workings) from the Black Swan in Doncaster Market Place.

It is tempting to nominate the John Bull Inn at Waterside as the Thorne terminal of this coach and *Baines' Directory* of 1822 suggests that it actually was, in that year at any rate, for a coach which it describes as the 'Old John Bull'. The 'New John Bull' coach at that time apparently ran to and from the Canal Tavern, probably in connection with the boat services to Keadby up the Stainforth and Keadby Canal which linked with the Gainsborough – Hull steamers down the river Trent, which had been sailing as packet services since 1815, if not earlier. But the 1818 advertisement mentioned above maintained that its coach arrangements were made with Thomas Barley, who had by that time become landlord of the Red Lion, actually sometime around the beginning of July 1817. It would probably have been this Inn, and not the John Bull, described in the Doncaster Gazette as a 'good

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TRAVELLER's House', which serviced the coach at first. Later the Red Lion and White Hart were involved with the *John Bull* coach. It was not unusual for passenger boats sailing from Waterside to have agents in the town centre, a mile distant – particulars of a market boat advertised in 1825 from Crowle Wharf (Whitgift) to Doncaster via Waterside were available from the Red Lion in Finkle Street, Thorne rather from one of the Waterside inns, as one might expect.

In 1818 the *Rodney* coach, now part-owned by Richard Wood, who was already the major Doncaster coachowner, was still running, now daily, between Sheffield and Hull and back, with connections to and from London at Doncaster, still calling at the White Hart in Thorne in both directions, leaving for Hull at 10.30am., and for Doncaster and Sheffield at 12 noon. But, especially after their service became a daily one in 1820, the steam packets were beating the *Rodney* for speed and possibly for comfort, especially over a 'full' journey from Sheffield or Doncaster to Hull, despite the change necessary at Waterside. A fare reduction by the *Rodney's*

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proprietors in January 1821 had little effect and the service was discontinued in April 1823. Wood had already protected his interests and regained some of the lost business by cutting into the *John Bull* coach during 1822.

Vause, who was still landlord of the White Hart, had of course also lost business by the demise of the *Rodney* and he, like Wood, soon embarked on a damage limitation exercise. On 16 April 1824 a new *Rockingham* coach was advertised to run daily, Sundays excepted, from 3 May 1824, from Doncaster (later Sheffield) to Waterside to connect with the steam packets to Hull. This coach was jointly owned by Vause and George Dunhill landlord of the Angel Inn in Frenchgate, Doncaster, and called en route at the White Hart in Hatfield and of course at the White Hart in Thorne. Wood felt that this threatened his interests and it counted for nothing that Vause had until so recently been a partner of his in the now discontinued *Rodney* coach. There is evidence that Wood put pressure on Anderton's, the Doncaster coachbuilders, with whom he did much business on his own account, not to deliver Vause and Dunhill's coach on time for

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the scheduled start on 3 May. They did receive it some days late and there ensued two and a half years of price-cutting, in which the Vause/Dunhill combination perhaps had an advantage, and some improvements, especially in speed. Here Wood's *John Bull* coach won out because it was a four horse coach rather than a pair coach. By sheer determination Wood won the 'war' by the end of October 1826, which was probably bad news for the White Hart. The whole story is an illustration of how cut-throat an affair the stage-coach business could be.

The White Hart in 1826 still had the Doncaster – Selby – York Mail service (I have no note of when this began), which left for York at 4.30pm (4pm in 1828, 3.30pm in 1834). By 1828 this service appeared to call at the Red Lion in Finkle Street in addition to the White Hart. The return working from York left Thorne at 9.30am. Vause died some time before 1831 as the White Hart was advertised on 20 April 1831 for sale by auction. Vause's widow Elizabeth may have been the successful bidder at that time as we hear of her as the landlady of the White Hart in 1834, and in June of that year she contradicted a

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report that she had given up the White Hart. The York Mail service may not have lasted much longer than 1834 and there is no mention of it in *White's Directory* of 1837. The direct Doncaster – Selby Turnpike road was by now ready for heavy coach traffic and the route via Thorne was some seven miles longer.

Milepost in Fieldside, Thorne.

The town's position, midway along the Turnpike, made it the ideal place for changing horses.



In the summer of 1834 a fresh coach ‘war’ broke out and this also involved the White Hart to some degree. It concerned the *John Bull* coach which had recently had to undergo further competition from coaches connecting Sheffield, not this time with the packets at Waterside but with the Gainsborough to Hull steam packets at West Butterwick on the river Trent.⁽⁷⁾ Now another coach called the *Red Rover* – the same name adopted by the West Butterwick coaches,

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but I am not sure what, if any, connection there was between them – set up in opposition to the *John Bull* in the Sheffield – Waterside route. Two ‘open letters’ published in the advertisement columns of the *Doncaster Gazette* give the general picture. First the *John Bull* put its case in the issue for 20 June 1834:

JOHN BULL COACHES SHEFFIELD, DONCASTER AND THORNE WATERSIDE

JAMES BOOTH returns his most grateful thanks to his Friends and the Public for the liberal support he has experienced in the above line of Road and begs to inform them, that in consequence of a combination which has been formed between some of his Partners to run his coaches off the Road, he has been induced to REMOVE THE JOHN BULL COACHES from the TONTINE to the COMMERCIAL, KING’S HEAD and ANGEL INNS at Sheffield and from the RED LION to the WHITE HART INN, at Thorne.

It is well known that the JOHN BULL COACHES were established when the STEAM

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PACKETS commenced running from Thorne Waterside to Hull [not quite accurate; see earlier] and they have ever since (and most of the time under the management of Mr. RICHARD WOOD, one of JAMES BOOTH'S present Partners), summer and winter, afforded a safe, expeditious and respectable conveyance and J.B. pledges himself that no piratical or deceptive means which his opponents may resort to, shall prevent the JOHN BULL COACHES from running as usual and it is with the greatest confidence that he makes this appeal to his Friends and the Public and respectfully solicits a continuance of their patronage. Performed by

	William Bradley	
General Coach Office,		Samuel Barnet
Sheffield		
Rein Deer Inn,	James Booth	
Doncaster		Richard Wood
Doncaster		
June 17 th 1834	Elizabeth Vause	Thorne

The opposition responded two weeks later, on 4 July as follows:

RED ROVERS

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The Proprietors of the above COACHES would be wanting in gratitude to a DISCRIMINATING AND GENEROUS PUBLIC if they did not return sincere acknowledgements for the decided preference shown them since the recent alterations in the Packet Coaches for Sheffield to Hull.

The Rovers will continue to be worked in the same style of excellence that has given them their present pre-eminence and leave Sheffield at a Quarter-past-Five every Morning (Sundays excepted) arriving at Thorne Waterside in time for the old-established and respectable line of packets from Hull.

Performed by	W.L. BICKLEY	
	DANL.	HOPKINSON
Sheffield		
	THOS. PERCIVAL	
	GEO. DUNHILL	
June 28 th 1834		JOHN KAYE
Doncaster		
	THOS. BARLEY	Thorne

P.S. W.L. Bickley cannot allow this opportunity to escape of contradicting a statement set forth in the Doncaster Gazette of June 20th and

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purporting to come from Mr James Booth. W.L.B. denies most equivocally for himself and Mr Barley of Thorne that any combination ever existed against Mr Booth and thus publicly challenges Mr Booth to say, whether he had not the choice given him of becoming Partner in the Rovers which is surely no proof of a desire to run his Coaches off the Road. The John Bull Coach was given up by W.L. Bickley and NOT REMOVED by Mr James Booth.

Several facts emerge from this exchange of Correspondence. Barley, who as we have seen, was the landlord of the Red Lion in Finkle Street, had prior to 1834, staged the *John Bull* but now performed that function for the new *Red Rover*, the *John Bull* moving to the White Hart. The full details of the subsequent history of this row are not known, but by May 1839 the *Red Rover* to Thorne is listed among Richard Wood's coach services! The *John Bull* packet coach was still operating (though by whom is not clear), for it was involved in an accident on 17 October 1839, resulting in one fatality, but perhaps not for long afterwards as nothing further is heard of it.

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The packet coaches were until the 1850s known as *Red Rover*, at the Doncaster end they operated from both the New Angel (Dunhill's inn) and the Reindeer (a Wood and Booth stronghold) and in Thorne from both the White Hart and the Red Lion. Some kind of a merger had obviously been arranged between the warring factions of 1834. As on many days in the 1840s up to five coaches ran on the *Red Rover* service, there was plenty of business for everyone.

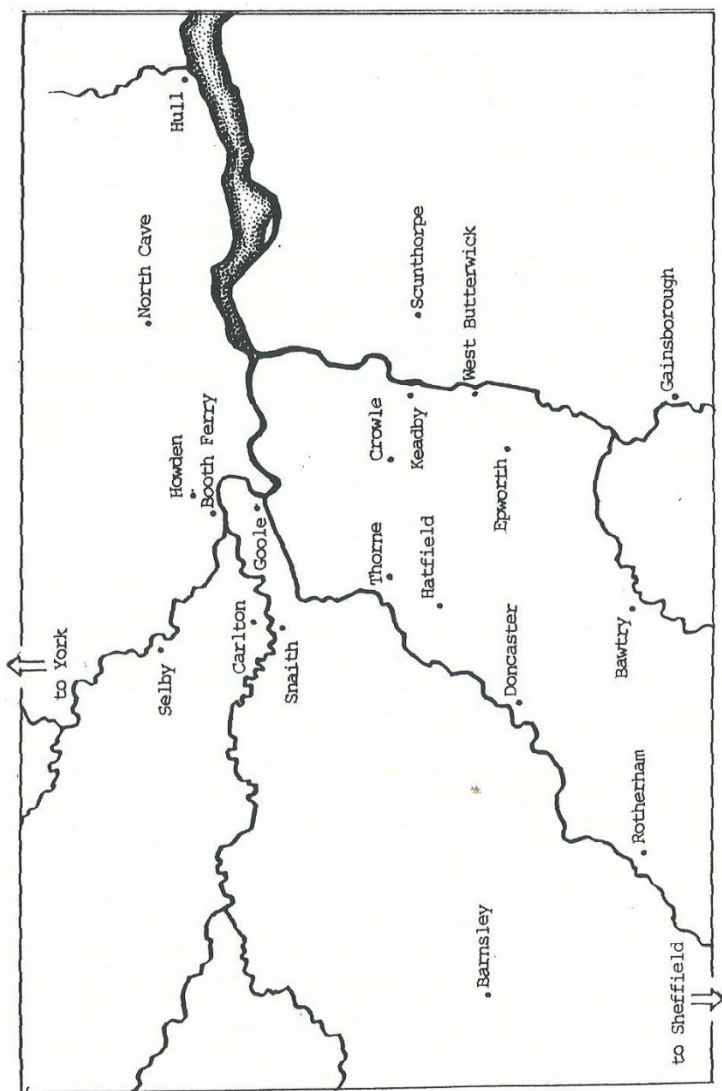
The late 1830s saw the White Hart's coaching traditions holding up well. The York Mail may have been lost, but on 24 January 1835 *The Times* market coach left the White Hart at 8.45am Saturdays only (later 9am) and, after stops at the Green Tree and the Bay Horse, Hatfield, arrived at the Reindeer Inn Doncaster at 10.15am. Return was scheduled from Doncaster at 3.30pm. The coach was apparently owned not by Mrs Vause but by one John Chantrey (or Chantry) who also drove it. Chantrey had, by his own account, established a Market Coach some seven years before and, as we shall see, was involved as a carrier locally for

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many years. The Market Coach service may have been his carrier service.

Then on 6 July 1837 a Doncaster – Hull Mail coach was revived on the route Doncaster (New Angel) – Thorne – Boothferry – Howden – North Cave – Hull, leaving Doncaster at 2pm and Hull at 5.30pm and taking six hours on the journey. (A Hatfield – Thorne – Goole – Boothferry turnpike trust was authorised in 1826). It did not last long;

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Map showing the places mentioned in the text.

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its fares were cut by 50% in October 1840 and nothing further is heard of it thereafter. But for three or four years, Thorne again enjoyed the prestige of servicing a mail coach. Its proprietors included, besides innkeepers at Hull, North Cave and Boothferry, George Dunhill, still at the New Angel, Doncaster, and at Thorne *both* Barley and George Meakin, then respectively landlords of the Red Lion and White Hart, at both of which intending passengers could book. *White's Directory* of 1837 suggests that this coach, like the *Red Rover*, made stops at both inns in Thorne, in line with the practice of the earlier York Mail. Another Thorne mail service came about on 6 July 1844 when the service from the North Midland Railway at Masborough (Rotherham) to Doncaster was extended to Thorne. Where the Thorne terminal was for this the *Doncaster Gazette* does not say but it is at least possible that it was the White Hart. This is not mentioned in *Slater's Commercial Directory* of 1848, which however lists the *Red Rose* coach as operating daily between Thorne and Sheffield via Hatfield, Doncaster and Rotherham from the White Hart whose landlord at that time was S. Barley, doubtless a relative of Thomas. But this

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coach is unlikely to have long survived the opening of the South Yorkshire Railway between Sheffield and Doncaster in 1849 and it is not listed in *White's Directory* of 1851.

The steam packets ceased sailing from Waterside in 1856 and inevitably the coach services⁽⁹⁾ connecting them came to an end also. For the three years 1856-59, a packet vessel continued to ply up the Stainforth and Keadby Canal from Thorne to Keadby where it made connection with the Gainsborough to Hull steamers. But connections to this by land were effectively in the hands of the South Yorkshire Railway once their passenger trains had reached Thorne probably Thorne Lock⁽¹⁰⁾ in June 1856. After 1859 even the canal packet boat was redundant as the railway itself reached Keadby that year. At the end of the 1860s a direct North Eastern Railway link between Hull and Doncaster via the present Thorne North station ruled out as impractical any ideas of continuing to reach Hull by both land and water from places in South Yorkshire.

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In the late 1850s, there was still one final piece of Thorne coaching enterprise to come, although William Daykin's vehicles were latterly given the relatively new-fangled title of 'omnibus', denoting that their operations were essentially short-haul in character. Daykin was at that time the landlord of the Red Bear Inn in the Green, Thorne, and had first come onto the scene in August 1849, when his coach, the *Columbine* ran a service between the White Bear in Doncaster and Thorne Bridge, where it connected with the canal packet, then similarly named. This service may well have continued to operate until the SYR's passenger trains reached Thorne in 1856. Nothing daunted, Daykin advertised in March 1857 that his 'bus', now entitled *Rapid* would leave the Red Bear at 8am – a timing soon to be changed to 7.45am when its terminus was altered to the Thorne railway station which was then still at the Lock – for New Bridge where a connection was made with an aquabus for Goole; at Goole a further change allowed passengers to board the Ouse steamboat *Empress*, thus providing a Thorne – Hull schedule of three and a quarter hours. A creditable one considering the two changes.

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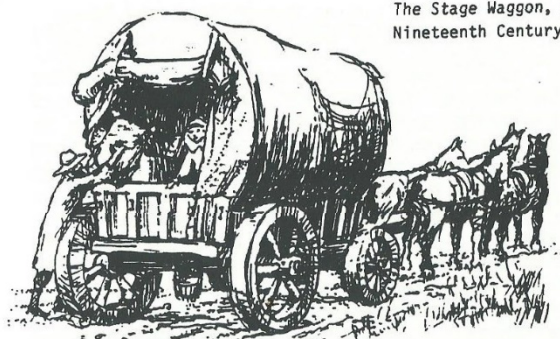
Later that year, Daykin's bus ran from the White Bear, Doncaster to New Bridge, but not during the winter season 1857-8 when its terminus was again at Thorne, probably the Red Bear. The Doncaster connection, which unlike the earlier *Red Rover* coaches to Waterside, at no time connected with Sheffield – Doncaster trains, was restored for the 1858 summer season, but Daykin put up his business for sale in September 1858. Its assets included just six horses and three omnibuses, suggesting the latter were pair horse vehicles rather than four-in-hands, so Daykin's business was never a major operator. It is not known who bought Daykin's business but whoever did made no mark that we know of on the transport pattern of the Thorne district.

THE CARRIERS

We now turn to the local carriers' services. Doncaster, with its large, very long-standing market and as a major road centre since medieval times, had many of these from surrounding towns and villages, over forty of them at their peak in the period 1860-90. The

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carrier, particularly later in the 19th Century, was an essential local figure,



The Stage Waggon, precursor of the Nineteenth Century carrier's cart.

not just in South Yorkshire but countrywide of course. He usually had an average radius of operation of 10-15 miles. He is familiar in the pages of English literature – examples come from Dickens' *The Cricket on the Hearth* and Hardy's *The Woodlanders* – if rather less so in the pages of English transport historians. Essentially a carrier took goods, particularly farm produce, to market, but passengers could also be accommodated, in the same way as had been done by the longer-distance stage waggon (there is again a literary example of this in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, by Dickens). Doncaster's stage waggon services, several of them owned by our friend Richard Wood, were at their peak

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1815-35, but all of them had disappeared soon after 1850, the railway having made them redundant.

Information about carriers is not easy to find, which may explain the historians' neglect of them, but we can acquire some indications of the scope of their services from the various 19th Century Yorkshire directories.

Starting with *Baines' Directory* of 1822, three carrier services are listed, all to Doncaster. The most important – and to be the longest-lived – was John Chantrey's, which was daily except Sundays. As it was stated to be run in connection with the steam packets, it, naturally enough, ran from the John Bull Inn at Waterside. The two others ran less frequently: William Seales, to Doncaster on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, returning (to the Steam Packet Inn, in Silver Street) on Thursdays and Sunday evenings; and William Merrington once weekly, on Tuesdays, from Doncaster to the Marquis of Granby Inn in Silver Street, returning on Wednesday. The Doncaster terminals for all these services, as for most carriers to Doncaster,

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were inns in or near the Market Place, implying that Doncaster Market was the principal attraction.

By the time of *Pigot's Directory* of 1828 these services had expanded. Chantrey and Samuel Downs (sic: surely Downing) operated to Doncaster, from the Market Place and the Marquis of Granby respectively, each three times a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday); Scales still operated from the Steam Packet Inn but only on Thursdays. In addition to those John Bowman (from the Marquis of Granby) and a Mr Reed (from the Steam Packet) worked to Epworth, both on Wednesdays, Thomas Drew (from the Red Lion) to Rawcliffe and Snaith and John Harrison (from the Marquis of Granby) to York, all on Wednesdays and John Jackson to Sheffield, also from the Marquis of Granby, on Tuesday and Thursday.

In 1834 Chantrey was still in business thrice weekly and supposedly worked to Sheffield, though this may have been via a connecting service. Samuel Downing now went to Doncaster daily, Richard Jackson to Sheffield

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(via Doncaster, presumably) three days a week, also from the Marquis of Granby. John Dibbs operated to Doncaster and Barnsley Mondays and Thursdays from the Steam Packet. This is, as regards Doncaster, a fuller provision than in 1822 and reflects perhaps improved prosperity and the fact that the Thorne – Doncaster road was by now turnpike and probably complete, though the work was, apparently not fully so in 1829.⁽¹¹⁾ Carrier provision in other directions from Thorne was sustained too, there being no fewer than three operators in the Snaith direction: George Harrison went to Selby and York via Snaith, on Wednesdays from the Marquis of Granby, Richard Darbyson worked to Carlton⁽¹²⁾ from the Red Lion, also Wednesdays and James Cadman to Snaith but twice weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays, also from the Red Lion. John Stones sustained the Epworth service from the Marquis of Granby, now thrice weekly.

Most of these services, judging from these directories and the *White's Directory* of 1837, had their termini at various hostelries in Thorne. The Marquis of Granby was particularly

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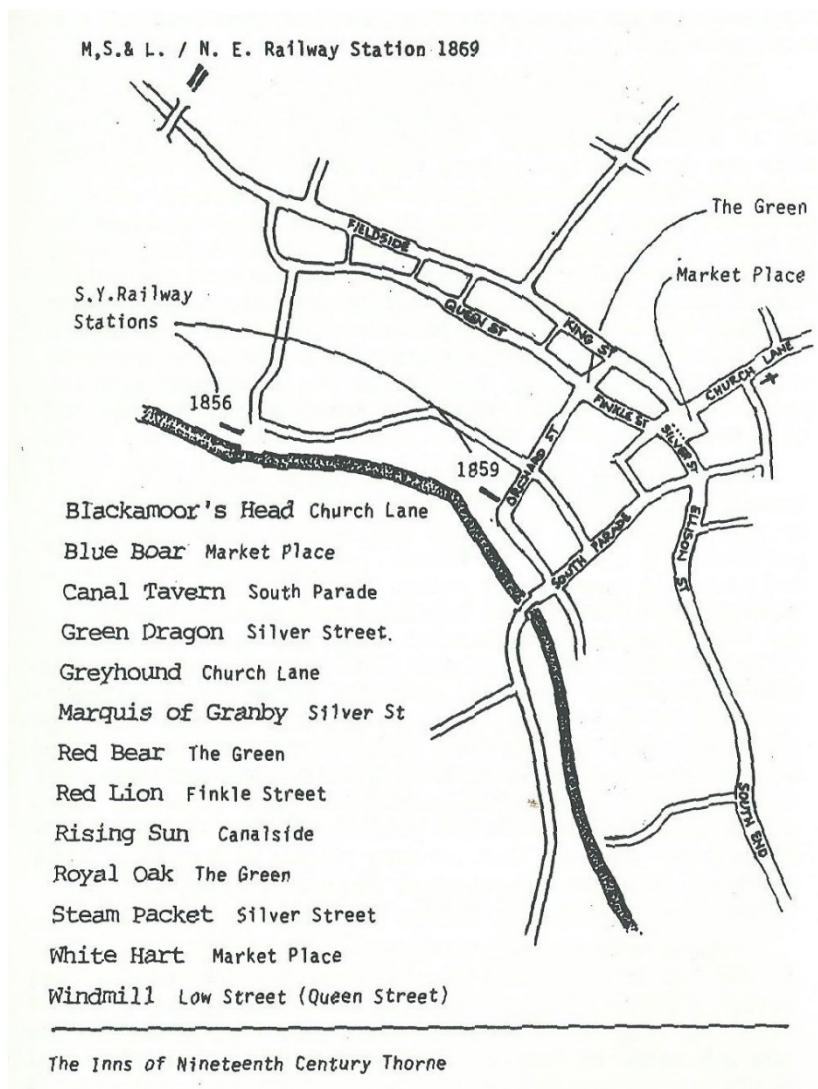
favoured, as we have seen, and even the Red Lion was a carrier terminal. In 1837 Mr Dibb (or Dibbs) still worked to Barnsley, Downing and Chantrey to Doncaster, Mary Jackson (perhaps the widow of Richard) to Sheffield and now daily. Epworth had four services a week by two operators while George Harrison had the Snaith and York direction to himself but worked on Wednesdays only. All, bar Chantrey who operated from his home, were based at the Marquis of Granby in Silver Street.

In *Slater's Commercial Directory* of 1848 many of these services were still working, except that George Brock's Epworth service (Wednesdays only) ran from the Blue Boar, Thomas Fish had replaced Harrison in the Snaith – Selby – York route (Wednesdays and Saturdays) but still working from the Marquis of Granby and there were services to Belton and Crowle, operated respectively by William Crabtree from the Green Dragon in Silver Street and William Walker from the Marquis of Granby, both on Wednesdays only. Downing and Chantrey went daily to Doncaster but the longer distance carrier services to Sheffield and Barnsley were no

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longer listed. Carrier services for Thorne, as for other places were becoming 'short-haul'. Richard Darbyson reappears in the Carlton carrier service, now working from the White Hart.

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By 1851 a further instance of this could be seen as Thomas Fish now only went to Snaith, not York. Darbyson is again not listed. In 1854, a Mr Howdell working from the Red Lion had joined Fish on the Snaith route and Chantrey and Downing still went to Doncaster, respectively twice weekly and daily: these were carriers to Thorne's nearest railheads at that time, Snaith being rather nearer, but Doncaster, because of its direct access to London was perhaps more important. If we study the *White's Directories* for 1858 and 1862 we find the Doncaster, Epworth and Snaith carriers' services still holding up, the latter two on market days only, Doncaster (still worked by the Chantrey family) twice weekly.

The Red Lion was, by 1854, no longer managed by Thomas Barley but by one Thomas Maskell, the White Hart by Henry Fosbroke. Later in the century Hannah Maskell presumably a relative of Thomas, was licensee of the Red Lion for some thirty years, while for some of that time William Maskell was landlord of the White Hart. But the coaching traditions of both inns were in decline by then, with no public services

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surviving. Even Thorne's carrier services gradually faded out, the second half of the century seeing much less carrier activity at Thorne than it did, even relatively speaking, at Doncaster where, as we have suggested, such services reached their peak in the period 1860-90. This was of course owed to the size and prestige of Doncaster's market and the fact that so many places within easy reach of it which had no ready railway connections, needed the carriers, however slow they no doubt were.

Thorne's market was of local significance only, so it was not the focus of carrier services from a wide area. Further, Thorne's direct rail connections were, from the late 1860s onwards, very good – to Goole, Hull and Doncaster by the North Eastern Railway from Thorne North and to Scunthorpe, Grimsby and again Doncaster by the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (later Great Central) from Thorne South – even though neither station was conveniently sited from the town centre. By that time, Thorne had long ceased to be a packet port, the railway having effectively brought about that situation as well.

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So it should come as no surprise to us that carrier services to and from Thorne faded away as the century progressed. *Kelly's Directory* of 1867 lists only Mrs. Chantrey, as successor no doubt to her husband who had carried goods to Doncaster since around 1820, and still carrying to Doncaster twice weekly, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, returning on the same days. That Directory lists a James Ward as an 'omnibus proprietor' in Thorne but there is no suggestion that he operated what we would call a stage carriage service of any significance. It is more likely that he ran an in-town hackney carriage, maybe run by one of the hotels to and from the railway, perhaps the White Hart, which was certainly the case in 1858. The term 'omnibus' often meant such a vehicle at this period.

By 1877 a Mrs. Schofield had taken over the Doncaster carrier service, again twice weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays, but by 1889 she was going to Doncaster only one day a week, Saturday, the main Doncaster market day. In 1908 no carriers are listed under Thorne. Not until the development of the motor-bus and the

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motor-lorry during the 1920s did Thorne's public road traffic begin to revive. But that is another story and one which I hope some day to have the opportunity of telling.

Thorne had thus made a significant contribution to coach and carrier services during the 19th Century. It is in a way surprising that there were so many of them particularly carrier services, as Thorne's water connections, for freight and passengers, up to around 1860 and indeed afterwards for freight, were good and it is received wisdom among transport historians that, in the pre-railway era, where there was navigable water, goods went by water. Clearly that rule has some exceptions and probably there are more of them than we realise. Several of Thorne's inns became involved in road services. The White Hart and, to a lesser degree, the Red Lion were outstanding in this direction, but at times others like the Marquis of Granby, the John Bull, the Steam Packet, the Red Bear, the Blue Boar and the Green Dragon also figured. Stage coaches and common carriers were not the whole story of course, as the White Hart and other important inns would also have serviced

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the post-chaises which could be hired privately for particular journeys and, in the case of richer persons, privately owned carriages also. The efforts of Vause and Barley in particular played an important role in the development of Thorne's prosperity and prestige in the half century after the time, say, of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. They should be remembered, not in any romantic sense, for coaching was a competitive and as we have seen, sometimes bitter, affair and more sophisticated than many people appreciate, but as hard-headed businessmen.⁽¹³⁾

NOTES

- 1 For a short account of this, see my 'Coaching in Doncaster' in *Yorkshire History*, Vol 1, issue No 4 (Jan/Feb 1996) pp 22-24.
- 2 E.g. on 8 September 1795.
- 3 E.g. on 4 August 1794 and 3 June 1799.
- 4 See 'The History and Antiquities of Thorne' (1829, revised 1868) I have not been able to establish the date(s) this happened.

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5 On the steam packets generally, see my 'Packet Boats from Thorne 1809-1860' (Thorne Local History Society Occasional Paper 19).

6 Baine's Directory

7 For details of this, see 'Packet Boats...' pp 10-11. The West Butterwick coaches probably did not go through Thorne but they certainly called at the Blue Bell Inn in Hatfield.

8 Doncaster Gazette.

9 Interestingly these had between 1849 and 1856 connected at Doncaster with trains of the South Yorkshire Railway from Sheffield, thus providing an early example of an integrated rail/road/water service between Sheffield and Hull. The coaches at that period were usually called Red Rover, though sometimes the names Don and John Bull, corresponding to the steamer packets in service, were used.

10 White's Directories of 1858 and 1862 suggest that Thorne's railway station was 'at the Quay' i.e. at Waterside. Certainly if it was, there would certainly have been the need for (as the Directory states) 'an Omnibus from the White Hart meets every train to and from'. But the present writer does not believe that Waterside ever had more than a goods station, and by 1862

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Thorne's passenger station was undoubtedly at Orchard Street, from which an omnibus to the Town Centre would hardly be needed.

11 Cf. *The History and Antiquities of Thorne*.

12 Spelled 'Carleton' in the Directory, but Carlton, near Snaith, is surely intended.

13 I am grateful to Laurie Thorp for supplying or confirming certain information, and for drawing the maps and illustrations.

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