



## Railway Man

*Mitchell Deaver*

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Railway Man begins with author Mitchell Deaver paying a nostalgic visit to Bickle signal box, base of boyhood adventures described in his first book Railway Boy. Shortly after, he leaves rural Yorkshire for life in the big cities. It is 1968. Railway Man describes the emotionally devastating draw-down of steam traction on British Railways. Three steam sheds remain: Carnforth, Lostock Hall and Rose Grove. The end comes when the last steam train runs on 11th August. The total steam ban is unbearable. Mitchell Deaver's brainchild, the Return to Steam Committee, tries to get steam back on British Railways. In 1980 Mitchell Deaver achieves a boyhood dream and becomes a signalman on the busy North London Line. Railway Man describes the realities of operating a mechanical signal box, one that is open continuously. Life as a signalman is not without incident. A mischievous letter prompts a visit from senior management. Signal box operations degenerate into a scene from the Marx Brothers. A signalmen's night out turns into a baffling conspiracy. In this true story set in the cities of Birmingham, Liverpool and London and spanning two decades, Railway Man describes a monumental battle between, on one side, Mitchell Deaver's love of railways and, on the other, forces that try to draw him elsewhere. Which side wins?

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