



# The Picturesque Railway: The Lithographs of John Cooke Bourne

*Dr Matt Thompson*

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## **The Picturesque Railway: The Lithographs of John Cooke Bourne** Dr Matt Thompson

John Cooke Bourne (1814—1896) is among the foremost artists of the great industrial period. In the space of just under 10 years, he documented the construction of the railways, and with it, the transformation of the British landscape. From the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s, Bourne's work focused primarily on the building of two major railways: the London and Birmingham and the Great Western. Bourne brought a skilled technical eye to his work, taking the notion of the picturesque and fusing it quite deliberately with the aesthetics of industry. Fantastically detailed and beautifully executed, his work illustrates everyday life and changing industry and was, in part, designed to allay the fears of those who saw railway building and the relentless progress of industry during the period as the destroyer of the unspoiled English countryside. A fascinating collection to celebrate and record the life and times of this seminal British artist.

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