

1851 was 327, particularly from Liverpool, and they carried 39,000 emigrants.<sup>22</sup> There were also many sailings from other ports, such as Southampton, as indicated by this advertisement from John Marshall & Co which appeared in the *Banbury Guardian* on 27 March 1845, under the heading Emigration to Canada via Southampton:

“First Class ships of large tonnage will sail from Southampton docks every month for Quebec and Montreal commencing 27<sup>th</sup> March. Passengers for these ships will be conveyed from the Vauxhall Station [in London] by railway, free of cost, alongside the ships; and will then, in 3 hours, be as far advanced as the Isle of Wight”.

The advertisement’s selling point, apart from travel free on the new-fangled railway, was “avoiding the delays and dangers of the passage from the Thames by the Downs and the narrow part of the English Channel.”

Of course no mention was made of other dangers of the journey, which varied from the minor to the catastrophic. Among the former was the case of the boy from Brackley St Peter who got lost on the way to London in 1844. The Brackley Union had to certify that no extra expense had been incurred by the parish as a result of “the lost (but subsequently found) boy Taylor” who missed the train from Wolverton to Euston en route to Southampton and therefore had to travel in a 2<sup>nd</sup> instead of 3<sup>rd</sup> class carriage. The Clerk of the Union was instructed to write to the Birmingham Railroad Company asking for a reduction from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> class prices, and remarkably was granted a refund of £3 9/-. The explanation of this mishap is revealing of the stresses caused by the decision whether to emigrate – “the late hour the family of Eyres made up their mind to go, the night before starting”.<sup>23</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum was the incident commemorated by a fountain on the green at Shipton-under-Wychwood, which carries the words “This fountain was erected by public subscription in the year 1878 to the memory of the 17 parishioners who perished in the *Cospatrick* by fire on her voyage to New Zealand November 17 1874”. No doubt this accident was exceptional, and most emigrant ships made the journey across the Atlantic safely, but the early years of the traffic to Canada pre-dated steam and the sailing ships were at the mercy of the vagaries of Atlantic weather. Not until the 1860s did steamships replace sail and in so doing cut the journey time by nearly three quarters (from six weeks to twelve days).

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<sup>22</sup> Papers relative to Emigration to the North American colonies, Parliamentary Papers xxxiii, 1852 p 16.

<sup>23</sup> Brackley Union Minutes June-July 1844, NRO PL1/4, pp152, 160.