

An ode to Mansfield... by Andy Castledine

November 22, 2018



Riding on the rail network recently, I passed through a number of places that were decimated by the closure of the coal mines post war to the 1990s. Whilst the purpose of these musings is not to revisit the closures, it certainly struck me that for reasons I don't know nor understand the government and civic leaders certainly failed to prepare the area for the post mining world. These days we call it succession planning or sustainability.

In the rail industry are we sleep walking the same way – as increasing levels of automation and technology marches into the work place? Some might argue it's unlikely given that a lot of our industry technology still creaks along from the 1990s and much earlier and we still use our trusty fax machines. For the first time there now exists challengers to take on the BR era and immediate post BR era technology.

Should we stop here; knowing that continuing on this path is this risky, and we run the risk of mass unemployment? Is the risk of mass unemployment overstated? I suspect it is unless mitigated by succession planning and a ruthless focus on customer experience.

In future, it will not be enough for consumers, for the railway just to be the a means of travel, the journey experience will be as important as the destination. For experience we need people not computers or automation to add value, or we'll simply replicate the civic leaders and politicians who failed the former mining communities.

The full article can be read here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ode-mansfield-andy-castledine/?published=t>

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