

# The Engineer

Ian Anderson

All along the new straight track we  
plough the old fields under.  
Seven good feet and a quarter inch,  
broad rails to steal the thunder.  
100 picks in '36 sent navvies to meet their maker  
as black Box Tunnel worms its way  
past the Company undertaker.

Hard, cast in iron, that engineer:  
God bless Isambard!  
Piston-scraping, furnace-busting,  
(he) plays the winning card.

Rain, Steam, Speed at Maidenhead -  
Turner's vision wide.  
Over bridges, girders, hot-driven  
rivets safely guide  
passenger wagons from Paddington  
to Bristol's briny blue.  
On to break the waves, with a thousand  
horses, turn the churning screw.

Hard, cast in iron, that engineer:

God bless Isambard!  
Piston-scraping, furnace-busting,  
(he) plays the winning card.

But those bonnie lads from way 'oop  
North, had to have the final laugh:  
the ripe new age was the standard  
gauge, four foot, eight and a half.  
And rolling out across all Europe,  
across the mad, bad Empire world  
came the age of steam and the engines  
roaring, bold brazen Jack unfurled.  
Arching palaces at Praed Street,  
stand lofty and serene;  
home to their maker and his last two  
miles to sleepy Kensal Green.

Hard, cast in iron, that engineer:  
God bless Isambard!  
Piston-scraping, furnace-busting,  
(he) plays the winning card.