'A Master Whose Heart is in the Land': Picturing the Tourist Utopia of the Great Western Railway, 1897 – 1947.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the images of landscapes and locations used by the Great Western Railway Company (GWR) in their advertising and publicity material from 1897 to 1947. It argues that the GWR made sophisticated use of such images and used landscape imagery as a way, not only to appeal to a wide and varied audience of tourists and potential travellers, but also to construct a deep historical context for the company; this historical context reinforced the company's authority and echoed their paternalistic management practices at the time.

The research challenges the idea that the 'motoring pastoral' of the inter-war period and beyond was a unique phenomenon by demonstrating that the GWR' landscape imagery can be viewed as a 'railway pastoral'. Such a notion pre-dates the widespread introduction of the motor-car and influenced the imagery associated with motoring that was to become so popular from the 1920s on. It argues that the motoring pastoral owes a significant debt to the railway's picturing of landscapes that came before it.

The thesis puts forward the concept of the 'tourist utopia' whereby landscapes and locations were portrayed in a highly idealised manner thus highlighting the difference between the experiences on offer to the tourist and the everyday world of work. The tourist utopia of the GWR was characterised by a marked heterogeneity insofar as several differing portrayals of landscapes such as rural, historical or technological, could co-exist within the same geographical location. Such heterogeneity, it is argued, reflects the marketing practice of market segmentation and demonstrates that the marketing of mobility in Great Britain was well developed in the years prior to 1914 and continued to develop during the inter-war period.

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Acknowledgments

Declaration

I declare that this work is original and no part of it has been previously published at the time of submission.

J E M Thompson

Preface

An overview of the project.

This thesis is one of the final outputs of a four year collaborative research project that was undertaken between 2008 and 2012. The project was entitled *The Commercial Cultures of Britain's Railways 1872 – 1977* and was led by Professor Colin Divall at the University of York. The project was predicated on the understanding that railways carry with them aesthetic and cultural meanings and significances far beyond the practical, utilitarian role that they play within society and industry. It saw the development of the railways and, most significantly, their advertising and marketing material as embedded in cultural processes while still retaining the commercial imperative to sell services, maintain market share and increase the value of stocks. In total there were two PhD projects, including the one that led to the production of the present work, and one postdoctoral project. The partner PhD project looked specifically at the ways in which the passenger was pictured by the railway companies in their advertising and marketing material and is, at the time of writing, very nearly complete.[1] The postdoctoral research is expected to be completed sometime in 2012 with a monograph set to be the published at some point in the following year.

However, outwith the more traditional academic outputs, there are other ways in which this research will be disseminated. As has already been stated, the overall project was a collaborative affair with the University of York representing the academic element, the non-academic partner has been the National Railway Museum (NRM) based in York. The NRM has had a long and productive relationship with the

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[1] Alex Medcalf, "Picturing the Passenger as Customer in Great Britain, 1903 - 1939" (unpublished, York: University of York, 2011).

University of York through the Institute of Railway Studies and Transport History (IRS&TH) which is based at the Museum. In the case of the *Commercial Cultures* project this relationship has been vital as the NRM holds within its collections the majority of the sources material explore and interpreted by the researchers. Along with a large collection of locomotives and other vehicles the NRM has a vast amount of advertising and marketing material from guidebooks and pamphlets to posters and personal archives. Without access to this material it would not have been possible even to begin the research and the hard work of the staff in providing copious records, books and documents needs to be officially recognised as a significant factor in the success of the project as a whole. Working collaboratively can often be problematic but, in this case, the past four years have been equally exciting and beneficial for both parties.

Given this relationship it should come as no surprise that the research would be incorporated into a major exhibition at the NRM which, at the time of writing, is in production. All of the individuals involved in the academic work have, at some time or another, worked closely with staff at the NRM providing information and analysis that has helped to inform temporary exhibitions that have already been put on or to feed into longer-term development work. It has been a lively and satisfying process to be involved with and knowing that ones work will help to underpin a exhibition that will be seen, and engaged with, by hundreds of thousands of people makes a welcome and significant change to more traditionally exclusive academic outputs most usually associated with such research projects.

The collaborative nature of the research that has ultimately produced the following thesis was particularly pronounced and it was somewhat different in emphasis than

the associated work on picturing the passenger or the postdoctoral research. It was

funded through an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) supported

programme of work called *Beyond Text* which set out to explore, in the widest

possible terms, non-textual means and methods of communication and research.[2] The

present work was included within the ambit of the *Beyond Text* programme because it

set out to explore the specifically visual ways in which landscapes and locations were

pictured by the railways, in this case the Great Western Railway (GWR), in their

advertising and marketing material and not to focus on the textual elements which are

so often afforded precedence by historians. In some sense this was a pragmatic

decision as the textual output of the GWR had been covered in some detail in a

previous PhD project.[3] In another sense it was a response to the fact that, within the

collections of the NRM, there existed a huge number of original negatives, well in

excess of 30,000, from the GWR's own photographers which effectively made up the

primary material from which the company created their illustrated guidebooks and

other advertising and marketing material. Published guidebooks could be studied but,

because of the existence of the negatives and other associated material, it was possible

to go back a step further and explore the context in which such material was actually

created.

The intensely visual nature of the project has had an impact on the finished article.

This thesis has far more illustrations included in it than would normally be

appropriate, or encouraged. I make no apologies for this, there are over 130 images

throughout the text and these are included, not only to provide support for the

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[2] See www.beyondtext.ac.uk
[3] Alan Bennett, *The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness* (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2000).

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interpretation and analysis, but also to reinforce in the mind of the reader that this is a piece of research based primarily on visual sources.

Such an approach had its drawbacks. The collaborative nature of the project meant that museological issues such as the care, storage and access to material had to be negotiated with curators and carried out in line with museum policy and best practice. This is very often something that the historian does not encounter directly; material is made available in reading rooms and libraries and it is the archivist or curator who concerns themselves with the care of the items. But, in this case, the photographic collections at the NRM had had received very little in the way of academic attention until the commencement of the *Commercial Cultures* project. This meant that, very often, curatorial decisions surrounding access had a direct impact on what could be studied, when, where and how. This was particularly pronounced when carrying out the research that would eventually become the core of Chapter Eight. Historical idiosyncrasies in the listing and cataloguing of negatives and the need to acclimatise negatives that were brought out of temperature and humidity controlled stores meant that the research strategy had to be adapted to suit. However, working so closely with the NRM meant that any issues could usually be resolved quickly and positively. It is however, worthwhile for the historian to be broadly aware of museological practice if only to enable them to understand and appreciate the difficulties that might be had in providing a document or item for study.

As will become evident while reading this thesis, collaboration was the key to success. Such a large number of individual items were studied in such a wide variety of media (glass and nitrate film stock negatives, original prints and artwork, posters and handbills, guidebooks and pamphlets) that understanding and working within the

constraints quite legitimately put on access was the only way to proceed. It is hoped that the results speak for themselves.

Sources, structure and format.

Before approaching the body of this thesis it is worthwhile introducing the sources in slightly more detail. As will be shown the GWR were by no means an insignificant company or employer and they were prolific in their production of advertising and marketing material; it is this material that makes up the primary sources of the research. They produced huge numbers of pictorial posters for display at stations and on general hoardings around railway buildings and published more than fifty individual guidebooks, annual gazetteers and other literary works from 1904 to 1947. In addition to this they produced countless pamphlets, folders and handbills. Many of these items were available for study at the National Railway Museum, and where there were gaps in their collection the British Library or National Archives often held copies. The vast majority of this material was profusely illustrated with lithographs, photographs and photogravures and line drawings and it is this material that that been studied.

If the published output of the GWR is the primary source then there exists, to borrow a term from archivists, a large amount of 'grey' material, material that is neither primary published nor secondary evidence, that has proved useful in carrying out the work. The National Railway Museum hold more than 30,000 individual negatives that comprise the GWR's own image collection. It has been possible, in several cases, to identify an original glass plate negative from which a particular image, published in a guidebook, was taken and this technique of tracing the image back through the archives has been vital in understanding more about what the GWR wanted to include and exclude in the images of landscapes and locations that it pictured. The NRM also holds a complete run

of the GWR staff magazine which, given the lack of relevant archive material held at the National Archives (TNA), has provided an insight into the business and cultural motivations of the company as a whole.

This last comment raises a moot point; while there are extensive holdings relating to the GWR at the National Archives there is very little evidence indeed relating to the production of their many tourist guidebooks, gazetteers and posters. There are minutes of committee meetings that occasionally refer to advertising budgets or preferred methods of advertising and, where relevant, these have been used to support the argument. But there is next to nothing about the inner workings of the company with relation to their advertising and marketing strategy. Therefore, this thesis has attempted to reconstruct, as fully as possible, the corporate motives of the GWR. Such 'intention-retrieval'[4] can, however, be fraught with pitfalls and, at every step, the work of other historians, geographers and commentators has been referred to underpin and ground the conclusions.

With such a wealth of material available the decision was taken to study those items, or types of items, that had the greatest impact on the market. In this case, circulation figures for guidebooks, posters and magazines were used to make this decision. Inevitably this has meant that some material that can be considered both aesthetically attractive and potentially interesting from an academic point of view has been left out or material that others may see as vital to understanding the company's advertising strategy has been given only a small amount of space; as with the discussion of the GWR's annual gazetteer *Holiday Haunts* in Chapter Seven. In these cases the decision making

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[4] Ronald Dworkin, *Justice for Hedgehogs* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Havard University Press, 2011), 7.

process has been clearly set out in the appropriate chapter along with any relevant supporting material.

This thesis is based around the notion that the GWR did not just market places, landscapes and locations, they played a part in actively constructing popular notions of such places. This process of construction is explored as the creation of a *Tourist Utopia*. Chapter Two sets out to explore and define this key concept along with providing an overview of the other significant concepts that have informed the present work.

Chapter Three begins to define the notion of a railway landscape aesthetic from the period directly before the GWR, and the other railway companies, had begun producing much of their own advertising material or guidebooks. This chapter is intended to set the scene for the chapters that follow by identifying and attempting to explain the reasons why, from the late nineteenth century on, railway tourist imagery rarely included images of the railway itself. This is a key characteristic of the GWR's tourist utopia and one that requires explication and analysis. In addition to this it is important to demonstrate that the material the GWR produced did not appear out of a cultural vacuum but was following in an aesthetic tradition that had developed over the previous 90 years.

Chapters Four and Five look in detail at the GWR's poster output from its beginnings in 1897 to the point at which the company was absorbed into British Railways in 1948. Both chapters begin with review of the relevant literature before going on to discuss general trends within the field. Chapter Four looks at the origins of the railway poster and its acceptance, or otherwise, within the railway press, something that has previously been overlooked, before charting the development of the GWR's own graphic style from

1897 to 1914. In this chapter it is demonstrated that the GWR were quick to make use of the medium of the pictorial poster and showed an ability to develop a complex visual vocabulary that increased in sophistication and confidence up to the outbreak of Work War One. Chapter Five picks up the development of the railway poster in general and the GWR's graphic style in particular after 1914 and follows it through to 1947. In this chapter it is shown that the GWR's tourist utopia became even more complex, exhibiting the marked heterogeneity that characterised the rest of their visual output.

Chapters Six and Seven examine the GWR's guidebooks beginning with a general overview of the development of the railway guidebook and an examination of the reception of the GWR's own publications in the railway and non-railway press. Both chapters make use of the same periodicity; Chapter Six looks at the guidebooks produced up to 1914 while Chapter Seven examines the inter-war publications and the company's annual gazetteer *Holiday Haunts*. Once more, the heterogeneity of the tourist utopia is highlighted along with the marked temporal dissonance which sees the inclusion of many old prints in the guidebooks. The fact that the GWR chose to show tourists images of things they could no longer see is held up as a factor of their desire to locate their tourist utopia within a general historical narrative. Chapter Six introduces the idea that the GWR were responding to a *novelty of place* felt within groups of society that, from the 1890s on, found themselves increasingly mobile and able to travel more freely. It is argued that the images of landscapes and locations were attractive in themselves because of their non-quotidian qualities. Chapter Seven picks up on this and shows how this trend developed into a *novelty of behaviour* towards the 1930s when it appeared that images of landscapes and locations were, in themselves, no longer enough to attract and entice and the images began to show increasing numbers of tourist *performing as tourists* within these locations. These more directive images, it is argued,

demonstrate how the tourist utopia developed over time to take into account changing tastes and desires.

Chapter Eight departs from the examination of the GWR's publicly available advertising material and focuses instead on a series of images called *Types of Great Western Countryside* that were published over a period of more that eleven years in the GWR's company magazine. It argues that, while many of the individual images were also published in the guidebooks intended for purchase and consumption by the public, the choice of images in the *Types of...* series show a distinctly different type of place than that portrayed to the public. It is argued that this difference reinforces the idea that the tourist utopia was predicated on heterogeneity; not only were different tourist groups being catered for, but the staff themselves were presented with a landscape that was edited and manipulated to reflect certain ideals and values. Rather than discuss this in terms of an imaginative geography, this chapter instead describes the *Types of...* series of images as an *interior geography* which further reinforces the corporate nature of the tourist utopia.

Chapter Nine draws together all of the conclusions from the preceding six chapters and examines them against the definitions of the tourist utopia set out in this introduction. It restates the corporate nature of the tourist utopia, its dynamism and its heterogeneity while also outlining areas where further research could be carried out. It demonstrates how the thesis, as a whole, adds to the existing literature on marketing and the railways.

It is the intention of this thesis, therefore, to reposition the cultural outputs of the GWR and to move away from a solely economic view of value and worth and towards a more qualitative understanding of their development and impact on society. It attempts to

explore the influence of the landscape and location imagery of the GWR and understand

the role it played in constructing an aesthetic of mobility.

Chapter One: Picturing the Tourist Utopia.

Introduction.

In recent years, there has been significant discussion surrounding mobility and ways

of experiencing the countryside; through this a dialectic encompassing the technology

of mobility and an appreciation of the countryside has emerged.[1] Matless has

described the phenomenon of the 'motoring pastoral'[2] as something which developed

during the inter-war period characterised by the publication of enormously popular

books such as *In Search of England*.[3] The motoring pastoral can be seen as being

associated with a new way of seeing the countryside and the "freedom of the road"

and also linked in with the idea of seeing *something*, in this case the unspoiled

English countryside, that was on the verge of changing or being lost forever. H. V.

Morton's *In Search of* series of books can be seen as precursors to the popular and

influential *Shell Guides* under the editorship of John Betjeman. In these volumes

leading contemporary artists, among others, were commissioned to write, and in many

cases illustrate, guidebooks to the counties of England. Both John Piper and Paul

Nash[4] produced volumes considered to be of particular merit. Indeed, Shell's

patronage of the arts led to their being dubbed 'the New Medici' in the 1930s.[5]

However, it is the argument of this thesis that the motoring pastoral had its origins in

an earlier aesthetic paradigm one that could perhaps be termed a 'railway pastoral'.

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[1] See, for example, Sean O'Connell, *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Peter Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-historical Geography of England's M1 Motorway* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

[2] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), 63 - 67.

[3] H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (London: Methuen and Co, 1927).

[4] John Piper, *Shell Guide to Oxon* (London: Faber and Faber, 1938); John Nash, *Shell Guide to Dorset* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).

[5] Cyril Connolly, "The New Medici," *Architectural Review*, July 1934, 2.

Such an aesthetic, as with that of the motorcar, fused contemporary developments in mobility with an appreciation of all that was seen to be traditional, rustic or old fashioned. Indeed, as is shown in Chapter Four, the idea that Shell should have been considered as 'the New Medici' is somewhat misleading; as early as 1910 commentators were suggesting 'that the artists who complain of starving on Academical landscapes are living on the railway poster'[6] and, in 1930, the poster artist Tom Purvis commented on the fact that Shell, or at least their staff, were 'relative newcomer[s] to advertising' whereas the railway companies had a great deal of experience garnered over many years of commissioning and working with commercial artists.[7] This suggests just how far into the background the aesthetic achievements of the railways have been pushed through the technological, social and cultural hegemony of the car.

The motoring pastoral can be seen as a significant development in the way in which the countryside was conceived and, most importantly, consumed by tourists. However, in much of the discussion there is little thought given to what came before the motoring pastoral or how much such an aesthetic of mobility may owe to other modes of transport, in particular the railway. What continuities existed between the ways landscapes and locations were portrayed by the railways and those that were portrayed by motorists or companies with pronounced motoring interests? And, if it is possible to talk about a motoring pastoral, given the wealth of advertising and publicity material produced by railway companies from the late nineteenth century on, is it then not possible to talk about a railway pastoral that predated and influenced the development of its motoring equivalent? This thesis explores exactly these

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[6] "Art in the Railway Poster," *Railway Times*, 21 May, 1910, 525.
[7] Tom Purvis, "Lectures Six and Seven, National Society of Art Masters", May 10, 1930, 12, 1990-7283, National Railway Museum.

questions and, as will be shown, the railway pastoral can be seen as a powerful, if complex and at times problematic, aesthetic trope in the decades before the widespread adoption of motoring.

There is a great deal of research needed into how far the landscape aesthetic of the railways influenced that of the motoring pastoral and the notion of the railway pastoral itself requires substantial work to define it and understand its chief characteristics. More traditional understandings of the term pastoral can be seen as developing out of the twin notions of the sublime and the picturesque which are covering in more detail in Chapter Two. This thesis can be seen as the first step in this process of understanding and defining a railway pastoral; it is an extended case study into the ways that a single railway company, in this case the Great Western Railway (hereafter GWR), made use of images of landscapes and locations in its advertising and publicity material.

Harrington has used the term 'railway pastoral' but framed it in a very limited sense stating that it 'represents an attempt to constrain the energy and potential danger of the railway' in particular in the mid nineteenth century.[8] But this definition simplifies the situation and overlooks the complexity of a railway pastoral that, as will be shown in this thesis, to have continued well into the twentieth century. Perhaps in the early years of the railways this was the case, but, as is clearly shown in the following chapters, while images of the railway, such as vehicles and infrastructure, may not have been present in the majority of railway guidebooks and posters there was clearly a railway landscape aesthetic that was utilized by the railway companies to market

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[8] Ralph Harrington, "Representing the Victorian railway: the aesthetics of ambivalence", 2006, http://harringtonmiscellany.wordpress.com/essays/victorian-railway/.

particular regions or specific places. The railway pastoral, or at least that promulgated

by the GWR, was representative of more than just the need to allay anxieties and

fears; it was used to construct a utopian vision of such regions and places that would

encourage people to travel to them. The railway allowed access to an 'unspoiled'

countryside; as a phenomenon, the railway was modern and technological, but it

provided the means through which people could experience places that were

portrayed as untouched by progress. The images of landscapes and locations that the

GWR used in their guidebooks and posters had many facets and included urban and

technological subjects as well as rural ones. But, as has been discussed by Marsh, 'the

rediscovery of the rustic world by the middle classes' in the 1870s as an aesthetic

backlash to the ravages of industrial expansion and urban growth meant that there was

a ready appetite for images of unsullied countryside by the 1900s that continued to

grow.[9] The marketing departments of railway companies, such as the Great Eastern

Railway, capitalized on this, as did the GWR when they began to produce their own

guidebooks in 1904.[10] Images of the rural landscape, including villages, parish

churches and farmland were a significant part of the world that the GWR constructed

but, as will be shown, it was only one aspect of such a utopian vision. This research

also shows that to quantify such an aesthetic as simply *pastoral* would be to overlook

the complexity and sophistication of a phenomenon that, at its height, encompassed

portrayals of urban, technological and industrial landscapes alongside the rural or

agricultural.

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[9] Jan Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in England, 1880 - 1914* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 27.
[10] Payne Jennings, *Photo Pictures in East Anglia* (Great Yarmouth: Jarrold and Sons, 1897); Payne Jennings, *Sun Pictures of the Norfolk Broads* (Ashstead: Art Photo Works, 1897).

By the time Morton was writing *In Search of England* and, in turn, constructing what would become known as the motoring pastoral, the railways had been pushed almost entirely into the background when it came to being a novel way of exploring the countryside. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century railways were both novel and transformational and a new aesthetic emerged in association with new notions of escape from the everyday and the discovery of the landscape; this was to have a strong influence on notions of identity and social standing. Chapter Two of this thesis explores the anxieties surrounding the coming of the railways and the ways in which these were embodied in visual representations of the relationship between trains, infrastructure and landscapes but, writing in 1926, Martin S. Briggs claimed that

> The influence of the railways on the appearance of the countryside has
> been mainly indirect, in the sense of having destroyed the isolation of
> villages and hamlets and with it the local characteristics that they
> possessed.[11]

By this time the railways were no longer seen as an immediate threat to the landscape and what changes they had brought with them were seen as 'indirect'. This contrasts with Briggs' strident description of an inter-war landscape dominated by the motorcar where

> one is surrounded by petrol-pumps, garages, blatant exorbitant cafes run
> by loud-voiced aliens, "souvenir" shops full of Brummagem and German
> products, ice-carts, and innumerable direction-posts to "ladies cloak
> rooms." All the charm of the place has gone in bribes to the tripper...

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[11] Martin S. Briggs, *Rusticus or the Future of the Countryside*, To day and To Morrow (London: Keegan Paul, 1926), 30.

When one sees a beautiful village or landscape prostituted to such ends, one wishes that the petrol-engine had never been invented.[12]

It is clear to see that in the inter-war period the railways were, for some, a 'low impact' form of mobility that allowed the tourist to move about and through the countryside in a far less destructive manner than with a motorcar.

Watts makes the claim that 'it does not follow that inter-war interest in the traditional and the rural was fuelled solely by petrol'.[13] He, quite rightly, suggests that the railways were just as influential and played just as important a part in the inter-war exploration of the countryside. However, his work is limited to a small data set and time period. This thesis attempts to move away from his conception of a 'modern' pastoral and puts forward the argument that there was a highly developed railway pastoral in evidence from at least the late 1890s.[14] A pastoral that would have a significant influence on the motoring pastoral that was to follow it.

The landscape imagery of the railways has received little critical attention from scholars; one of the primary reasons for this lack of critical appraisal is that the source material seems to suffer by dint of its being very attractive. The landscapes and locations portrayed by the GWR in their advertising material were, by turns, dramatic, mysterious, exciting, peaceful or enticing and sometimes several of these at once. The polished nature of the images that were presented to the public in the form of posters, illustrated guidebooks and pamphlets, means that they have a power to seduce the viewer, be they tourist or historian, and transport them to a different place. Such a

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[12] Ibid., 61.
[13] D. C. H. Watts, "Evaluating British railway poster advertising: The London & North Eastern Railway Company between the wars," *The Journal of Transport History* 25, no. 2 (September 2004): 34.
[14] Ibid., 35.

power all too often means that the critical faculties of analysis and interpretation are not packed along with the bucket and spade, meaning that the images are very much appreciated but perhaps not understood as deeply as they might. The visual vocabularies that the images employed, their semiotic content and the historical context which influenced their production and, in turn, they went on to define, can remain neglected in a superficial, albeit well meaning, appreciation of their stylistic qualities. It is hoped that this thesis will go some way towards addressing this.

That an image, such as a photograph, carries with it powerful meanings and significance that makes it worth study is not under debate in this thesis. Barthes saw the photograph as having 'a power to convert which must be analysed,' by which he meant that, in acknowledging the power of photographs to influence our understanding and awareness of a given situation, it is important to scrutinise these images to better appreciate the ways in which such influence may have been contrived.[15] Therefore this thesis makes two broad claims for the ways in which landscapes and locations were pictured by the GWR in their advertising material. The first is that, collectively, they constitute the construction of a *tourist utopia* and the second that this utopia was characterised by a marked heterogeneity. Such are arrived at through the adoption of a softer, more culturally attuned, critical eye than has perhaps been used hitherto and by the utilisation of a theoretical and philosophical framework that ascribes agency to the GWR and begins from the standpoint that what we see always means *something*.

This chapter sets out to define the key notion in the thesis, the tourist utopia, and examines how such a notion fits within the existing literature, both on utopianism and

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[15] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2000), 91.

tourism. It provides the theoretical background to the body of the research and also an outline of the historiographical value of studying railways from the point of view of marketing. However, it begins with a very brief history of the GWR as an organisation that will allow the reader to better contextualise and process the research and the findings.

The Great Western Railway: a very brief history.

There are countless books on the subject of the GWR covering all aspects of the company's history and operation. There are several general histories and appreciations of the company and what it was seen to stand for along with more esoteric volumes covering subjects such as the company's road vehicles.[16] The object of this section is not to provide a comprehensive history of the background and development of the company as this has already been carried out, albeit some time ago, by the likes of MacDermot, Nock and St John Thomas, but to provide the bare bones of the company's story so that the reader has an understanding of the company's origins and broad trajectory.[17]

The Great Western Railway Company was incorporated by Act of Parliament on 31 August 1835 and was permitted to construct a railway from Bristol, Temple Meads to Paddington in London.[18] It was originally designed to strengthen the trade links

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[16] Tim Bryan, *The Great Western Railway, a Celebration* (Hersham: Ian Allan Publishing, 2010); Andrew Roden, *Great Western Railway, a History* (London: Aurum Press Ltd, 2010); Philip J. Kelley, *Road Vehicles of the Great Western Railway* (Oxford: Oxford Publishing Company, 1973).

[17] E. T. Macdermot, *History of the Great Western Railway, Volume 1 1833 - 1863* (London: Ian Allan, 1964); E. T. Macdermot, *History of the Great Western Railway, Volume 2 1863 - 1921* (London: Ian Allan, 1964); O. S. Nock, *History of the Great Western Railway, Volume 3 1923 - 1948* (London: Ian Allan, 1967); David St John Thomas, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain. Volume 1, The West Country* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1981).

[18] Macdermot, *History of the Great Western Railway, Volume 1 1833 - 1863*, 13.

between the port of Bristol and the capital and by 1845 was operating over 220 miles of railway connecting Bristol, Oxford and Gloucester, among others, with London.[19] The GWR was active, if not aggressive, in its dealing with other railways and, while the company continued to build new lines through the nineteenth century, many smaller railway companies were absorbed into the GWR network. By 1910, the GWR operated over 2860 miles of track and around the same time, in 1907, it was the third largest employer in the UK with a total staff of 70,014.[20]

In 1923 the implementation of the 1921 Railways Act saw more than 120 railway companies amalgamated into what would become known as the Big Four; the Southern Railway, the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, the London and North Eastern Railway and the Great Western Railway.[21] The GWR was the only company to survive the process with its corporate identity ostensibly intact (the implications of which are discussed in more details in Chapter Six) and led to the company announcing 1923 as 'A.D. 1 of the greater Great Western Company'.[22]

Map 1.1 shows the extent of the GWR network, including lines over which it had agreed running powers, at its height in the inter-war period. From this it is possible to see exactly how much of the country they covered.

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[19] Ibid., 453.
[20] Macdermot, *History of the Great Western Railway, Volume 2 1863 - 1921*, 324; Geoffrey Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940: Studies in Business History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 24.
[21] "The Railways Act, 1921," *The Railway Gazette*, 16 September, 1921.
[22] "British Railway Meetings," *The Railway Gazette*, 23 February, 1923, 307.
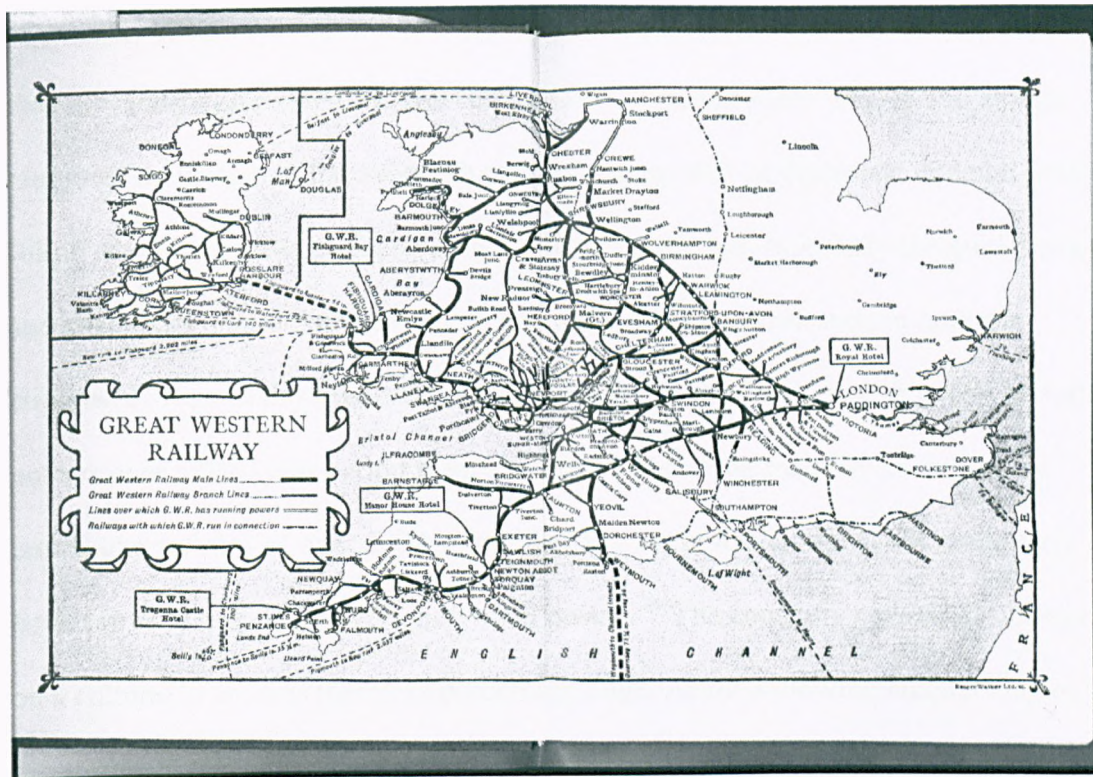
During the inter-war period the GWR operated a system that constituted over 3500 route miles and it was during this time that the bulk of their guidebooks and posters were produced.[23] A succession of talented General Managers, such as Felix Pole and James Milne, ensured that that GWR was run well although it suffered, along with the other Big Four railways during the depression of the 1930s. However, all of the railway companies, including the GWR, could not escape nationalisation directly after World War Two and, on 5 March 1948, the last meeting of the Great Western Railway Company was held.[24] The GWR was itself, after 113 years, finally absorbed into a greater whole; in this case British Railways.

From this necessarily brief overview of the company's history it is possible to see that the GWR was a remarkable concern. Its corporate identity survived intact through

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[23] Nock, *History of the Great Western Railway, Volume 3 1923 - 1948*, 2.
[24] Ibid., 238.

takeovers, amalgamations and policy changes over the course of more than a century that saw almost all of its near rivals changed or altered in some way. It was a huge employer at the turn of the twentieth century and, as will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, the publicity material that it produced, especially the guidebooks and gazetteers, were sold in the hundreds of thousands and reissued in multiple editions. Further to this, evidence shows that the GWR issued more than 660 pictorial posters over a fifty-year period from 1897 to 1947 and the majority of these were issued in print runs of over 2000; altogether this suggests that the GWR could have issued in excess of 1.3 million individual posters.[25] The company's *scope for impact,* on a cultural level, was therefore potentially huge. As the following chapters lay out the argument that, collectively, these outputs constitute the construction of a tourist utopia it is worth bearing in mind the scale of the GWR's operations and the commensurate reality that such a utopian construct might take on in the minds of the many companies, families and individuals that encountered it.

Marketing and the Railways: an overview

As has already been discussed, this thesis is concerned with the corporate construction of, what is here termed, a tourist utopia. As such it can be viewed as a being broadly aligned with research into marketing in general, and railway marketing in particular, from the end of the nineteenth century to roughly 1945. It is important to locate the present research within the wider subject of marketing and advertising and demonstrate how such a detailed study of a railway company's use of landscape imagery serves to cover a gap in the understandings of the development of mobility marketing. This review will show that the subject of railway marketing, that is the

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[25] John Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," unpublished typescript (National Railway Museum, York, 1993).

marketing strategies adopted by the railways themselves, has only recently become the focus of academic interest.

The work of Kotler et al has for many years been a standard text on marketing, its principles and applications.[26] Indeed, his most recent work has explored the development of marketing in the digital age and outlines how a new form of marketing can function in today's world where the emphasis has moved away from individuals as simply *consumers* and towards an understanding of them as 'whole human beings with minds, hearts and spirits'.[27] This notion is a clear demonstration that research into the field of marketing is both vibrant and adapting to the changes that the modern world presents both the scholar and the consumer (in whatever form we choose to see them). However, the roots of marketing as a discipline either of practise or of research are less well understood or discussed, and this is even more the case when one looks at the area of mobility marketing.

Tedlow's work on the development of mass marketing in America stated one of the key problems of research into the field. He saw it as 'an elusive subject. Difficult to discuss because it is difficult to define.'[28] However, he went on to describe the development of marketing in the US that began in the late nineteenth century with many individual retailers involved in piecemeal operations that could best be described as *advertising* before the development of the railways and telegraph system allowed companies the opportunity to develop national strategies more akin to marketing as it would be understood today. Tedlow saw marketing in 1920s America

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[26] Philip Kotler et al., *Principles of Marketing: European Edition* (London: Financial Times/ Prentice Hall, 2001).
[27] Philip Kotler, Hermawan Kartajaya, and Iwan Setiawan, *Marketing 3.0: From Products to Customers to the Human Spirit* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 4.
[28] Richard S. Tedlow, *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1990), 5.

as a sophisticated phenomenon that exhibited one of the characteristic traits of modern marketing; market segmentation where products are aimed at satisfying the needs and wants of particular sections of society by appealing directly to such underlying, motivating desires.[29]

Schwarzkopf's work outlines the notion that, until recently, it was thought that marketing in Britain was very much influenced by developments in the United States and that, before the strategies developed there in the early part of the twentieth century were imported to Britain in the 1950s, domestic marketing was a somewhat dull and unsophisticated affair. However, the work of Schwarzkopf has begun to challenge this and suggested that 'mass marketing advertising was not an "idea" or an "ideology" which originated in the United States and then spread across the world via means of cultural domination and hegemony'. Instead, he argues, there was a '"Europeanization" of the American market and commodity culture before World War 1'.[30] This model implies a more complex scenario where modern mass marketing was not necessarily born in any one particular place or in any particular time but was formed out of a process of cross fertilisation where local markets and marketers took on ideas from abroad and adapted them to suit their immediate needs. However, the work of American historians on the development of marketing has proved to be of significance to those wishing to understand more about parallel developments in Britain. As Fitzgerald has commented:

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[29] Ibid., 7.
[30] Stefan Schwarzkopf, "Who Said 'Americanisation'? The Case of Twentieth-Century Advertising and mass marketing from a British Perspective," in *Decentering America: Explorations in Culture and International History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 56.

Descriptions of production, product, sales, and marketing orientations

offer a set of yardsticks by which to assess the strategic objectives of

[British] firms and [their] degrees of organizational sophistication.[31]

This thesis will look specifically at the sophisticated ways in which the GWR

marketed their railway and the places that they served. Market segmentation is a

recurring theme throughout and one of the key conclusions is that the GWR exhibited

elements of market segmentation from the early twentieth century onwards, and that

their use of landscapes in their posters, guidebooks and publicity material show that

they were keen to understand the particular needs and wants of their markets. One

example of this was their development of a particular element of their tourist utopia to

meet the needs of the American tourist as discussed in Chapter Four. Like the work of

Schwarzkopf, this thesis is based around demonstrating that sophisticated, complex

marketing and branding strategies were being developed in Britain in the early years

of the twentieth century.[32] The major distinction between the present research and the

work of Schwarzkopf and, for example, Church is that, in the main, the existing

literature has focussed on consumer goods whereas the work of the railway

companies was based around the provision of *services*.[33] If the historiography of

marketing in general in Britain is only just beginning to emerge from the shadow of

transatlantic influence then the marketing of mobility, in particular railway mobility,

is, even less well represented.

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[31] Robert Fitzgerald, "Marketing Management in Britain: What is the Evidence for 'Failure'?," in *Business in Britain in the Twentieth Century: Decline and Renaissance?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 170.
[32] Stefan Schwarzkopf, "Turning Trade marks into Brands: how Advertising Agencies Created Brands in the Global Market PLace, 1900 - 1930" (Centre for Globalisation Research Working Paper 18, August 2008), 13, http://webspace.qmul.ac.uk/pmartins/CGRWP18.pdf.
[33] Roy Church, "Advertising consumer goods in nineteenth century Britain: reinterpretations," *Economic History Review* 53, no. 4 (2000): 621 - 645.

In one sense there has been interest in railway marketing for the best part of sixty years but this has been primarily based around the marketing of railway shares in the boom years of the railway mania in the 1840s and 50s.[34] Serious interest in the marketing strategies adopted and developed by railway companies is somewhat thin on the ground. One explanation for this can be put forward by returning to Tedlow's remark about the field being difficult to define; what, actually, were railway companies selling (outside of stocks and shares)? They were not selling a tangible item or product that could be taken away by a consumer. They were selling the opportunity for producers to reach market places and markets with their freight operations and, as is the focus of this thesis, the potential for individuals, families and groups to have non-quotidian experiences and encounters through and with landscapes and locations that were markedly different from those provided by their everyday working lives. In the apocryphal words of an unknown advertiser, the railways were very much in the business of selling the *sizzle* and not the *sausage*. Work by Ward and Shields has examined the ways in which places were sold or defined in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but, in this research, the aim is to begin to understand more about the way places (in this case landscapes and locations) were *made,* or constructed, specifically through the marketing strategies and publicity material of the railways.[35] In this way it differs from the majority of work on the subject which sees the provision of mobility simply as the means to the touristic end; in this case the resort, hotel or holiday location.

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[34] Harold Pollins, "The Marketing of Railway Shares in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Economic History Review* 7, no. 2 (1954): 230 - 239.
[35] Stephen Ward, *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1998); Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1992).

Once more, it is to developments in North America that one must turn to look at the development of an historiography of railway marketing as, over recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the role played by the railroad companies in the marketing of some of the most iconic landscapes of the United States. Mickelson has looked at the role of the railways in the opening up, and settling, of The West and provides evidence to show that the marketing campaigns of the railroad companies, in this case the Northern Pacific Railroad, were often based around the dual objectives of selling land that the company owned to settlers along with 'the desire to attract population to the entire territory adjacent to the railroad'.[36] Schwantes has also explored how the Northern Pacific began to open up the landscapes of the northern West for hunting and fishing parties helping to define the region as a 'sportsman's paradise'.[37]

The work of Orsi has broadly supported Mickelson's within the context of the more southerly states. He has suggested that the Southern Pacific Railroad's promotional 'displays... of the mid-1880s were important promotional events for California, in fact turning points in the formation of a new image for the state as an agricultural Eden'.[38] Dye's research into the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) has shown how the railroad companies were keen to promote places that were not necessarily even on their network. She states that the AT&SF were happy to exploit 'the history

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[36] Sig Mickelson, *The Northern Pacific Railroad and the Selling of the West: A Nineteenth-Century Public Relations Venture* (Sioux Falls: Center for Western Studies, 1993), 124.
[37] Carlos A. Schwantes, "No Aid and No Comfort: Early Transportation and the Origins of Tourism in the Northern West," in *Seeing and Being Seen* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 137.
[38] Richard J Orsi, *Sunset Limited. The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West 1850 - 1930* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2007), 138.

of a town eighteen miles off the main line to generate income from the company."[39]

Similarly, Blodgett has explored the role played by several different railroad

companies in the advertising of national parks in the United States again highlighting

the fact that landscapes and locations did not have to be urban or industrial centres to

fall into the ambit of the railroad companies advertising departments.[40]

This research into railroads and their impact on understandings and conceptions of

regions and places has come out of a long tradition in North America of reflexive

exploration of mobility, place and identity. Leo Marx's *Machine in the Garden* and

Stilgoe's *Metropolitan Corridor* are examples of early works that have had a

significant influence on more recent work by academics such as Irwin, Tchudi and,

most importantly, Nye.[41] Indeed, the present work can be seen as providing a British

counterpoint to Nye's conception of the 'technological sublime'.[42]

While it would be mistaken to assert that marketing, in its broadest sense, began in the

United States and was then simply adopted in Great Britain it is clear to see that,

historiographically at least, research into the impact and influence of railroad

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[39] Victoria E Dye, *All Aboard for Sata Fe. Railway Promotion of the Southwest, 1890s to 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 15.
[40] Peter Blodgett, "Selling the Scenery: Advertising and the National Parks, 1916 - 1933," in *Seeing and Being Seen* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 272.
[41] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); John R. Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene, 1880-1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); William Irwin, *The New Niagra. Tourism, Technology and the Landscape of Niagra Falls, 1776 - 1917* (University Park, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Stephan Tchudi, ed., *Western Technological Landscapes* (Reno: The Nevada Humanities Commision, 1998); David Nye, "Technologies of Landscape," in *Technologies of Landscape: from Reaping to Recycling* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 3 - 20; David Nye, *Narratives and Spaces, Technology and the Construction of American Culture* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1997).
[42] David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1999).

marketing on understandings of region, landscape and place has begun to flourish in North America. But that is not to say that marketing *per se* has been overlooked entirely within the historiography of the railways of Britain. There are some works that have sought to examine how corporate identities of the railway companies were constructed although these, as might be expected, concentrate on the uniforms, corporate branding and vehicle design and do not touch on the role that the company may have had in constructing notions of places and process *outwith* the company itself.[43] Lovegrove's research into the relationships between railway companies, design and wider understandings of culture also touches on, for examples, railway posters but the analysis is once again more geared towards the corporate branding of the company as opposed to the ways in which they might have constructed notions about the landscape and locations portrayed as in Chapters Three and Four of the present work.[44] Votolato's recent work on design in transport takes transport at its most broad and covers everything from trains, to aeroplanes and shipping; but again, the focus here is mainly on the design of the vehicles and not on the marketing and publicity material that the companies covered produced.[45]

However, Bennett's work on the GWR's guidebooks and Esbester's work into the GWR magazine are examples of recent scholarship that has begun to unpick the complex messages that railway companies put forward in their publicity material.[46]

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[43] Brian Haresnape, *British Rail 1948 - 78- A Journey by Design* (London: Ian Allan, 1979); Mike Vincent, Green Chris, ed., *The Intercity Story* (Oxford: Oxford Publishing Company, 1994).

[44] Keith Lovegrove, *Railway Identity, Design and Culture* (London: Lawrence King, 2004).

[45] Gregory Votolato, *Transport Design- A Travel History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).

[46] Alan Bennett, *The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness* (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2000); Michael Owen Esbester,

The work of both of these authors will be referred to throughout this thesis and is discussed in its proper context later in this introductory chapter. Given the interest that marketing other modes of transport has had since the late 1990s, in particular the car, as outlined in the opening section of this chapter, the lack of recent work on the railways becomes increasingly significant.

In terms of the historiography, there has been a recent move towards establishing a more nuanced understanding of the subject and a move away from the notion that marketing, as it is understood today, began in the US and was imported, wholesale, to Britain in the immediate post-war period. Unfortunately, as far as railway marketing and design is concerned most of the existing literature takes a techno-centric view and, as stated above, concentrates on the design of vehicles or the construction of corporate identities.

One of the aims of the present research is to add to the small, but expanding, body of work on railway marketing but to do this by concentrating on the ways in which the GWR sought to shape and form understandings of things over which they had comparatively little control; in particular the landscape and locations that they served. This is a signal move away from an explication of the ways that a railway company might have marketed their own locomotives, rolling stock or stations and begins to acknowledge and explore the wider influence of the commercial cultures of the railways of Britain. The railways mined contemporary notions of history, identity, regionality, myth and legend in their marketing; this thesis explores the ways that images of landscapes and locations were utilised in such material.

'Dead on the Point of "safety" ': Occupational Safety Education on the Great Western Railway, C.1913-39 (York: s.n., 2006).

The Tourist Utopia

Central to this thesis is the notion of the *tourist utopia*. Such a term has been coined in an attempt to express the collective unreality of the tourist landscape as portrayed in material designed to entice people to travel long distances to see it and to part with money for the privilege of doing so. To claim it as unreal, however, is not to see it as entirely fictional or fabricated; the tourist utopia of the GWR was based fully and firmly in the real world as experienced by both tourist and locals but it was always given an edge, a polish (perhaps even a 'spin') that would make it more attractive to the given market. As an example, in basic terms, only exceptionally rarely was bad weather ever depicted in the GWR's posters (and the same is true of all the other railway companies). In this way they portrayed a world that was not like the real world as experienced on a day-to-day basis. The GWR's use of landscape imagery and, indeed, its marketing and publicity material in general can be seen as utopian. Tower Sargent describes such a contrapuntal position towards the world *as it is* as a key characteristic of a utopia.

> Utopias are generally oppositional, reflecting, at the minimum, frustration with things as they are and the desire for a better life.[47]

The recognition, on the part of the GWR, that poor weather frustrated people, especially holiday-makers meant that they pictured the landscapes and locations that they provided access to as blessed with good weather. On the face of it, that images of poor weather will not attract tourists is a very simple notion but, ultimately, the manipulation of

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[47] Lyman Tower Sargent, "Utopian Traditions: Themes and Variations," in *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World* (New York, Oxford: New York Public Library, 2000), 8.

images of the landscape, the weather, the people or notions of history and belonging constitute a form of utopianism.

There is a rich literature that had built up around the concept of the utopia. Although the concept as a literary conceit had classical origins it was the publication, in 1516, of Thomas More's *Utopia* (a shortened title from the original) that saw the birth of the modern utopia and utopian literature.[48] Writing at the same time as the European exploration of the New World and Asia, More's book 'envisaged an ideal society of fallen human beings coming to terms with an imperfect world' and outlined the manners and customs of the inhabitants of an island whose name literally translated from the Greek as *no-place*.[49] From this time on there was an increasing amount of utopian literature as writers employed the conceit to critique existing structures of governance or social mores or to put forward ideas of how best to improve the existing situation. In the words of one commentator, the oeuvre of utopian literature is not only large but also diverse 'reflecting the historical and political circumstances and personal aspirations of the various authors'.[50] Classic examples of utopian literature from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries include Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Butler's *Erewhon* whose title is, again, a play on the notion of *nowhere*.[51]

The late nineteenth century, however, saw a resurgence of utopian literature and it is into this milieu that the idea of the tourist utopia begins to take shape. Beaumont sees

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[48] Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (London: Longman, 2004).
[49] J. C. Davis, "Utopia and the New World, 1500 - 1700," in *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World* (New York, Oxford: New York Public Library, 2000), 101.
[50] Judith N. Shklar, "What is the Use of Utopia?," in *Heterotopia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 40.
[51] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2003); Samuel Butler, *Erewhon* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2006).

the development of a distinctly new style of utopian literature between 1870 and 1900

as being born out of the particular circumstances of the period. He defines the period

in terms of the space opened up between the collapse of two utopias of

progress: first, that of an unfettered, free-trade capitalism; and second,

that of a reformist socialism premised on the belief that systematic

transformation can occur within the framework of the existing social

order...[52]

This uncertainty about the future and about the stability of the present led to an

increase in the numbers of utopian novels and articles in publication by the likes of

William Morris and H. G. Wells. Beaumont suggests that it was at this time that

sections of the working class 'were starting to demand control over their destinies'[53]

and that much of the utopian writing produced at the time can be seen as 'a gleam

emitted by middle-class culture as it dully mirrors and distorts the desires of the

working class'.[54]

Perkin has stated that, between 1880 and 1914 'inequality was probably at its height'

and that the 'distribution of income was more skewed and the economic distance

between the classes was greater than ever before'.[55] It is against this backdrop of social

upheaval and inequality that, towards the very end of the nineteenth century, the

railway companies, including the GWR, began to produce their own publicity

material. And, as is commented on in Chapter Three, by 1897 the quantities of

material being produced were beginning to frustrate even the writers of the railway

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[52] Matthew Beaumont, *Utopia, Ltd: Ideologies of Social Dreaming in England 1870 - 1900* (Lieden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005), 14.
[53] Ibid., 19.
[54] Ibid., 22.
[55] Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society* (London: Routledge, 1989), 28.

periodicals. The railway companies can be seen as beginning to respond to the desires and aspirations of those who wished more control over their destiny but did so in a distinctly middle-class way: through the production of guidebooks and posters that portrayed an idealised landscape- a tourist utopia. This thesis is based upon the exploration of the visual representations of this utopia in an attempt to understand more about its texture, quality and breadth. By viewing the images used in the guidebooks, pamphlets and posters from the point of view that they construct a whole that carries with it significance and meaning it becomes perhaps possible to understand more about the nature of tourism and the ways in which it functions as a social process. Rather than couching an analysis of such material solely with a business historical model or by examining each image only for what it can tell us about a single location, scene or item this research aims at taking on the representations of landscapes and locations as a whole (as far as is possible) and similarly aims at interpreting them always as part of a cohesive and cogent totality.

It is for this reason that, throughout this thesis, the images published by the GWR will be referred to collectively as a tourist utopia; it stands as a shorthand for the idealised holiday world that was borne out of the frustrations of the everyday world. The sharp division between the everyday and the non-everyday has always been a defining characteristic of both the tourist experience and advertising. In 1914 Dr Charles D. Musgrove argued that holidays provided a change of situation that was essential to a happy life and 'a requisite for good health'[56] similarly Urry, in 1990, stated that tourism was 'a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised

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[56] Charles D. Musgrove, *Holidays and How to Use Them* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd, 1914), 11.

work'.[57] In these understandings the tourist utopia is set up in direct contradistinction to the quotidian world of structured labour.

However, in this thesis the tourist utopia is not simply defined as one half of a pair of opposites. More recent thinking on the subject has suggested that 'tourist places are hybrid places of home *and* away' and that '[t]ourist places are produced spaces and tourists are co-producers of such places'.[58] This problematises the binary opposition of home and away and places the tourist utopia into a touristic cycle of 'anticipation, performance and remembrance' whereby the tourist utopia is dynamic and able to adjust and accommodate changes in desires and aspirations.[59] Throughout this thesis it will be shown that the GWR's tourist utopia did just that; rather than remain static it changed over time to assimilate changing tastes and wants. As Bourdieu commented, and as is referred to in Chapter Two, 'every change in the system of goods induces a change in tastes' and it is precisely this dynamism that is brought out as one of the key threads of this thesis.[60]

Having defined the concept of the tourist utopia and put forward the argument that one of its chief characteristics is its dynamism and mutability in the face of change this thesis goes further by establishing another of its key attributes: its heterogeneity. The tourist utopia cannot be seen as a single world-view that represents a single set of values that develop through time. This research seeks to demonstrate that the tourist utopia of the GWR was made up of interleaving geographies of tourism that, at times,

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[57] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, Second Edition. (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2002), 2.
[58] Joergen Ole Baerenholdt et al., *Performing Tourist Places* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 10.
[59] Ibid., 3.
[60] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1984), 231.

complemented and contradicted each other. Foucault identified such a phenomenon as a heterotopia and thought of it as a phenomenon 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible'.[61] In simple terms, and within the ambit of the current research, it can be seen as the embodiment of the commercial imperative of the railway company; namely to ensure that it had a wide appeal to varied and different groups. If images of the West Country (nominally the GWR's territory) were all designed to appeal to the solitary romantic walker then the company would miss out on ticket sales to those wishing for a seaside family holiday. The very nature of the GWR's operations meant that it had to attempt to provide something for almost every desire; these desires could be very different but the tourist utopia of the GWR set out to cater for them within ostensibly the same geographical space. Such a layering of significance relates to Brace's conception of the English landscape in the early twentieth century as 'a highly differentiated mosaic of regions, the diversity of which was crucial to England's character' although, in this case, the situation is complicated somewhat by the fact that, very often, the differentiated regions can occupy the same geographical space.[62]

However, while the tourist utopia is markedly heterotopic in nature the term heterotopia *per se* is possibly not a helpful one to use. In the first instance it begins to concretise the various elements of the tourist utopia into individual heterotopias which can undermine the inter-relations on which the tourist utopia depends. Each heterotopia can become reified and any sense of process, dynamism or change can be lost. Second, the term has already been employed, albeit in a way that appears to be far

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[61] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 25.
[62] Catherine Brace, "Finding England Everywhere: regional identity and the construction of national identity, 1890 - 1940," *Cultural Geographies* 6, no. 1 (1999): 94.

more rigid than perhaps Foucault might have envisaged, in a sense to mean an 'effectively realized [sic] utopia'.[63] The tourist utopia of the GWR was something that could only ever be fully realised by the tourist in their encounter with the landscapes and locations portrayed in the guidebooks and posters and their subsequent construction of their own imaginative geography. The tourist utopia remains just that; *utopian* and, as such, unrealized. Therefore it would be misleading and inappropriate to employ the term in this thesis. Thirdly, it is perhaps an inelegant lexical solution to talk about a tourist utopia that consists of several heterotopias; far better, in this case at least, to talk of a tourist utopia that displays a marked heterogeneity. The heterotopia of Foucault is a powerful concept but this research moves beyond a purely theoretical approach and begins the task of amassing empirical evidence to support its case. In this way, the heterotopia can remain theoretical; employing the terms heterogeneous or heterogeneity distinguishes this practical work from the philosophical approach of Foucault. Throughout this thesis incongruities and inconsistencies will be embraced and held up as examples of the heterogeneous nature of the GWR's tourist utopia. While this can complicate the overall picture it acknowledges the tacit reality of the situation; the GWR was in the business of maximising profit and increasing share price and to do so it had to have as wide a market as possible. The model of the tourist utopia, with all of its inherent heterogeneity, accommodates this underpinning truth while allowing for the cultural significance of the various visual vocabularies that it employed to be examined and analysed.

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[63] Pia Maria Ahlback, "The Road to Industrial Heterotopia. Landscape, Technology, and George Orwell's Travelogue 'The Road to Wigan Pier'," in *Landscape and Technology. From Reaping to Recycling* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 258.

Where, then, does the notion of a tourist utopia sit within the existing historical

literature? Conceptually its closest relation would be *imaginative geography*, but there

are reasons why this term has not been used in this research. Schwartz and Ryan

defined imaginative geography, within a discussion of the power of landscape

imagery, quite simply as 'our perceptions of place' but also commented that the

imaginative geography involved 'blurring the distinction between the real and the

imagined',[64] while Pelizzari, writing on a similar subject, sees the imaginative

geography as being 'inscribed between the experience of place and the remembrance

of place'.[65] Foster adds to this by equating the imaginative geography with 'a sense of

place' and 'identity' and suggests that, as a concept, it can only ever be approached or

described indirectly.[66] Earlier Foster referred to an 'imaginary geography' in discussing

similar subject matter but used the term in this case to refer not to an construct created

and defined by the historian but to the process by which white settlers reified the

landscape of South Africa in an attempt to create a sense of place that could be

considered as home.[67]

Aside from notions of identity, which will be covered later in this chapter, these

definitions lead to a number of problems that mean it would be inappropriate to apply

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[64] Joan Schwartz and James Ryan, "Introduction: Geography and the Geographical Imagination," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London and New York: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2003), 6.
[65] Maria Antonella Pelizzari, "Retracing the Outlines of Rome: Intertextuality and Imaginative Geographies in Nineteenth-Century Photographs," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London and New York: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2003), 72.
[66] Jeremy Foster, "Capturing and Losing the 'Lie of the Land': Railway Photography and Colonial Nationalism in Early Twentieth Century South Africa," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London and New York: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2003), 144.
[67] Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home We Have Always Known'?: The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 3 (September 2003): 659.

the term imaginative geography to this research. Initially, there is the question of whether it is an imaginative or imaginary? These two words imply very different things; one is a geographical conception of place that is based on subjective, perhaps personal understandings while the other would seem to imply that it was a geography that did not exist in material reality. That the two terms have both been used to discuss similar subjects leads to confusion, and there would appear to be no consensus on which term is the most appropriate. Second, if the imaginative geography is an abstract perception of place that cannot be approached directly then it would be wrong to apply such a term in this thesis. The images of landscapes and locations used by the GWR were of real, not imagined, places and were idealised at the point of manufacture as opposed to being created in the interstices between experience and remembrance. While they undoubtedly influenced both the experience of a place and the ways in which such a place was memorialised they were not created through this process alone. The images that the GWR used had *agency* insofar as they were created and produced by a single, if complex, organisation that had a clear motive for doing so, the commercial imperative, and who manipulated and engineered such images to ensure that they fulfilled that motive. They were not created out of the spontaneous aggregation of individual or collective experience outside of the railway company or the region. The imaginative geography (not to be further confused with the 'geographical imagination'[68]) is a powerful concept and one that is indeed very useful for historians and geographers; but, ultimately, within this context the imaginary geography of the GWR would, and should, refer to the experiences of the tourist, their photographs, diaries and letters home and their direct experience of the tourist utopia.

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[68] David Matless, "Regional Surveys and Local Knowledges: The Geographical Imagination in Britian, 1918 - 39," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 17, no. 4 (1992): 464 - 480.

By contrast, the GWR constructed a tourist utopia, one that could be experienced, by the tourist, *as* an imaginative geography; therefore, because this thesis concerns itself with the material created and produced by the GWR, the concept of the tourist utopia needs to be created. The term utopia comes with several centuries of understandings and associated values, just some of which have been outline above, and it could be argued that the tourist utopia comes without the trappings of radicalism so closely associated with utopianism in history. However, in this thesis, the term is being used very specifically to describe the cumulative effect of the GWR's continued picturing of locations and landscapes and their dissemination to the public. It is used to distinguish it, as a phenomenon, from the tourist's existential encounter with the same landscapes and locations (either in the form of the images in the guidebooks and posters or the physical landscape itself) and, through this, their construction of their own imaginative geographies.

In the same way, the tourist utopia does not directly concern itself with the somewhat nebulous issues surrounding place and place-making. A *place* as opposed to a geographical *space* is created through its inhabitation and investment with meaning and significance by those who encounter it existentially. There is a great deal of literature related to the concept of place, the work of Relph, Malpas, Casey and Tuan being notable examples.[69] Many of these writers, Relph in particular, are concerned with Heideggerian ideas of authenticity and inauthenticity and understanding what

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[69] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976); Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2008); Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); E. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); E. Casey, "How to get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time," in *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 13 - 52; Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

constitutes and authentic or inauthentic place. This is a hugely important and significant area of study, and one that will certainly have an impact on contemporary understandings of our place within the wider environment but, once again, it falls somewhat outside of the scope of this work. Further research would be needed to begin to unpick how people experienced the places that the GWR portrayed in their posters and guidebooks. The tourist's experience of the West Country (or any other region) may have been overlooked or under studied, but this thesis looks at the corporate side of the process; although this is envisaged as a dynamic process where the tourist's desires and wants began to influence the imagery, the tourist utopia remained something that was produced and controlled by the GWR as a corporate entity. It can be seen as having had a major part to play in, say, the construction of 'inauthentic' seaside resort towns but that 'inauthenticity' was something that would have been experienced by the tourist and *not* the GWR and, as such, would be need to be studied, phenomenologically, from the tourists' point of view. In the same way, while a methodological steer may have been taken from the work of Urry and Baerentholdt, the notion of the tourist gaze (in all its various forms) is of limited use.[70] The tourist gaze is just that; the gaze of the tourist and while this thesis concerns itself with images of tourist places, landscapes and locations the tourist utopia, as the prime object of the research, must be seen as having been constructed through a *corporate* gaze.

Foster, as was mentioned earlier, saw the imaginary geography as a place where notions of national identity could be formed or strengthened. Is the same then true of the tourist utopia? The answer is frustrating; quite probably but such a discussion is, once more, outside the remit of this research. The creation of national and regional identities, especially within a touristic context, is complex and sophisticated. Zuelow's work on the

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[70] Baerenholdt et al., *Performing Tourist Places.*

'tourist nexus' of Ireland demonstrates this.[71] To understand how this process takes place

and what the results are it is vital that the tourist's encounter with the landscape and the

locals' encounter with the tourist are fully taken into account.[72] This thesis concentrates

on the body of work produced specifically by the GWR and has not had the scope to

take on the experiential element of the tourist experience. The final chapter of this thesis

sets out areas of further research and this area is explored in more detail there. That

being said, there is a substantial body of work related to the understanding of visual

culture and the construction of regional and national identity and much of it, particularly

the work of Brace and Matless, has already, and will continue to be referred to

throughout the body of this work.[73]

Moreover, any analysis of identity should be predicated on a more nuanced

understanding of what historians *mean* when they discuss national identity. Mandler has

warned against the casual use of the term by historians and suggests that 'we ought to be

careful not to assume that any identity is being formed (much less fixed) by any one

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[71] Eric G.E. Zuelow, "The Tourism Nexus: National Identity and the Meanings of Tourism Since the Irish Civil War," in *Ireland's Heritages*, ed. Mark McCarthy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 189 - 204; Eric G.E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity Since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

[72] The term 'local' is clumsy and unsophisticated but will be used throughout the thesis to denote those who live and work within a region that is also deemed a tourist area. For these groups their quotidian experience is of the landscapes and locations that appear so appealing to the tourist. It has been suggested that the term 'host' would be more appropriate but this implies a measure of acceptance and acquiescence that is not always in evidence.

[73] Catherine Brace, "Looking back: the Cotswolds and English national identity, c. 1890 - 1950," *Journal of Historical Geography* 25, no. 4 (1999): 502 - 516; Brace, "Finding England Everywhere: regional identity and the construction of national identity, 1890 - 1940."; Catherine Brace, "Envisioning England: the visual in countryside writing in the 1930s and 1940s," *Landscape Research* 28, no. 4 (October 2003): 365 - 382; Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*; David Matless, "Nature, the Modern and the Mystic: Tales from Early Twentieth Century Geography," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16, no. 3 (1991): 272 - 286; Matless, "Regional Surveys and Local Knowledges: The Geographical Imagination in Britian, 1918 - 39."

particular process' and that identity is perhaps 'only rarely the proper province of the historian'.[74] Having said that, he goes on to state that '[w]e need more microhistorical study of the specific contexts and situations in which identity talk takes place'.[75] That is precisely what this thesis is attempting to be; a study of the context against which it may (or may not) be possible to later talk about the railway's role in the construction of notions of national and regional identity. Without research into this field any subsequent discussion of the railway's part in the construction of such notions might be flawed or lacking rigour.

There is a growing literature relating to national and regional identity and certainly the GWR's key territory, what could be termed here as The 'West Country', has received some significant attention. But, as has already been discussed above, regional identity is a nebulous concept, the chief reason for this being that it is very hard to ascertain how far a particular regional identity exists independently and how far it has been constructed by those outside of a region who view those inside as different in some way, or 'others'. This notion of *othering* is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five with particular reference to Ireland as a tourist destination and the work of Edward Said.[76] However, in the following paragraphs the discussion will focus more on Cornwall and the West Country.

Vernon, when discussing the identity of Cornwall in general, sees the fact that the county lies on the very 'margins of England and Englishness' very much as a function of

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[74] Peter Mandler, "What is 'National Identity'? Definitions and Applications in Modern British Historiography," *Modern Intellectual History* 3, no. 2 (2006): 275.
[75] Ibid., 297.
[76] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003).

its geographical location.[77] This is very similar to Said's model of a strong cultural centre and a weaker, often subjugated, periphery.[78] The railways allowed a greater freedom of movement throughout the country and it allowed such 'peripheral' regions to be explored by those who considered themselves as coming from a cultural centre, in this case very often London. The role of the GWR, in allowing access to this *exotic* region and enabling it to be more widely accepted has already been discussed in some detail by Payton and Thornton.[79] The impact that this was to have on the regional identity of Cornwall was huge with research from the 1880s suggesting that the Cornish (and incidentally the Irish), with their own language and customs, were not just culturally but racially distinct from the rest of the country.[80] In this way he discusses the eventual establishment of artists colonies in Cornwall, as discussed by Lubbren,[81] in terms of a colonial adventure or 'an imperial narrative of discovery'.[82] In these terms the country was seen as an exotic region almost in the same way as Africa had been seen earlier in the century.

Outside of the somewhat highbrow artists colony Vernon identifies the GWR's guidebooks and popular imagining of the region as being perhaps the most influential in the creation of the county's identity. Cornwall began to be pictured as 'a repository of all that England had once been before its fall into a corrosive and effeminate modernity'.[83] In this way his work begins to move towards the fact that regional identity is vary rarely

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[77] James Vernon, "Border Crossings: Cornwall and the English (imagi)nation," in *Imagining Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 153.
[78] Said, *Orientalism*, 12.
[79] Phillip Payton and Paul Thornton, "The Great Western Railway and the Cornish-Celtic Revival," in *Cornish Studies Three* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1995), 83 - 103.
[80] Vernon, "Border Crossings: Cornwall and the English (imagi)nation," 157.
[81] Nina Lubbren, *Rural Artists Colonies in Europe, 1870 - 1910* (New Jersey: Rytgers University Press, 2001), 144.
[82] Vernon, "Border Crossings: Cornwall and the English (imagi)nation," 160.
[83] Ibid., 165.

firm or distinct until it begins to be defined by someone else outside of that region; in this case the GWR.

Trezise takes this a step further by exploring the entire conception of the West Country as a literary invention, one that came about through the romantic regional novels of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Once more, there is an underlying centre/periphery in the analysis that sees such apparently escapist literature as actually engaging in debate around 'issues of class, giving a voice to those excluded from central and dominant discourse'.[84] While, in this thesis, such binary oppositions as centre and periphery will be challenged (particularly in Chapters Five and Six) such a conception of the literary creation of a regional identity lends weight to one of the central themes of this work; that the ways in which landscapes and locations were pictured (and written about) helped to construct more concrete understanding of such places in the minds of those who read about and visited them. This thesis aims to add detail and texture to the work that has already been produced and to strengthen the notion that regional identity, like the tourist utopia itself, was not so much pictured and portrayed by the tourist material of the GWR as actively constructed by it.

Railways and Culture: an overview.

That there are a huge number of books on the railways of Great Britain would be something of an understatement. The National Railway Museum at York holds well over 20,000 individual titles pertaining to the subject. However, a great many of these relate to technical subjects such as locomotives, rolling stock, infrastructure and architecture. An even greater number can be considered as picture books in which old photographs are reprinted, often for the use of the modeller or enthusiast. There are

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[84] Simon Tresize, *The West Country as a Literary Invention* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 9.

several classics of railway history that have been referred to in this research, not least

among them are *The Victorian Railway* by Jack Simmons and *The Railway Journey* by

Wolfgang Schivelbusch.[85] However, there is also a large corpus of academic work

relating to the railways, in particular the business historical elements of their formation

and operations; works by Revill, Gourvish, Channon and Casson being testament to

this.[86] The work of Carter, Beaumont and Freeman and Boyd have moved the subject

away from the more traditional aspects of railway and transport history and begun to

explore more of the socio-cultural influences and impacts of the railways.[87] Several of

the papers in Evans and Gough's edited volume also address some of the more cultural

elements of the railways and have been referred to.[88]

However, there is less current academic work on the cultural outputs of the railways.

While there are many picture books relating to railway posters for instance very few of

them carry much in the way of critical examination or appraisal or couch their

discussion within an historical context (Cole and Durack's book being a notable

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[85] Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1991); Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980).

[86] George Revill, "Working the System: journeys through corporate culture in the railway age," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12 (1994): 705 - 725; T. R. Gourvish, *British Railways 1948-73: A Business History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Terry Gourvish, *British Rail 1974-1997: From Integration to Privatisation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940*; Mark Casson, *The World's First Railway System: Enterprise, Competition, and Regulation on the Railway Network in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[87] Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Matthew Beaumont and Michael Freeman, eds., *The Railway and Modernity: Time, Space and the Machine Ensemble* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007); Jane E. Boyd, "Adorning the landscape: images of transportation in nineteenth century France," in *Visions of the Industrial Age, 1830 - 1914: Modernity and the Anxiety of Representation in Europe*, ed. Minsoo Kang and Amy Woodson-Boulton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 21 - 41.

[88] A.K.B. Evans and J. V. Gough, eds., *The Impact of the Railway on Society in Britain: Essays in Honour of Jack Simmons* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

exception).[89] The books by Burdett Wilson and Middleton make the crossover from

enthusiast interest to general history and cover the advertising departments of the GWR

and LNER respectively.[90] However, it can sometimes be difficult to identify their

sources for the claims that they make. Academic research into the subject is limited to a

few journal articles, for example those by Watts and Harrington among others, or the

unpublished MA research of Holland.[91] One source of invaluable information has been

the unpublished typescript of a catalogue of all of the GWR's posters from the late

nineteenth century to 1947; this was compiled by John Somers Cocks and a copy is held

at the National Railway Museum.[92] Although there are some omissions and dating errors

this has proved to be an enormously helpful document and a great deal of use is made of

it in Chapters Three and Four.

Murdoch's research into the 'railway in the artists landscape' has also provided a great

deal of valuable material and is an important study into the portrayal of the railway in

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[89] Teri J. Edelstein, ed., *Art for All: British Posters for Transport* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010); Julia Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era* (London: HMSO, 1996); *Happy Holidays: The Golden Age of Railway Posters* (London: Pavilion, 1987); Beverley Cole, *It's Quicker by Rail: LNER Publicity and Posters, 1923 - 1947* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 2006); Beverley Cole and Richard Durack, *Railway Posters 1923 - 1947* (London: Lawrence King, 1992).
[90] Roger Burdett Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of Great Western Railway Publicity* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles PLC, 1987); Allan Middleton, *It's Quicker by Rail: The History of LNER Advertising* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2002).
[91] Watts, "Evaluating British railway poster advertising: The London & North Eastern Railway Company between the wars."; Ralph Harrington, "Beyond the bathing Belle: Images of Women in inter-war railway publicity," *The Journal of Transport History* 25, no. 1 (2004): 22 - 45; Rachel Holland, "L.N.E.R Posters 1923 - 1947: Aspects of Iconography, Railway and Social History" (M.A. in Railway Studies, York: University of York, 1999).
[92] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947."

the landscape in the nineteenth century.[93] However, the present research, while

exploring similar representations, especially in Chapter Two, moves away from the high

art aesthetic of the professional artist that Murdoch focuses on towards a more popular

picturing of railways in the landscape in sources such as guidebooks and posters. Such

sources had a markedly different, and perhaps far wider, audience than, for example, the

paintings of Turner and Pissaro. This research does not run counter to Murdoch's main

premise however and it can be seen as a complimentary strand of research that adds

further to our understandings of the phenomenon.

Discussion of railway company guidebooks is even more limited. There have been

occasional articles about the mid-nineteenth century guidebooks produced by George

Measom and Bennett's work into the guidebooks of the GWR which will be referred to

throughout this thesis provides an excellent textual counterpoint to the argument put

forward in the present work.[94] There has been valuable research into the role played by

the GWR's staff magazine in the company's corporate culture of both safety and

authority carried out by Esbester while the role of company magazines has been

explored, in more general terms by Heller, and in relation to the tobacco firm BAT by

Cox.[95] These have all been used to provide historical context for the research in this

thesis.

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[93] Jill Murdoch, From Elephant to Penge West: the railway in the artist's landscape (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2003).
[94] J. D. Bennett, "The Railway Guidebooks of George Measom," *Backtrack*, July 2001; G. H. Martin, "Sir George Samuel Measom (1818 – 1901), and His Railway Guides," in *The Impact of the Railway on Society in Britain: Essays in honour of Jack Simmons* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 225 - 240; Bennett, *The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness*.
[95] Michael Owen Esbester, "Organizing Work: Company Magazines and the Discipline of Safety," *Management and Organizational History* 3, no. 3 & 4 (2008): 217 - 237; Michael Heller, "Company Magazines: An Overview 1880 - 1940," *Management and Organizational History* 3, no. 3 & 4 (2008): 179 - 196; Michael

Heller, "British Company Magazines, 1878 - 1939: The Origins and Functions of House Journals in Large Scale Organisations.," *Media History* 15, no. 2 (May 1, 2009): 143 - 166; Howard Cox, "Shaping a Corporate Identity from Below" The Role of the BAT Bulletin," *Management and Organizational History* 3, no. 3 & 4 (2008): 197 - 215.

Chapter Two: Modernity and Anxiety: the popular picturing of the railways, 1809 – 1879, and the development of a railway landscape aesthetic.

Introduction

The preceding chapter set out the philosophical and methodological structures relating to place-making, utopias and the role of the tourist and the provider of touristic mobility in establishing locations as 'places' in themselves. This chapter will examine in more detail notions of, what will be termed in this research, a railway landscape aesthetic and how this aesthetic influenced and informed the widely circulated and widely consumed publicity material produced by the railway companies themselves that would begin to appear around the turn of the twentieth century. It will touch upon how the landscape aesthetic of the railways was itself influenced by pre-existing understandings of the picturesque, sublime and the beautiful before focussing on the ways in which a visual vocabulary of landscape was developed by artists working, either at the railways' behest, or privately but with the railways' approval and tacit acknowledgement.

This railway landscape aesthetic can be seen as related to the notion of a *railscape*. This is a term that has had currency mainly within North America and developed out of Leo Marx's conception that '[t]he contrast between the machine and the pastoral ideal [in North America] dramatizes the great issue of our culture'.[1] This was in turn built upon by Franklin who saw the North American landscape and the technologies of mobility as able to 'appropriate very easily the canons of the painterly tradition'.[2] The work of David Nye has consolidated this conceptualisation of the technological

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[1] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 353.
[2] Wayne Franklin, "Boats, Trains, Cars and the Popular Eye," *The North American Review* 273, no. 1 (March 1988): 19.

landscape, particularly with the *American Technological Sublime* which considered the American railroad of the nineteenth century to have been a fusion of science and art where machines, such as locomotives, were 'subsumed... within the framework of the natural sublime'.[3] Within a British context such high-art understandings of the railway in the landscape have been explored by Murdoch but, certainly in the popular eye, they are more focussed on the later, inter-war, period and can, for example, be characterised by Carter's explication of Ravillious's *Train Landscape*.[4] The temptation to coin yet another neologism has here been resisted and the term railway landscape aesthetic has been used throughout as a, perhaps rather inelegant, but effective term for the collective picturing of a landscape viewed either *with* or *from* the railway.

This chapter also introduces the notion of a modernity/anxiety dialectic that began to make itself apparent in the visual representations of the railway in the landscape from the early nineteenth century on. This notion is not put forward as a rigid concept but rather one that can help to capture the dynamic tension that was created through the rapid development of railway technology; in this case connotative broadly of *modernity* and the anxieties felt by those encountering the railways in the landscapes and environments through which it ran. These anxieties were by no means all directed against the railways and could, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, also have been expressions of the anxiety, or desire, to be associated *with* the railways, as with the romanticisation of the railways in the middle of the century. These two concepts of modernity and anxiety are also not to be seen as polar opposites or in constant

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[3] David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1999), 46.
[4] Jill Murdoch, *From Elephant to Penge West: the railway in the artist's landscape* (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2003); Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 261 - 291.

conflict with each other. They intertwine and enmesh with each other throughout the nineteenth century producing the changing visual vocabularies that are explored within this chapter. As Bourdieu once remarked, 'every change in the system of goods induces a change in tastes' and, as the railways developed both their technologies and their offer to the public, the changed attitudes towards them can be traced through the visual representation of the relationship between technological modernity and the anxieties that went hand in hand with it.[5] Notions of anxiety, power and perceived threats to status and standing were embedded within many of the representations of railways in the landscape, alongside attempts to reconcile and, finally, absorb the railway into the landscapes through which they ran. These are discussed in an attempt to provide a deeper historical context for, and a clearer understanding of, the ways in which railways were portrayed in the landscape in the twentieth century.

Attempting to assess the importance of the visual portrayal of place and landscape in late nineteenth and early twentieth century railway publicity material *without* addressing the wealth of material that came before the widespread production of publicity material by railway companies themselves would be to overlook the formative, generative, period of the railway landscape aesthetic. It would neglect the period when the railways were forming their own identities and understandings of themselves and their role in society at a time when they were, arguably, most open to influence from broader aesthetic and artistic influences.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a background against and through which the subsequent publicity material produced by the railway companies themselves, the study of which comprises the body of this thesis, can be contextualised and analysed.

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[5] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1984), 231.

The chapter demonstrates that the railway companies, when they began to produce their own guidebooks, posters and publicity material, had inherited a mode of visualising the landscape that had been borne out of the shifting anxieties of the nineteenth century. As the anxieties associated with the railways changed, so did the ways in which the railway in the landscape was represented. Simmons argued that the period of 1831 – 1850 comprised 'the brief classical moment of railway art' when 'the railways were new [and] it had seemed worth trouble and expense to depict them with care'.[6] This chapter does not seek to refute this but rather to place this 'brief classical moment' within a wider historical context and to explore the ways in which such a moment came about. It will also attempt to demonstrate that the 'brief classical moment' was just that; a point in the dynamic and fluid development of a railway landscape aesthetic that would go on to inform and influence the later picturing of railway landscapes into the twentieth century. It highlights the fact that the 'machine ensemble' of Schivelbusch, far from being a static concept constructed through the coming together of locomotives, vehicles and infrastructure, was dynamic and subject to change.[7] The images discussed in this chapter show that there was not simply a one-way process where '[t]he traveler [sic] perceives the landscape as filtered through the machine ensemble'; the landscape was itself capable of transforming the machine ensemble.[8]

This research will look at material from before 1831 and will go further into the nineteenth century than Simmons' 'classical moment'. However, in essence, it will

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[6] Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1991), 126.
[7] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 40.
[8] Ibid., 27.

appraise the railway landscape aesthetic from the earliest years of the railways'

existence up to the point at which the railway companies themselves began to

produce, and circulate, their own illustrated publicity material for the consumption of

the general public. By understanding the railway landscape aesthetic of this early, pre

in-house publicity, period a more nuanced understanding of the later, more publicly

orientated, material can be arrived at.

To date there have been few other significant pieces of research that have been

dedicated to the area of visual representations of railways and landscapes. The work

of Murdoch, which will be referred to at times in this work, was aimed specifically,

and unashamedly, at the 'fine art' aspects of railways in the landscape and sought to

understand how these representations, not only negotiated aspects of modernity, but

more importantly reflected many of the class and social structures of their times.[9] The

present work builds on, but differs from, Murdoch's in two key ways; first, while it

does touch on similar material in the early years (such as the Tait, Bourne and Bury

lithographs), in the main it is concerned with far more popular and widely available

visual representations (the Morton guides from 1879 that are discussed at some length

were available for the price of one penny) such as illustrations in guidebooks. Second,

the explication of the images is based around an interpretation that seeks to

understand more about how people felt about their place in the world and is not

perhaps as rigorously political in outlook as Murdoch's work. Carter's work on the

Train Landscape discusses how, by the inter-war period "[a]lmost fully domesticated,

the railway dragon nestled in [the] English countryside" and seeks to understand how

this 'domestication' or 'naturalisation' (concepts that will be applied later in this text)

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[9] Murdoch, *From Elephant to Penge West: the railway in the artist's landscape.*

took place.[10] While Carter chooses to focus upon the work of Ravilious, W. Heath Robinson and Rowland Emett, in seeking the historical context of the creation of such railway landscapes he, again, returns to the 'high art' of the Victorian period citing the work of Musgrave and Egg (much as Murdoch does). The present work takes a decidedly 'middle', or perhaps even 'low brow' approach and postulates that the railway landscape aesthetic that went on to inform much of the inter-war understandings of the railway in the countryside was profoundly influenced by the images that were reproduced in the mass-market guidebooks aimed at railway travellers from the middle of the nineteenth century on.

This chapter is concerned with demonstrating that while the railway companies were among the first large organisations to embrace the idea of publicity as a purchasable product in itself, the visual content of the images they produced was, in turn, influenced by a complex modernity/anxiety dialectic that took its cue from eighteenth century ideals of the picturesque, sublime and the beautiful. For example, Ackerman points towards the early landscape photographers having been influenced by the picturesque and sublime ideals that were prevalent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[11] And, while he notes that these influences faded towards the last decades of the nineteenth century as photography began to find its own, distinctive, style of representation, it is this causal link between pre and post photographic landscape aesthetics that will be explored in this chapter.

By drawing together the existing secondary research in this field with a reappraisal of contemporary primary material the link can be made between nineteenth century

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[10] Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain*, 264.
[11] James S. Ackerman, "The Photographic Picturesque," *Artibus et Historiae* 24, no. 48 (2003): 73 - 94.

attempts to negotiate the social and cultural anxieties of modern mobility and the twentieth century's unabashed celebration of it.

This research will draw on secondary sources to locate the argument in the current literature and to contextualise it in contemporary historical debates. To this end scholarly material will be cited. It is, however, a field that has been, to a great degree, overlooked in terms of academic research with early railway prints and paintings often being studied for their engineering content or what they can reveal about early locomotive construction. There is considerable 'enthusiast' material that has been published on the subject that demonstrates great care and attention to detail and, while its analysis of the material may not be wholly pertinent, the quality of some of this work means that it will occasionally be included as background in the current research.

The Picturesque, the Sublime and the Beautiful

This thesis concerns itself primarily with representations of the landscape and among the terms most often used throughout these chapters will be the sublime and the picturesque. In broad terms it can be argued that the landscape itself is never 'picturesque' in the literal sense, only its artistic representation can be said to exhibit picturesque values. In this section the history and associated meanings of terms that will be used, throughout both this chapter and the rest of the thesis, will be looked at. These terms are primarily 'the picturesque' and 'the sublime' although the descriptive term 'beautiful' will be mentioned. In no way is this a discussion of wider notions of beauty or aesthetics in general, rather this is an opportunity to understand what these terms mean when applied to very specific visual representations of landscapes.

Burke's 1757 *A Philosophical Enquiry into the origins of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* became a standard text for several decades propounding the effects that visible, ostensibly beautiful, objects had on the human psyche.[12] Hussey explains it thus: '[o]bjects were perceived by the senses, and the senses communicated, not with the conscious mind, but with the sub-conscious instincts, begetting passions.'[13] Broadly speaking, those things that were gentle and pleasing were *beautiful* and those things that inspired awe, fear or discomfort were *sublime*. However, as changing artistic fashions came into Great Britain from the continent it became clear that such loose definitions were no longer adequate to encapsulate and describe, not only the visual styles being practiced but their effect on the viewer.

Hussey, in his influential 1929 work on the subject, describes the origins of the term 'picturesque' as being the 'painter's view' or 'after the manner of painters' from the Italian *pittoresco*.[14] In this way it can be seen that there is a clear delineation between the thing itself and the thing as represented through the artifice of Man. In the artistic traditions of Great Britain, in the eighteenth century looking towards the Classical for inspiration, the Italian landscape painters and the subsequent Dutch school embodied much of what was understood to be a 'painterly landscape'. William Gilpin's *Three Essays* was first published in 1794 and set about adding a new category, the Picturesque, in addition to the Sublime and the Beautiful in an attempt to rationalise the landscapes of Gainsborough and his contemporaries. He put forward the argument that '*roughness* forms the most essential point of difference between the *beautiful* and

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[12] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2008).
[13] Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque* (London: Frank Cass and Co, Ltd, 1927), 12.
[14] Ibid., 9.

the *picturesque*".[15] The ideas of 'roughness' and 'ruggedness' that were "observable... in the outline, and bark of a tree, as in the rude summit, and craggy sides of a mountain'[16] allowed for more Romantic elements to be acknowledged and included in works of art. In Gilpin's own words:

> A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant to the last degree. The proportion of it's [sic] parts – the propriety of it's ornaments – and the symmetry of the whole may be immensely pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet instead of the chisel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a *smooth* building we must turn it into a *rough* ruin. No painter, who had the choice of the two objects, would hesitate which to chuse [sic].[17]

Here it is possible to see another key facet of the Picturesque: the contrast between the natural world and the man-made. The rough bark of a tree and the craggy mountainside were juxtaposed with architectural forms (preferably ruins). This late eighteenth century model of aesthetics would, therefore, become perfectly suited to the juxtaposition of the old and the new in the nineteenth century, especially from the 1830s on when there was such a spate of railway building which saw the classically-inspired monumentalism of the railway viaduct contrasted with the pastoralism of the surrounding countryside. More will be said about this in the following sections and examples from contemporary prints and illustrations will be used to demonstrate this.

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[15] William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; And On Sketching Landscape* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2001), 6.
[16] Ibid., 7.
[17] Ibid.

Published in the same year as Gilpin, Uvedale Price's *Essays on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* goes on to examine the relationships between the picturesque, the sublime and the beautiful. While he is happy to acknowledge that 'picturesqueness appears to hold a station between beauty and sublimity'[18] he concedes that beauty, in this case in relation to a tree, requires 'a certain correspondence of parts, and a comparative regularity and proportion; whereas inequality and irregularity alone, will give to a tree a *picturesque* appearance'.[19] Of the difference between the Sublime and the Picturesque Price puts forward two key distinctions; the first being size or scale: 'greatness of dimension is a powerful cause of the sublime: the picturesque has *no connection with dimension of any kind*, and is often found in the smallest as in the largest of objects'.[20] The second is '[u]niformity, which is so great an enemy of the picturesque'; in the mind of Price the 'boundlessness' of the landscape helped to instil a sense of stillness and gloom.[21]

These concepts of the picturesque, the sublime and the beautiful were to influence artists, designers, architects and, as Ackerman has already pointed out, early photographers well into the nineteenth century.[22] While, from an art-historical and philosophical point of view, aesthetics and landscape have begun to be more hotly debated unpacking the influences of these concepts has not been fully explored in relation to the recording and memorialisation of the building of the railways.[23] Further to this, the ramifications of an essentially picturesque visual language in the

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[18] Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2001), 68.
[19] Ibid., 76.
[20] Ibid., 83.
[21] Ibid., 84.
[22] Ackerman, "The Photographic Picturesque."
[23] See, for example, Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2002).

representation of the railway landscape aesthetic into the twentieth century has only just begun to be touched on. These terms will be used in the description and explication of many of the railway related scenes and images that follow. An awareness of the mid eighteenth century roots of the portrayal of such symbols of contemporary modernity reinforces the fact that, while the railways developed quickly, the means to apprehend and assimilate them and their socio-cultural consequences took somewhat longer to progress.

<u>Anxiety and the Coming of the Railways: some early examples.</u>

Rees posits the date of May 1830 for the earliest railway prints and these depict the opening of the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway.[24] In this lithograph the railway is shown in perspective, running through a cutting, surrounded on both sides by cheering, flag waving, spectators. Canterbury Cathedral stands proud in the middle distance, dominating the landscape and providing a counterpoint to the classic 'V' composition created by the cutting and the horizon. The landscape here is dominated by the works of man in the forms of the town, cathedral and the railway.

This date of 1830 should not, however, be taken as fixed. While 1830 was undoubtedly the beginning of the explosion of pictorial representations of railways in the landscape as we know them today, both Darby and the Reverend R. B. Fellows, push the date back, by 80 years, to around 1750 with the engraving of Prior Park, near Bath.[25] This image shows a very early, man-powered, wooden wagonway that was built to transport quarried stone through the estate to the river transport on the Avon. Again, the railway is shown in perspective as it runs underneath the broad, sweeping

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[24] Gareth Rees, *Early Railway Prints* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1980), 15.
[25] Michael Darby, *Early Railway Prints. From the collection of Mr and Mrs M. G. Powell* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1979), 2; Rev. R. B. Fellows, "Early Railway Prints," *Print Collectors Quarterly* 18 (1931): 305.

front elevation of the country seat of Ralph Allen Esq. This railway is firmly placed in a parkland landscape that, very much like the lithograph of Canterbury that would come later, has been sculpted and transformed by the hand of man. Avenues, stands of trees and formal gardens lie alongside the wagonway which appears to have a dual function as a promenade. There is much that is painterly, or picturesque, about this scene but very little of the sublimity that would become a feature of railway prints from the later 1830s.

It is clear from a 1954 exhibition catalogue that there were other eighteenth century depictions of very early railways as reference is made to a print of 'a representation of a coal wagon' from the *London Magazine* of 1764.[26] Also included in this exhibition was the 1809 Rowlandson print that pictured Trevithick's experimental locomotive *Catch Me Who Can* running on its circular track in Euston (see Figure 2. 1). This is one of the first railway images that can be seen as embodying some of the latent anxieties that the railways brought to the fore. Images, especially cartoons, showing the railway as a dangerous monster began to be more common from the 1830s and the 1840s as the number of fortunes lost through speculation on them and the numbers of accidents increased dramatically as the railways grew.[27] This image, however, predates the railway mania of that period by almost two decades but the relationship between the railway and the landscape as portrayed in this print is significant.

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[26] *Railways. An Exhibition of rare and early books, prints and original drawings illustrating the development of railways in Great Britain in the nineteenth century* (London: Foyles Art Gallery, 1954), 1.
[27] James Taylor, "Business in Pictures: Representations of Railway Enterprise in the Satirical Press in Britain," *Past and Present*, no. 189 (November 2005): 111 - 146.

Unsurprisingly, the Rowlandson print portrays the railway as a spectacle. It is running on a circular track and is surrounded by a palisade which, one assumes, was intended to keep out those who hadn't paid the fee to witness, or ride upon, such a novelty. However, there is a sense of threat and anxiety in this image as the railway is portrayed almost as a wild animal that had to be physically separated from the outside world by a fence. The land surrounding the stockade is also blank and featureless indicating that this spectacle was doubly removed from the everyday world through being located in a hinterland on the outskirts of the capital. The city springs up in the middle distance only when safely apart from the railway while the hills that overlook the buildings (which are not present in reality) are a reminder of a more natural,

unsullied life. This image embodies the feelings of uncertainty and anxiety that many

had when encountering the railways later in the nineteenth century and adds weight to

the notion of

> [...] the anxiety-producing effects of rapid and constant change, and how
>
> the visual functioned as a means of expressing and allaying that anxiety
>
> through constant efforts to process and integrate the centrifugal experience
>
> of industrial capitalism.[28]

While Trevithick most likely did erect a fence around his potential money-maker it is

suggested here that the Rowlandson print shows that there were contemporary

anxieties about such technology and its place within the landscape.

Also listed in the same 1954 catalogue is perhaps the earliest representation of a

working steam railway. *The Collier* (see Figure 2.2) is an engraving dated 1813 but

subsequently published in a book on costume in 1814.[29] The background to this image

shows a Blenkinsop locomotive and a train of wagons running on what can be

assumed to be the Middleton Railway in Leeds. The environment, such as it is, is

entirely industrial and while there is an element of perspective, as can be seen in the

depiction of the sets of wheels on the far side of the vehicles, the train is essentially

side on and running through a *functional* landscape. This functional landscape is

typical of the earliest representations of railways and can be seen again in the 1823

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[28] Minsoo Kang and Amy Woodson-Boulton, "Preface," in *Visions of the Industrial Age, 1830 - 1914: Modernity and the Anxiety of Representation in Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), xvii.

[29] NRM: 1978-7741, "Coloured engraving. The Collier. Drawn by G Walker. Engraved by R and D Havell. Published by Robinson and Son, Leeds. 1 August 1813. (From Costume of Yorkshire by George Walker, 1814)", n.d.

engraving of the Blenkinsop locomotive included in Thomas Gray's early work on railways *Observations on a General Iron Rail Way*.[30]

Figure2. 2. NRM 1978-17741. *The Collier.*

In this image the physical context in which the train is portrayed is depicted as solely functional and appears almost as an integral part of the 'machine ensemble' of Schivelbusch. Early images such as these are extreme in their portrayal or, more accurately, non-portrayal of the landscape. The machine ensemble appears to have absorbed and negated the landscape in much the same way it was hoped that railways would absorb and negate space and time. In this way, far from the machine ensemble occupying a space 'both physically and metaphorically, between the traveller and the landscape' these early representations seem to reduce the landscape to a simple

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[30] Thomas Gray, *Observations on a General Iron Rail Way* (London: Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1823), facing page 46.

function of the machine ensemble itself.[31] This reduction of the landscape to a functional background can be seen as a direct impact of the modernity of the railways and their newness in the world's consciousness.

Early first hand accounts of the railways bear witness to the fact that, conceptually, they were problematic to describe. The letter of John Backhouse, written to his sister on the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825, appears to confirm this. Rather than attempt a solely textual description he chooses to make a small drawing of the train at the top of the letter and then describe its constituent parts.[32] The drawing itself is characteristic of many representations of railways in this period in that there is no landscape included. In addition, the textual description that accompanies the drawing demonstrates that the writer struggled with the relationship between people and the train as they are described in terms of dead weight rather than as passengers.

It is clear that, in the early part of the nineteenth century, certainly before the 1830s, there was a great deal of anxiety surrounding the building of the railways. Speculators and projectors proposed railways as solutions to logistical problems that the canals could not solve or as ways to gain personal wealth. Landowners and farmers, however, were far less amenable. Turnock describes how 'Lord Derby and Lord Sefton, and the farming people in general were hostile' to the building of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1825 and were lobbied hard until they saw the

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[31] Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 40.
[32] NRM: 2005-7137, "Letter from a 14 year old, John Backhouse, to his sister in London describing the opening train of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, 27th September 1825. Above the letter text is Backhouse's pencil sketch of the train with numbers to identify the various wagons and carriages described in the body of the letter.", September 27, 1825.

advantages.[33] Similarly, Biddle describes a situation where 'opposition was greatest

from landowners... whose families had spent large sums in landscaping parks and

improving agriculture' and who 'opposed the railways through an altruism derived

from the romantic movement and the concept of the picturesque in scenery'.[34]

Royal parks in particular were thought to be at risk from the railways and there is

evidence of diversions being built to ensure that they remained untouched by the

railways.[35] Figure 2.3 shows a 'narrow escape' for the Queen's Staghounds on the

Great Western Railway,[36] this is an illustration of an incident that took place on 11

January 1839 and was covered by *The Times*.[37] The landscape itself is depicted very

much as a functional, horizontal plane as before, but it is the activity, in this case stag

hunting, that represents the landscape. This image shows a landscape that was already

full; not simply of people, buildings and farms but of activities; activities that were

significant and symbolic both for and of those who saw themselves as representing

the interests of the landscapes they owned and worked. As if to reinforce this, the

sketch *Glorious!! Don't you admire Steam!* once more represents the anxieties of the

land and stock owning sections of society (see Figure 2.4).[38] While undated the

locomotive puts the image at around the early 1840s and it shows the train making its

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[33] David Turnock, *An Historical Geography of Railways in Great Britain and Ireland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 61.
[34] Gordon Biddle, "Railways, their Builders, and the Environment," in *The Impact of the Railway on Society in Britain: Essays in honour of Jack Simmons*, ed. A. K. B. Evans and J. V. Gough (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 120.
[35] Ibid., 122.
[36] NRM: 1997-7469, "Cartoon, 'The Queen's Staghounds Narrow Escape on the Great Western Railway'", c1839.
[37] "The Queen's Staghounds- Narrow Escape on the Great Western Railway," *The Times*, 14 January, 1839.
[38] 1978-2507 NRM, "Pen and ink sketch 'Glorious!! Don't you admire Steam! O Precious discovery, how well it makes everything go!!!'", C1840.

way through the landscape while the livestock; sheep, cows and horses, can be seen bolting in terror with the hapless owner looking on.
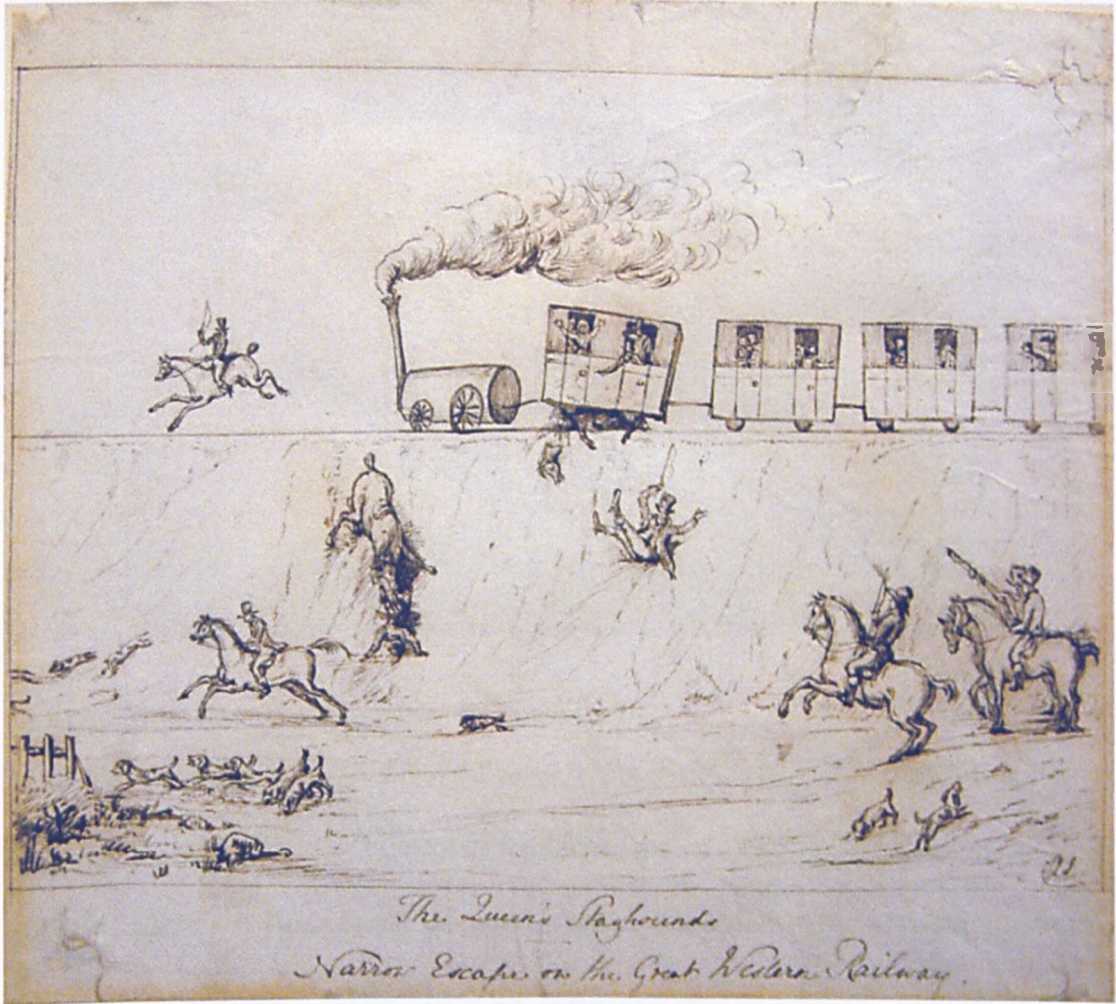
Figure 2.3. NRM 1997-7496 *The Queens Staghounds Narrow Escape...*

Figure 2.4. NRM1978-2507, *Glorious, Don't You Admire Steam...*

Similarly, the engraving *Hold Hard There!* of the early 1840s, illustrates this early

anxiety surrounding loss of control of the landscape (see Figure 2.5).[39] It appears to

show the Master of Hounds, pulling up his horse, and ordering the oncoming train to

stop in order to let the hounds follow the scent over the railway line. Again hunting,

the pastime of the landed gentry, has been interrupted and disrupted by the railways.

What is most significant in this image is the depiction of the landscape surrounding

the scene. It has developed from a simple functional background on and over which

the railway runs and has become a scene imbued with its own significance and

symbolism. In the background is fertile farming land which appears to be full of life

(unlike the sterile white of the railway line); a team of horses, with farm labourers, is

drawing a plough across the field while, in the distance, the church stands proudly on

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[39] NRM: 1978-1971, "Engraving, 'Hold Hard There!'. Drawn by H. Alden. Engraved by J. H. Engleheart. Published by Rogerson and Tuxford, 246 Strand, London.", c1840.

the horizon. All of the key structures of the countryside are embedded in this image: the landowners hunting, the labourers working the land and the church looking down over all; everything is in its rightful place; until, that is, the railway appeared.

Figure 2.5. NRM 1978-1971. *Hold Hard There!*

In these images the anxiety that Kang and Woodson-Boulton posit, and which is supported by the evidence of Turnock and Biddle is clearly apparent. They represent the fear that those who saw themselves as embedded in the landscape faced with the coming of the railways; as Wosk puts it, they gave vent to the 'subliminal anxieties that social frameworks were speedily being shattered'.[40] Such anxieties surrounding the railways were common in the 1830s and 40s and the satirical press were quick to capitalise on them. However, recent research has suggested that these anxieties were most commonly related to economic dangers and railway accidents were used as a

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[40] Julie Wosk, *Breaking Frame: Technology and the Visual Arts in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 34.

metaphor for the 'devastation wrought by speculation in railway shares'.[41] In these images it is clear to see that social anxieties were being played out against the backdrop of the English landscape. The visual use of the landscape has changed. From being something that had been assimilated into the machine ensemble the landscape was transformed into something that symbolised stability and the *old order of things* that was under threat from modernity.

The Picturesque Railway Landscape: prints and images

A change in the way railways in the landscape were pictured was already beginning to take place by the early 1830s. Running parallel to the portrayal of anxiety and fear of disruption or loss of control there was a shift towards portraying the railway as an integral part of a romantic landscape. After so much opposition from the landowning and farming classes images of new railways began to appear that deliberately made use of the picturesque and the sublime in an attempt to stress the 'grace and order of the railway in the landscape'.[42] As Kang and Woodson-Boulton have suggested, what was used to highlight the negative was also being employed to ameliorate, modify and temper the anxieties of modernity.

The images produced to commemorate the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway (LMR) in 1830, by Shaw and Bury, began to show the railway in a much more detailed landscape and architectural context. Figures 2.6 and 2.7 show the LMR at the crossing of Chat Moss and the viaduct over the Sankey Valley respectively and are typical of the large number of commemorative prints that began to appear at this time.

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[41] Taylor, "Business in Pictures: Representations of Railway Enterprise in the Satirical Press in Britain," 118.
[42] Rees, *Early Railway Prints*, 22.

The image of Chat Moss shows a perspective view of the train travelling through the open landscape leaving it dwarfed by its surroundings. The wide-open countryside exhibits all the hallmarks of 'the sublime' inasmuch as the sheer 'greatness of dimension' and '[u]niformity' of the surrounding landscape stimulates a sense of awe or trepidation.[43] The railway, while triumphant in its progress across the image is firmly located *in* and not simply *on* the landscape.
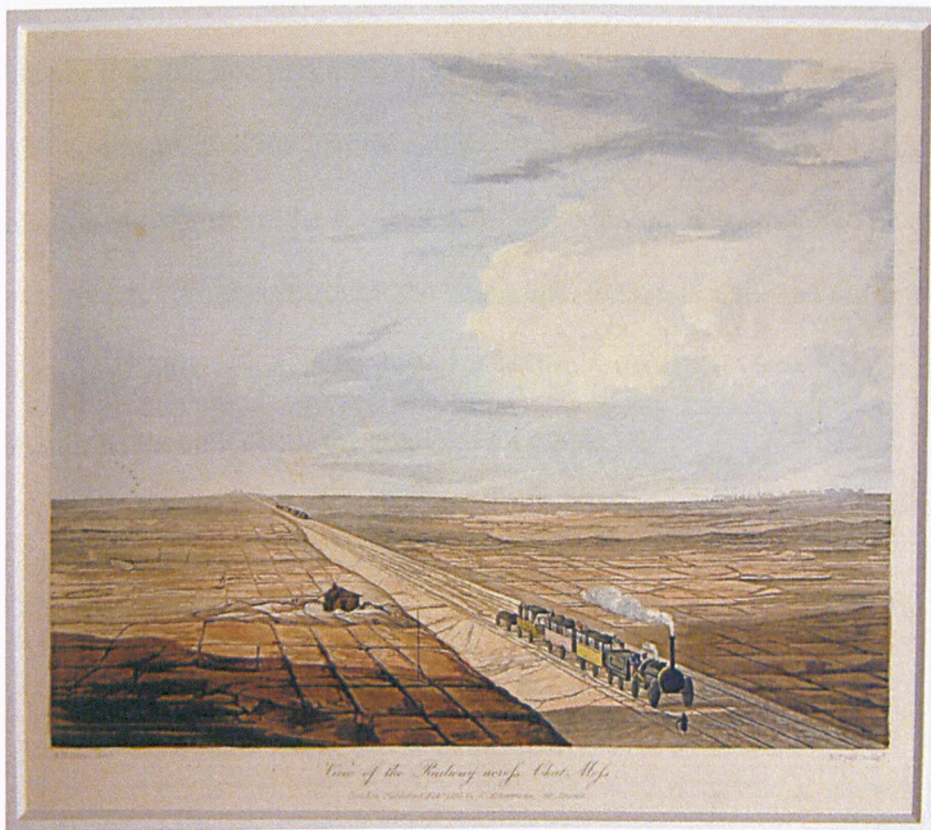
Figure 2.6. NRM 1975-8733. *View of the Railway at Chat Moss.*

The representation of the Sankey Viaduct appears to express not sublimity so much as picturesque, or painterly, values. The classical form of the viaduct itself echoes the aqueducts of ancient Rome that could be found on the continent, and were redolent of scenes from the Grand Tour and certainly an influence for continental railway

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[43] Price, *Essays on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful*, 83 - 84.

engineers later in the century.[44] Below, there are a host of signifiers both of the picturesque and the pastoral. A group of women look on, over the valley, as a farmer and his dog round up the cattle; here it is possible to see both the rural, the farmer and his livestock, and the rural-as-spectacle with the women looking on. The idea that the rurality pictured is worthy of the educated gaze of these women strengthens the picturesque credentials of the image while the 'lovers', pictured leaning against a conveniently built fence or gate adds a romantic element that begins to instruct the viewer that this image is a beautiful one, to be appreciated in an almost intimate way. The co-presence of the natural and the man-made have been used to highlight the picturesque nature of the scene. Again, while the railway is seen to be making *monumental* progress through the landscape, the landscape, and the activities that take place in it, have begun to be included as if to instruct the viewer of the image what should be thought about the content as a whole.

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[44] Jane E. Boyd, "Adorning the landscape: images of transportation in nineteenth century France," in *Visions of the Industrial Age, 1830 - 1914: Modernity and the Anxiety of Representation in Europe*, ed. Minsoo Kang and Amy Woodson-Boulton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 22.

While the prints of Bury and Shaw are well known there is other visual evidence of

the direct "situating" of the railway within the landscape in an attempt to naturalise it

and mitigate the anxieties that accompanied its development. Figure 2.8 shows a hand

tinted print 1m 35cm long that was designed to be seen, as a moving roll, on a viewer

dating from 1830 - 1835.[45] The spool was wound round and the scene would appear to

move along in a linear fashion, aping the passing scenery as experienced from a

moving train.

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[45] NRM: 2006-7639, "Engraving, hand coloured, long strip on wooden spool, for use
in viewing device, early mementoof Liverpool and Manchester Railway, c. 1830 -
1835, comprising of three sections viz (1) goods train hauled by 'Sans Pareil' and
passenger train hauled by 'Rocket' (2) view of line over Chat Moss (3) view of
Sankey Viaduct. Strip 68mm x 1355mm", n.d.
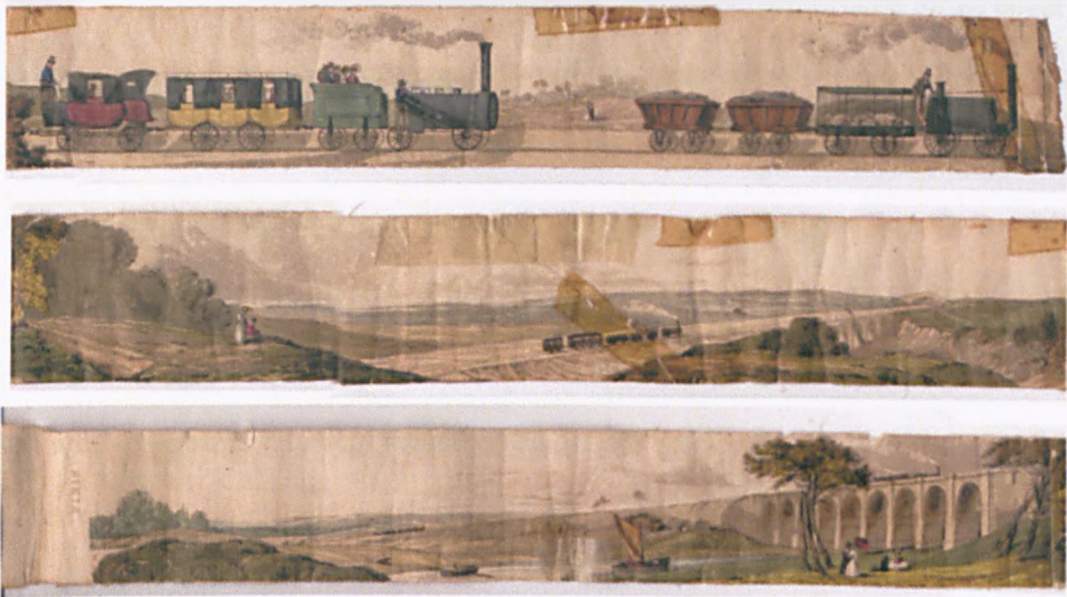
Figure 2.8. NRM 2006-7639. Spooled, engraved strip image of Liverpool and Manchester Railway.

This item also represents the LMR and the key topographical features along the line, in this case Chat Moss and the Sankey Viaduct. It begins with the locomotives hauling trains; both *Sans Pareil* and *Rocket* are pictured with trains of minerals and passengers respectively and both are pictured on a horizontal, functional background very reminiscent of the early images discussed in the previous section. The landscape features that are pictured are very much incidental to the machine ensemble that dominates the picture. As the image is moved on, the railway and the trains are repeatedly pictured, but in successively more and more *situated* ways, contextualised by the landscape through which they move.

The train, now in perspective, is seen running across Chat Moss, away from the viewer. It is much smaller than in the first section and the railway appears altogether more distant and situated in the surrounding landscape. The two women viewing the scene appear once more as an instruction to the viewer, an intimation that this scene,

far from being technological and intimidating, is there to be appreciated for its beauty and composition The picturesque classicism of the Sankey Viaduct can be seen in the distance, its aesthetic credentials reinforced by the inclusion of a party of viewers no doubt admiring its Palladian lines along with the pastoral scene being played out below the arches. Unlike the T. T. Bury print of the same location, the viaduct is obscured by trees which grow up from the valley bottom suggesting that this structure, while built only very recently, had already started to settle into its environment; the train itself appears to be emerging from a grove, partly architectural and partly pastoral.

The final scene of the roll shows a train so small that it is hardly recognisable as such and is almost lost in the landscape. The transformation appears to be complete; from its beginnings as a dominant machine ensemble, that negated not only time and space but the landscape itself, the railway is now pictured as fully situate *in* the landscape. The landscape has absorbed the machine ensemble in direct contrast to the assimilation of the landscape seen in the early picturing of locomotives and trains. In this artefact, the visual has been used to expound a narrative on modernity and anxiety, one that acknowledged the new and challenging nature of the railway but, at the same time, highlighted its picturesque attributes and pointed towards its eventual place in a re-established order of things.

This use of picturesque values to normalise and situate the railway in the pastoral arguably reached its apogee with the publication of J. C. Bourne's lithographs of the construction of the Great Western Railway in 1846.[46] Bourne had previously produced

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[46] J. C. Bourne, *Bourne's Great Western Railway: a reproduction of the History and description of the Great Western Railway: from drawings taken expressly for this work and executed in lithography* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1969).

a similar set of lithographs documenting the construction of the London and

Birmingham Railway (LBR) in 1839 but while this volume was embarked upon

because of the artist's own enthusiasm to record the construction of the railway that

was near his home, the second was a considered choice taken under advice of his

publisher because of the popularity of the subject matter at that time.[47]

Bourne's volume on the construction of the GWR differs greatly both in style and

content to that of the LBR. There is a more impressionistic use of the pencil to

suggest the grass and scrub in foregrounds and the scenes are composed in a far more

painterly way with none of the 'free floating' scenes such as that of *Box Moor*

Embankment (see figure 2.9). The scenes are unquestionably monumental and

industrial but are couched in a picturesque style that could have allayed some of the

concomitant anxieties associated with them.

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[47] J. C. Bourne, *Bourne's London and Birmingham Railway, by John C. Bourne; with a historical and descriptive account by John Britton* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1970); Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, 122 - 123.

Figure 2.9. NRM 1900-004 (pt2). *Box Moor Embankment.*

Figure 2.10 shows the scene *Wharncliffe Viaduct, Hanwell* from Bourne's GWR

volume which illustrates this use of the picturesque style. This scene shows a far more

relaxed style of representation and holds within it a host of signifiers pointing towards

the picturesque and the locating of the railway within a type of rural idyll. The

foreground is populated with people engaged in rural activities such as gathering in

hay (the wagons to the left of the viaduct) and watching over livestock (underneath

the viaduct arch to the right). The footing of the nearest pier even provides a welcome

rest-stop for the 'rustics'. In the background can be seen parkland and a modern

church. This scene contains all of the same elements that are to be found in *Hold

Hard There!* However, in this scene these elements are introduced in an attempt to

naturalise the railway within the landscape as opposed to highlight its separateness or

lack of locatedness. The symbols of the *old order*: agricultural activities, land

management and the church are, in this case, used to support the railways' claim of

authenticity and belonging whereas, previously, they appear to be included to
highlight difference.
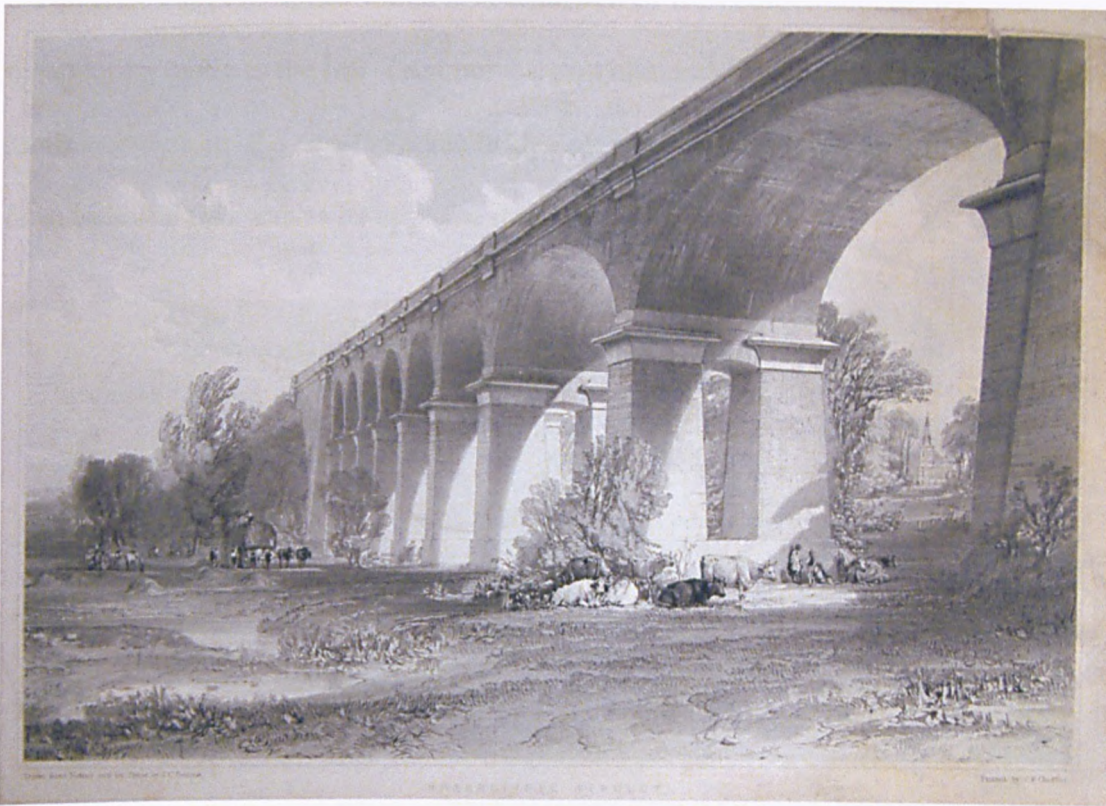
Figure 2.10. NRM 1977-7535. *Wharncliffe Viaduct, Hanwell.*

Other scenes from the same volume further support this naturalisation of the railway.

The scene at *Bath Hampton* (see Figure 2.11) is striking in its juxtaposition of the

rural and picturesque with the modern and monumental. The scene is composed of

two-thirds rural idyll and one-third railway. To the left the picture is composed of

classic elements of the picturesque, the cattle mill around in front of the farm

buildings while the church (again, the church is significantly placed) dominates the

scene. 'Rustics' lean on stable doors and pass the time while the trees elegantly frame

the view. Things appear to be slow-moving in this part of the scene and there is a

sense that both the cattle and the people are meandering about their business. Outside

of the architectural form of the church there is hardly a straight or parallel line in the

scene. This contrasts sharply with the straight, parallel lines of the GWR track that run from the bottom corner of the right hand portion of the scene. The heavy use of perspective suggests speed which is accentuated by the counterpoint of the meandering cattle to the left. The cool, elegant classical lines of the railway bridge are reminiscent more of a neo-Palladian bridge over a parkland lake than the vernacular farm building that acts as its opposite number.

Figure 2.11. NRM 1977-7532. *Bath Hampton*.

Despite these differences and distinctions, the railway is shown as co-existing with a peaceful countryside environment. The cattle are not spooked and the railway has not disturbed the conversation of the farm workers. The railway has, again, been located in a pre-existing, rural landscape and, through the use of picturesque techniques, has been shown to have been successfully assimilated into it. In these scenes nature, in the form of trees and bushes, has been deliberately placed in front of and around the

architectural railway features; this purposeful admixture of the natural and the man-made being, in itself, a key feature of the picturesque ideals of an earlier pre-railway age.

This image in particular has been looked at in terms of the development of the notion of a 'picturesque railway' but, in this case, it is worthwhile looking at the scene in a broader context; as a stage in the development of a wider railway landscape aesthetic.[48] In this period it is possible to see how the landscape was used to attenuate the anxieties concomitant with the machine ensemble. The technology of mobility; locomotives, vehicles and infrastructure, was taken into the painterly ambit of the sublime and the picturesque and transformed into something that could not only contrast but also complement the natural world. Once more, the concept of the machine ensemble as solely a filter through which the world was viewed has been brought into question. In this case, the evidence suggests the malleability of the machine ensemble as a concept by illustrating how the machine ensemble was itself viewed in a new light when represented within an aesthetic context. Indeed, Murdoch cites evidence to show that Bourne and his publisher saw themselves as explicitly engaged in the work of 'spreading knowledge about the railways and calming fears'.[49]

The work of Bourne and his contemporaries was 'high-end' and aimed at an exclusive audience as can be gauged by the scenes that they recorded and presented to the public and the cost of their volumes.[50] Bourne's work in particular can been seen as deliberately remodelling Gilpin's ideas of the picturesque to include industrial elements that had hitherto been rejected in picturesque representations of the

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[48] Philip Pacey, "The Picturesque Railway," *Visual Resources* 18, no. 4 (2002): 289.
[49] Murdoch, *From Elephant to Penge West: the railway in the artist's landscape*, 152.
[50] Rees, *Early Railway Prints*, 18.

landscape.[51] However, at this time the landscape became a powerful visual tool that addressed the anxieties of the age and, by lending the railway credence and an air of classical authenticity, enabled it to become more firmly embedded into the wider world; both geographically and culturally.

The Removal of the 'everyday' Railway.

The ending of the Railway Mania in 1847 marked the beginning of the railways' settling into the national cultural consciousness.[52] Most significantly however, it also appears to mark the beginning of the time when railways, as physical structures, began to be removed or edited out of the landscape in popular representations. While production of the railway print, of the style discussed in the previous section, fell out of fashion and almost ceased completely by the 1850s the railway guidebook became both more popular and prevalent.[53]

Guidebooks, detailing the experiences of travellers and providing advice for those who might wish to repeat such travels, had existed for centuries.[54] They often provided a dual function; first, describing the sights (and sites) that could be seen in a given county or area and, second, legitimising and historicising a given landowning family or family name by providing a provenance relating to their own situatedness and sense of belonging in a given area.[55] By the early nineteenth century there was a long tradition of literary guidebooks covering both the British Isles and the Continent. Morgan asserts that, by the time John Murray published his first travel handbook in

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[51] Arthur Elton, "The Piranesi of the Age of Steam," in *Country Life Annual* (London: Country Life, 1965).

[52] H. G. Lewin, *The Railway Mania and its Aftermath 1845 - 1852* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1968), chapter 15.

[53] Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, 126.

[54] Nicholas Parsons T., *Worth the Detour* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007), 12.

[55] Charles Lancaster, *Seeing England: Antiquaries, Travellers and Naturalists* (Gloucester: Nonsuch Press, 2008), 12.

1836 'the most indispensible item of travelling gear was the guidebook'.[56] Three years later, in 1839, George Bradshaw published *Bradshaw's General Railway and Steam Navigation Guide for Great Britain and Ireland* (Bradshaw) a series that was, in one form or another, to continue well into the twentieth century. While primarily a timetable and, according to some an unfathomable one at that, it was to herald the publication of a host of other railway-based guidebooks.

Whether travel was domestic or foreign, guidebooks became a vital part of the process of both exploring and defining 'other' places. While the railway companies would eventually begin to produce their own guidebooks 'in house', the late 1830s to the mid 1890s was the heyday of the privately published travel guide, although many publishers were fastidious in either dedicating their volumes to the relevant railway company or clearly stating on the front cover that their book was *Published by Authority* of the company concerned.[57]

While there were illustrated volumes from the early 1830s Martin sees Dodgson's 1836 volume on the Whitby and Pickering Railway as 'perhaps the first to bring the traditions of the picturesque into play'.[58] This fits with the argument of the previous section that the picturesque was employed from the 1830s to ameliorate the anxieties associated with the railways and to transform, or at least temper, the machine ensemble with the accessibility of a more classical aesthetic. Following in this tradition was *Roscoe's Book of the Railway from Birmingham, Liverpool and*

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[56] Marjorie Morgan, *National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 19.
[57] G. H. Martin, "Sir George Samuel Measom (1818 – 1901), and His Railway Guides," in *The Impact of the Railway on Society in Britain: Essays in honour of Jack Simmons* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 230.
[58] Ibid., 228.

Manchester from 1839.[59] Textually it is fairly typical of the guidebooks that were published at around the same time, the illustrations, however, are of a particularly high quality. Figure 2.12 shows *The Aston Viaduct*, a scene that is redolent of the romantic and picturesque notions of the period. The train passes over a viaduct and a mill by the river Tame. Country folk look on (again, indicating that this is a picturesque view to be appreciated) as the train makes its way through a countryside that is overlooked, not only by the spire of a church, but by the three decorative pinnacles of nearby Aston Hall. Both the symbols of the church and the landowning aristocracy are present in this image while other images in the book begin to acknowledge the railway's own place in the landscape. For example, the next image in the book shows the railway running directly across the parkland in front of Aston Hall. Such scenes, while contemporary with the work of Bourne, show the railways both as monumental and as local and personal. By direct association with pre-existing social and cultural symbols such as the church, the stately home and the farm labourer the railway was naturalised and domesticated in the public gaze. The guidebook, far more affordable than a volume of Bourne's lithographs, was becoming one of the main ways of negotiating the anxieties of modernity and of continuing to reshape the machine ensemble.

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[59] Thomas Roscoe, *Roscoe's Book of the Railway from Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester* (London: Orr and Co, 1839).

As more and more illustrated guidebooks were produced the image of the railway as situated in the landscape began to disappear to be replaced instead with more scenes from the locations to which the railway could provide access. The volumes produced by George Measom stand out, in what was a crowded field, as excellent examples of the illustrated guidebook and are redolent of the genre at a point of change.[60] The railways are still pictured in many of the Measom guidebooks but there are volumes that contain only landscapes where the railway has been omitted and the scene itself, rather than the means of accessing it, has been portrayed. The railway, normalised and to a great degree domesticated, ceased to be a source of such interest or anxiety and so ceased to require some form of mitigation. From the late 1850s and early 1860s the most common scenes published in the guidebooks were locations that could be

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[60] Martin, "Sir George Samuel Measom (1818 – 1901), and His Railway Guides."; J. D. Bennett, "The Railway Guidebooks of George Measom," *Backtrack*, July 2001.

reached by the railway and not images of the railway itself. The 1856 *Guide to the London and South Western Railway*, is typical of this in that it depicts railways solely in urban or suburban environments and not in the rural landscape; where out-of-town locations were pictured they were done so without the railways being present.[61] The natural home of the railway had begun to be seen as an urban and not, as was previously the case, a rural environment. The machine ensemble of the railway had been brought within the ambit of what might be seen as the wider machine ensemble of urban industrialism.

The nine titles that made up the Morton and Co's *Illustrated Guides* of 1879 exhibit a similar trend. These were clearly aimed at a popular market as they were priced at one penny and made quite a contrast to the fine hardbound volumes that preceded them. Their small size and paper covers made them easily foldable and transportable and, while they did not perhaps contain the same quantity of information as the guides by Measom or Bradshaw they covered all of the main towns and cities and provided timetable information as well. In addition to this the Morton guides were priced at one penny while the Measom guides, even in the 1850s, cost one shilling.

The guidebook to the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway had several beach scenes along the coast including Brighton, Hastings and Worthing along with some picturesque views of places such as the Isle of Wight (see Figure 2.13) but there was no sign of the railway in the illustrations at all.[62] The London and South Western Railway guide again, had many engraved views of Jersey and Devon along with coverage of key towns and cities such as Southampton but there was no picturing of

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[61] George Measom, *The Official Guide to the London and South Western Railway* (London: H. G. Collins, 1856).
[62] *London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, Illustrated Tourist Guide* (London: Morton and Co, 1879).

the railway, in the landscape or otherwise.[63] The guide for the London, Chatham and Dover Railway had eleven pages of scenes of Paris and its environs but, again, there are no images of railway.[64] Interestingly, page 2 of this volume presented a full page engraving of the cross channel steamers that would take the tourist to Paris so it would appear as if transport and mobility were not de facto 'off limits' as subjects to be represented.

Figure 2.13. Views of the Isle of Wight from Morton's guide to the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, 1879, p. 28.

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[63] *London and South Western Railway, Illustrated Tourist Guide* (London: Morton and Co, 1879).
[64] *London, Chatham and Dover Railway, Illustrated Tourist Guide* (London: Morton and Co, 1879).

There are elements of the picturesque in many of the landscape scenes included in the

Morton guides but these do not seem to be aimed at negotiating any form of

modernity; they make use of the composed, framed vista and the juxtaposition of the

man made and the natural but there appears to be no conflict, or clash, that is being

worked out. The guide to the South Eastern Railway contained several typical

examples that illustrate this.[65] Figure 2.14 shows *Camden House, Chislehurst* from

this volume; the house itself is partially obscured by the foliage that frames it and the

foreground exhibits a roughness that Gilpin would have approved of. Given that the

railway ran only two miles from the parkland it seems possible that the railway could

have been pictured in the foreground but, unlike in the earlier guidebooks (such as

those covering Aston Hall), this was not done.

CAMDEN HOUSE, CHISLEHURST.

Figure 2.14. *Camden House, Chislehurst* from Morton's guide to the South Eastern Railway, 1879, p. 3.

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[65] *South Eastern Railway, Illustrated Tourist Guide* (London: Morton and Co, 1879).

The scene chosen to represent Hythe in this volume (see Figure 2.15) was, again, characteristically picturesque. The church is the dominant feature and it appears settled and at home in the pastoral scene that unfolds around it. A man rakes hay in the meadow in front of the church while a woman and children admire the view and, down the lane, a pony and trap comes into view. Once more, everything is in its right and proper place: the church, labourers working on the land and the well-to-do lady or governess typifying much of the strata of society at that time. There is little anxiety in this image and, as with the majority of the illustrations in the series, the railway is entirely absent; it is a far cry from the conflict of interests pictured in *Hold Hard There!* almost forty years previously.

Figure 2.15. *Hythe* from Morton's guide to the South Eastern Railway, 1879, p. 10.

The Morton guide to the Midland Railway is a particularly striking example of how the railway was removed from the visual representations of the landscape at this

time.[66] The Midland Railway ran through some of the most rugged, and thus picturesque and sublime, landscapes in the country and these are pictured profusely. On page 15 the text gives a series of accounts of what can be seen from the train and describes each vista as it unfolds before the passenger. 'We are now at Dent Head, and away to the north stretches the valley down which the Dee roars'. The *we* signifies that the reader was made to feel as if they were being accompanied by the writer as he expounded on the beauties of the landscapes through which they passed together, but the railway was not pictured in the associated image. Similarly on page 18, the Eden Valley was described thus: 'We have now for nearly forty miles been descending the Vale of the Eden, the scenery of which is full of romantic beauty.' This descent of the valley, considering the distances involved, is obviously taking place on a train, but the accompanying image shows the picturesque landscape, as if from some other point outside of the train, with nothing of the railway in evidence (see Figure 2.16). Textually, the railway may have been present; visually the railway had been removed from the landscape almost completely.

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[66] *Midland Railway, Illustrated Tourist-Guide* (London: Morton and Co, 1879).

Only a very few of the nine 1879 Morton guides contain images of the railway itself

and, in the main these are of the railway in its own territory (most often the station).

The guide to the Great Northern Railway and Route to Scotland carries some of the

best examples of these images.[67] These include views of the city of York which places

the ancient buildings and monuments of the city such as the Minster and the ruins of

St Mary's Abbey alongside York station, which in 1879, had only been open for two

years (see Figure 2.17). It is perhaps significant that aspects of the railway, such as

the station, are pictured in this volume and that they are paired with the monumental

structures of the medieval period. The station is here being compared to the

monumental religious architecture of an earlier age and is seen as being comparable in

both scale and significance. The station building has become a cathedral of modern

mobility and it is pictured as fully situated in an urban context in much the same way

as the Minster at York is centred as the cultural and religious heart of the city. Only

[67] *Great Northern Railway and East Coast Route to Scotland Tourist Guide, Illustrated* (London: Morton and Co, 1879).

two years before the publication of this guide, and in the same year as the new station at York opened, Monet began his series of paintings of the Gare Saint-Lazare in Paris; the modernism of the impressionist's style echoing the modernism of the subject.[68] The station building, and the railway, had come to town, to settle in an increasingly urban, metropolitan context.

Figure 2.17. *York* from Morton's guide to the Great Northern Railway and East Coast of Scotland, 1879, p. 7.

Unusually for the railway guides of the period Morton's Great Northern guide does carry one scene of the railway in the landscape and it is remarkably similar to the earlier scenes discussed above. The *Royal Border Bridge* exhibits elements of both the sublime and the picturesque. A shepherd in the foreground tending his flock on

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[68] Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain*, 119.

the rough, scrubby hillside is contrasted with the awe inspiring scale of the bridge itself, its piers reflected in the waters of the river Tweed. The fact that, in this volume and several of the others, this is the only scene that echoes the earlier romanticising of the railways perhaps makes it all the more significant. One interpretation of this scene could be that the bridge is acting as a transition between urban, modern England and wild, sublime Scotland that carried with it all the romantic associations of Walter Scott and Robert Burns. The older visual language of the sublime and the picturesque was revisited and reapplied to a nation that, while part of the union, was considered by many to be attractively 'other'. It stands in powerful contrast to the scenes of the railway as situated in an urban context or those of the landscape denuded of the railway altogether and possibly serves as a reminder of the scale of the railways' undertakings.

Apart from occasional examples such as the *Royal Border Bridge* the railway was, by the late 1870s, almost fully removed from the landscape context which the visual material typified by Bourne and others once strove to place it so harmoniously within. The railway no longer had to be pictured as situated within the landscape, its presence was *implied* by the fact that the landscape was being seen at all. The railway was the *means* to the landscape in much the same way as the presence of the photographer is implied by the existence of a photograph although, in the main, the photographer is not visible in the image and is the voyeuristic means though which we are able to view the scene.[69] This shows evidence of a deep change in the apprehension of railway-as-modernity. Initially, as has been shown in the early visual representations, the railway negated the landscape and it was the works of man that were commemorated, memorialised and that assimilated the natural world. Towards the

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[69] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 12.

end of the nineteenth century, however, the landscape had begun to visually negate the railway; the works of man and nature were generally pictured at arms length from each other. The landscape was depicted as picturesque or sublime while urban environments were seen as busy bustling cultural centres; the railway, once paired with the former, began to be seen as belonging more fully to the latter.

The Morton guides were proudly emblazoned with the legend 'published by authority' on their covers thereby establishing a direct link with the company whose line they were recording. But, by the late nineteenth century, many of the railway companies began to commission their own guidebooks (one presumes in an attempt to have greater control of content and style). From the 1890s most of these volumes began to use photographs, instead of the more traditional wood engravings, to illustrate their guides although it is clear that photographs were commonly retouched. These hybrid images have been seen as another aspect of the modernity/anxiety dialectic. As Beegan says '[a]s the negative consequences of industrialization became unmistakably clear in the second half of the [nineteenth] century [in Britain] there was a decline of confidence in mechanical progress' which likewise saw a loss in confidence in the photo-mechanically reproduced image.[70] Beegan suggests that the widespread practice of retouching or altering images either to give them the impression that they were paintings or engravings was in order to locate the image itself in a well-established artistic tradition that stood apart from the 'brutally faithful, and microscopically ugly' photo-mechanically reproduced photograph.[71]

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[70] Gerry Beegan, "Finding Florence in Birmingham: hybridity and the photomechanical image in the 1890s," in *Visions of the Industrial Age, 1830 - 1914: Modernity and the Anxiety of Representation in Europe*, ed. Minsoo Kang and Amy Woodson-Boulton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 97.
[71] Ibid.

Railway companies had been making use of photographs, retouched or otherwise, in their carriages since the mid 1880s as a form of advertising and decoration. In this the Great Eastern Railway (GER) said that it 'led the van, and for years maintained the monopoly' after the Locomotive Superintendant William Worsdell suggested, in 1884, putting up photographs of GER hotels and stations above the seats in the carriages.[72] The GER made use of 'the greatest landscape photographer of the time' (admittedly the article from which this is taken was written by a GER employee) and hired Payne Jennings to take the photographs.[73] Jennings had travelled and exhibited widely and the images he took were credited, by the GER, with almost tripling the numbers of people travelling to the GER's seaside stations in the first year that the photographs were used.[74] Jennings would continue his association with the GER and, in 1897, produced two books for them that would mark the beginning of the railway company produced guidebook proper.[75]

The role of the photograph in the production of guidebooks in the later nineteenth century has been touched upon in the work of Taylor who, while acknowledging that photographs were very often simply 'presented as illustrations, without comment', was keen to demonstrate that the images acted as a guide for the tourist in preparing them for the things they *ought* to see when visiting a location. He also comments that in the photographic images included in the guidebooks at the time it was common that '[a]ll

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[72] Scott Damant, "Art in Railway Carriages," *The Railway Magazine*, February 1898, 159.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 161.
[75] Payne Jennings, *Photo Pictures in East Anglia* (Great Yarmouth: Jarrold and Sons, 1897); Payne Jennings, *Sun Pictures of the Norfolk Broads* (Ashstead: Art Photo Works, 1897).

signs of modernity were excised'.[76] Such editing out of modernity is something that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven with reference to the 'interior geography' of the GWR where the images used within the pages of the staff magazine differed greatly from those used in their outward facing publicity campaigns. However, in this context, it is sufficient to note that there was a dynamic tension between the modernity of the medium (photography) and the idealised rural landscapes and locations being pictured.

As the railways became more 'everyday' and were eventually removed from the picturing of the landscape, the 'pastoralised' rural idyll became the stock-in-trade of the railway guidebook. This provided potential, and actual, tourists with visual representations of an idealised landscape, which were consumed in ever increasing numbers meaning that the relationship between the railways, and the landscapes through which they ran became more complex and problematic. In providing access to these locations the railways were in danger of threatening the very pre-industrial character which they extolled to the tourist; the modernity/anxiety dialectic took an inward turn and challenged the railway companies to examine their relationship with themselves- how far could they create a 'place' out of a *location* that embodied the characteristics which would appeal to tourists without endangering the survival of those characteristics through the process of mass tourism? It would appear that a simple solution to this problem came in the form of excluding the railways from the picturing of the landscape and thus visually side-stepping the thorny problem of the preservation of a truly 'authentic' rural environment.

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[76] John Taylor, *A Dream of England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 70 -1.

Conclusions

By the time railway companies, such as the GWR, began producing their own illustrated tourist guides there had been a complicated and fluctuating railway landscape aesthetic in evidence for at least 70 years. This research has put forward the argument that the railway landscape aesthetic was a fluid construct that was heavily influenced by the changing nature of, what has here been termed, a modernity/anxiety dialectic; a process that has already been identified as having an impact on visual representations in the nineteenth century, and one that led to the use of shifting forms of visual vocabulary.[77] In its earliest form the railway landscape aesthetic was characterised by its negation of the landscape or its reduction to a functional 'ground'. The anxieties felt by people about the burgeoning railway network were expressed in images of crashes, catastrophes and implied socially through the disruption of the old established order of life.

As railways became more everyday in an existential sense, the visual vocabulary had developed into a more familiar pattern typified by the use of tropes associated with the sublime and the picturesque. Such tropes were employed in an attempt to allay, and not to highlight, the anxieties created by the modernity of the railways and, as has been shown, one of the prime exponents of this aesthetic can be seen as Bourne whose lithographs attempted to reconcile the modern with the romantic, rural and the classical.

From the middle of the nineteenth century the modernity/anxiety dialectic took an inward turn that saw the railways seeing themselves as possibly threatening the idyll

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[77] Kang and Woodson-Boulton, "Preface."; Beegan, "Finding Florence in Birmingham: hybridity and the photomechanical image in the 1890s."; Rees, *Early Railway Prints.*

that they had provided widespread access to. This research posits that this is one of the key reasons why the railway, in all its forms, began to disappear from the picturing of the railway landscape. The railway, rather than being seen, became implied, a conceptual turn that would dovetail well into the theoretical framework of photography that would play such an important role in the continuing representation of the railway landscape aesthetic where the photographer, the agency through which the photograph is produced, is also implied (by the existence of the photographic image) rather than seen. It was this 'inward turn' of the modernity/anxiety dialectic that would provide the structure for the 'railway-free' aesthetic that would inform the bulk of the early to mid twentieth century railway landscape representations.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates the value of a 'long tail' approach to the understanding of the railway's portrayal of the landscape and their relationship with it. Only through understanding and identifying the processes behind the finished article that was presented to the public, in the form of in-house guidebooks and publicity, in the very late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is it possible to comprehend the complex visual interplay between railways, as harbingers of both modernity and anxiety, and the landscape.

always partly cloudy, suggesting moderation and temperance... The

countryside, carefully preserved by this equable climate, echoes its

harmony.[1]

The following two chapters look in detail at the representation of landscapes in the

graphic posters of the Great Western Railway (GWR) from their earliest foray into the

production of a 'modern' graphic poster in 1897 until their absorption into the

nationalised British Railways in 1948. It will look at how the landscape was pictured

and, to a great degree, manipulated to construct a particular type of countryside that

echoed the GWR's vision of itself and its values while tying in with wider, popular

understandings of the significance of landscape. It will analyse the parallels with the

visual tropes already identified in the representation of railway landscapes and

locations in the previous chapter such as the marked lack of images of the railway

(locomotives, rolling stock and infrastructure) and strong evidence of market

segmentation that reflects the heterogeneous nature of the tourist utopia that they

constructed. These two chapters will place the development of the GWR's graphic

style within a wider contemporary historical context and will ground the individual

poster images within the debates, narratives and discourses that were ongoing at the

time. In addition, it will demonstrate that the graphic style developed by the GWR

was a continuation of the complex landscape aesthetic that has been identified in

Chapter Two and that, while distinct from the styles of other railway companies,

reflects the wider visual vocabulary employed by the railway companies of Britain at

this time.

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[1] *Happy Holidays: The Golden Age of Railway Posters* (London: Pavilion, 1987), 6.

Chapter Three: Creating the Recurring Thought: The Use of Landscapes in the Pictorial Posters of the GWR, 1897 – 1914.

<u>Introduction</u>

The previous chapter provided both an historical and aesthetic context against which to view the use of landscapes by the GWR. It has shown that the GWR did not begin producing their publicity material in a vacuum; there was already an existing railway landscape aesthetic that had gone through several iterations by the time they produced their first poster or guidebook. The main body of this thesis is concerned with understanding more about the ways in which such an aesthetic was developed and adapted by the GWR to suit its own needs and agenda. Beginning with the pictorial posters and then moving on to the guidebooks, this thesis will demonstrate that the nineteenth century inheritance which the GWR received was a dynamic kit-of-parts that allowed the company to construct a sophisticated and complex series of imaginative geographies that came together to form, as has been defined in Chapter Two, a *tourist utopia*.

The posters produced by railway companies from the late nineteenth century are perhaps some of the best-remembered aspects of the varied publicity enterprises that they undertook. Memories of holidays, people and places seem somehow tied up and embodied in the colourful images half-remembered and half-imagined by tourists and travellers of all ages. Writer, broadcaster and traveller Michael Palin summed up his own thoughts on the railway posters of his childhood by stating that

> ...there is, nevertheless, something undeniably reassuring and
>
> comforting about the world of uncomplicated pleasure and unalloyed
>
> beauty which they defined. It is a timeless world in which skies are

This chapter will explore the development of the railway pictorial poster in general up to 1914, and how it was viewed in the contemporary railway press. It will then go on to examine the GWR's use of landscape in the posters of this period. The following chapter (Chapter Four) will pick up the development of the GWR's graphic style in the inter-war period and look at how, over time, the representation of landscapes in the GWR pictorial poster oeuvre developed. Both chapters will put forward the argument that, while the GWR were in no way the most experimental or avant-garde of the railway companies when it came to poster design, they were innovative in their own way and perhaps do not deserve the conservative tag with which they are so readily labelled today.[2]

As perhaps the most popular aspect of the publicity material created by the railways the transport poster has come in for significant attention over the past 25 years or more. Levey's *London Transport Posters* of 1976 ascribed a powerful role to the poster, in particular those designed under the auspices of Frank Pick, and states that 'much of the international esteem which London transport enjoys stems from its posters'.[3] London Transport posters have since been the subject of continued interest and scrutiny that have seen volumes of general compilations, and those focussed on specific aspects of their poster advertising or the role played by particular individuals in the development of their own graphic style.[4] Remaining in the capital, the posters of

[2] Teri J. Edelstein, "The Art of Posters: Strategies and Debates," in *Art for All. British Posters for Transport* (New Have and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 22.
[3] Michael F. Levey, *London Transport Posters* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1976), ix.
[4] David Bownes and Oliver Green, eds., *London Transport Posters: A Century of Art and Design* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2008); Jonathan Riddel, *Pleasure Trips by Underground* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 1998); Jonathan Riddell and William T. Stearn, *By Underground to Kew: London Transport Posters 1908 to the Present* (London: Studio Vista, 1994); Jonathan Riddell, Peter Denton, *By Underground to The Zoo: London Transport Posters 1913 to the Present* (London: Studio Vista, 1995); Naomi Games, ed., *Poster Journeys: Abram Games and London*

the London County Council Tramways (LCCT) have recently benefitted from in-depth research. This has highlighted the fact that the LCCT, rather than commissioning posters from established artists or organisations, could draw on the talent of student artists enrolled at the London County Council-run Central School of Arts and Crafts which, due in part to the school's 'very egalitarian policy', led to the development of a distinctive house style.[5]

Nationally, railway posters have featured in many publications. *Speed to the West*, *It's Quicker by Rail* and *South for Sunshine* have reproduced the poster and graphic art of the GWR, London North Eastern railway (LNER) and Southern Railway (SR) respectively and provide many visual examples of the graphic styles that so captured the imagination of commentators such as Palin.[6] These are, however, more properly picture books than any attempt to examine the graphic styles and outputs of the railways in their historical and cultural context. An overview of the poster art of the 'Big Four' railway companies was published in 1992 and, while in essence also a picture book, the introduction to this volume provides useful general information about the use of posters and their development over time.[7] Furness moved away from a company by company themed approach in his, to date, two volumes subtitled *Railway Journeys in Art* and made use of posters from several different companies from different historical periods to compile a selection that focuses almost exclusively on

Transport (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 2008); Justin Howes, *Johnston's Underground Type* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 2000).
[5] Jonathan Riddell, *Tramway Art: The Distinctive Poster Art of the London County Council Tramways* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 2010), 7.
[6] Aldo Delicata and Beverley Cole, *Speed to the West* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 2000); Beverley Cole, *It's Quicker by Rail: LNER Publicity and Posters, 1923 - 1947* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 2006); Tony Hillman and Beverley Cole, *South for Sunshine: Southern Railway Publicity and Posters, 1923 - 1947* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 1999).
[7] Beverley Cole and Richard Durack, *Railway Posters 1923 - 1947* (London: Lawrence King, 1992).

landscapes and locations.[8] These books attempt 'to explore the world of commercial railway art more extensively, and to write the books as if we were taking journeys around the United Kingdom'.[9] While ostensibly large-format picture books they have also required some significant scholarship regarding dates and the attribution of artists. Moving away from posters but retaining the idea of a journey through Britain, *Landscapes Under the Luggage Rack* by Norden looks at the production of the carriage prints that were used to illustrate landscapes and locations within the carriages themselves.[10] Very often the same artists that were used to produce the poster art of the inter-war period were also commissioned to produce the carriage print artwork.

More in-depth work has been carried out on both the GWR and LNER and these two volumes, which cover, as far as possible, the entire range of publicity outputs of these companies, will be referred to throughout this chapter.[11] Significantly, almost all of these books deal with the railway companies of Britain after the changes brought about by the 1921 Railways Act and the subsequent formation of the 'Big Four' in 1923. There is significantly less work on the earlier pre-1923 posters and graphic art of the railways. One exception is Wigg's *Bon Voyage: Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era* which looks at the posters of both railway companies and shipping

[8] Richard Furness, *Poster to Poster: Railway Journeys in Art. Vol. 2 Yorkshire & the North East* (Tirley: JDF and Associates Ltd, 2010); Richard Furness, *Poster to Poster: Railway Journeys in Art. Vol. 1 Scotland* (Tirley: JDF and Associates Ltd, 2009).
[9] Furness, *Poster to Poster: Railway Journeys in Art. Vol. 1 Scotland*, 1.
[10] Greg Norden, *Landscapes Under the Luggage Rack: Great Paintings of Britain* (Bugbrooke: Great Norden Railway Publications, 1997).
[11] Roger Burdett Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of Great Western Railway Publicity* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles PLC, 1987); Allan Middleton, *It's Quicker by Rail: The History of LNER Advertising* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2002).

lines.[12] Once more, this volume is primarily a vehicle for reproducing the posters themselves but the introductory section contains information on the early designers and artists that the railways employed.

Internationally, a significant touring exhibition of British railway posters was mounted in Japan in 1997.[13] This exhibition made extensive use of the poster collections held at the National Railway Museum (NRM) in York and demonstrated the strength that the images had and their ability to communicate across vast distances of both space and time and with significantly different cultures. Similarly Caracalla's small volume *Travel Posters* looks at the development of railway poster art on the continent from the 1870s to the late twentieth century.[14] While there is little in the way of comparison with the railway poster art of the same period in Britain it provides useful information on styles of lettering and representations of landscape along with the marketing processes and mindsets that led to their creation and subsequent reception.

As can be seen, there are significant numbers of publications relating to railway posters. While there has undoubtedly been a great deal of work involved in compiling these books they rarely make serious attempts to place the railway's graphic style in their cultural and historical contexts or begin to explicate the agency that they may have had in the active construction of the tourist experience. These books will be referred to throughout this chapter but the current research seeks to move away from a basic appreciation of the stylistic content of the posters and graphic art of the GWR and begin to interrogate the semiotic content.

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[12] Julia Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era* (London: HMSO, 1996).
[13] *The Railway Poster in Britain: Excursion for History and Culture* (Kobe: East Japan Railway Culture Foundation, 1997).
[14] Jean-Paul Caracalla, *Travel Posters* (Paris: Fitway Publishing, 2005).

Perhaps surprisingly, there has been little academic work into railway posters and little in the way of in-depth analysis of their use and content. The work of Harrington looked at the role that female figures played in the railway advertising of the inter-war years. Interestingly, in this paper the term 'advertising' is virtually synonymous with the word 'poster' as no material outside of the posters produced by the railway companies is considered in great detail.[15]

The evidence of a commercial strategy defined by market-segmentation was characteristic of the railway advertising of the inter-war period, as will be discussed in the following chapters. But this chapter will demonstrate that the same can be seen in the railway's treatment of landscape in the Edwardian era and should not be seen solely an inter-war phenomenon.

The research of Holland into the wider cultural context of the LNER's posters sees their visual imagery as 'instrumental in creating an idealistic vision of escape from the modern world,' but conceded that '[m]odern images co-existed alongside modern representations of the traditional.'[16] Holland's work sought to place the LNER's posters within the cultural context of increasing wages, the availability of paid holidays and the railways' competition with the car. Her work focussed primarily on the ways in which the LNER portrayed modernity and the places they served as clean, bright and essentially modern in nature. In this way the LNER posters can be seen as quite distinct from the GWR designs that will be examined in the following two chapters. There was a strong tendency towards the interlinked tropes of the picturesque and the

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[15] Ralph Harrington, "Beyond the bathing Belle: Images of Women in inter-war railway publicity," *The Journal of Transport History* 25, no. 1 (2004): 22 - 45.
[16] Rachel Holland, "L.N.E.R Posters 1923 - 1947: Aspects of Iconography, Railway and Social History" (M.A. in Railway Studies, York: University of York, 1999), 107.

sublime in the GWR's work that tended to root the GWR landscape firmly in a quasi-historical past as opposed to a bright, modern future.

Watts's research into 16 of the LNER's posters take, as their focal point, the landscape of the Yorkshire dales and moors. While questioning how effective these posters were as inducements to travel by the LNER he, again, points out the selective and exclusive nature of their visual content.[17] Watts sees these posters as aimed at a specific section of the market place, namely the middle classes, who had the financial freedoms that would allow the kind of tourism that was advertised in the posters. The present research will take Watts conclusions for the LNER and test them against similar outputs from the GWR. However, the period under study in this case will be significantly longer in duration (1897 – 1947) and the dataset that will be studied will be significantly larger. Also, the purpose of this research is not simply to assess how effective the graphic representations of landscapes were on a travelling population. It is aimed at understanding more about how far these representations of landscape went towards constructing a tourist utopia that was deeply heterogeneous in nature and what that tells us about notions of place in the first half of the twentieth century.

From a more general point of view there are some significant works that have looked at the role of the poster in the wider context of advertising history. In her introduction to the large collection of essays *The Power of the Poster* Timmers begins to define, not only what posters are, but also how they function. She sees the poster as a tool that channels the agency of one individual or group to another. Her definition highlights

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[17] D. C. H. Watts, "Evaluating British railway poster advertising: The London & North Eastern Railway Company between the wars," *The Journal of Transport History* 25, no. 2 (September 2004): 23 - 56.

the power relationships latent in much of the theory of advertising when she describes a poster as

> ...essentially a product of communication between an active force and a re-active one. Its originator (individual, institution, business or organization) has a message to sell; the recipient, its target audience, must be persuaded to buy the message. The interchange takes place in the public domain.[18]

The current research will question the validity of a straight active/passive dialectic which almost appears to view the passive 'target audience' as an empty vessel waiting to be filled with information, views and opinions by an active 'originator'. It will attempt to demonstrate that the visual content of the posters can be seen semiotically as a series of 'place-images' that are deemed representative of a given landscape or location. It will argue that, while this visual content undoubtedly has a strong influence over the ways in which people experience a place, the nature and forms of these 'place-images' have themselves been influenced by tourists, writers and artists before them. In addition, it will demonstrate that the ways in which landscapes were presented to the public changed through time as the nature of tourism changed and developed; the GWR understood and assimilated these changes, consciously or otherwise, and adapted their landscapes accordingly. Therefore, the current research will put forward a far more cyclical model related to Baerentholdt et al's touristic cycle of anticipation, performance and remembrance as discussed in Chapter Two.[19]

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[18] Margaret Timmers, ed., *The Power of the Poster* (London: V & A Publications, 1998), 7.
[19] Joergen Ole Baerenholdt et al., *Performing Tourist Places* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 3.

However, the notions of the poster as a tool of communication and the fact that this communication takes place in a public arena are both useful in understanding the basic function of much of the graphic art and posters that will be examined. But, building on the notion that posters do more than simply communicate information from the originator to the empty vessel that is the viewer, much modern analysis of the role posters has focussed on the active part that posters and images can play in shaping daily life and understandings of the world around us. Discussing specifically the posters of the post-war period, Rennie talks about a 'new visual economy' and how 'industrial multiplication of images would, in spectacular fashion, create a new psychological reality. The new vision would, necessarily, create a new cognitive perception of the world.'[20] The present research will argue that this was not simply a post-war turn but that poster artwork was helping to shape new 'cognitive perceptions of the world' from at least the early twentieth century.

In sum, this chapter will challenge the idea put forward by Palin at the opening of this chapter that the railway poster simply reflected the equable climate and nature of the nation and represented the harmonious countryside that could be seen out of the carriage window. It will argue that the strong graphic images that we associate with the inter-war railway poster were the product of the mid to late 1930s and the culmination of a significant period of development and evolution that began in the early nineteenth century. It will show that the GWR's graphic landscape aesthetic continued to develop from 1897 until the absorption of the company into British Railways (BR) in 1948 and that characterising it as an oeuvre with a level of visual or semiotic homogeneity overlooks complex and subtle differences and variations. Such

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[20] Paul Rennie, *Modern British Posters: Art, Design and Communication* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010), 31.

difference, it will be argued, was a function of the concerted move towards addressing a segmented market with differing needs, wants and desires that began increasingly to become apparent in the inter-war period, but which had its roots much earlier. It will also attempt to show that, far from being a one-way process where the posters simply represented the landscape to the tourist in an almost objective or documentary manner, the GWR's graphic landscape aesthetic responded to the changing nature of tourism in Great Britain. This removes the poster from a one-way street of representation and places them firmly into a performative cycle where the visual content of the graphic material in question begins to play an important part in actively shaping peoples' understandings of, and responses to, the landscape.

Railway Advertising, the Pictorial Poster and the GWR: an historical context 1886 – 1914

One of the few volumes to deal with the posters of the pre World War One period sees the travel posters of the early twentieth century as offering 'a glimpse of an era when the idea of travel for pleasure had begun to take root, not merely in the wealthier sections of Edwardian society, but among the poorer classes too'.[21] While it could be argued that it was perhaps the *less well off* as opposed to *poorer* it is undeniable that, by the late 1890s and into the early 1900s, the travel poster was coming into its own. The opening up of the possibilities of travel for a far wider section of the population meaning that high impact, wide reaching publicity at a relatively low cost, such as the poster offered, began to increase rapidly. However, it is important to explore the historical context of this development and understand more about the ways in which advertising on the railways was viewed. The development of the pictorial poster as a

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[21] Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era*, 1.

fundamental cornerstone of railway publicity was not to everyone's taste and framing the GWR's own forays into this field through this contemporary debate is essential.

The listing of GWR posters by Somers Cocks dates the earliest of the GWR's pictorial posters 1879[22] although it is generally accepted that 1897 saw the first example that was sufficiently removed from the letterpress bills of the nineteenth century to warrant the term pictorial poster.[23] The GWR and the majority of the other railway companies had indeed been involved in the production of countless posters for the best part of half a century before this time but the distinction between the earlier letterpress posters that consisted mainly of type and the pictorial poster where an image was the main content with the lettering as a secondary device was one that was beginning to be made at this time. As will be shown, such developments and changes were not always well received. Articles and editorial pieces in the major railway periodicals testify to this and, with the paucity of official GWR documents on this subject, provide the opportunity to understand both how the railway poster developed and how such developments were received in the wider railway and travelling sectors.

In the railway industry in the late 1890s there was a growing awareness of the importance of advertising but also an acknowledgement that the sector lacked the skills and experience to develop effective advertising strategies. Many commentators at the time looked to America as the pillar of best practice and went so far as to say that 'the Americans can give us points in the art of advertising and beat us easily'.[24] The typical railway poster of the period was, as Wigg has described, 'mostly very busy, often cluttered with type laid over composite views' and the GWR's *Ascot Races*

[22] John Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 – 1947," unpublished typescript (National Railway Museum, York, 1993), 25.
[23] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 66.
[24] "Pertinent Paragraphs," *Railway Magazine*, September 1897, 284.

poster of 1897 seems to fall into this category (see Figure 3.1).[25] It is similar in style to the composite views that were employed in many of the guidebooks and magazines of the period, including the GWR's own staff magazine.[26] However, these early attempts at persuasive advertising (including pictorial posters) were subject to a great deal of scepticism from the very beginning.

Figure 3.1. GWR Poster (NRM 2000-7507) *Ascot Races, 1897.*

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[25] Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era*, 1.
[26] "Jersey," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1898, 31.

The unequivocal championing of railway advertising appears to have been rare at this time. The *Railway Times*, a journal that had been in publication since 1837, commented in 1897 that:

> To the number of elaborately illustrated railway guides, handbooks, and programmes which have been making their appearance during the last few years there appears to be no limit, and their name is legion. What earthly purpose they serve beyond advertising and enriching the printing firms employed to produce them we cannot conceive... they are absolutely useless, and only swell the waste paper-baskets of their recipients.[27]

Such an attitude from The *Railway Times* appears to be somewhat surprising as they had, for some years previous to this, generally provided positive responses to copies of guidebooks submitted for review. Writing in August 1886, for example, *The Railway Times'* reviewer of *The Official Guide to the Great Western Railway* commented that he could 'thoroughly recommend this handy, cheap, and well-executed guide to the diversified attractions within the range of the Great Western Railway.'[28] It would appear that, up until the late 1890s, the railway guidebooks that were produced by independent publishers, outside of the railway companies themselves, were viewed as helpful and valuable pieces of work. Perhaps it was only when the railways themselves began producing their own material that the reviewers and editors of the railway journals began to be sceptical (even suspicious) of their motives.[29]

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[27] "Passing Notes," *Railway Times*, 3 July, 1897, 19.
[28] "Some Guide-Books," *Railway Times*, 21 August, 1886, 252.
[29] It could, of course, relate to the fact that the railway press didn't not have a consistent editorial policy but understanding that might constitute a separate avenue of research.

However, there was support from certain quarters. In response to an article in the
Railway Herald in September 1898 that challenged the value and use of railway
advertising and asked the question '[w]hoever in the world would think of going to any
particular place simply because it is described in one or other of the railway
companies' guide-books' the Railway Magazine replied:

> The railways can be divided into two broad classes... the one that extensively
> advertises and the one that does not... Without exception it will be found that the
> railways that advertise are the successful ones... How has this result been
> obtained? Like all other successes in business- by advertising.[30]

This general suspicion of the railway-produced advertising material, which sprang up
in the late 1890s, appears in part to have stemmed from an underlying doubt about the
proper function of a railway system in its widest sense; were they primarily tools for
developing and expanding business and the economy or were they there for the public
good and the movement of people during holiday periods? Again, The Railway Times
sounded a note of caution with respect to 'The Economics of Holiday Traffic' when it
stated in 1898 that '[e]loquent, no doubt, as holiday traffic returns are... there is an
undoubted tendency to overrate their importance to the railways as profit-earning
undertakings.' It went on to describe holiday traffic as 'both expensive to work and
speculative in its nature' and exhorted readers to question the figures put before them
by the companies themselves.[31] One week later, when the figures for that years Good
Friday and Easter Week's passenger traffic had come in the Railway Times once more
ran an article about the value of conveying tourists on the railway. While the receipts

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[30] "Pertinent Paragraphs," Railway Magazine, September 1898, 245.
[31] "The Economics of Holiday Traffic," Railway Times, 16 April, 1898, 516.

were, in general, up on the previous year the piece still sounded a note of sceptical caution about the value of tourist traffic on the railways:

> ...if the elements are adverse then loss falls upon the companies, for the facilities provided at large cost are in that case only partially made use of.[32]

In this way, it can be argued that much of the scepticism about the value of the burgeoning railway advertising was predicated in serious concerns about the reliance on a type of traffic that was seen to be expensive, speculative and highly weather dependent. With railway advertising in its infancy it is perhaps not such a surprise that many in the industry were wary of seeing large amounts invested in its promotion. It is also perhaps worth noting that the seasonal nature of railway holiday traffic was to become a long-lived feature of railway pictorial posters. The Great Northern Railway's famous *Skegness is so bracing!* poster suggests that railway companies were always keen to show that it was possible to have a good time on holiday whatever the weather.

By 1900 this debate about the value of railway advertising, particularly with regard to tourist traffic, had developed and, while there were still disagreements, the railway companies continued to develop a distinctive graphic style. In June 1900 the *Railway Magazine* ran a detailed, seven page, article on *Railway Tourist Literature* which not only provided a chronology for the development of the railway guidebook from 1835 to 1900 but also provided illustrations of the pictorial covers of 23 contemporary titles.[33] The covers of these guides are very reminiscent of the early railway pictorial posters where text of several different founts is used in conjunction with composite views of landscapes or activities. It is impossible not to see that the graphic style of the

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[32] "Holiday Traffics," *Railway Times*, 23 April, 1898, 549.
[33] S. Kirkwood, "Railway Tourist Literature," *Railway Magazine*, June 1900.

posters was heavily influenced by the style of the guidebooks which, in the main, preceded them. In turn, the guidebooks were themselves influenced by continental styles of graphic art, a cultural indebtedness that would be fully acknowledged by the railway companies in time.

Interestingly, the GWR is notable only for its absence. Almost all of the railways of Britain and Ireland are present but it is mentioned that '[i]t is remarkable that the Great Western have no tourist publications beyond the guides published by Messrs. Morton and Co. and Messrs. Cassell and Co.,... not withstanding the many delightful resorts on or adjacent to their line.'[34] While this does overlook the publication of the GWR's *Farmhouse and Country Lodgings Guide* in conjunction with Walter Hill and Co. in 1894 it does point towards the beginnings of an aesthetic conservatism accusations of which would follow the GWRs advertising practice well into the inter-war period.[35]

The *Railway Magazine* appears to have stood apart from many of the other industry magazines and journals in its support for the developing, more artistic, forms of railway advertising. In 1900 they ran articles from *The Aesthetic Aspect of Railways* to *Art on the Railways* but it was in November of that year that they would publish one of the first extended pieces exploring the latest, and most exciting, techniques of railway advertising.[36] *Artistic Railway Posters*, by W. Gunn Gwennet, began by stating that advertising was 'undoubtedly necessary' to the running of a railway but that, until very recently, the posters used by the railways had been exceptionally poor and inadequate for the task of inspiring people to travel. The author berated those companies 'who continue to adhere to the antiquated puzzle posters, crude in colour and composition,

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[34] Ibid., 514.
[35] "Passing Notes," *The Railway Times*, June 2, 1894, 715.
[36] Fred. J. Husband, "The Aesthetic Aspect of Railways," *Railway Magazine*, June 1900; D. T. Timins, "Art on the Railways," *Railway Magazine*, May 1900.

which purport to represent views of the places advertised' which he describes as 'chromatic orgies'.[37] He goes on to state that the effective poster needed to move away from the crowded letterpress or composite image style and towards a cleaner, more eye catching graphic style where 'the lettering should be quite subordinated to the picture'.[38] Further to this he began to expound some of the psychology behind these new posters putting forward the idea 'that almost *any* design will be found to possess more attracting power than mere type.'[39] In this article the stylistic debt owed by these new artistic posters to the continent and the work of French designers such as Cheret and Privat-Livemont is explicitly made; something that is referred to time and again as the literature on railway posters began to grow. That these posters should be considered as works of art and be 'bold... simple and well drawn' was also advocated if the railway companies were to make best use of them.[40]

The *Railway Magazine* published further articles on railways and advertising over the course of the next two years. In June 1902 they explored the costs and benefits of railway advertising in general arguing that railway directors should not overlook the importance of advertising. 'For there are looming ahead the powerful forces of motor-cars, wireless telegraphy, air-ships and sundry things that will very shortly need all the best go-ahead force of railways to keep pace with them.'[41] In the following year a two part article was published in June and July called *Railway Art and Literature in 1903* which gave an insight into the advertising material being produced by twenty of the

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[37] W. Gunn Gwennet, "Artistic Railway Posters," *Railway Magazine*, November 1900, 416.
[38] Ibid., 417.
[39] Ibid., 418.
[40] Ibid., 419.
[41] George A. Wade, "How Big Railways Advertise," *Railway Magazine*, June 1902, 541.

largest lines in the country at that time.[42] This shows a change in strategy on the part of

many of the railway companies with the artistic approach, as set out by Gunn

Gwennet, apparently being adopted by some with enthusiasm. The Great Eastern

Railway's *Norfolk Broads* poster in particular conforms to the new ideals of a simple

bold design with small quantities of subordinated text (see Figure 3.2). The two GWR

examples reproduced show Southern Ireland and Cornwall (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4)

and are also text-light and have striking illustrations of picturesque and sublime

landscapes although they are perhaps not as modernist in design as the GER's

example.[43] This article also provides proof that the GWR had moved on dramatically

from the rather backward state of affairs described in the *Railway Magazine* in 1900.

The GWR in 1903 is described as being 'well to the fore this year with some capital

posters, well printed in colours'.[44] From a position at the rear of the railway industry in

terms of advertising and posters in 1900 the GWR's efforts are described in glowing

terms:

> We shall watch with interest the efforts which, we trust, the other railways
>
> will make to follow so capital a lead. Commercially, as well as
>
> aesthetically, a policy of progress in this direction is surely the right one
>
> for advertising managers to pursue.[45]

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[42] "Railway Art and Literature in 1903 [pt. 1]," *Railway Magazine*, June 1903, 511 -
518; "Railway Art and Literature in 1903 [pt. 2]," *Railway Magazine*, July 1903, 43 -
48.
[43] Neither of these posters are recorded in Somers Cocks' listing. There is a blank in
the typescript between 1901 and 1904 which suggests that he may have been awaiting
further information.
[44] "Railway Art and Literature in 1903 [pt. 1]," 516.
[45] Ibid.
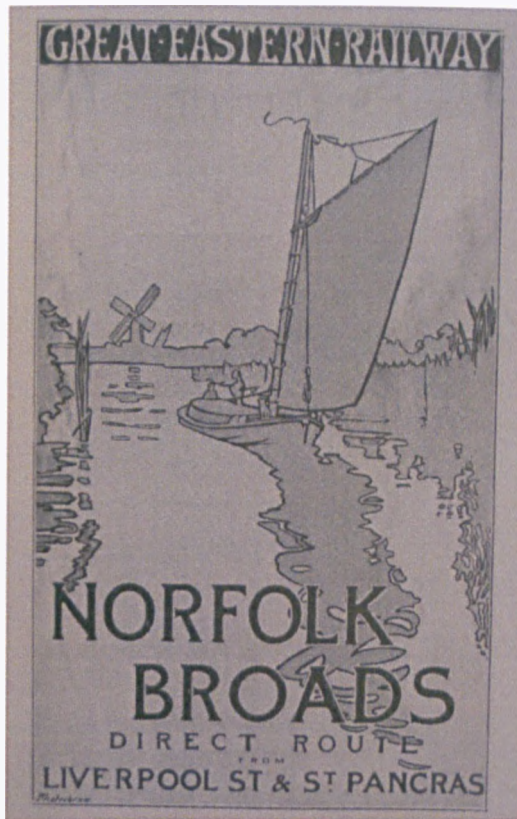
Figure 3.2. GER Poster *Norfolk Broads*, c.1903 (from *Railway Magazine*, July 1903)
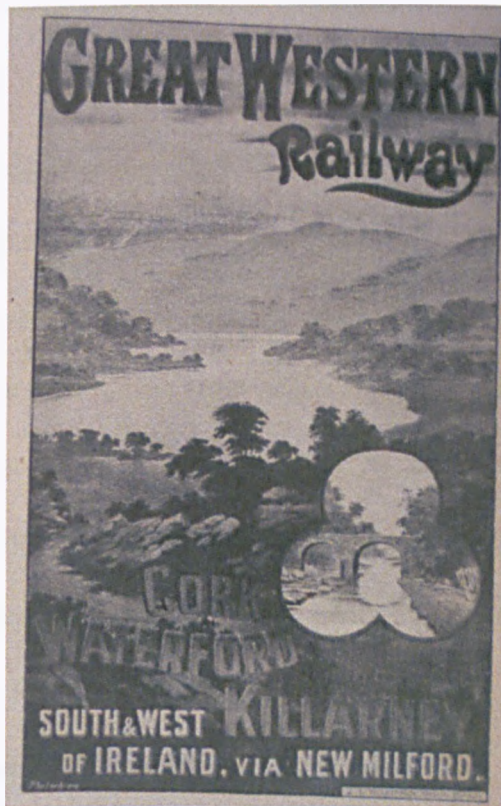
Figure 3.3. GWR Poster *Cork, Waterford, Killarney*, c.1903 (from *Railway Magazine*, June 1903)
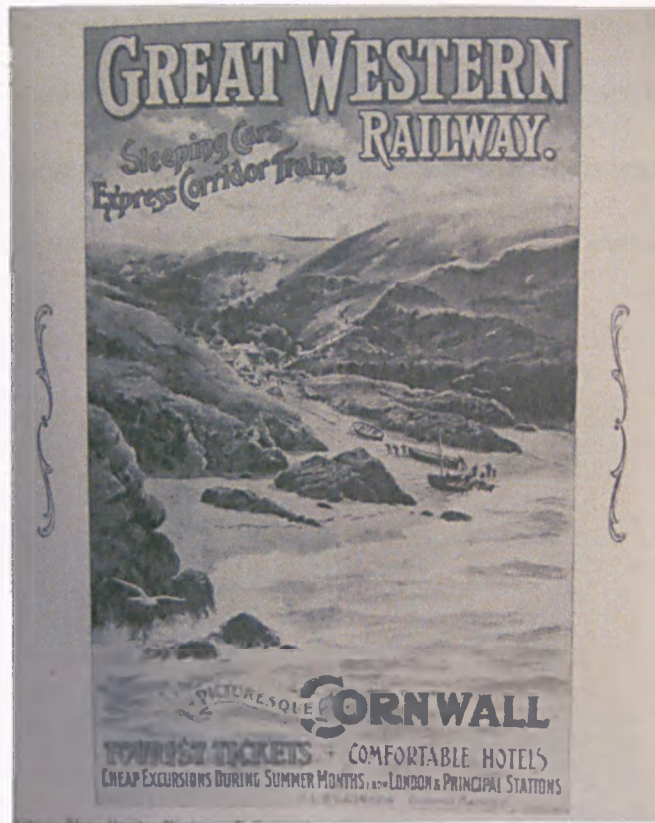
Figure 3.4. GWR Poster *Picturesque Cornwall*, possibly 1897 (from *Railway Magazine*, June 1903).

By 1904 the railway magazines and journals began to feature reproductions of railway posters as a matter of course but it is clear to see that different titles had different understandings of what counted as well designed or attractive. The *Transport and Railroad Gazette* (which would, two years later, change its name simply to the *Railway Gazette*) of October 1904 reproduced two posters, one Great Central and one GWR, which it considered to be both 'well-designed and traffic-attracting' but both would appear to be rather old fashioned by the standards set previously.[46] The GWR poster in particular (see Figure 3.5) comes across as more of a timetable than an artistic poster and certainly could not be considered as a work of art in its own right as Gunn Gwennet recommended. It does, however, suggest that, as a company, care may

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[46] "Railway Posters," *Transport and Railroad Gazette*, October 7, 1904, 239E.

have been taken over posters that, illustrated a given region or area that the company was confident it would have a long term stake in, such as Southern Ireland or Cornwall, but would revert to the text-heavy poster of the 1890s when a seasonal poster was being designed that would have a limited relevance outside of the holiday period.
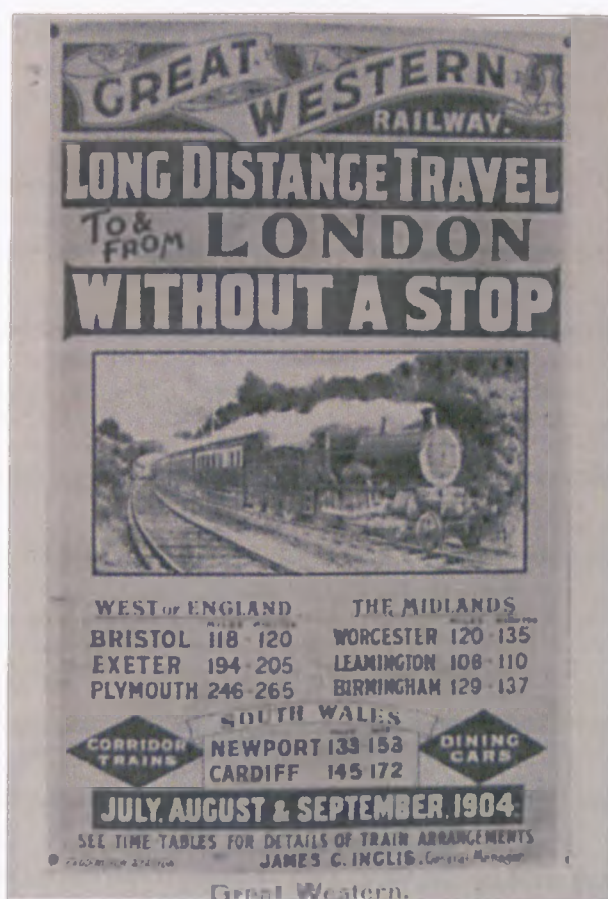
Figure 3.5. GWR Poster *Long Distance Travel...* c.1904 (from *Transport and Railroad Gazette,* October 1904).

In May 1905 it is possible to see that the GWR had kept up its development of a distinctive graphic style through the production of a series of picture postcards, each of which was a reduced facsimile of one of the company's own posters designed by Alec Fraser.[47] On the whole, they exhibited all of the qualities of the 'modern' artistic poster.

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[47] "G. W. Pictorial Postcards- Some of the Third Series," *Great Western Railway Magazine,* May 1905, 83.

They were made up of a single bold image in swathes of flat colour. In seven of the examples, the lettering is reminiscent of that used in continental posters typified by those designed by Henri Toulouse Lautrec. These postcards were cited as the third in a series that had already proved extremely popular.[48]

Elsewhere in the railway sector at this time there appears to have been a softening of attitude towards the more modern approach to railway advertising. *The Railway Times*, usually so sceptical of the value of advertising, published an editorial in June 1905 that, while highly critical of the claimed benefits of newspaper advertising, conceded that 'there is a good deal to be said in support of more elaborate advertising by our leading railways... Money thus spent may be much more profitable than that incurred on running half-empty trains'.[49] While it would be some time before the railways' very own *Thunderer* would cease to be critical of advertising as a whole it is worth noting that it took almost a decade before changes in advertising strategies and techniques were even beginning to be accepted in certain quarters.

By 1907 full-page reproductions of railway pictorial posters were regularly being reproduced in magazines and journals.[50] The railway companies were beginning to experiment and improvise with models of locomotives and free newspapers for passengers.[51] The *Railway Gazette* was proud to announce in an editorial piece in January of that year that:

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[48] Harold Macfarlane, "Railway Picture Postcards," *Railway Magazine*, February 1906, 142.
[49] "The Uses of Advertisement," *Railway Times*, 3 June , 1905, 542.
[50] "G. N. R. New and Attractive Poster," *Railway Magazine*, May 1906, 430.
[51] "North-Eastern's New Advertising Device," *Railway Gazette*, 15 March, 1907, 261; "Brighton's Novel Advertising Device," *Railway Gazette*, 20 December, 1907, 597; "Advertising the Tube Railways," *Railway Times*, 22 June, 1907, 646.

During the past half-dozen years the art of attractive publicity has made

such rapid strides on British Railways, that it is safe to say they are at

present unrivalled in this respect, even the justly-celebrated American

railways having recently been surpassed by the best of our British

pamphlets and posters.[52]

Those considered to be the more progressive companies, such as the London and

North Western (LNWR), began to publicly acknowledge the value that advertising

could bring. Lord Stalbridge, chairman of the LNWR, made a statement to the

company in February 1907 that spending on advertising 'when properly looked after,

always affords a good return'.[53] The North Eastern Railway (NER) also began to

innovate in the field and, while the *Railway Gazette* acknowledged that they were not

the only company to recognise 'that art and advertising are not incompatible' it

considered that their material was 'consistently excellent'.[54] Later, in June of that year,

the NER were to unveil a poster for display in London that measured twenty-five by

almost nine feet in size.[55]

For the GWR, 1907 was also the year that they took the opportunity to showcase their

pictorial posters in their staff magazine. The article *The Evolution of the Pictorial*

Poster followed firmly in the footsteps of Gunn Gwennet almost six years before in

arguing that pictorial posters should be considered as a form of art and 'not merely as a

crude form of printing in mammoth letters'.[56] Again, it looked to the continent for the

art form's early development, specifically mentioning the work of Chenet. As might

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[52] "A Novelty in Railway Advertising," *Railway Gazette*, 25 January, 1907, 75.
[53] "Lord Stalbridge on Advertising," *Railway Gazette*, 2 February, 1907, 190B.
[54] "North-Eastern Railway Publicity," *Railway Gazette*, 28 June, 1907, 607.
[55] "North-Eastern's New Large Poster," *Railway Gazette*, 5 July, 1907, 27B.
[56] F. C. G. Marks, "The Evolution of the Pictorial Poster," *Great Western Railway*
Magazine, May 1907, 99.

have been expected from the GWRs own magazine, the GWR were described as having been 'pioneers in the field of poster improvement from the very first' and the designs of Alec Fraser, who had been responsible for the majority of the GWR's posters since the turn of the century, were seen to have been particularly persuasive.[57] Interestingly, with reference to the artistic nature of the posters themselves, the article puts forward the opinion that artists, and not photographers, needed to be used as '[p]hotographs are dead things... and of no real use as posters.'[58] Included in that issue of the magazine was a colour pictorial supplement which showed six of the company's posters, all designed by Fraser (see Figure 3.6). It is interesting to note that they are all the same as those shown as postcards in May 1905 which means that, while the GWR were putting themselves forwards as innovators and pioneers in the field, the examples that they use to show this were at least two years old at the time.

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

Figure 3.6. Pictorial Supplement to *Great Western Railway Magazine*, June 1907.

The GWR included another pictorial supplement of posters again in June 1908[59]

including the, now famous, *See Your Own Country First* poster which compared the

landform, climate and women of Cornwall with Italy (see Figure 3.7). It is clear that,

as a company, the GWR was increasing in confidence with regard to their advertising

strategy. April 1908 saw the company send a Milnes-Daimler omnibus on a 2,500 mile

trip around the North of England and Scotland to advertise their holiday services,

[59] "Pictorial Posters," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, June 1908, 118.

something that was commented on favourably by *The Railway Gazette*.[60] The extended

road tour was something that they would repeat in May 1913.[61]At the same time, it is

clear to see that, while the artistic pictorial poster was becoming the norm, some

railway companies were continuing to experiment and adapt the style. The Midland

Railway (MR) in 1908 attempted to 'strike a distinctly new note' in poster design with

what appeared to be a return to an early nineteenth century wood-engraving

aesthetic.[62] How successful this was is unclear but it certainly did not appear to catch

on with other companies.

Figure 3.7. Pictorial supplement to *Great Western Railway Magazine*, June 1908.

1908 can be seen as something of a watershed year in terms of the acceptance of the

pictorial poster by much of the industry. The *Railway Gazette* went from having the

occasional reference to posters and advertising before 1907 to six specific mentions in

1908, sixteen in 1909 and eighteen in 1910. Similarly, from 1908, printers and

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[60] "Advertising by Road Motor," *Railway Gazette*, 10 April, 1908, 334.
[61] "Great Western Advertising Tour," *Railway Times*, 31 May, 1913, 548.
[62] "A New Note in Posters," *Railway Gazette*, 24 July, 1908, 118.

lithographers such as Andrew Reid and Co. began to exhibit examples of the posters

that they produced (including GWR ones) in international exhibitions.[63] The fact that

the printers themselves were beginning to become aware of the interest that such items

were generating is perhaps indicative of the levels of exposure that they were

receiving. However, as the artistic and aesthetic motives began to be given more of a

free rein passengers occasionally began to feel that the design-led poster had gone too

far. One correspondent to the *Railway Gazette* in 1910 was critical of the ways in

which images were manipulated in such a way that they ceased to represent the

physical actuality. Commenting on a poster of Grimsby docks which appeared to show

Hull to the south of Grimsby he warned: 'do not let us, in striving for effect, make an

absolute sacrifice of accuracy'.[64]

From 1910 the GWR were regularly credited with being at the forefront of the

development of railway advertising despite the fact that later commentators, such as

Wilson, saw this period as lacking innovation and drive.[65] The GWR publicity

department put on 'one of the most notable advertising schemes ever undertaken by a

railway company' in August 1910 when it launched a quiz competition based on the

contents of its guidebooks[66] Their posters advertising Easter holiday traffic and their

quick-minded use of the weather to encourage people to head south was deemed both

'[c]lever'[67] and an example of the GWR believing that "printers' ink makes millions

think.'[68] Their new posters continued to be published in railway magazines and

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[63] "Reid's Railway and Shipping Posters," *Railway Gazette*, 2 October, 1908, 400.

[64] "From Correspondents: Accuracy or Effect in Railway Advertisements?," *Railway Gazette*, 12 August, 1910, 194.

[65] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 66 - 67.

[66] "Progressive Advertising on the Great Western," *Railway Gazette*, 26 August, 1910, 257.

[67] "A Clever Great Western Poster," *Railway Gazette*, 7 April, 1911, 355.

[68] "Smart Publicity Work by the G.W.R.," *Railway Gazette*, 14 April, 1911, 383.

journals and in their own staff magazine although some of these examples (see Figure 3.7) seem to show some retrograde steps towards the earlier text-heavy style.[69] By the middle of 1911 *The Railway Times* felt comfortable enough to say that '[t]he methods adopted this season [by the GWR] to bring the attractions of the districts served by the Great Western Railway... are of a notable character'.[70] High praise indeed from a journal that had been so sceptical about the advertising of tourist services only a few years before. Indeed, by November of that year, the *Railway Times* felt in a position to praise the railway directors of Great Britain:

> Not so many years ago they practically ignored many methods for
>
> bringing the advantages of their systems before the public... but now we
>
> have regular services advertised and the natural attractions of places
>
> served displayed pictorially. Along with this are the companies' guide-
>
> books, excellent compilations well written and well illustrated.[71]

This contrasts sharply with their comments of 14 years earlier when they declaimed railway guidebooks as 'absolutely useless' and fit only for the waste paper basket. It could also perhaps be suggested that one of the reasons why the railway companies' directors were reluctant to adopt more progressive advertising strategies was precisely because leading journals, such as the *Railway Times* consistently questioned both the value of advertising and the value of tourist traffic at all. From this point on even this

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[69] "A Clever Great Western Poster," *Railway Gazette*, 2 June, 1911, 564; "The 'Flying Line'," *The Railway Gazette*, July 28, 1911, 92; "Some Examples of Present-Day G. W. R. Advertising," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, August 1910, 210; "Recent G. W. R. Posters," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, June 1911, 153; "G. W. R. Summer Advertising," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, September 1911, supplemental.

[70] "Great Western Railway Publicity Department," *Railway Times*, 19 August, 1911, 184.

[71] "Advantages of Publicity," *Railway Times*, 18 November, 1911, 490.

journal was broadly supportive of the advertising strategies of the railway companies

and regularly published news items and reproduced new posters in its pages.[72]

Editorials in the journal began to talk in ever more positive terms of the value of

advertising and even went as far as to compliment the railway companies on more

aesthetic grounds:

> An artistic value is to be discerned on its pictorial side, and literary
>
> qualities in booklet, newspaper and magazine prose, while skill is
>
> apparent in the compilation of advertisements in the popular journals and
>
> for display on hoardings. The importance of the direct appeal to the
>
> public cannot be overrated.[73]

The *Railway Gazette* continued to be a strong advocate of railway advertising,

commenting favourably on lectures delivered by railway advertising staff.[74] They too

regularly published reproductions of new pictorial posters and often included short

critiques of their relative merits.[75] The GWR's 1912 poster *Right Away!* Was described

as an example of the genre that 'at once arrests the eye and impels attention.'[76]

However, these developments, and their slow but sure acceptance within the pages of

the railway industry magazines and journals, were not universally regarded. In April

1913 the GWR *Magazine* published a two page article called 'Do Railways Believe in

Advertising?' by an anonymous writer under the pseudonym of Candidus.[77] In it

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[72] "Caledonian Railway New Pictorial Poster," *Railway Times*, 27 April, 1912, 429; "Holiday Traffic Publicity," *Railway Times*, 6 July, 1912, 16; "Joint Railway Publicity," *Railway Times*, 27 July, 1912, 98.

[73] "Railway Advertising," *Railway Times*, 31 August, 1912, 222.

[74] "Railway Advertising," *Railway Gazette*, 23 February, 1912, 219.

[75] "Caledonian Railway Posters," *Railway Gazette*, 25 April, 1913, 531.

[76] "Novel Railway Poster," *Railway Gazette*, 12 July, 1912, 51.

[77] Candidus, "Do Railways Believe in Advertising?," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1913, 102-103.

Candidus looked back on the history of modern railway advertising, making a distinction between the text-only posters and letterpress handbills and the pictorial posters which he saw as having their origins (quite rightly) around 1897. But, while being broadly supportive of the railways' adoption of better publicity, he was critical of the lack of expenditure that the advertising departments had to do their job and claimed that it could be done much more effectively if 'the higher officials of the railways' would only recognise its importance.[78] In total he makes three separate criticisms of railway directors for not paying enough attention to the need for progressive advertising or for not providing the resources to do their jobs to their fullest extent. He ends by exhorting the railway companies to move away from advertising as a way of extending competition:

> ...[r]ather would one prefer to hear praise of good advertising, whether produced by one's own company or another, because good advertising raises the standard and lifts the whole in the estimation of the public.[79]

The tone of the article sounds as though it was written by a frustrated member of GWR staff, which might also explain the need for a pseudonym. On multiple occasions the 'higher officials' are charged with being ostensibly to blame for the under-resourcing of the advertising departments and for using advertising simply as a tool to get 'one up' on another company. However, it is the response that the article elicited from what appears to have been another member of GWR advertising staff that is most interesting.

J. E. Peart responded somewhat angrily to Candidus' article in the May issue of the GWR *Magazine*.[80] He opened by stating that he had 'fifteen years' experience of

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[78] Ibid., 103.
[79] Ibid.

railway publicity in all its branches' and that his opinions on railway advertising 'differ materially in many respects from those of 'Candidus'.[81] While being critical of Candidus' understanding of the history of railway advertising Peart's most dramatic comments come in the form of the reintroduction of the laissez faire position that, in the 1890s, questioned the value of advertising at all:

> It is a truism that is often overlooked that if all the railways stopped advertising to-morrow, the public would still need to travel and merchandise have to be transported form place to place. A fuller recognition of this fact might perhaps enable railway companies to effect economy in their existing publicity in certain directions.[82]

In this one statement Peart has not only resurrected a standpoint that even the more conservative railway journals had turned their back on but also made a tacit suggestion that the railways could save money by further cutting their advertising budgets. Candidus' response in the July issue of the GWR *Magazine* picks up on this point of view and clarifies his position by stating that he sees a fundamental need for railway advertising 'to improve, so that the public will not travel of necessity only, but because they have been induced to do so'.[83]

Interestingly, Candidus refers to Peart as 'a colleague' which suggests that they were both employed by the GWR.[84] Unfortunately, there is nothing known about the true identity of Candidus. That there was still a deep-rooted scepticism about the value of

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[80] J. E. Peart, "Suggestions and Correspondence: Do Railways Believe in Advertising?," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1913, 141.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Candidus, "Suggestions and Correspondence: Do Railways Believe in Advertising?," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, July 1913, 227.
[84] Ibid.

advertising on the railways in 1913 comes as something of a surprise. Peart claimed to have 15 years experience in this business which would mean that he began his career in railway advertising around 1897, precisely at the time when the debate around the value of advertising was being played out for the first time. It would appear as if the more conservative stance of the *Railway Times*, as demonstrated above, was a significant influence on Peart who, 15 years later, would still be doggedly attached to them.

Despite the fact that there was obviously a significant conservative lobby against progressive advertising strategies, the period up to the outbreak of the First World War was one where advertising, and its coverage in the leading magazines and journals, continued to flourish. A more widespread use of cinema began around 1912[85] while the GWR (who had employed such techniques since around 1909[86]) had, by 1914, developed their cinematic repertoire into a full programme of five different films covering England, Wales and Southern Ireland.[87] September 1913 saw what was considered to be one of the first public exhibitions of railway pictorial posters in the West End mansion of the Baron E. d'Erlanger where '[t]he efforts of the publicity departments of most of the principal companies found representation, the collection hiding the walls of the hall and staircase from the ground floor to the roof'.[88] Further editorial paragraphs provided figures showing increased receipts on well-advertised lines that demonstrated 'a conclusive proof of what advertising will effect'.[89]

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[85] "Cinematograph Advertising for Railways," *Railway Times*, 7 December, 1912, 587.
[86] A. H. H. Edwards, "The Cinematograph at Paddington," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, November 1909, 260.
[87] "G.W.R. Cinema Matinee," *Railway Gazette*, 22 May, 1914, 711.
[88] "An Exhibition of Posters," *Railway Times*, 27 September, 1913, 307.
[89] "Value of Advertising to Railways," *Railway Times*, 25 October, 1913, 403.

As if to cement the standing of railway advertising, the Jubilee edition of *The Railway News* of 1914 ran an extended essay by the publicity manager of the Great Northern Railway, H. J. Jewell, on the various kinds of advertising that different railway companies pursued. In his essay Jewell makes an interesting distinction between 'announcements' and 'advertising proper' seeing the earlier form of advertising that writers like Candidus so disliked as merely making an announcement and not, like the pictorial poster encouraging people to travel.[90] He saw the role of railway advertising as 'primarily... a business getter' that should be eye-catching and far more thought through than the old-style 'bare announcement of train times... the details being displayed in such a conglomeration of type as to repel the most eager of passengers'.[91] While he regretted that space did not allow him to discuss fully the best way to design a pictorial poster he did sum up the raison d'être of railway publicity at the time in one simple phrase: '...the art of publicity is to create the recurring thought'.[92]

It is this shift away from the simple provision of information and toward inspiring people to travel that the railway pictorial poster was so involved with. Notions about the role of advertising changed radically at around the same time as the railway pictorial poster developed. It was no longer good enough to state the journey times, frequency and cost, designs had to be more subtle and pique the interest, perhaps even on a subconscious level.

It was in 1914 that the GWR produced what was called their 'most artistic' poster to date (see Figure 3.8).[93] In it a woman in a slim-fitting long dress stands on a rocky cliff

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[90] H. J. Jewell, "The Publicity Department," in *The Jubilee of the Railway News* (London: Railway News, 1914), 214.
[91] Ibid., 213.
[92] Ibid., 216.
[93] "The 'Cornish Riviera' Posters," *Railway Gazette*, 7 August, 1914, 195.

edge looking out to see while gulls wheel over the waves. At the top the text reads 'The Cornish Riviera' while at the bottom is the legend 'On the Sunny Shores of the Atlantic'. It is a demonstration of exactly how far the railway poster had developed from the 1890s to 1914. Gone is the busy composite image and the large quantities of text, there are no train times, dates or prices listed on the poster and even the name of the Great Western Railway has not been included. Here the poster had been designed on the back of a notion of place (the Cornish Riviera) which it is assumed that the public will already associate with the GWR. The image itself stood for what was being sold: the aspiration for something markedly different from everyday life. In under two decades, and against a significant amount of opposition from both within the railway companies and, out with, the railway press, railway advertising, and the pictorial poster in particular, developed into a truly modern medium of communication. This rather enigmatic image was expressly designed to *create the recurring thought* in the mind of the viewer and reflected a brand that the GWR felt had been firmly embedded in the minds of its customers.

THE CORNISH RIVIERA

On the Sunny Shores of the Atlantic.
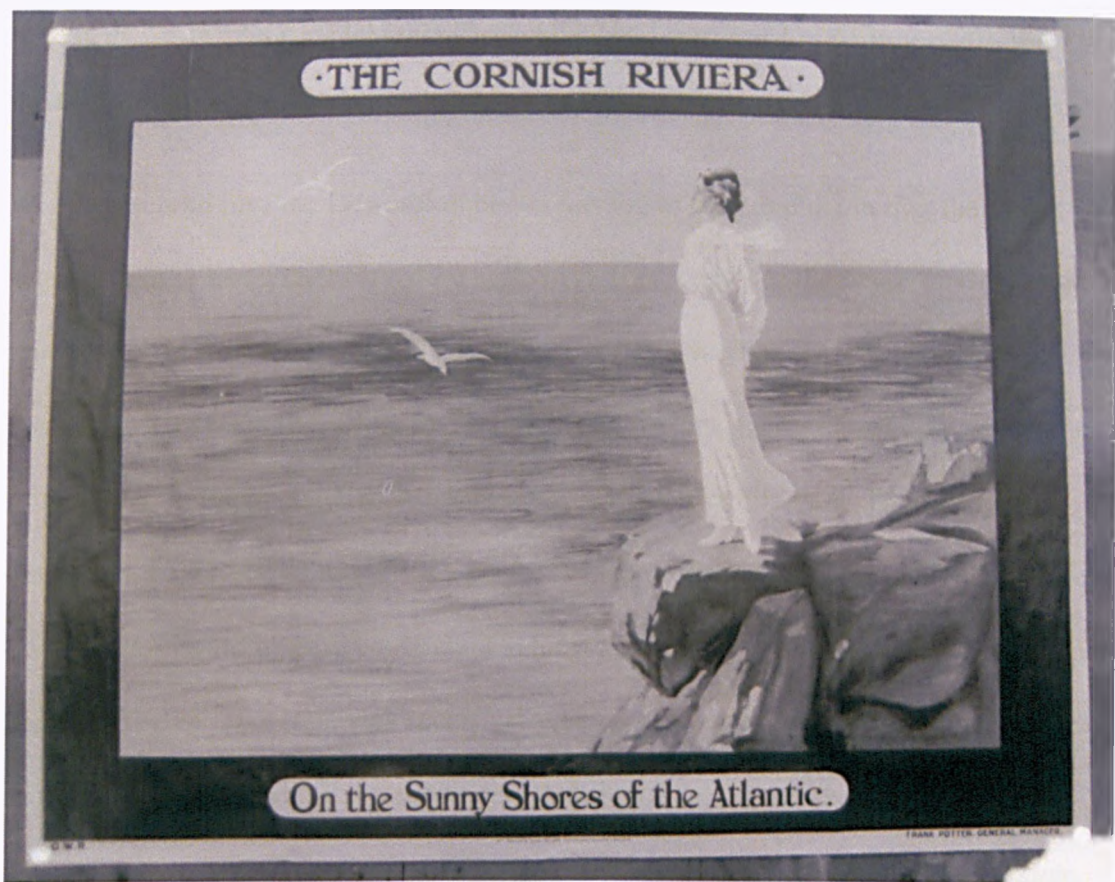
Figure 3.8. GWR Poster *The Cornish Riviera*, July 1914, taken from GWR negative A1684.

The Use of Landscapes in GWR Posters, 1897 – 1914

Having outlined the contemporary debates that surrounded the development of the railway pictorial poster and outlined the cultural context into which they appeared the following section will specifically scrutinise the use of landscapes in the GWR's pictorial poster output up to 1914. As has already been discussed, there are relatively few GWR posters surviving from this period and their reproduction in the main railway journals and magazines provide the best sources to analyse them. It should also be borne in mind that the GWR were by no means alone in their use of landscape imagery in their pre World War One output. Taking the poster output of the Great Eastern Railway (GER) as an example it is possible to see that landscapes often

feature as the primary visual content, as with *The Charm of Poppyland* reproduced in the GER company magazine in 1914.[94]

Wigg's research into the Edwardian poster has led to the conclusion that the GWR 'was content to use a fairly standard style of design whatever the resort'.[95] However, this overlooks the fact that the GWR did not solely advertise resorts through their posters; just as often they were marketing broad regions such as Cornwall, Wales or Ireland and, in these cases, their approach was markedly different. The following examination of some of the GWR's posters of the period will outline that, while a GWR poster could be easily recognised, they were not necessarily all of a single type and their use of landscape was specifically designed to establish certain characteristics as being associated with the regions depicted. It will be argued that their use of landscape imagery was not so much passive place-picturing as active place-making.

The landscapes chosen to be depicted in the earliest years of the GWR posters can be seen as essentially sublime and picturesque; sea cliffs with crashing waves, ruined castles surrounded by autumnal trees and the sun setting over the sea give a distinctly romantic flavour to the landscape. Key to the designs of these posters in particular is the fact that many are devoid of tourists. Typically, the designs that include people show them as historical figures, often in traditional dress or carrying out the traditional activities of the period and location (for examples of this see the discussion of the early posters of Wales below). Where tourists are included in the posters the landscape, where pictured at all, is of a distinctly different character. The 1908 poster *Newquay Cardiganshire* (Figure 3.9), designed by Fraser, is divided into three panels,

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[94] E. A. Evans, "Some New Posters," *Great Eastern Railway Magazine*, May 1914, 147.
[95] Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era*, 9.

(itself demonstrating the somewhat segregated nature of the GWR's representation of landscapes) the top panel shows tourists on a beach with deck chairs and marquees. The surrounding landscape is little more than a beach scene that appears as if secondary to, or subjugated by, the tourists themselves. This is in direct contrast to the unpopulated landscape shown in the lower panel which seems to be specifically designed to dwarf the tourist/viewer. In this way it can be seen that, far from adopting an homogeneous approach to their poster designs, there were at least two key tropes in the GWR's poster designs: *tourist-focussed* element which invariably included images of tourists and appear to have been designed to appeal directly to people through the use of narrative, activity or the promise of a personal, bodily, experience that could be considered as 'other' to the everyday (in most cases this can be characterised as relaxation) and *topographical* designs that tended not to include people and made use of the aesthetics of the sublime and the picturesque to appeal to a romantic, quasi-historical, appreciation of the landscape. Occasionally, as with the *Newquay* poster, these two elements were combined but significantly kept separate and apart from each other.

Charles Musgrove, writing in 1914 about the best ways to enjoy a holiday, identified two reasons why people go on holiday 'those who go in pursuit of pleasure and those who go in search of health'.[96] It is important to stress that these two categories do not link directly with the two broad types of poster described above. It is, however, significant to point out that the posters of this period, whether tourist-focussed or topographic, can be seen as reflecting these two motivations of pleasure and health.

Somers Cocks listing records a total of 145 pictorial posters produced by the GWR between 1897 and 1914 although, as has already been pointed out, it appears as though

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[96] Charles D. Musgrove, *Holidays and How to Use Them* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd, 1914), 10.

there are some gaps in his work.[97] An official GWR list of posters produced between 1897 and 1929 records just fourteen titles before 1914 although it may be assumed that these were designs that were considered to have been of some merit.[98] All told, it would appear as if the GWR were producing, on average, at least nine pictorial poster designs a year. Many of these early posters do not survive and, in this respect, the shorter GWR list has provided vital information as it records negative numbers of photographic copies of the posters included on the list. In some cases these negatives have survived in the collections held by the NRM which has allowed for the study, in this chapter, of designs not seen for possibly over 90 years. Where a poster design has been studied as a contemporary photographic copy, the negative number has been included in the footnote.

The 1898 poster *Picturesque Wales* is only slightly less busy than its contemporary *Ascot Races* but it carries less text and is, as the title would suggest, far more picturesque in nature (see Figure 3.10).[99] It shows a woman in traditional Welsh dress sat at a spinning wheel along with a view of an historic building and a view of a rugged mountain and lake landscape. The dynamism of the *Ascot Races* poster, which shows a throng of carriage and four dashing off to the race meeting along a busy road, is not present. No tourists are pictured in this poster and the overall feel is of a place frozen in time, again, offering a chance to experience the sublimity of the mountains and the quaint old-world-ness of the locals.

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[97] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 25 - 33.
[98] Great Western Railway, "RAIL 1014/38, Posters", c 1929, The National Archives.
[99] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 25. Held by the NRM as GWR negative B5757.
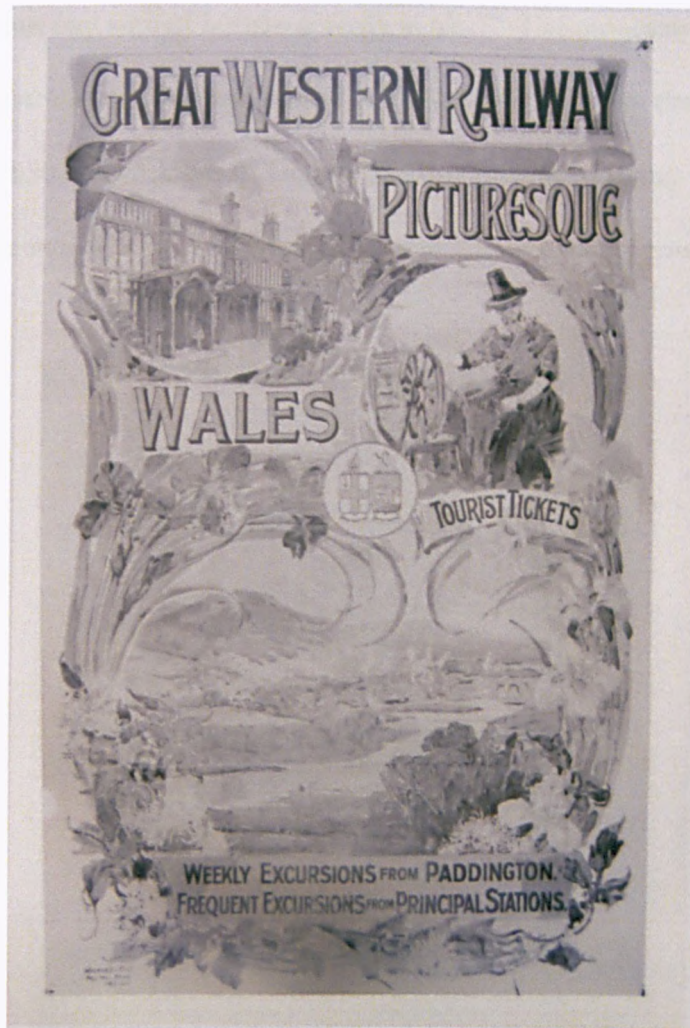
The c1899 *Picturesque Wales*, unrecorded by Somers Cocks, (see Figure 3.11) poster

continued this theme with landscapes framed by a, somewhat florid, floral border.[100]

While there is less text than the previous design the landscapes shown, a town and a

castle, are situated in picturesque countryside that is denuded of tourists. It is the

landscape itself, and the experiences that can be had in it, that is ostensibly being sold

and not the provision of specifically tourist experiences as might be found in a resort.

Again, in the poster from 1899 (see Figure 3.12) the landscapes, framed by a floral

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[100] Held by the NRM as GWR negative B5764

border, are without any sign of human activity at all.[101] The mountains and valleys appear to demonstrate the scale and nature of the country in a way that is more redolent of the 1850s *Wild Wales* of George Borrow than the country that, by the turn of the twentieth century, was increasingly becoming an industrial power-house.[102]

Figure 3.11. GWR poster *Picturesque Wales*, 1898, taken from GWR negative B5755.

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[101] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 25. Held by the NRM as GWR negative B5765
[102] George Borrow, *Wild Wales. Its People, Language and Scenery*, 3 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1967).
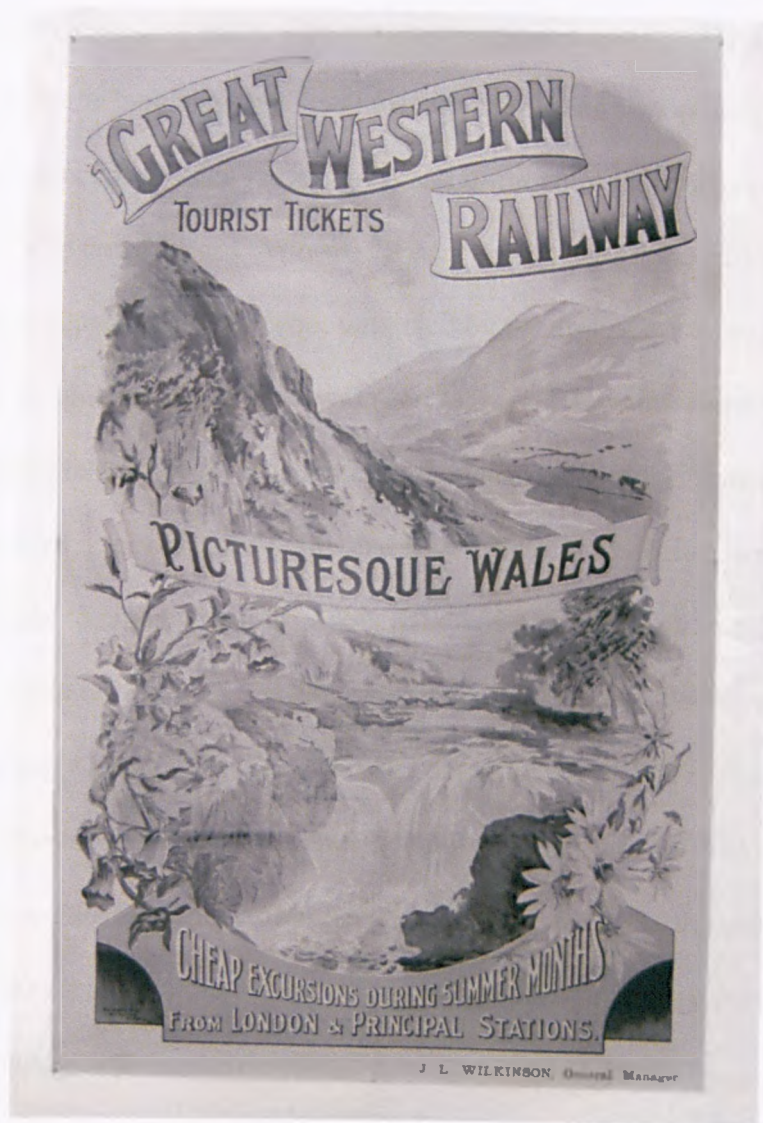
1900 saw a subtle change in the way Wales was pictured in the GWR posters with the appearance of tourists in the landscape (see Figure 3.13).[103] In this design a picturesque boating lake is framed by a stand of trees while a carriage full of tourists heads towards the waiting boats at the water's edge.[104] However, while tourists made an appearance in this design there is still a strong element of romanticism in the image. In the foreground can be seen a group of people working in the fields. Far from being resentful of the tourists now in their midst they are waving happily at the carriage as if

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[103] Held by the NRM as GWR negative B5767.

[104] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 – 1947," 26.

welcoming them to their country. This notion of simple, happy countryfolk, a domestic take on the 'noble savage' ideal that saw Tahitians as popular guests in fashionable eighteenth century salons, is typical of much of the tourism of the early 1900s. Those who could afford to do so often travelled to the more isolated regions of Great Britain in search of people who, untainted by the almost unstoppable progress of the industrial revolution, living what was seen as a more authentic existence, close to nature and unspoiled. It was just such a fascination with the more "primitive" people of the British Isles, especially those of what was known as the Celtic fringe, that saw tourists travelling to, and eventually aiding the disintegration of, the small island society of St Kilda off the west coast of Scotland. Unfortunately, in this case the islanders' gradually became 'disillusioned and demoralized' by the 'malign and cumulative influence of tourism' and their society began to wane.[105] The inclusion of happy "locals" toiling in the fields but happy to be a spectacle for the arriving tourists in this poster points towards an almost subliminal colonialism on the part of the GWR who are continuing to present an almost Eden-like vision of Wales.

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[105] Charles Maclean, *St Kilda: Island on the Edge of the World* (Edinburgh: Cannongate Classics, 1998), 147.

Figure 3.13. GWR poster *Picturesque Wales*, 1900, taken from GWR negative B5767.

This inclusion of the tourist in the landscape continued and in 1901 another

Picturesque Wales poster (see Figure 3.14) showed a woman in traditional Welsh

dress standing on a headland looking down over the landscape of Tenby beach which

is now populated by tourists.[106] In this case the tourists are pictured as tiny, almost ant-

like, in their bathing machines on the beach. The woman appears as a benign protector

figure and seems to represent the Welsh-ness of the landscape; a visual shorthand for

all that Wales was seen to stand for. She looks down on the tourists with an almost

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[106] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 26. Held by the NRM as GWR negative B5763.

meditative air from a grassy outcrop, she is large and dominates the design while the tourists are swallowed up in the enormity of the Welsh landscape.

The 1902 poster for *Picturesque Wales* (unrecorded by Somers Cocks, see Figure 3.15), designed by William Tomkin, shows the famous precipice walk at Dolgellau and, again, while there are tourists pictured they blend into the scenery and almost appear to be included to give the viewer a sense of the enormity, and sublimity, of the landscape through which they move. A river valley flows to the right of the picture

with the banks a brighter green suggesting verdant, lowland, tranquillity while the colours change to include more browns and blues as the ground rises steeply to the mountain side. Once more, mountains can be seen in the distance which increases the sense of depth and scale and adds weight to the GWR's claim of 1906 that this region was 'The British Tyrol'.[107] Towards the end of the pre-1914 period, in 1911, the GWR issued a poster specifically identifying North Wales with the Tyrol with a design, very much in the style of Alec Fraser.[108] This showed two tourists surveying dramatic mountain views (see Figure 3.16).[109] This design is markedly different from those that came before it insofar as the tourists, and not the locals (as in the 1901 poster) are now on top of the high ground looking down on the rest of the landscape. This suggests that Wales, once pictured as a picturesque idyll with sublime castles and mountains, has now become a place tamed by tourism. The landscape is no longer dominant but has been conquered by the intrepid tourist. It is a subtle change but one that hints towards a more sophisticated use of landscape imagery that could respond to changing understandings of place. It is possible that, as tourists in Wales became greater in number into the twentieth century, it became less and less realistic to talk about the landscape in terms of being an undiscovered country. To reflect this the posters changed to show tourists in a more primary role in the poster, showing that the landscape was more accessible- even for women hikers! This can be seen as an example of the cyclical approach to poster design as set out in the introduction to this chapter which posited the view that the posters reacted to changing touristic

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[107] A. M. Broadley, *North Wales: The British Tyrol*, second edition. (London: Great Western Railway, 1911).
[108] Held by the NRM as GWR negative B1578
[109] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 32.

understandings of place and were not simply a one-way street passing on information

from the railway company to the tourist.
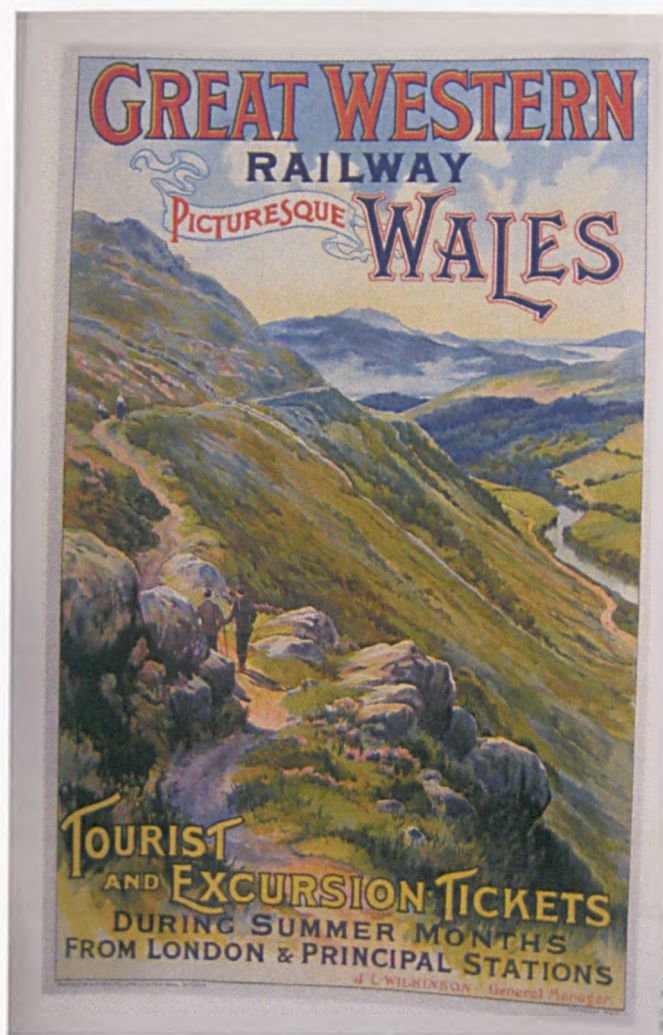
Figure 3.15. GWR poster *Picturesque Wales*, 1902, taken from Wigg, *Bon Voyage!*, plate 28.
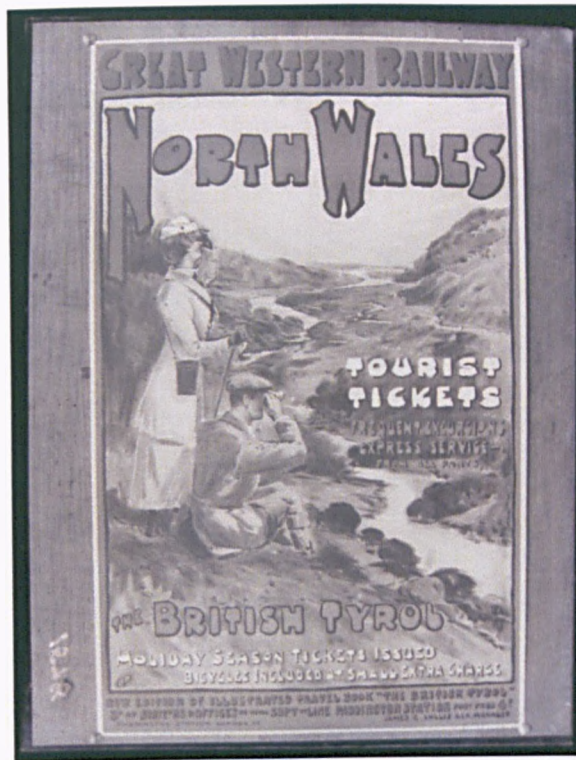
Figure 3.16. GWR poster *North Wales, the British Tyrol*, 1911, taken from GWR negative B1578.

Wales was by no means the only region that the GWR advertised using images of landscapes and the artist and designer of the 1902 *Picturesque Wales* poster, William Tomkin, was also responsible for the design of the 1903 poster *Hunting Season* (unrecorded by Somers Cocks) which shows mounted huntsmen dressed in their pinks accompanied by dogs running across gently rolling fields (see Figure 3.17). This is a clear attempt by the GWR to capture a very specific sector of the market; foxhunting being both expensive to participate in and elitist. The poster itself advertises the fact that there are reduced rates for both horse and grooms and, as Wigg has pointed out, makes use of emblematic items such as stirrups and crops in the cartouches for the text.[110] The links between foxhunting and the landscape have only recently begun to be

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[110] Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era*, plate 21.

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explored in depth[111] but it is clear to see here that the GWR was using the landscape to link together ideas both of class and identity.

The performative and highly ritualised nature of the fox hunt transforms the landscape into a powerful cultural context within which notions of belonging, ownership and identity are played out. It is a significantly different type of landscape to the sublime and picturesque offerings that came before and is perhaps a landscape that would not be immediately associated with the GWR who made such great stock of the mountains and moorlands of Wales, Cornwall, Devon and Southern Ireland. In this design the

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[111] Jonathan Finch, "'What more were the pastures of Leicester to me?' Hunting, Landscape Character, and the Politics of Place," *International Journal of Cultural Property*, no. 14 (2007): 361 - 383.

GWR have acknowledged that, although their guidebooks frequently described places as having ample opportunities for hunting, it was the relatively flat countryside of the Midlands that provided the best sport.[112] In the poster it can be seen that the countryside is flat with a series of well-kept hedges and is clearly spotted with copses. The use of this landscape implies an intentionality on the part of the GWR who were willing to move away from their stock in trade topography in order to appeal to a specific audience. This can be seen as an example of the market segmentation that will be discussed later in this thesis and the role of the landscape in the development of a heterogeneous tourist utopia.

Over time the GWR began to further develop a distinctive graphic landscape style in particular with the work of the designer Alec Fraser. While there is not a great deal of information available about Fraser as a designer it is possible to track his work through the appearance of his recognisable style in the pages of the GWR *Magazine*. Some of his earliest recorded work with the company was reproduced in the *Magazine* in the form of postcards as previously mentioned above.[113] Out of the nine examples printed five of them feature landscapes as the primary visual content (see Figure 3.18) three of which were reprinted as a colour pictorial supplement to accompany the GWR's 1907 article about posters.[114] The posters *To the Lizard by Rail and Motor, Southern Ireland- its Lakes and Landscapes* and *Lands End by Rail and Motor*, all from around 1904/5, are all good examples of what could be considered typical designs by Fraser.[115]

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[112] See, for example, *Holiday Haunts on the Great Western Railway, Season 1906* (London: Great Western Railway, 1906), 100, 154 and 234.
[113] "G. W. Pictorial Postcards- Some of the Third Series," 83.
[114] Marks, "The Evolution of the Pictorial Poster," 99 - 100.
[115] None of these are recorded in Somers Cocks' listing.

Figure 3.18. *G.W. Pictorial Postcards...* taken from *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1905, p.83.

Blarney Castle from the 1904*Southern Ireland* poster (see Figure 3.19) is seen as if looming over the viewer while a deep orange sun sets behind it.[116] The low vantage point and the framing of the castle by autumnal woodland are particularly characteristic of what could be called a 'romantic gaze'.[117] The graphic style of this design is extremely redolent of much earlier work from the continent such as that by Alphonse Mucha where separate elements of a design were given a sense of solidity and depth by the inclusion of a heavier dark outline. This can be seen in Mucha's 1896 poster for the *la Dame Aux Camelias* where the actress Sandra Bernhardt is lifted from the complex background by a heavier outline.[118] Similarly, the key elements in the *Southern Ireland* poster, the castle, the trees and the path, are also defined by heavy outlines. In this particular poster design, the continental influence that had been highlighted and discussed for some time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century railway press is relatively easy to discern.

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[116] Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era*, plate 35.

[117] Baerenholdt et al., *Performing Tourist Places*, 82 - 84.

[118] Catherine Haill, "Pleasure and Leisure: Posters for Performance," in *The Power of the Poster* (London: V & A Publications, 1998), 39.

This same technique was used by Fraser for a more tourist-focussed design to advertise the resort of Tenby in 1905 (see Figure 3.20).[119] Here heavy outlines were used to separate the wooded foreground from the beach with its cluster of tents and windbreaks.[120] It could be argued that the more 'earthy' colour palette was employed by Fraser to suggest the outdoors and a healthy lifestyle, something that would be seen as appropriate for Tenby which was itself heavily marketed as a health spa from the early 1900s.

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[119] Wigg, *Bon Voyage! Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era*, plate 29.
[120] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 27.
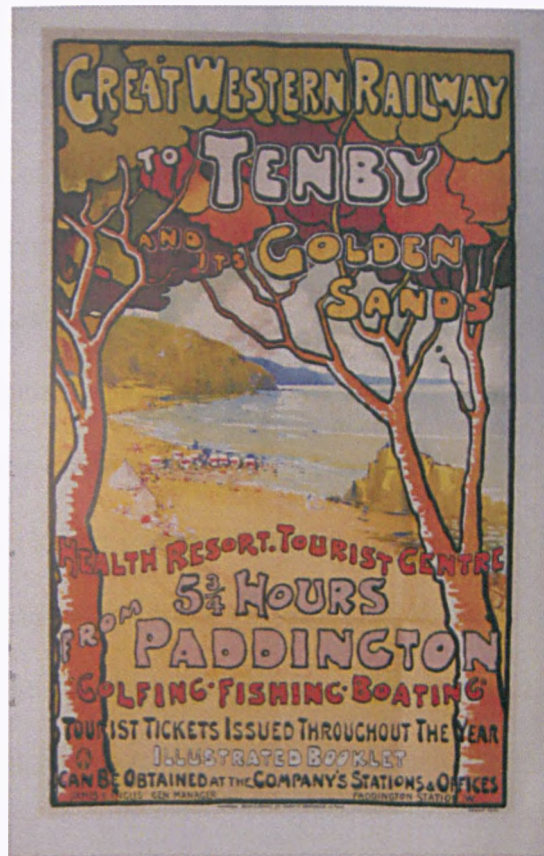
Unfortunately, there are very few survivals of GWR posters from the period 1909 –

1913 although the titles provided in Somers Cocks' listing can help us to understand

something of their content. Certainly, it is clear to see that Wales and Cornwall were

the focus of much of their posters. Further research into ticket sales from this period

might help to establish whether there was a link between the publication of posters

covering a particular area predicated on increasing sales in that area.

The lettering and typography of these early posters, while not the primary focus of this

research, warrant a certain amount of attention. As has already been discussed, early

posters were often heavily criticised for their over-use of text and their use of a great

many typefaces. The GWR posters were no exception and, while things improved over

time, their posters often seem inordinately crowded and fussy; the *Ascot Races* poster

of 1897 being a good example of this. However, as the posters became more

accomplished the lettering began to be more mod-ish and appealing. Both Simpson

and Fraser made great use of the wide bubble-lettering that was very reminiscent of

the continental posters of the 1890s and, while the amount of text in the design does

not seem to greatly decrease towards 1914, the fact that it is custom lettering that has

been painted into the design, as opposed to overlaid type, means that the text began to

sit more comfortably into the overall design. In addition to this, the fact that the

lettering was coloured in complementary tones to the overall scheme meant that, while

it was still legible, it no longer overwhelmed the composition. Comparing this style of

lettering to other companies' posters of the same period shows that the GWR stood

somewhat apart from the vast majority of their competitors and, although they too

made great use of standard founts, they were not averse to continental-style

innovation.

As has been alluded to already, the last pre World War One GWR poster that was

given attention by the railway press was *The Cornish Riviera* (see Figure 3.8)[121] This

was reproduced in the 7 August edition of the *Railway Gazette* just three days after

Britain entered the war. It is worthwhile noting that Somers Cocks recorded a further

two posters published in 1914 and three more in 1915.[122] Not only is this poster

remarkable for its visual simplicity but its textual content is worth comment. Unlike

almost all of the posters that had gone before (GWR or otherwise) this design (the

artist is unknown) does not include the name of the company, only a title and strap

line. It is a spare design and one that could be seen to be both tourist-focussed and

topographical. A woman is standing on a cliff edge, that has a clear resemblance to the

sublime landscapes produced earlier by the likes of Tomkin and Fraser, gazing off into

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[121] "The 'Cornish Riviera' Posters," 195.
[122] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 35.

the distance as if in a reverie. The wind is blowing her scarf and dress which implies that she is in physical contact with the elements that can be found on the 'sunny shores of the Atlantic'. She is almost like the figurehead on the prow of a ship insofar as she and the cliff appear to be a single form standing in counterpoint to the flat seascape that fills the majority of the composition. The name *Cornish Riviera* had been used so often over the preceding years that it was perhaps considered superfluous to state that it was the GWR who would get you there.

It suggests that, while the GWR have been accused of conservative practices, they quickly learned how to design a poster that could be eye catching and pique the interest of the viewer. The arguments of the commentators who highlighted some of the principles of modern railway poster design such as Gunn Gwennet, Marks and Candidus had obviously been taken to heart and the GWR, with this poster, can be seen to be producing a visually simple but semiotically complex design that has begun to fuse people with the landscape. In addition to this it can be argued that the preceding years of advertising had been so successful that merely the name of a place; *The Cornish Riviera* was enough for people to realise that they were looking at a GWR poster and not, for example, a LSWR one. The landscape itself, in this case the sublimity of the Cornish coast, had become a byword or visual mnemonic for both the company and the type of physical experience that could be had in the places which they served. While the GWR, after World War One and with the recommencement of advertising in 1920 would continue to produce posters that were occasionally text-heavy, poorly designed or conservative in nature it demonstrates that they were, as a company, both able and willing to innovate.[123] In around seventeen years the GWR

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[123] Railway Clearing House, "RAIL 1080/51, Minutes of Meetings of Advertising Representatives, Minutes 24 Oct 1919", 1919.

had grasped the importance of picturing the landscape over simply writing about it. They had invested time and energy into promoting specific locations, in an act of corporate place-making that would recreate these locations both physically and in the minds of the tourist as desirable places to visit.

Conclusion

The remit of this chapter was to cover the majority of the GWR's pictorial poster output from 1897 to 1914. It has shown that, far from being seen as a natural progression for railway advertising, the poster (and, in fact, the guidebook) with its often tangential reference to the actual railway element of the product or place being advertised was subjected to intense criticism and sustained scrutiny from the 1890s to the early 1910s. This criticism even went to so far as to question the value and need of advertising at all, assuming a laissez faire approach that saw railways as a vital part of the world and travel as a pure necessity. Despite this mistrust of the introduction of an art-based aesthetic into the world of the railways the pictorial poster began to flourish and, although the GWR are not considered to have been at the forefront of this development, the present research has shown that in many areas of the railway press their poster designs were considered to have been of some merit.

If, as H. J. Jewell stated, the mark of a modern form of railway advertising was to 'create the recurring thought' and not put the viewer off with large quantities of type in multifarious founts then the GWR's use of landscape can be seen as a form of visual shorthand where certain types of touristic experiences were seen to be embodied in specific topographical tropes.[124] Their focusing on specific locations for several years at a time and their use and reuse of the same names for certain regions, for example

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[124] Jewell, "The Publicity Department," 216.

the *Picturesque Wales* series from 1897 – 1901 and the *Cornish Riviera* series from 1911 – 1914, echoed this strategy where the bylines would recur over time in different pictorial forms. In this way the recurring thought would be reinforced by something approaching a recurring *landscape brand*. The 1914 *Cornish Riviera* poster being the culmination of this process.

The pre World War One railway poster has not been the subject of any significant academic study and so the conclusions of this research, while based entirely on primary and published primary sources, would benefit from contrast with comparative work on the some of the other main railway companies of the period. However, the broad conclusions of this work can be summarised thus.

First, through their use of landscape in the pictorial posters of the period the GWR began to define locations and regions in terms of the types of experience that could be had there. Where an active people-oriented place was pictured the landscape was most often secondary, in some way subjugated by the performance of the tourist act. However, the more topographic posters offered landscapes that were typified by the tropes of the picturesque and the sublime. In these posters landscapes were used to inspire awe in the minds of the potential tourist, most often through the use of scale where people, if included at all, were small and almost insignificant in contrast to the landscape in which they were situated.

Second, the landscapes used in the posters put forward a particular notion about the place pictured that sought to reinforce certain aspects of a given place and overlook others. For example, in this way Ireland is pictured as a quasi-historical, romantic landscape with castles, sunsets and woods while Wales is made up of picturesque mountain as opposed to docks, coal fields and heavy industry.

Third, the landscapes were used to provide a cultural topography within which understandings of class, identity and belonging could be explored. The *Hunting Season* poster demonstrates this and also shows how landscapes were used as a tool to support an apparent strategy of market segmentation which saw the GWR abandon its more usual picturesque and sublime landscapes in favour of a more tame Midland topography in an attempt to appeal to the fox hunting lady or gentleman. This points towards the beginnings of the construction of a distinctly heterogeneous tourist utopia where a given geographical region, in this case the GWR's West Country, can have several, often very different, layers of significance and meaning.

Fourth, there is evidence that, even in the early stages of the GWR's pictorial posters, the picturing of the landscape and its relationship to the tourist responded to changes in touristic practices. For example, the inclusion of tourists in the *Picturesque Wales* series of posters shows how they were initially not pictured at all, then pictured alongside 'locals' and finally became prominent in the landscape, often in the place of the traditionally dressed local whose position they usurped.

Finally, it can be seen that, by 1914, the GWR had developed a sophisticated use of landscape and location whereby certain of its posters no longer even had to carry the name of the company. The *Cornish Riviera* poster of 1914 shows a company that is confident enough in its public associations with landscape, place and locality to bypass any kind of informative content at all. It relies on the implication of the railway and, in particular, the GWR's associations with the area. It shows a woman, alone but fully at home in a wild, sublime landscape. It appears assured, understated and, above all, modern and is a fitting testament to the GWR's own pre-1914 moves towards being a railway company that, while acknowledging its historical roots, was seeking to grow

and develop. The GWR had established their landscapes in the minds of the travelling public to such a degree that it no longer felt the need to name itself. If the aim of railway publicity at this time was to create the recurring thought then, by this criteria, the GWR's pictorial posters can be seen to have been something of a success.

Chapter Four: 'Quick to perceive the possibilities...': The Landscapes of the Great Western Railway's Inter-war posters.

Introduction

This chapter follows the development of the railway pictorial poster from 1918 to nationalisation in 1948, although the posters of the GWR, through the period of the Big Four, 1923 – 1947, will be the main focus of the research.

This chapter begins with an historical review of the ways in which railway posters developed throughout this period and will show that, in terms of exposure in the railway press at least, the railway pictorial poster had its heyday around 1929 – 1932 although the numbers of posters produced by companies continued to rise after this period. It shows that, while there was little in the way of posters produced during World War One, the railway poster was still well embedded in the travelling public's psyche and that, once production resumed, they were well received.

Following this is an in depth analysis of 50 of the GWR's posters from this period which will make the case both for the nascent modernism that can be found in their choice of artists and designs (perhaps contrary to the GWR's conservative image) and the fact that their use of landscape became increasingly sophisticated throughout the period. It is argued that the use of landscapes by the GWR in this period marks a further sophistication of the landscape aesthetic developed in the 1890s and 1910s. These developments, it is argued, represented a move towards a landscape aesthetic that was further influenced by notions of market segmentation and the continued construction of a heterogeneous tourist utopia where the GWR, through their pictorial posters, sought to be all things to all people. Further to this it is shown that far from

producing relatively few posters, as suggested by Edelstein, the GWR were both prolific and inventive in their poster designs.[1]

The conclusion of this chapter also recaps and contextualises the findings of the previous chapter (Chapter Three) on the GWR's earlier posters. It acknowledges that, while posters may have been (and perhaps still are) among the most eye-catching and popular forms of railway marketing advertising, they were never considered, by the railway companies themselves, as their best form of communication with the public. But, it is argued, that this does not impact on the value of analysing their semiotic content.

<u>Railway Posters Between the Wars: a further historical context.</u>

In the previous chapter much information was gleaned from an in depth examination of the ways in which the development of pictorial railway posters was covered in the general railway press. Four main sources were used the *Railway Times,* the *Railway Gazette,* the *Railway Magazine* and, to provide a more GWR specific view, the *Great Western Railway Magazine.* This research demonstrated that the development of the pictorial poster was by no means a smooth transition from the high Victorian examples of the art of letterpress and composite views to the clean, more structured examples of the railway poster that have become so lodged in the public imaginations. This chapter, covering the period from 1915 – 1948, will employ a similar strategy. However, the number of railway periodicals that are available for study shrank dramatically in the inter-war period. Research has shown that many of the titles that were founded in the nineteenth century either ceased publication or were merged with other titles; with direct reference to the present research it is important to note that the

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[1] Teri J. Edelstein, "The Art of Posters: Strategies and Debates," in *Art for All. British Posters for Transport* (New Have and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 22.

Railway Times was incorporated into the *Railway Gazette* in 1914 and so is therefore unavailable for separate study.[2] The other titles remain available for research but other changes that particular periodicals underwent will be discussed where relevant later in this section.

Out of the three remaining sources there is one key difference that comes to light when they are studied for evidence of the continuing discussion and debate about the need and effectiveness of railway pictorial posters. Posters of any kind were comparatively less reported in the periodicals except where something out of the ordinary was taking place. At first it may seems strange that, at a time when the numbers of pictorial posters being produced by the railway companies exploded and their designs were becoming ever more eye-catching, bold and innovative, discussion of them should fall away so dramatically, but it is just this popularity that may account for it. Whereas, pre World War One, the idea of using pictorial posters was novel and its value hotly debated, by the inter-war period it appears that it had been generally accepted that such posters were a *good thing* and that, therefore, there was less need to debate them quite so hotly. Adding to this, as the number of railway periodical titles began to shrink there was an increase in the number of specialist titles available such as the *Advertisers Weekly* which was founded in 1913. It would appear that in-depth debate about the finer points of advertising via posters or other means could have been carried on in the pages of more niche journals and periodicals such as these rather than in the pages of the railway press. This, in itself, is significant insofar as it demonstrates that, by this time, advertising per se had become a profession in its own right and not solely an adjunct to the industry it was advertising.

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[2] Philip Atkins, "19th Century British Railway Periodicals (revised)," unpublished typescript (National Railway Museum, York, 2009), 4.

There is, however, a great deal of significant information available that can be used to understand more about the development of the railway pictorial poster in the inter-war period. Although the vast majority of railway advertising ceased during the World War One and was not restarted until 1920, the pictorial poster continued to be employed in specific areas.[3] The London and North Western Railway (LNWR) issued a poster in July 1916 advertising vacant lineside plots that were 'suitable for Factories, Foundries etc'.[4] The poster depicts a workmanlike landscape where the railway connects the distant city with the potential business. The would-be factory hangs in the air waiting to be slotted into the fabric of the countryside that is defined by a patchwork of tight, neat hedges. The countryside in this poster, as one might expect during a time of war, is utilitarian, there to be developed for the greater good of the businesses involved and, of course, King and Country. Throughout the war there is evidence to suggest that railway advertising in general, and posters in particular, continued to be discussed by the railway companies. The London Underground were keen to address the necessity of advertising for 'country routes, seaside excursions etc'.[5] At the same time the *Railway Magazine* showed an interest in the wider aesthetics of the railway.[6]

With the cessation of hostilities and the resumption of railway advertising the railway companies had the chance to take stock of the situation regarding publicity. In 1920, the *Railway Gazette* commented that

[3] Railway Clearing House, "RAIL 1080/51, Minutes of Meetings of Advertising Representatives, Minutes 24 Oct 1919", 1919.
[4] "Good Advice Effectively Offered," *Railway Magazine*, July 1916, 43.
[5] "The Value of Railway Publicity," *Railway Magazine*, March 1917, 217.
[6] "Railways in Art and Literature," *Railway Magazine*, April 1918, 240 - 245.

Although the conditions under which the railways of the United Kingdom

are at the present time being worked are not of a nature to warrant the

conduct of extensive publicity campaigns by the various lines, such as we

were accustomed to in pre-war days, it is by no means true that, with the

changed circumstances, publicity has ceased to be of value in the English

railway business.[7]

Their article went on to forecast that the future of 'English' railway publicity would lie

in taking inspiration from overseas concerns such as the Canadian and South African

railways and that those who were interested in railway publicity at home (professionally

or otherwise) 'will watch with no small interest, the many developments which now

appear imminent,... by certain of the more important overseas railways'.[8] The *Gazette*

followed up on this article in June 1920 with a short note that, in the overseas railway

context, publicity was continuing to be of growing interest, the fact that even the Great

Indian Peninsula Railway had added a Publicity Superintendent to their staff being

given as evidence of this.[9]

A further column in the *Railway Gazette* of August 1920 draws attention to the fact that

the domestic railways' shortcomings with regard to advertising were constantly being

brought up in the wider press. This it attributed to a general 'lack of knowledge or

misrepresentation of facts.'[10] However, it would seem that the railways had begun

producing advertising and pictorial posters in some quantities by this time as can be

seen in the photograph of a 'Display of Posters' at Blackpool, printed in the *Railway*

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[7] "Railway Publicity," *Railway Gazette*, May 7, 1920, 698.
[8] Ibid.
[9] "Publicity and Railways," *Railway Gazette*, June 18, 1920, 885.
[10] "Railway Publicity," *Railway Gazette*, August 13, 1920, 209.

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Magazine, in that year.[11] In addition to this *The Railway Gazette* reported, in November

1920, about an *International Advertising Exhibition* 'to prove the value from every angle

of good, truthful advertising'.[12]

If the general press were becoming more critical of the shortcomings of railway

advertising it can be seen that, within the industry, there was a high degree of soul

searching going on. Companies, and the industry in general, were taking stock of the

situation and becoming more aware of international developments in advertising; 1920

can be seen as a formative year in the development of railway advertising and, from this

year on, the railway companies would begin to be ever more sophisticated in their use of

advertising and the design of their pictorial posters. As the Minister of Transport, Sir

Eric Geddes, commented to the Organising Committee of the International Advertising

Exhibition in December 1920

> The trade of this country has got to gain its ascendancy, and it could not do
>
> that without skilled advertising. The manufacturer has got to go to the
>
> advertising agent to prescribe the right physic... British trade throughout
>
> the world was in the advertisers hands. They were the doctors.[13]

The medicinal metaphor employed by Geddes in his address may have been more

prescient than he had imagined as, around 1921, there was a far more holistic approach

to advertising on the railways with the first mention of the use of psychology in the

development of advertising strategies. Frank Pick, Commercial Manager to the London

Underground Company stated that it was vital to 'understand the animal- man' when

[11] "Display of Posters at Central Station Blackpool," *Railway Magazine,* August 1920,
84.
[12] "International Advertising Exhibition," *Railway Gazette,* 19 November, 1920, 682.
[13] "Sir Eric Geddes on the Value of Advertising," *Railway Gazette,* 3 December,
1920, 735.

fixing fares or thinking about advertising.[14] As ever, the advertising of the London

Underground can be seen to have been ahead of the game but it would not be long

before other railways, including the GWR would begin to design and publish more

refined pictorial posters in an attempt to attract greater numbers of travellers.

In general, the period 1921 – 1922 appears to have been relatively quiet in terms of the

production of great numbers of pictorial posters. Somers Cocks records just 22 posters

published in those years.[15] This could easily be explained by the impending

amalgamation of the pre-existing railway companies into the Big Four as set out in the

1921 Railways Act. There is little of relevance recorded in the *Railway Gazette* and the

Railway Magazine reproduced just one example of a pictorial poster, by the London,

Brighton and South Coast Railway, in September 1922.[16] As can be imagined, the

thought that all of the 120 plus railway companies would lose or radically change their

corporate identities, all bar the GWR that is, effectively put a stop to large scale

advertising campaigns of a pre war type. However, after amalgamation in 1923, the Big

Four began to develop their own styles of poster design and produce material in

prodigious quantities. However, the GWR publicity department were not entirely silent

over this period and came up with an imaginative and, it must be pointed out, extremely

low cost, idea to develop new poster designs. In April 1922, they decided to go firmly

in-house when they announced a competition to design pictorial posters in their staff

magazine.[17] They received around 3000 entries and the three winners were announced

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[14] "First-Class Passengers and Travel Psychology," *Railway Magazine*, June 1921, 61.
[15] John Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," unpublished typescript (National Railway Museum, York, 1993), 36 - 37.
[16] "London, Brighton and South Coast Railway 'Prince Regent' poster," *Railway Magazine*, September 1922, 232.
[17] Felix Pole, "Great Western Railway Poster Competition," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1922, 127.

by the General Manager, Felix Pole, in the July issue of the *Magazine*.[18] All three of these poster designs were published by the company and make up three of only 19 posters published in 1922.[19]

A speech at the Institute of Transport in January 1923 on 'Advertising in Transportation' reinforced and restated the generally accepted view of the situation with regard to railways: '...money spent on bad advertising was always wasted, money spent on good advertising always came back'.[20] It also highlighted that while press advertising was considered to be the most effective use of the advertising budget the pictorial poster was considered 'the most interesting branch of publicity work'.[21]

The GWR's pictorial poster debut in the post-grouping world was unfortunately not considered by some to have been particularly appealing. Burdett Wilson described the 1923 poster *Bathing in February* as 'poster art at its worst'; (see Figure 4.1) it shows several images of women bathing in the sea off the Cornish coast.[22] From a landscape point of view these images can almost be seen as an active counterpoint to the quiet reverie of the woman standing on a Cornish cliff edge in the GWR's 1914 poster for the area described in the previous chapter. There are smiling faces as the women pose on the beach and the rocks echoing the mermaids written about by the GWR in its *Legend Land* publication of 1922.[23] In these images there is a coming together of femininity and

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[18] Felix Pole, "The G.W.R. Poster Competition," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, July 1922, 271.
[19] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 39.
[20] "Advertising in Transportation," *Railway Gazette*, January 19, 1923, 99.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Roger Burdett Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of Great Western Railway Publicity* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles PLC, 1987), 35.
[23] Lyonesse, *Legend Land. Volume One. Being a collection of some of the Old Tales told in those Western Parts of Britain served by the Great Western Railway* (London: Great Western Railway, 1922).

a mythologizing of the landscape under a heading that sees everything under the ownership of the GWR. The Cornish Riviera brand is here being populated by real people engaged in the activities that any tourist might be, but the magical suggestion of the mermaid keeps the notion of the Celtic Sublime, as put forward by Bennett, just within reach.[24]

Figure 4.1. GWR Poster *Bathing in February*.

Whatever Burdett Wilson may have thought of this poster it is clear that it was well received at the time of publication with the *Railway Gazette* stating that

The publicity department of the Great Western Railway Company were quick to perceive the possibilities of the pictures as an advertising asset and

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[24] Alan Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2000), 76 - 109.

are to be complimented on the resultant appearance of a poster which is at once happy, unconventional and arresting.[25]

Others of the Big Four were producing posters fairly soon after amalgamation and they can be seen to be rather tentative, almost pedestrian, in design. The Southern Railway (SR) produced a design advertising their *Southern Belle* service by February 1923 which was almost Edwardian in its appearance (see Figure 4.2).[26] There is almost a return to the older more information based, style of design as the bottom half of the poster is filled with timetable information in a way that would have horrified the critics and commentators of the pre-war railway industry. However, another SR poster reproduced in the *Railway Magazine* in September of 1923 shows a more light hearted approach to poster design with a bright, cartoon-like, beach scene filled with activity.[27] In this design the landscape is once again subjugated by the human element and becomes little more than a background to the performance of the tourist act: couples stroll arm in arm, people relax in deck chairs and children paddle in the sea. This design is typical of much that would come later in many posters designs where landscapes become places in which one can *do* as opposed to simply *go*.

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[25] "Topical Advertising of the Cornish Riviera," *Railway Gazette*, March 9, 1923, 428.

[26] "Southern Railway's New Poster," *Railway Magazine*, February 1923, 173.

[27] "A Smile-Provoking Poster," *Railway Magazine*, September 1923, 252.

Figure 4.2. SR Poster *Southern Belle*.

Interestingly, as if following up on their call for railway advertisers to take heed of overseas development in 1920, *The Railway Gazette* published a full page montage of the 'Publicity and Advertising Methods' of the South African Railways in September 1923.[28] This showed the wide variety of styles and designs that were made use of to advertise tourist destinations, products and services. While, visually, it appears a touch cacophonous with many different types faces and layouts competing for attention these examples do demonstrate how lively and unrestrained the methods were in comparison to what was on offer domestically at the time.

However, the romantic and picturesque nature of the railway poster had not entirely fallen by the wayside in the early Big Four period. A poem published in the *Great*

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[28] "Publicity and Advertising Methods, South African Railways," *Railway Magazine*, September 1923, 244.

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Western Railway Magazine in December 1923, by an author signing themselves simply

as A. L., shows that the pictorial railway poster was still very much lodged in the

popular psyche and that some people, at least, spent time considering their aesthetic and

symbolic merits. The poem, titled *A Poster Musing- "Mount's Bay"*, is formed of three

verses, the first two of which focus on a detailed description of a romantic scene of a

fishing harbour on a hot, moonlit summer's night. The first verse reads

> The night was hot and dusk had fallen,
>
> A crescent moon hung in the sky;
>
> And smacks went out in the bay.
>
> The harbour light flashed round and out,
>
> The windows gleamed on Michael's Mount,
>
> The fishermen sailed away.[29]

The scene is portrayed as something that is *real*, as if the writer is viewing it, first

hand. The crescent moon in the hot night sky and the harbour light gleaming on the

window panes on the island of St. Michael's Mount lend a romantic air to the scene.

Acting as a counterpoint to this, the description of the fishermen in their fishing

smacks going out to sea adds an element of authenticity reinforced by the performance

of a 'traditional' act, it is as if one is viewing a scene untouched and untroubled by the

vagaries of modernity, that existed outside of the modern world. This is backed up by

a line in the second verse which has the viewer state "I forgot the town and the daily

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[29] A. L., "A Poster Musing- 'Mount's Bay.'," *Great Western Railway Magazine*,
December 1923, 546.

round./ Under a star strewn sky.'[30] The writer is describing an environment that appears to exist within a quasi-historical temporality that has nothing to do with either the urban environment; 'the town' or the quotidian goings on associated with it; 'the daily round.'

The final verse reveals that the writer has been contemplating, not a physical scene but a poster representing it:

> I listened to sound, like the roll of the tide,
>
> Then back to earth- my train came in,
>
> The fishing smacks paled afar.
>
> I had mused upon a poster of Mount's Bay,
>
> Had seen sea leave stones wet and bare,
>
> A dream caused by the GWR.[31]

The final sentence of the poem credits the GWR as being directly responsible for transportative power of the scene which saw the writer moved, metaphysically, to Michael's Mount Bay in Cornwall. Ontologically, this poem describes a complex process- the reader of the poem is transported to the scene by reading an account of the writer being transported to a scene that he has, himself, not viewed directly but has seen as a pictorial representation in a poster. The landscape is used in such a way that it implies a great power to provoke a form of reverie that can remove the reader, and certainly did remove the writer, from the everyday world. It is worth noting that the poster to which the poem refers would appear to be *Mount's Bay by Night* which was

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

published by the GWR in 1904.[32] This points towards the longevity of the poster designs, their longevity and their ability to remain in the mind of the viewer.

This poem illustrates two points, first, that the pictorial poster was still prominent in the minds of the public despite several years of little or no development during the First World War. Second, it shows that the landscapes depicted in posters were indeed interpreted by the viewer. It clearly demonstrates that some people would take the time to look at the posters issued by the railway companies and construct daydreams or fantasies around them. In addition to this, these daydreams were entered into self consciously and with an element of knowing; the viewer allowed themselves to be transported to another place precisely because that place was *other* or outside their normative experiences of the world around them. Writing about holidays in 1914, Musgrove supported this and exhorted the tourist to 'make the change as complete as possible'.[33] It helps to support the idea that the railway pictorial poster was more than just a colourful addition to a station or hoarding designed simply to brighten the place up. The implied meanings inherent in the visual content were understood by viewers and used to construct personal imaginative geographies based on the GWR's wider corporate identity and activities.

From 1923 on it is clear that the Big Four were beginning to find their stride in terms of innovative poster design. In particular there are two events that point towards the widening of the cultural audience for the railway poster. In February 1924 the *Railway Magazine* announced that the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) had taken 'an important step forward in industrial art... in commissioning members of the Royal

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[32] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 – 1947," 27.
[33] Charles D. Musgrove, *Holidays and How to Use Them* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd, 1914), 39.

Academy to design posters of places and industries on their line.[34] The scheme

originated from the poster artist Norman Wilkinson and, very soon after the

announcement, there was a notice reporting that nine original works of art by R.A.'s had

been exhibited in Wilkinson's studio in January of that year.[35] This is a particularly

significant move that shows a shift away from the purely *commercial* art practiced by

the poster designers and into the world of high art under industrial patronage. As such

an exercise of industrial patronage it predated, by a full decade, the trumpeting of Cyril

Connolly about the role of Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd as 'The New Medici' in

commissioning poster art from artists such as Graham Sutherland and Paul Nash.[36]

Connolly claimed that Shell-Mex and B.P.'s 1934 poster exhibition 'marks the

beginning of a new era in the relations between creative modern art and big business'

characterised by 'the fundamental idea of the new advertising, to give the artist a free

hand.'[37] Interestingly, very similar words were used in the description of the LMS's 1923

scheme: '[b]eyond indicating the place or industry that they wish to advertise, the

[LMS] are giving the artists an entirely free hand.'[38] The well know poster artist Tom

Purvis, some of whose work is discussed later in this chapter, also commented in 1930

on the fact that Shell, or at least their staff, were 'relative newcomer[s] to advertising'

implying that the railway companies had been engaged in such work for sometime

previously.[39] While the work of the Royal Academicians in 1923 and 1924 might not

have been as overtly 'modern' as that of Sutherland and Nash it is clear to see that

railway companies were prepared to fulfil the role of 'the new Medici' long before the

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[34] "L.M.S. Posters by R.A.'s," *Railway Magazine*, February 1924, 151.
[35] "L.M.S. Posters by R.A.'s," *Railway Magazine*, May 1924, 234 - 235.
[36] Cyril Connolly, "The New Medici," *Architectural Review*, July 1934, 2.
[37] Ibid.
[38] "L.M.S. Posters by R.A.'s," 151.
[39] Tom Purvis, "Lectures Six and Seven, National Society of Art Masters", May 10, 1930, 12, 1990-7283, National Railway Museum.

petroleum companies entered into the fray. Indeed, as far back as 1910 *The Railway Times* commented 'that the artists who complain of starving on Academical landscapes are living on the railway poster' suggesting that the railways played a significant role in supporting, not only the arts, but the artists themselves.[40]

The second event is one that took place on a far, far smaller scale but is just as significant in highlighting just how embedded in popular culture the pictorial poster had become. In March 1924 it was noted that '[t]o give an air of similitude to a model railway station miniature posters are a necessity, and to meet this requirement Messrs. Bassett-Lowke Ltd have produced a remarkable series of miniatures'.[41] An accompanying image shows a miniature poster hoarding with five examples of pictorial posters from the Big Four. While this might seem a trivial occurrence it shows that, by 1924, a railway station was intimately associated with pictorial posters and that even a model of such a building would look unrealistic without them. Their inclusion in the scaled down world of the railway modeller suggests that the pictorial poster was here to stay.

From 1924 the railway pictorial poster began to be seen in places other than in a purely railway context. The British Empire Exhibition of 1924 featured stands representing all of the Big Four and pictorial posters were a major component.[42] The GWR stand alone appears to have had over 15 full size posters on display. The Big Four exhibited jointly at the Advertising Exhibition at Olympia in 1927 where visitors encountered mounted

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[40] "Art in the Railway Poster," *Railway Times*, May 21, 1910, 525.
[41] "What the Railways are Doing," *Railway Magazine*, March 1924, 249.
[42] "Railway Exhibits at the British Empire Exhibition," *Railway Magazine*, May 1924, 468 - 474.

posters as they entered the stand.[43] The pages of the railway press became increasingly filled with paragraphs, articles and reproductions of, and relating to, new posters.[44] However, critical comment on design, layout and the value of the pictorial poster declined sharply. Once again, it may be that such discourse did continue in the advertising periodicals but not necessarily within the pages of the railway press.

Unpublished work carried out by Beverly Cole, the then Curator of Pictorial Collections at the NRM, in the mid 1990s provides raw data about the mention or appearance of posters within the pages of *The Railway Gazette* in the inter-war period.[45] Cole noted the appearance of articles on or about posters in the magazine from 1923 – 1939 which can be used to understand the levels of media exposure that each of the Big Four received for their posters throughout this period. This data does not reflect the numbers of posters actually produced by the companies but rather the assiduity of their press offices in circulating information about releases of new posters, exhibitions and new commissions. Given the fact that there are several hundred such references in this one title alone it allows for a simplified way of assessing the development of the pictorial poster over the inter-war period that does not rely on quotation and explication of countless individual references.

Chart No.1 shows the number of general poster references in the *Railway Gazette* while Chart No.2 shows the same for the *Railway Magazine*. These are captioned as total poster *and* publicity references as, in certain cases the articles discuss exhibitions with

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[43] "The Railway Section at the Advertising Exhibition, Olympia," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, August 1927, 318 - 319.

[44] "Another Striking 'Underground' Poster," *Railway Magazine*, May 1925, 374; "G.W.R. 'Land Cruise' Poster," *The Railway Magazine*, June 1927, 498; "One of the new 'Lighthouse' Posters Issued by the L.N.E.R.," *The Railway Magazine*, December 1926, 503.

[45] Beverley Cole, "The Railway Gazette Poster References" (Unpublished notebooks, n.d.), National Railway Museum.

specific reference to poster titles. As can be clearly seen, the numbers of references in each magazine are significantly different with the *Railway Magazine* running only one tenth of the number of poster references that could be found in the *Railway Gazette*. That said, it is possible to point out a number of similarities that will be useful when discussing the GWR's posters in the following section.

In general, while the numbers for the *Railway Magazine* are too small to make any significant statements, it can be seen that the year 1929 was the apogee of the reporting of pictorial posters in the railway press. There are 107 references from the *Railway Gazette* and 17 from the *Railway Magazine*- the majority of the references relate to posters produced by either the LNER or SR both of whom had large amounts of press exposure in this year. Unfortunately it is not possible to track further developments in the reporting of posters in *The Railway Magazine* after 1931 as it appears to have changed a great deal of its focus and outlook after this year and became far more of an enthusiast publication as opposed to an industry journal. This is reflected in the numbers of poster/publicity references falling away from the average 4 – 10 references per year to virtually nothing after this time.

Although there are spikes in 1933 and 1936 the number of poster references in the *Railway Gazette* are on a steady downward trajectory from their height in 1929 and fall from the maximum of 107 in that year to a low of just 16 in 1938.

Total Poster/Publicity References
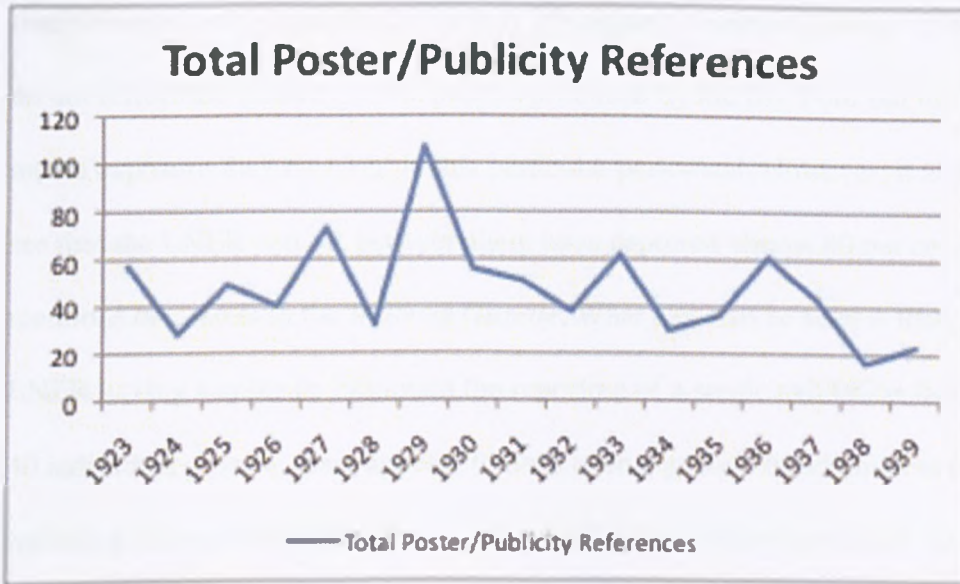
Chart 1: Total poster references in the *Railway Gazette*.

Total Poster/Publicity References
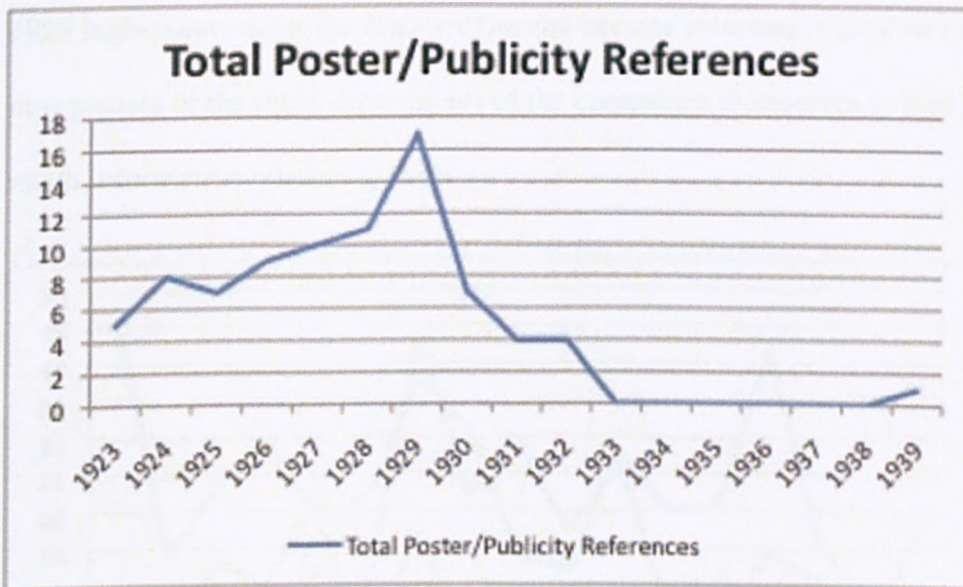
Chart 2: Total poster references in the *Railway Magazine*.

Leaving the figures for the *Railway Magazine* to one side it is possible to further sub-

divide the more substantial data from the *Railway Gazette* into figures for each of the

Big Four; Chart No.3 shows this. This chart clearly shows that the LNER had the most

poster references out of the Big Four, 383 in total, with the SR coming second with 254.

The GWR managed only 90 mentions of posters or exhibitions while, surprisingly, the

much-vaunted LMS came last with only 75. Again, it must be stressed that these figures do not reflect the quantity of the posters produced by the Big Four but the levels of media exposure they received in this particular periodical. However, it is interesting to see that the LNER and SR between them have captured almost 80 per cent of the total mentions of posters in the *Railway Gazette*. What can also be seen is that, despite the LNER having a spike in 1936 with the reporting of a single exhibition that mentioned 40 individual posters, there appears to have been a general trend downwards in the reporting of posters from 1929 on across the Big Four. However, there can be no doubt that both the LNER and SR, throughout the inter-war period, provided more newsworthy material relating to their posters than the GWR or LMS but that, after the 1929 high-point, either the *Railway Gazette* became reluctant to publish items about new posters or the press departments of the companies themselves ceased to send out as much information relating to them.
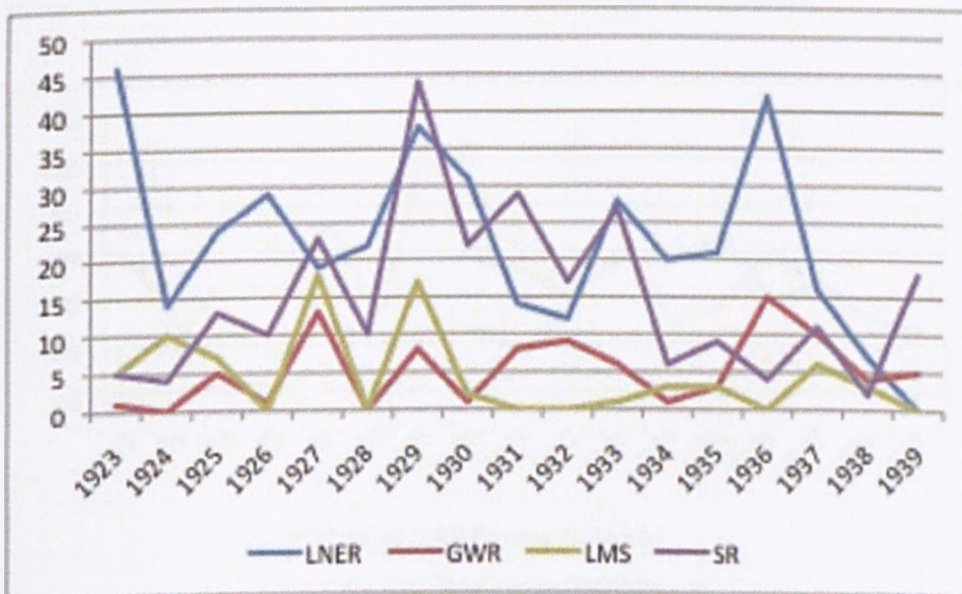
Chart 3: Poster/publicity references in the *Railway Gazette* broken down by railway company.

Does this mean that the actual numbers of railway posters produced had shrunk, remained static or grown during this period? It is difficult to make generalised

statements about all of the Big Four but, with reference to Somers Cocks' listing, it is possible to look at the total numbers of posters produced by the GWR in the inter-war period and over-lay these against the number or references, both total and specific to the GWR, to posters in the *Railway Gazette*. Chart No. 4 shows the figures and, while it is very much a case of comparing raw figures, the chart shows that, as the total number of poster and publicity references fell, the numbers of posters produced by the GWR actually increased dramatically. The GWR's share of references in the *Railway Gazette*, however, remained both remarkably low and remarkably stable regardless of the numbers of posters produced. This suggests that, while the GWR were producing significant numbers of posters they were not necessarily marketing particularly actively which might explain why they were seen as conservative or slow to develop their style. Even in 1924 it was thought by one commentator that 'the Great Western has not yet explored any of the great opportunities that its country-side and seaside has to offer. Its posters are less attractive by far than its pamphlets and guides'.[46]
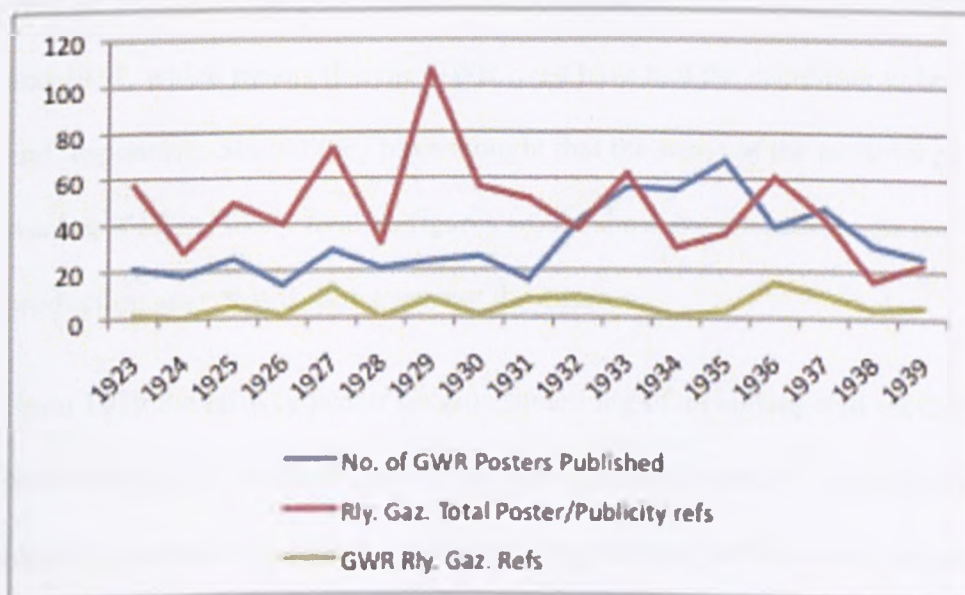
Chart 4: Total numbers of posters produced by the GWR alongside *Railway Gazette* references.

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[46] Walter Shaw Sparrow, *Advertising and British Art* (London: John Lane, 1924), 114.

At the height of the *Railway Gazette* and the *Railway Magazine*'s interest in railway posters, 1929, the GWR only produced 24 pictorial posters; about average for the period.[47] However, the number of posters steadily increased from 1932, when 41 were produced, to its height in 1935 when a total of 68 posters were produced.[48] The figures remained high until 1939 when they fell dramatically with the onset of war. It would seem that, in the case of the GWR at least, the fall in railway media interest in pictorial posters was not related to output but may have come from a form of market saturation where the volume of new posters being produced by all of the Big Four grew to such a level that they no longer merited being commented upon individually or collectively as they had been before. This, coupled with media market segmentation that could have seen discourses on posters in the pages of the advertising press and not the railway press, would explain the apparent drop-off of interest. It does not, however, mean that the railway poster had lost any of its popularity or power. The figures for GWR poster production show that they were capable of increasing the numbers of posters produced year on year, for example production more than doubled from 16 to 41 between 1931 and 1932, which means that the GWR must have had the capability to be both flexible and responsive. Should they have thought that the value of the pictorial poster was waning it seems likely that the figures would show commensurate decreases in production also; this is, however, not the case.

From 1939 the railway poster became something of an endangered species. Between November and December 1939 the railways busied themselves with the work of blacking out stations, reducing services and producing informative, and propaganda, posters from the Railway Executive Committee. There is, however, evidence to suggest

[47] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 47 - 48.
[48] Ibid., 63 - 67.

that, as stations were scrubbed clean of unnecessary material 'the pictorial resort posters,

whose colour contrasted with the blackened windows and dimmed lights of the stations'

were retained perhaps as a means of keeping up morale.[49] But this did not mean that

production was continued and, on 27 May 1940, all non-essential posters were

prohibited by Government edict.[50] The age of the inter-war railway poster and, to all

intents and purposes, the Big Four railway poster, had come to an end. There would be a

short period of production in 1946 and, as Somers Cocks points out, most of the early

regional British Railways posters of 1947 were designs from commissions put out by

the Big Four but the essential character of the railway poster had changed

fundamentally.[51]

It is important not to overlook the numerous joint posters that were issued by the Big

Four. The GWR issued posters with both the LMS and SR and, while their visual

content is very similar to those produced by the GWR alone, the implications of such

joint working should not be overlooked and will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

To close this brief historical overview of the development of the railway poster in the

inter-war period it is possible to come to the following conclusions. First, that the period

leading up to amalgamation in 1923 was quiet in terms of the production of pictorial

posters. This can be attributed to the fact that the companies themselves were well

aware that their corporate identities were soon to be radically changed and that time and

money spent on the design and circulation of posters was perhaps not going to be

particularly beneficial. Second, that although there had been relatively few railway

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[49] *Railway Posters and the War. Reproductions of poster announcements of the
Railway Executive Committee and of individual Railways concerning transport
services and facilities*, 6 vols (London: The Railway Gazette, 1939), vol. 2, p.3.
[50] Ibid., vol. 4, 2.
[51] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 -
1947," 80.

posters produced between 1914 and 1923 (the GWR produced only 23 in this period[52]) there is strong evidence to suggest that they remained a well loved and significant part of the travelling public's own imaginative geographies of the railway and that their reintroduction was welcomed. The existence of poetic paeans to them, the production of miniature versions of them and the general increase of the reporting of them from 1923 – 1929 demonstrate this amply. Third, there appears to have been no relationship between the numbers of posters produced and the levels of media exposure they achieved in the specialist press. It seems likely that, as the posters became more popular and varied, their value to the railway press lessened. Certainly, evidence for the GWR points towards their increasing the numbers of posters produced after the 1929 height of interest in them in the railway press.

Inter-war Landscapes of Variety and Meaning- the GWR's use of landscape in building the brand of the West.

Somers Cocks lists some 666 posters produced by the GWR between 1879 and 1947 of which around 574 posters were produced between 1923 and 1946.[53] The vast majority of these had some form of landscape as a key feature of their visual content in the form of towns, cities, rural environment and occasional industrial scenes. This means that, inevitably, any assessment of the GWR's use of landscape will be limited to a small proportion of the posters produced. However, the posters that will be examined, in this section will be contextualised using the preceding data seen in the charts above. In this way it will be possible to look at early, mid and late period posters and assess their content, significance and development. Watts's examination of the use of landscape by

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[52] Ibid., 36 - 37.
[53] Ibid., 38 - 80.

the LNER made use of a dataset of just 16 posters; in the present research the dataset

will not only be larger but also from a wider chronological spread.[54]

While there are significant holdings of GWR posters at The National Archives this

overview will make use of the posters held at the National Railway Museum (NRM)

and, when referring to an individual poster, will provide the NRM inventory number

and will footnote its appearance in the chronological list compiled by Somers Cocks

which has provided information about date, print run and, occasionally, the fee paid to

the artist.

It would be almost impossible to devise a classification system that would cover all of

the designs, types and styles of landscape pictured in the 500 plus inter-war posters of

the GWR. With such a diverse dataset where each design almost exists in a class of one

the more simple and broad the classification system is the more useful it can prove.

Watts has stated that posters in general tend to be interpreted in a 'commonsense' way

that can make them 'difficult to interrogate critically' and advocates the use of a form of

Piercean semiotics where the *signs*, in this case the visual content itself, is examined to

understand what they *stand for*; a similar approach will be taken in the present

research.[55] It puts forward the point that the design of the posters themselves represents

a clear move towards market segmentation where the myriad experiences that the

railway company, as provider of mobility, are signified through particular types of

landscape. In this way it builds on Bennett's conclusions that the GWR were interested

in portraying the dynamics of 'past and present, continuity and change' and allows for a

more market orientated approach where the need to be *all things to all men* had a

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[54] D. C. H. Watts, "Evaluating British railway poster advertising: The London &
North Eastern Railway Company between the wars," *The Journal of Transport
History* 25, no. 2 (September 2004): 23 - 56.
[55] Ibid., 24.

significant impact on their visual aesthetic.[56] It argues that, through their use of landscape, the GWR began to build up a visual brand of *The West* as a tourist utopia that was heterogeneous in nature and that could both appeal to the varied needs and wants of passengers.

Fifty posters were identified for study which spanned, in date range, from 1922 (admittedly pre-grouping but included because of the circumstances of its design and, as has been discussed elsewhere, the fact that, by 1922, the GWR had virtually completed the process of amalgamation) to 1947.[57] From this survey, five broad types of landscape were identified: rural, urban, active, historic and technological. Each of these will be discussed in turn after a brief discussion of the framework as a whole.

While five types of landscape have been identified, and are to be looked at chronologically, it is worth commenting that, while looking at the almost 200 GWR posters held by the NRM, it was not possible to see a broad change towards one particular style or the other through the inter-war period. All five types appear to be present from the early 1920s onwards. This may have its roots in the fact that, very shortly after amalgamation, in 1924 the GWR greatly expanded their advertising department and renamed it the Publicity Department.[58] Where it might be possible to say that there was a proliferation of urban landscapes immediately post-war it can be equally argued that a similar number of rural landscapes were pictured also. With the dataset used for this particular research there was a roughly even spread of landscape types over time which would appear to be representative of the oeuvre as a whole. In this way it can be argued that the market segmentation that was present in the GWR's

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[56] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 237.
[57] "Great Western Amalgamation and Absorption," *Railway Gazette*, May 12, 1922, 760.
[58] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 29.

posters was not something that was developed through the inter-war period but was present from the outset and was most likely a considered adoption of a more pragmatic form of marketing in the face of the changes brought about by amalgamation.

The first landscape type which has been identified is that of the *rural*. This was perhaps the most typical landscape to be associated with the GWR who were keen to associate themselves with particular landscapes and appropriate them. The classic rural landscapes of the GWR can be seen as the broad sweep of hills and wide open spaces as found in the 1935 poster *Wales: a holiday land full of undiscovered charm* (1988-7975) by A. B. Webb (see Figure 4.3).[59] In this image a castle sits on top of a rocky outcrop surveying a scene of pleasant hills, fields and wooded valleys. There is no reference to the modern world at all and the image invites the viewer to explore and experience the sublime and picturesque landscape on offer; the implied exploratory nature of the landscape encounter on offer is reinforced through the text which describes the country as *undiscovered*. This undiscovered but potentially discoverable countryside is pictured frequently in the GWR posters, Frank Newbould's *The Wye Valley* (1978-9239) from 1946 does the same by showing the viewer vistas and hinting at further sights worth seeing around the corner.[60]

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[59] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 63.
[60] Ibid., 78.

However, in this research rural does not simply mean hillsides, fields and environments with no built structures. Many of the rural landscapes of the GWR feature towns, villages or small settlements but the key to their being rural is their connection to the wider landscape surrounding them. They are settlements that are pictured as belonging to the landscape and not divorced from it; they are not rural simply in contradistinction to being urban but by dint of their strong connection to their surroundings.

The rural landscapes of the GWR are chiefly characterised by a lack of tourists. In only a very few of the landscapes classed as rural is it possible to see figures but these can be classed as locals about their daily routine unaware of the gaze of the tourist or artist upon them. The 1932 poster *Come to Old World Cornwall* (1981-7360) by S. I. Veale[61]

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[61] Ibid., 52.

(see Figure 4.4) and the 1936 *Devon* (1989-7088) by Frank Newbould[62] (see Figure 4.5) are classic examples of this. The streets through which the figures walk are devoid of signs, adverts or any other evidence that these are places frequented by tourists. The mosaic-style poster designs produced by R. Lampitt in 1936 provide another example that further supports this; the design for *Cornwall* from 1936 (1980-7244) (see Figure 4.6) shows a Cornish harbour with men at work with nets and creels.[63] There are no pleasure craft and no people pictured standing about viewing the scene which is, in itself, workmanlike and redolent of the traditional industry of the area. In this poster the activities being carried out, the performance of the traditional act of preparing a fishing vessel for sea, are as much signifiers of place and identity as a physical landmark or famous view. Again, these designs make use of traditional ways of being in the world (such as fishing) to advertise and, in a way, commodify the unspoilt essence of the place being pictured. The figures exist almost as a part of the landscape; their work and their being *in place* appear to be almost designed to add to the sense of the place being pictured. Thus it makes perfect sense that the coastal fishing village or town (as all of these posters show) should be populated solely by people who appear to be associated with the fishing industry. They are signifiers of the *authenticity* that is on show in these places and available for the viewing pleasure, consumption and appropriation of the tourist.

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[62] Ibid., 68.
[63] Ibid., 67.

4.4. GWR Poster *Come to Old World Cornwall.*

Figure 4.5. GWR Poster *Devon*.

Figure 4.6. GWR Poster *Cornwall*.

Acting as counterpoint to all this rurality is the urban landscape. If the rural landscapes begin to explore ideas of regionality, authenticity and identity then the urban landscapes that the GWR use in their inter-war posters can be seen to address ideas of modernity and function, national identity and cosmopolitanism. The 1932 poster *Cardiff. The City of Conferences* (1987-8807) (see Figure 4.7) is a rare example of a photographic poster which shows the city of Cardiff from the air.[64] The fact that a built environment was chosen to be pictured through photography and not the graphic arts is itself significant and expressive of the modernity held innate in notions of what was, and still is, considered to be urban. The city is laid out for the viewer to see and apprehend in almost a single glance via an aerial view- itself a modernist perspective on the landscape as will be discussed in more detail later. The accompanying text is explicit in giving the city a function: it is *the* city of conferences, it is not considered to be a city of culture, industry or exploratory touristic rambles. Another aerial view of an urban landscape can be seen in the 1936 poster by E. Coffin *London* (1986-8817) (see Figure 4.8).[65] Neat streets, squares, parks and gardens are laid out punctuated by the landmarks such as the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace. The colours used in this image sharpen up the detail and provide a view of the city that is almost akin to a map; as a poster it is directive inasmuch as it provides a landscape that can be navigated both visually and, once one arrives, physically. Again, it has a functional feel to it- the landscape appears to exist solely to provide context for the landmark buildings that exist within it. It is regimented, and self-consciously ordered and lacks the unconscious authenticity put forward in the rural landscapes discussed previously.

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[64] Ibid., 53.
[65] Ibid., 69.
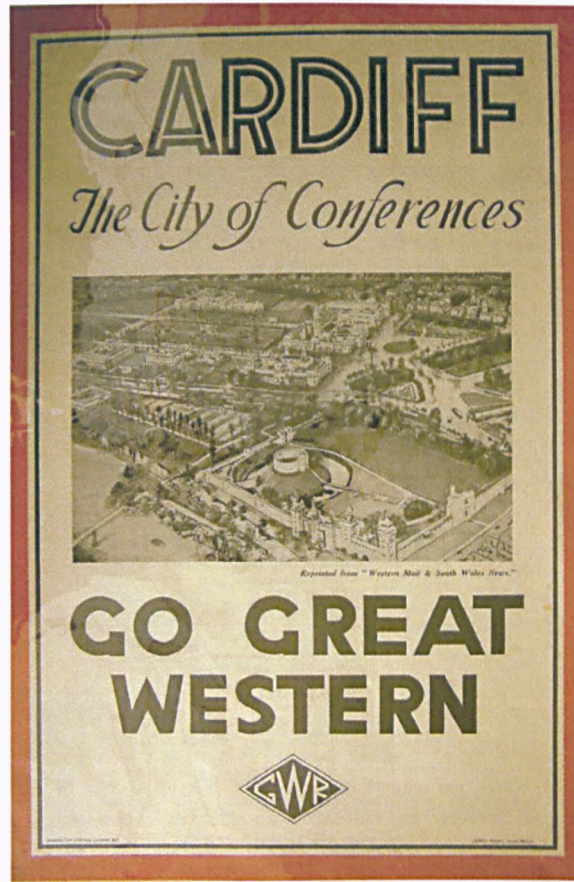
Figure 4.7. GWR Poster *Cardiff, City of Conferences.*

Figure 4.8. GWR Poster, *London*.

Similarly, Frank Mason's 1938 poster *London* (1978-9354) (see Figure 4.9) shows

Tower Bridge and the Tower of London at night from an elevated, aerial view.[66] The

city is brightly lit by the many windows of the buildings while a large ship is passing

under the bridge. This design appears to be based on fixed points such as the historic

Tower and the landmark Tower Bridge around, through and under which flows a steady

stream of traffic. It captures the cosmopolitan nature of the capital and hints at the

overseas connections which made the city what it was.

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[66] Ibid., 75.

Figure 4.9. GWR Poster, *London.*

However, not all the urban landscapes were aerial views. The 1939 *London, Heart of the Empire* (1989-7090) designed by Newbould (see Figure 4.10) makes explicit the both the imperial element of British Identity and the martial ways though which it was reinforced.[67] It features a mounted member of the Horse Guards, with sword drawn. It is perhaps significant that such an image was produced in 1939 at a time when the nation was preparing for another major conflict. This is unequivocal in its strength and, as the text makes clear, it firmly connects London to the Empire through the military. Providing a further example of what might be considered to be the "might of Empire" is the 1946 poster *London Pride* (1978-9180) again by Frank Mason (see Figure 4.11) which shows a view of the House of Commons from across the

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[67] Ibid., 76.

Thames.[68] Again, an iconic landmark of political importance is the focus, the colours are light and positive giving an air of optimism to the scene. The clouds are parting to reveal a clear blue sky and there is absolutely no evidence of bomb damage in a city that had been devastated by six years of war. It is a landscape of resilience, authority and control that speaks not just of survival through another World War but pride (as the text suggests) in the capital's ability to weather such trials. Bennett has highlighted a similar trend with the GWR's literary oeuvre where London was used as a leitmotif for a 'landscape of inheritance' where there was evidence of 'progress and development which united past and present and rural and urban experience within a national-international configuration of cultural authority'.[69] Once again, the GWR landscape has been used to mediate discourses on cultural and political authority.

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[68] Ibid., 79.
[69] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 240.

Figure 4.9. GWR Poster, *London, Heart of Empire*.

Figure 4.10. GWR Poster, *London Pride*.

Other towns and cities were also pictured in the GWR posters such as in *Bristol* by Claude Buckle (1985-8797) (see Figure 4.12)[70] and *Oxford* by E. Coffin (1986-9115), a poster issued jointly with the LMS (see Figure 4.13).[71] In these designs some of the key urban centres served by the GWR are depicted in terms of their architectural elegance. The built environment, in these posters, is used to represent quality, class and education- these are not simply frivolous tourist destinations but solid, serious places that carry weight and significance and, one assumes, a visit to such a place would be very *improving*.

Figure 4.11. GWR Poster, *Bristol*.

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[70] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 58.

[71] Ibid., 74.
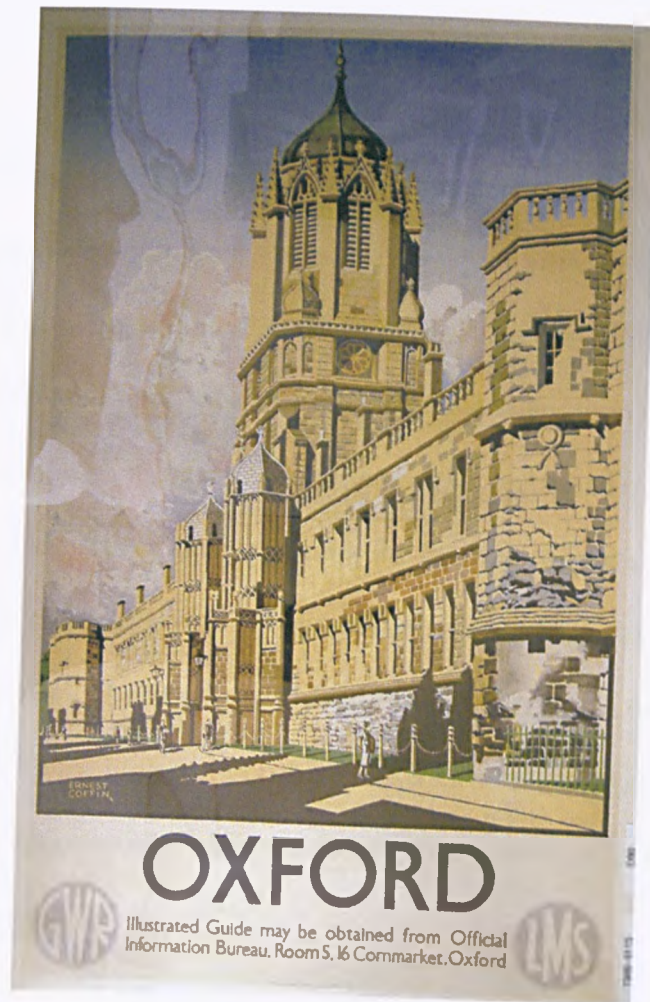
Figure 4.12. GWR/LMS Poster, *Oxford*.

However, not all of the landscapes were of such a serious nature. Many of the poster

designs, especially those depicting beach scenes can be said to be landscapes of activity.

These landscapes typically feature people; young people, families and individuals

engaged in some form of activity that one might associate with a typical holiday. Where

there are no people in the design the accompanying text often extols the virtues of the

place depicted in terms of what activities are available there. The 1922 poster *South*

Wales, (1987-9175) was designed by Kennedy Worth, a GWR staff member who was

one of the winners of the 1922 poster competition touched on in the previous section

(see Figure 4.14).[72] It shows a wide sweep of beach with beach huts and families

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[72] Ibid., 37.

playing in the surf. In the foreground adults are promenading along the front while

another child plays around a tree. The middle distance shows people relaxing on

benches taking in the view. This is a landscape that is demonstrating what is available in

the resorts of South Wales- it is a chance to relax and play with the children, to see and

be seen by others and an opportunity to take in the 'bracing' air. While the 1927 poster

Penzance (1993-8137) does not have such an active visual vocabulary (see Figure 4.15)

the image of the town, with its beach and harbour, is accompanied by text which lists

the activities available.[73] These are not perhaps the family-oriented activities which

were on show in the previous poster but more adult outdoor pastimes such as 'fishing,

hunting, golf and tennis'. The landscape around Penzance is, in this poster, depicted as

green rolling hills with the high moors behind. Each hill, vale and valley has become

filled with sporting opportunities while the golf courses and tennis courts of the town

remain invisible but implied.

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[73] Ibid., 45.

Figure 4.13. GWR Poster, *South Wales for bracing holidays.*

Figure 4.14. GWR Poster, *Penzance, The Ideal Holiday Centre.*

The active family became a fundamental part of the active landscape in the mid 1930s as can be seen in the two 1937 posters by Lambert *Newquay* (1986-8828, see Figure 4.16) and *Criccieth*[74] (1986-8829, see Figure 4.17).[75] Both of these designs show bronzed, healthy people enjoying the sunshine, activities and clean air that was available in the coastal resorts. Matless has commented on the links between fitness and citizenship that were being developed at this time[76] and Bennett touches on similar ideas of 'effective citizenship' in his discussion of the GWR's tourist literature.[77] These are healthy, wholesome landscapes that are filled with "doing" and are distinct from the more reflective rural landscapes that speak of older, perhaps less dynamic times.

Figure 4.15. GWR Poster, *Newquay on the Cornish coast.*

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[74] Ibid., 72.
[75] Ibid., 70.
[76] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 91 - 92.
[77] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 240.

Figure 4.16. GWR Poster, *Criccieth, the Caernarvonshire resort facing South.*

However, with such activity also came an element of sex and the active landscape of the GWR was also one that could provide the potential for activity of a different kind. The 1937 poster *The Cambrian Coast* (1978-8903), designed by Charles Pears (see Figure 4.18), shows a beach scene where, as might be expected, children can be seen laying in the waves.[78] Dominating the image, however, is a reclining woman in a green bathing suit and cap lying languorously in the surf. The top of her bathing suit appears to be dangerously low and her arm trails in the water. She has a serene look on her face and, once again, there are elements of the mermaid motif that has recurred throughout the GWR's inter-war publicity. However, it is clear that what is on show

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[78] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 73.

here is far more earthy and not so much mythological. Similarly, the poster *Paignton* (1978-8898) from 1938, again by Pears (see Figure 4.19), shows a typical seaside scene with families playing on the beach and people sitting on the promenade in deck chairs.[79] The image is, however, dominated by a young lady, in the centre of the foreground, in a pink bathing suit waving a bright red towel above her head. It appears as if she is almost on a seawall-catwalk striding in front of the people seated on the prom and there is an element of the exhibitionist about the way the towel, perhaps the signifier of beach modesty, is cast off and waved in the air. Harrington, however, has observed that the use of such images of a specific type of femininity was not necessarily as suggestive as it might at first appear. He claimed that the Big Four were attempting to appeal directly to women travellers and that the inter-war railway companies 'existed in an increasingly competitive market in which appeal to a female audience was an increasingly important element of commercial strategy. A range of female images and archetypes were deployed in their advertising material as a result.[80] As such, the active landscape can further be seen as function of market segmentation and the use of the landscape to mediate messages both of desirability and aspiration.

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Ralph Harrington, "Beyond the bathing Belle: Images of Women in inter-war railway publicity," *The Journal of Transport History* 25, no. 1 (2004): 43.

Figure 4.17. GWR Poster, *The Cambrian Coast: Miles of Glorious Sands*.

Figure 4.18. GWR Poster, *Paignton, South Devon*.

Issues of authority have already been touched upon in this section and the fourth landscape, the historic, adds to this. The GWR was always keen to associate itself with historical elements of the landscapes it served. The 1931 poster by Freda Lindstrom *Tintern Abbey* (1990-7070) is an early example of such a landscape (see Figure 4.20).[81] The wooded hillsides are represented in autumnal colours and the scene is framed in a picturesque manner by a tree in the foreground. Centre stage, however, are the runs of Tintern Abbey itself with the buildings of the village huddled around it. The historic landscape of the GWR was one where the ancient works of man feature as signifiers of the GWR's own stability and persistence through time. By presenting the viewer/traveler with ruins, cathedrals and historical figures and events it begins to set itself up as the medium through which such historical places and events can be experienced by the tourist. As a railway company the GWR had already exhibited a marked interest in the historical landmarks and landscapes it served and had gone to some lengths to interpret and appropriate them to their own ends as is discussed in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

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[81] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 51.

As such it is perhaps not a surprise to see that a key landscape trope that the GWR utilized was that of the historic environment. However, it was not solely the ruin in the countryside that was illustrated in the posters. Urban-historic landscapes were also much in evidence in designs such as *Historic, Romantic Exeter* from 1931 by Leslie Carr (1990-7071, see Figure 4.21)[82] and 1933's *Bristol* by Claude Buckle (1977-5602, see Figure 4.22).[83] These both show historic aspects of the large cities on the GWR's network and play on their significance through time.

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[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., 58.

Figure 4.20. GWR Poster, *Historic, Romantic Exeter.*
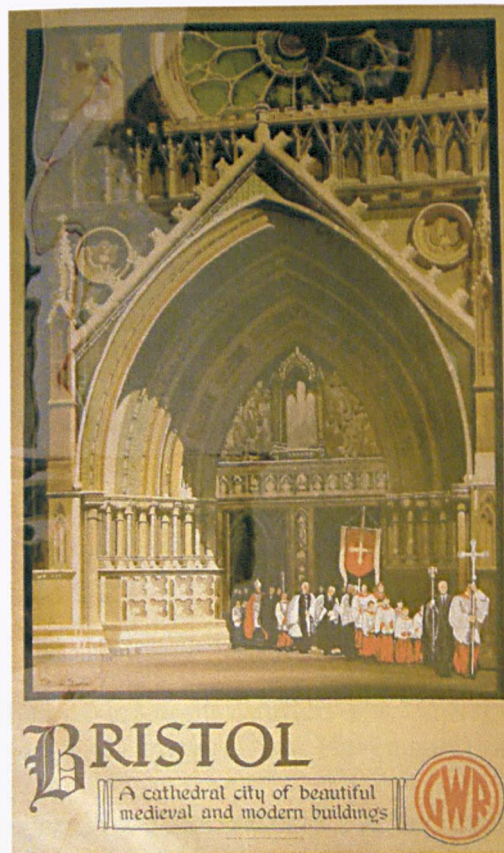
Figure 4.21. GWR Poster, *Bristol.*

The well known poster artist E McKnight Kauffer had been commissioned to produce six posters for the GWR in 1933.[84] While these designs were considered to have been slightly too avant-garde for the management at Paddington and were watered down somewhat, they show that the GWR were willing, in some way, to embrace a more modernist aesthetic.[85] His designs for the GWR can be seen as touristic landscapes of activity with an admixture of the rural although, for reasons of space, they are not discussed in this thesis. Kauffer was commissioned again by the GWR to produce a poster titled *Royal Windsor* in 1935 (1991-7106 see Figure 4.23) and this particular design can be read as an interestingly modernist take on the historical landscape.[86] It also has a great deal to say about the GWR's vision of itself and its place within an historical and authoritarian hierarchy.

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[84] Peyton Skipwith, "Edward McKnight Kauffer: The Underground Poster King," in *Art for All. British Posters for Transport* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 127 - 143.

[85] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 74; Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 15.

[86] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 66.

Figure 4.22. GWR Poster. *Royal Windsor.*

Revisited in this poster, Windsor Castle has been simplified, its notable roundness flattened into a series of blocky, crenulated rectangles. In sharp contrast to this is the wooded landscape below the castle walls which is rough and filled with movement, as if a strong wind were blowing the branches; it appears almost as if it is a medieval tapestry. At the side of a pool is a deer which lends a further medieval aspect to the scene where deer, the favourite hunting animals of royalty, filled the woods that were themselves reserved for the king's private sport. Although there are elements of a rural present in this design this must be seen as a deeply historical landscape that comes loaded with implied meaning and significance there is a strong sense of symbolic authoritarianism embedded in the scene. The castle overlooks the scene and dominates everything in it. Most significant is the fact that, suggested in the castle itself, is a stylised face, presumably that of the King, with the crenulated walls of the

central tower forming a crown, this face looks over the rest of the scene laid out below it. Nature, represented here in the form of the woods, birds and deer, is subservient to the king (or queen) ensconced in the castle. Textually the poster simply carries the legend *Royal Windsor* but it is perhaps significant that the word 'royal' is set in type almost twice the height of the word 'Windsor'. In this way notions of power, in this case royalty, are portrayed as more significant than place or geographical locatedness.

Unlike the 1933 posters this image includes the GWR roundel logo but any explicit mention of the railways has been omitted. In addition, the roundel is printed at the very foot of the image placing itself, hierarchically, below the level of the royal house of Windsor. It seems likely that this very Royalist, hierarchical image was influenced by the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935. The GWR were very keen to highlight their own historical associations with royalty and boasted that 'they may claim to have carried members of the reigning house more frequently than any other railway company in this country' a fact attributed to the GWR's servicing of the station at Windsor itself.[87] So keen were the GWR to put forward the Silver Jubilee as a time of 'gaiety and pleasure' that they 'decided to grant a day's leave with pay' to all employees.[88] In addition to this, 1935 saw the centenary of the GWR. Throughout 1935 there was much made of the company's longevity, its long standing equating with its authority, stability and reliability. In this way a deeply hierarchical portrayal of the countryside seems, again, to reflect the GWR's own desire to be seen as

[87] "King George and the Great Western Railway," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1935, 237.
[88] "The Silver Jubilee Celebrations. Great Western Railway Arrangements," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1935, 248.

established in a business firmament that, with increasing competition from the roads, seemed to be in growing flux.

It is clear to see that, with the poster designs produced by Kauffer for the GWR, landscapes were used to communicate sophisticated implied meanings. Specific types of landscapes were used to emphasise the attachment to places that had long histories of habitation. In this way certain of the 1933 designs can be seen as utilising the 'archaeological imagination' that Hauser has identified with the, near contemporary, neo-Romantic aesthetics.[89]

The historic landscape was also used to play out ideas of national identity and resilience in times of hardship. Frank Newbould's 1947 poster *Plymouth, the spirit of Drake lives on* (1978-9157, see Figure 4.24), issued with the SR, shows a defiant image of the statue of Francis Drake looking out to see over the landscape of the Hoe.[90] This archetypal Englishman/adventurer is looking out over the shores to foreign lands and appears to be acing almost as a guardian of the country. It is a powerful post-war narrative that carries meanings of strength and national identity but is negotiated through a historical medium. In this way the GWR's historic landscapes, as with the rural, can be seen to touch upon the Neo-Romantic 'perception of inherence' within the British landscape where the past, rather than being solely *in* the past, is inherited as part and parcel of our present understandings of self and identity.[91]

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[89] Kitty Hauser, *Shadow Sites: Photography, Archaeology, and the British Landscape 1927-1955* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2007).
[90] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 79.
[91] Cited in Hauser, *Shadow Sites*, 19.

Figure 4.23. GWR/SR Poster, *Plymouth, the spirit of Drake lives on.*

Reinforcing the argument that the historical landscape was used to negotiate notions of national identity are the posters that go to make up the *This England of Ours* series begun in 1932. For example, the Claude Buckle poster *Historic Totnes- Devon* (1993-8116, see Figure 4.25) published in 1933, shows the historic market town of Totnes filled with people shopping and taking in the sights.[92] The England that is *ours* is an historic one but one that is there to be appreciated by people fully embedded in the modern world not separated from. This is further evidence of the GWR's interest in managing ideas of continuity and change as stated by Bennett. This use of historical figures and landscapes can further be seen as a strongly modernist leitmotif when we look at what the artist Paul Nash said in 1932. He famously stated that it was all about 'Going Modern and Being British' in other words, about taking the past and using it to

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[92] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 57.

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inform our understandings of the present.[93] Interestingly, the GWR poster *Bristol* (referred to above) emphasizes this with its text stating that Bristol was a 'Cathedral city of beautiful medieval and modern buildings'- the modern world had not been edited out fully, it simply co-existed with (a version of) the past.
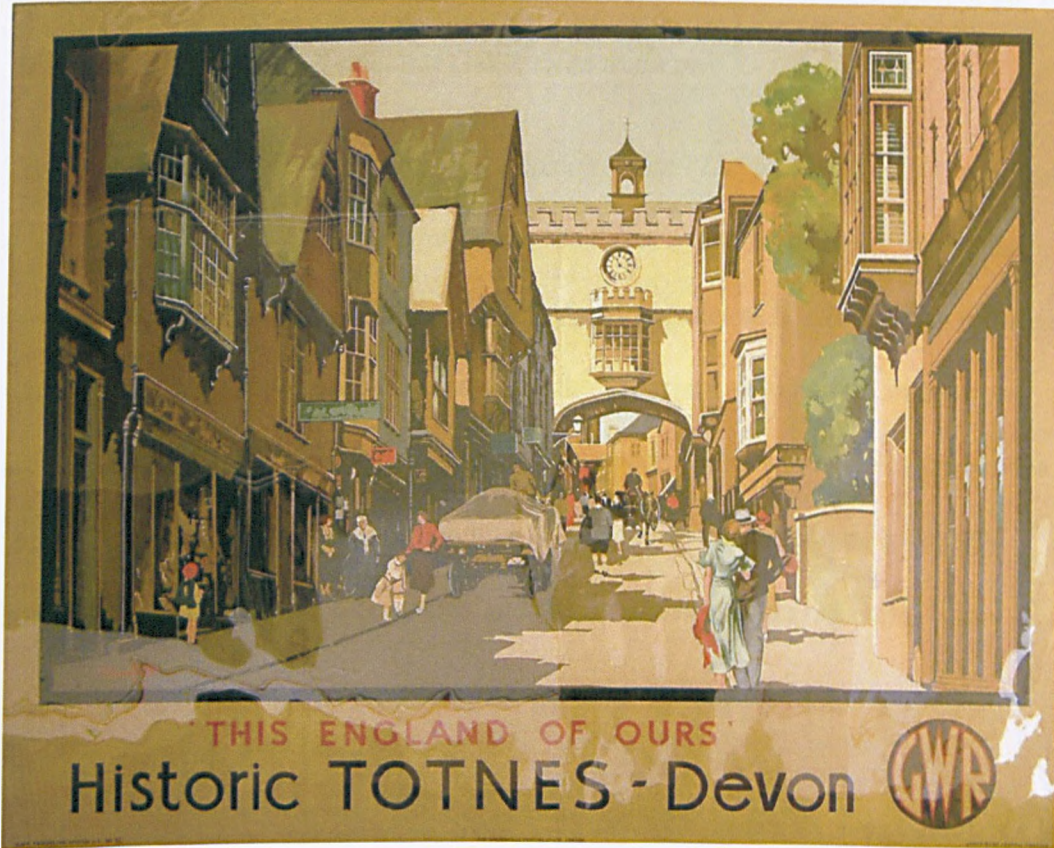
Figure 4.24. GWR Poster, *Historic Totnes- Devon*.

Finally, and perhaps the least common of all of the GWR landscape types was the technological landscape. These can be defined primarily as landscapes that contain, as their prime visual content, images of the technological side of the railways operations; in other words locomotives, trains and infrastructure.

It has already been discussed in Chapter Two how railway companies began to edit out the technological aspects of the railways after about the 1870s leaving a landscape that was unspoiled by tracks, cuttings, stations, locomotives and rolling stock.

[93] Hauser, *Shadow Sites*, 6.

Holland's work suggests that, as locomotive technology developed, there was a return to a pride in the mechanisms behind the mobility that saw, for the LNER at least, a return to representations of technology in their posters and guide-books.[94] The GWR appears to have been less interested in such representations of technological development although that does not mean that such images were not used at all; they were, but, as ever, with a peculiar GWR twist to them.

The 1928 poster *The Torbay Express, Glorious South Devon* (1986-8797, see Figure 4.26) is a rare example of a design where the name of the service sits above the destination.[95] Although printed in smaller type it appears as if *The Torbay Express* is what is on offer and, almost as an adjunct, the experiences to be had in glorious Devon. The photograph that has been used has been tinted which gives the poster the feel of being much older than it actually is, altogether it seems to be a slightly confused paean to speed, technology and the modernity of the railways.

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[94] Rachel Holland, "L.N.E.R Posters 1923 - 1947: Aspects of Iconography, Railway and Social History" (M.A. in Railway Studies, York: University of York, 1999), 43.
[95] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 47.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY

THE TORBAY EXPRESS
GLORIOUS SOUTH DEVON

Figure 4.25. GWR Poster, *The Torbay Express.*

One of the most striking posters of the GWR's inter-war years was P. I. Brown's

Westward! (2000-8435, see Figure 4.27) which makes use of a bold design and colour

palette to great modernist effect.[96] The swallow has been used as a harbinger of

summer and his flight towards temperate summer climes appears to be echoed by the

movement of the train, picked out in silhouette, westwards, possibly towards the

Cornish Riviera. The landscape, indeed the world, has been shrunk to a smooth ball

which appears to have ironed out all of the distances, difficulties and inconveniences

associated with travel. This poster speaks of a smooth ride to ones destination, taking

its lead from the natural world, in choosing to holiday in the healthy, sunny West

Country. Interestingly, the GWR roundel has been included almost at the centre of the

"world" as depicted in the poster which, once again, appears to signify a sense of

ownership over, and belonging to, the landscape.

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[96] Ibid., 54.

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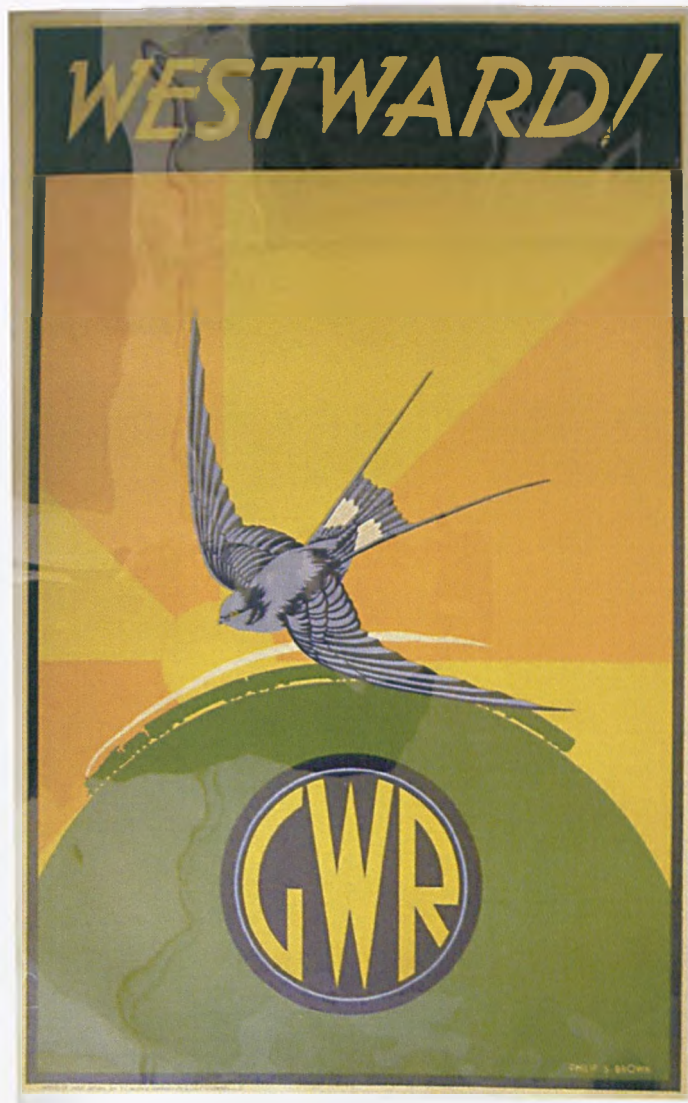
1939, however, saw the production of one of the GWR's most iconic poster images.

Speed to the West (1979-7920, see Figure 4.28)[97] was designed by Charles Mayo and

was issued as part of a print run of 2500, the poster was subsequently reissued in

1946.[98] The image shows a 'King' class locomotive (again, perhaps symbolic of

authority and social standing?) in a front and three-quarter shot as it speed out across

the poster. This image is all about speed, technology and a celebration of the GWR

engineering. This is a landscape precisely of speed, technology and GWR

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[97] Ibid., 57.
[98] Ibid., 78.

engineering- the places, be they destinations or starting points, are included simply as text at the bottom of the design. While this is not as dramatic as the LNER's posters of their streamlined locomotives it still remains a powerful image that transforms the landscape, through technology, into an easily ordered list of places that can be accessed quickly and without fuss.

Figure 4.27. GWR Poster, *Speed to the West*, 1939 edition.

In celebrating their centenary year the GWR published more posters than at any other time, 68 in total. While some of them carried deeply significant implied meanings others were more basic in their celebration of technological development. *100 Years of Progress* by M. Secretan (1990-7170, see Figure 4.29) once again shows a GWR locomotive in a front and three-quarter view but this time there is much more landscape surrounding the train.[99] It is as if the train has become more located into the

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[99] Ibid., 63.

geography of the GWR and that, after 100 years it fully belongs there; it is, in short *in place*. The inclusion of a much earlier *North Star* class locomotive in the bottom left of the image serves to emphasize the technological development undergone by the company over the course of a century but, in essence, it is the sense of belonging in the landscape that is put forward in this poster. Everything is serene and in its proper place, the sky is blue and the beach and sea appear inviting. After a century the GWR seemed to be happy about its place in the world and this technological landscape was just one way in which it expressed this.
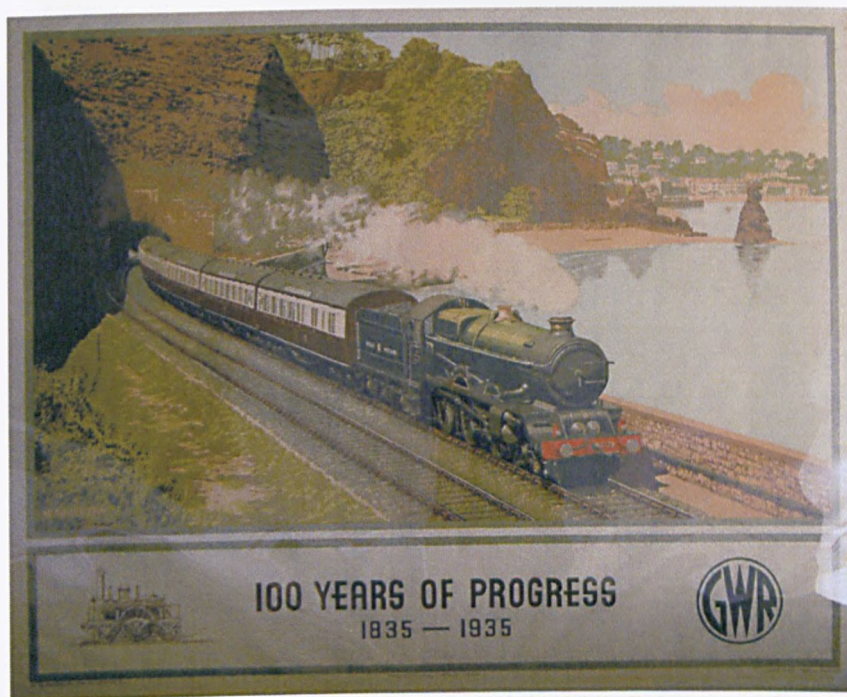
Figure 4.28. GWR Poster, *100 Years of Progress.*

The final poster issued by the GWR was the 1947 *Paignton* (1986-8818, see Figure 4.30) designed by D. Relf. It shows the town, with its harbour and church, in the distance, viewed over a cornfield filled with stooks.[100] It is a deeply rural image where even the seaside tourist destination has been subsumed into the countryside; it exudes a kind of peace, or perhaps even resignation, about the future prospects for the

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[100] Ibid., 80.

company itself. By this time nationalization was a given and, unlike the amalgamations of 1923, the GWR would not come through this with its identity intact. With this poster it appears as if the GWR were returning to their roots in the landscape- the coastal town within a wider rural environment that provided the context against which they were to develop a more complex and nuanced use of the landscape.
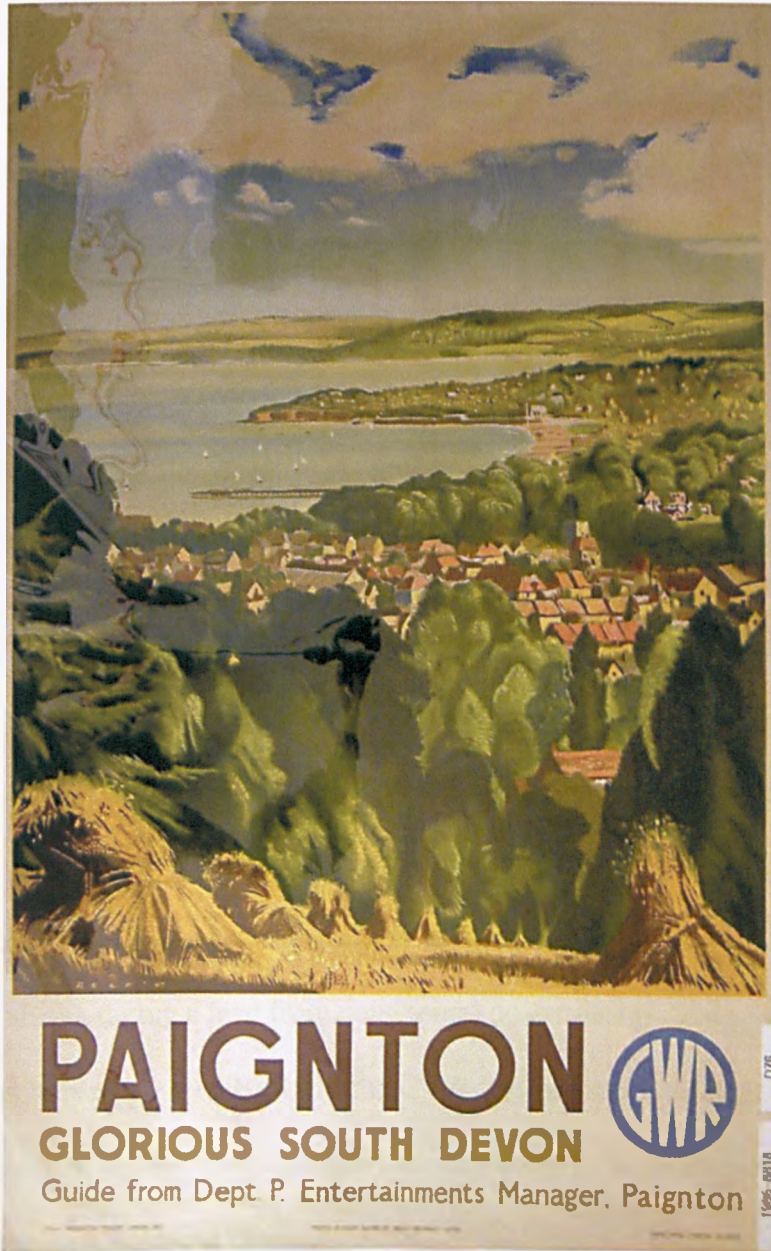
Figure 4.29. GWR Poster, *Paignton, Glorious South Devon.*

Conclusions

To begin with it should be stated that the posters produced by the railway companies (GWR or otherwise) should not be seen as the main vehicle through which brands were built up and ideas about value, belonging and identity were put forward. All the railway companies (particularly the GWR) produced many guide-books, leaflets and sale publications to complement their posters and, throughout it all, the medium of press advertising was always seen as the most effective method of communication to the public. In 1936 the GWR allocated £68,000 to press advertising as opposed to only £24,000 on printing and publications out of a total budget of £90,000.[101] However, the pictorial poster was a powerful adjunct to these other means of advertising and marketing and made a significant impact in the minds of the traveller. These two, interlinked, chapters have attempted to highlight a number of key points about both the development of the pictorial poster in general and the use of images of landscape by the GWR to put construct a heterogeneous tourist utopia and build up a recognisable brand.

Initially, it has shown that the historical development of the pictorial poster was not always a smooth one. From the 1890s until the 1910s there was a great deal of debate, not only about the effectiveness of the poster but also about the general trend towards the attracting of tourist traffic. However, while there was a great deal of debate and discussion about the right and wrong ways to design posters, the railway companies were forging ahead, taking a lead from continental poster design, and producing increasing numbers of posters. By 1914 the GWR had become confident enough to produce posters that did not even mention their company name or explicitly refer to the commodity that they were offering.

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[101] Great Western Railway, "Traffic Committee Agenda", 1936, Rail 250/680.

While the First World War saw the production of railway posters effectively shelved the impending amalgamation of the railway companies into the Big Four meant that work, in earnest, on new designs did not begin again until 1923. But when it did, it took off and the numbers of posters produced by all of the Big Four increased dramatically. The railway press, so keen to follow the debates about poster design in the pre-war era, continued to document the developments of all of the companies' posters with interest up to the high point of articles and comments in 1929. After this time it appears as if media interest in the railway poster began to wane somewhat. There are, however, certain caveats which must be taken into account. The first of these is that many of the railway periodicals that existed pre-1914 either ceased to exist or were absorbed into other titles leaving significantly fewer being published and therefore a more narrow range of editorial interests. Second, one of the chief railway periodicals of the inter-war period, the *Railway Magazine*, became less of an industry journal and more of an enthusiasts publication from around 1931 which meant there was significantly less debate about the technicalities of railway aesthetics in their pages. Finally, it must be remembered that a number of specialist journals relating to advertising began to appear just prior to the First World War and it is highly probable that discussions about the most effective ways to advertise and developments in poster design were carried on in these pages. There is scope for considerable further work in this area that the present research does not have the capacity to undertake.

Whatever the reason, the railway poster ceased to be such a ubiquitous part of the weekly and monthly railway press. But this did not mean that the numbers, and types, of railway poster had fallen or that the railway companies themselves had begun to lose interest in their ability to attract the eye and drum up interest from the public. It is clear to see that, for the GWR at least, the years following 1931 saw an explosion in the

numbers and variety of posters produced with total output more than tripling between 1931 and its height of 68 individual titles in 1935. The GWR's poster output for the remainder of the inter-war period stayed consistently high until the outbreak of war in 1939. Once again, further research into the total poster production of the other Big Four railway companies would be very rewarding although, simply through looking at the published books of railway posters, it could be suggested that they followed a similar trajectory.

The post-war period saw the GWR produce only 33 more posters before nationalisation but, by this time, the poster had become an established part of the railways and deeply embedded in the psyches of travellers.[102] As has been stated previously, many of the early posters that were published from 1948 on by British Railways were actually commissioned by the Big Four, perhaps even before the war. Thus, the childhood 'world of uncomplicated pleasure and unalloyed beauty' described by Michael Palin, born in 1943, at the beginning of the first of these two chapters would have been one born out of the Big Four which was in turn the product of an aesthetic developed from the late 1890s.[103]

Stylistically, the GWR developed significantly over time. This research has focussed on a period of 50 years from 1897 to 1947 during which time the GWR produced more than 600 posters. The visual content of these posters was obviously extremely varied. However, as a purveyor of mobility it is not surprising that landscapes feature, in one sense or another, in almost all of them. While the GWR's early attempts at pictorial posters were perhaps overly busy, textually confused or set out more like a timetable or

[102] Somers Cocks, "A Survey of Great Western Railway Pictorial Posters, 1879 - 1947," 78 - 80.

[103] *Happy Holidays: The Golden Age of Railway Posters* (London: Pavilion, 1987), 6.

information leaflet they quickly began to understand the fundamentals of poster design (something that was, as has been shown, being readily talked about in the railway press at the time) and produce some interesting and striking examples.

From around 1904, with the commissioning of work by Alec Fraser, the GWR began to produce distinctive posters featuring landscapes that were effectively bifurcated and often leaned either towards the people-centred, more active or touristic landscape or to the topographic landscape where aesthetic notions of the sublime and picturesque featured heavily. Throughout this period, especially in the people-centred designs, it can be argued that the landscape was often subjugated through the performance of the tourist act as if the visual vocabulary of the landscape lacked the subtleties to express the coming together of people, place and tourism *per se*. This is something that would be overcome in the inter-war period. However, as can be seen in posters such as *Hunting Season*, this early period was when ideas of class, status and belonging began to be explored.

By 1914, despite the modern day assertion of the GWR's conservatism, it is clear that they had developed a landscape brand that was known about and required little in the way of a bye-line; the poster *Cornish Riviera* of that year demonstrates this amply. There were precious few other posters produced in this period, for railway companies or otherwise, that did not have at least the company name prominently displayed.

By 1923 the GWR's use of landscapes in their posters became increasingly sophisticated. Topography no longer had to be pushed into the background if the focus was on activity- the landscape itself began to be used as a signifier for the varieties of potential touristic experiences on offer at a given place. While the GWR was not necessarily as avant-garde as other of the Big Four their association with the artist E.

McKnight Kauffer indicates that they clearly had an awareness of modernist aesthetics within marketing and the fact that Kauffer did not work for any of the other Big Four companies shows that they were, in some way, willing to go out on a limb occasionally. His work can be seen as embodying many of the elements of landscape that can be considered typical of the GWR's output of the period.

Throughout the inter-war period a complex series of landscapes, in this research identified as rural, urban, active, historic and technological, each with its own characteristics and particular signs was developed to construct a notion of Western-ness as something which offered an experience suited for almost anyone. The GWR helped to create a region that was rooted firmly in the landscape (the rural landscape) while also providing easy access to places associated with modernity and cosmopolitanism (the urban landscape). The places they served could provide the active tourist or the family with resorts and locations that would stimulate them and occupy the children (the active landscape) while, all the time, referring back to the deep historical nature of the region and the evidence of strong hierarchical frameworks such as monarchy (the historic landscape). Finally, the GWR was not averse to showboating with some of its technical developments, although these were not quite as dramatic or emblematic as those of the LNER, and the technological landscape, while rare, was something that was used to demonstrate the company's progress; most notably during their centenary year of 1935. Often, these landscapes were interwoven to create a dense, richly textured portrayal of place where the resort existed alongside the quiet rural retreat and where the past informed the present. As Bennett has pointed out, past and present, continuity and change were factors through which much of the GWR's textual output was filtered. It seems highly likely that their visual material sought to engage with these same factors

and produce a non-text based canon of work that attempted to both portray and create

The West as a heterogeneous tourist utopia.

Chapter Five: '...bait to tempt the roving spirit.': Landscape Imagery in the Guidebooks of the Great Western Railway, 1904 – 1914

Introduction

The following two interlinked chapters look at what can be considered to be the bulk of the Great Western Railway's (GWR) published output; while their use of landscapes in their pictorial posters has been discussed in the previous two chapters the images of landscapes and locations contained within the guidebooks published by the GWR between 1904 and 1946 will be examined here. The posters may have been the images that stuck most in the mind of the viewer but it was the guidebooks that were considered by the GWR as the mainstay of their advertising and place marketing. Indeed, in 1936 the Great Western Railway stated that its annual guidebook *Holiday Haunts* should be 'regarded as the backbone of the Company's publicity for holiday traffic'.[1] While railway posters receive the bulk of the attention from modern scholars and enthusiasts railway guidebooks, with the exception of Bennett who will be discussed in more detail later, have received little or no attention.[2] Certainly, from an academic point of view, they are a relatively un-mined source of information both regarding the methods employed by the railway companies to market the landscapes and locations which they served and to better understand the aesthetics of mobility and the railway landscape in the first half of the twentieth century.

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[1] RAIL 250/772, "Great Western Railway Superintendents Meeting, 1931 - 1942", 1936, The National Archives.

[2] Alan Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2000).

As will be covered in more detail in the following pages, the GWR produced their first in-house guidebook, *The Cornish Riviera*, in 1904.[3] However, it followed on from an established tradition of guidebooks and tourist handbooks that stretched back into antiquity. It is valuable, at this point, to provide a very brief overview both of the development of the guidebook and a review of the related literature. Parsons places a biblical origin on the guidebook and views the *The Book of Joshua 10: 4-9* as 'one of the earliest topographical documents having elements of a guidebook'[4] but quickly moves on to the more well recognised guidebook of Greece produced c150 -180AD by Pausanias[5] which he considers to be, in form, 'undoubtedly that of a guide'.[6] The role of the guidebook within a religious context, especially in pilgrimage, in the medieval period is also touched upon and is used as a starting point for Vaughan's 1978 discussion of eighteenth and nineteenth century guidebooks although he states that, by the mid1600s, '[c]ulture [had] superseded piety as the excuse for making a tour.'[7]

What Vaughan and Parsons help to make clear is that the history of the guidebook has an extremely long tail. By the mid eighteenth century when both domestic and foreign travel had become both more popular and more commonplace among those classes who could afford it, the idea of having a book that could instruct the traveller and act as a knowledgeable and discreet guide to otherwise unknown areas was already well established. The two names that stand out in the sea of guidebooks and publishers

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[3] A. M. Broadley, *The Cornish Riviera (New and Enlarged Edition)*, 2nd ed. (London: Great Western Railway, 1905).
[4] Nicholas Parsons T., *Worth the Detour* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007), 3.
[5] Pausanias, *Description of Greece: Attica & Corinth Bk. 1 & 2, v. 1* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Loeb, 1989).
[6] Parsons, *Worth the Detour*, 26.
[7] John Vaughan E., *The English Guide Book* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1978), 15.

were those of Murray and Beadeker who, throughout the nineteenth century, published huge numbers of volumes covering Europe, Asia and beyond. Parsons in particular devotes a great deal of time to looking at the ways in which these two guidebook giants interacted and competed. Sillitoe, however, is at pains to highlight the numbers of other publishers, such as A&C Black, Baddeley, Ward Lock and Methuen who produced guidebooks of the British Isles that were worthy of merit.[8]

However, while these volumes provide a thorough account of the guidebook's development over time, the railway guidebook, defined in this work as that which was produced and published by a railway company, gets no mention at all. Sillitoe covers the period 1815 – 1914 in his book but, even when his narrative makes use of the railway, including the GWR, he prefers to use quotes from Murray and Baedeker et al to describe the scenery and not the railway produced guidebooks that would have been in abundance from the 1900s on.[9]

Parsons covers the period in more detail than both Vaughan and Sillitoe and, while he acknowledges the railways' impact he spends no more than three pages on railway guidebooks, covers only those produced before 1899 and does not even recognise the existence of guidebooks produced by railway companies themselves.[10]

What becomes clear is that if the guidebook *per se* has had little attention focussed on it, the guidebook produced by a railway company has had even less. The exceptions are few; Wilson's work on the GWR has chapters relating both to sale publications[11]

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[8] Alan Sillitoe, *Leading the Blind: A Century of Guidebook Travel, 1815-1914* (Nottingham: Bookcase Editions, 2004), 222.
[9] Ibid., 228.
[10] Parsons, *Worth the Detour*, 227 - 230.
[11] Roger Burdett Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of Great Western Railway Publicity* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles PLC, 1987), 83 - 103.

and the annual guidebook *Holiday Haunts*.[12] In addition to this Middleton's research into the LNER's advertising also covers their books and pamphlets[13] which provides an interesting counterpoint to the work of the GWR. The published output of R. N. Forsythe,[14] can also be seen as falling into this field of study and adds significantly to the wider public awareness of the different forms and functions of advertising including the guidebook. These sources provide invaluable material and have been hugely important in bringing the subject of railway guidebooks and advertising out of the shadows. They are, however, not, in the strictest sense, academic works and are therefore of limited value in the present research. However, Bennett's doctoral research on the GWR's guidebooks has proved to be of significant value insofar as it focuses entirely on the textual elements of the guidebooks and acts to ground the accompanying images which are discussed here.[15]

These chapters will provide a more thorough historical context for the development of the railway produced guidebook and its reception, particularly in the railway press. They will not attempt a study of the railway guidebook in its totality; they will demonstrate how landscapes were used in a sophisticated way to appeal towards different groups and markets- a form of market segmentation that highlights the heterogeneous nature of the tourist utopia which they constructed. In this chapter the notion of *novelty of place* will be introduced to describe the overall feel of the images of landscape within the guidebooks. This will be contrasted with the notion of *novelty*

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[12] Ibid., 104 - 121.

[13] Allan Middleton, *It's Quicker by Rail: The History of LNER Advertising* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2002), 40 - 63.

[14] R. N. Forsythe, *Irish Sea Shipping Publicised* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2002); R. N. Forsythe, *To Western Scottish Waters* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing Plc, 2010).

[15] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness.

of behaviour which will be introduced in Chapter Six to characterise the landscape imagery that developed in the inter-war period.

The Railway Guidebook to 1914: an historical perspective.

The previous chapters have explored the ways in which images of landscapes were used to construct and communicate specific ideas and understandings about the GWR's territory as a region and about the specific experiences awaiting the tourist. The railway poster was, as has already been discussed, both popular and influential by the first decade of the twentieth century, so much so that, by 1910 the *Westminster Gazette* commented that

> ...we may compliment the railway companies on the alluring picture
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> galleries they have provided on street hoardings and station platforms
>
> and in the ticket offices... And one suspects that the artists who
>
> complain of starving on Academical landscapes are living on the
>
> railway poster.[16]

But the railway poster, as a form of advertising, was not alone; guidebooks covering the railways had been published from the early nineteenth century (see Chapter Two) but had always been produced by those outside of the industry itself; George Measom's 'Official' guides of the 1850s and 60s being early collaborative examples of a railway company working closely with an external publisher.[17] A later example, *East Coast "Express" Route to Scotland* from 1895 is also worthy of notice. In this

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[16] "Art in the Railway Poster," *The Railway Times*, May 21, 1910, 525.
[17] George Measom, *The Official Illustrated Guide to the Brighton and South Coast Railways, Crystal Palace at Sydenham and Isle of Wight* (London: H. G. Collins, 1852); George Measom, *The Official Guide to the London and South Western Railway* (London: H. G. Collins, 1856); George Measom, *The Official Illustrated Guide to the Great Western Railway* (London: Richard Griffin and Co, 1860).

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book the timetables were published first, followed by a guidebook to the towns, villages and scenes along the line.[18]

Taylor has discussed the role of the guidebook in the construction of broad public understandings of *Shakespeare Country*. He has shown that railway-produced guidebooks from the later part of the nineteenth century were highly influential in creating a tourist experience of the Stratford on Avon that was perceived as *'authentic'* or objectively *'true'* [his original].[19] The power of the guidebook, when created in conjunction with the means of accessing the landscape it portrayed was not to be underestimated even at this early stage. Very quickly the railways recognised this power and set to work ensuring that they could harness it for themselves.

The Great Eastern Railway (GER) was among the first to capitalise on this surge of new advertising material and began to publish more substantial guidebooks covering the countryside that they served in 1897.[20] From this point on, rather than the majority of guidebooks being published by individuals or organisations independent of, or related only tangentially to, the railways it was the railway companies themselves that began to commission and publish the guidebooks to their lines and the landscapes and locations that they served.

While the Great Western Railway (GWR) had produced numerous handbills advertising their services it was not until 1904 that their first guidebook, *The Cornish*

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[18] *The East Coast "Express" Route to Scotland. Tourist Programme Great Northern and North Eastern Railways* (London: Sir Joseph Causton and Sons Ltd, 1895).

[19] John Taylor, *A Dream of England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 70.

[20] See ch 2 p53. The GER, however, can be viewed as one of the vanguard in the world of railway guidebooks as they appear to have been closely involved with the publication of a guidebook to the Continent in 1882: Percy Lindley, *The Great Eastern Railway Company's Tourist-Guide to the Continent* (London: Great Eastern Railway, 1882)

Riviera, was published.[21] However, once the GWR had begun to publish their own guidebooks, and to successfully sell them to the public, they quickly realised their value and continued to produce high quality volumes covering, not only the landscapes and locations that they served, but also archaeology, architectural history, mythology and folklore. Middleton, in his work on the LNER's advertising material, states unequivocally that '[w]hen it came to the production of books and booklets, it must with some certainty be agreed that the Great Western was well ahead of the others both in quantity as well as quality'.[22] The following section sets out to provide an historical context for the production of the GWR's sale publications by looking at the ways in which railway guidebooks were received by the railway press. Many of the general arguments relating to the value of advertising and the wisdom of chasing after what was seen to be a fickle travelling public have already been set out in the previous two chapters (in particular Chapter Three) and such ground will not be trodden over again here. What this sections aims to do is to demonstrate that the GWR, while admittedly both enthusiastic and, at times, innovative in their production of guidebooks was certainly not alone. It will show that, in the main, all of the railway companies, both large and small, were producing guidebooks that sought not only to act as a guide for the tourist once arrived at a given location but also to encourage and inspire the potential tourist or "armchair traveller". It will demonstrate that the railway press took a distinct interest in such guidebooks and, rather than debate their value or worth as with the development of the pictorial poster, received such publications generally positively from the outset. Such a reception suggests that it was the medium, as opposed to the message, that was problematic for elements of the railway industry

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[21] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 41 - 64.
[22] Middleton, *It's Quicker by Rail: The History of LNER Advertising*, 40.

to appreciate and that the book, a familiar and trustworthy companion on even the earliest of railway journeys, was considered appropriate from the outset.

The laying of such contextual foundations will provide important background information that will aid the discussion of the picturing of landscapes in the GWR's own guidebooks that follows.

As with Chapters Three and Four, four key sources have been consulted in this exercise. The *Railway Times*, the *Railway Gazette*, the *Railway Magazine* and the *Great Western Railway Magazine* have all been consulted for articles relating to the production of guidebooks or for reviews and notices of recently published volumes. While there are obviously other titles that could have been consulted, such as the *Railway News*, it was felt that these titles provided an adequate overview of the topic along with information specific to the GWR. Throughout this, and the following, chapter the terms railway guidebook or, simply guidebook will be employed. In this context what is being referred to are guidebooks specifically produced by railway companies themselves and *not* those produced by organisations such as Thomas Cook and Bradshaws or publishers such as Cassell. While these undoubtedly would repay significant study they fall outside of the remit of the present research.

The GWR was evidently particularly proud of its first foray into the production of guidebooks. In the April 1904 issue of the *Great Western Railway Magazine (GWRM)* the front page carried excerpts of reviews of *The Cornish Riviera* from six different periodicals. Interestingly, three of the titles, *Madame, The Lady's Field* and *Lady's Pictorial*, were evidently aimed specifically at a female readership, which may give some indication as to who the key audience for these guidebooks was at the time. '[G]enuine literary distinction... fine photographs... accurate in every detail; and

above all things, practical' were just some of the plaudits showered on the volume. But the GWR was not alone, their publication appeared at a time when guidebooks were significantly increasing in number.[23] The *New Publications* and *Trade Catalogues* columns of the *Transport and Railroad Gazette* (shortly to become simply the *Railway Gazette*) began to be filled with reviews and notices of new books being issued covering all parts of Great Britain.[24] The GWR, capitalising on the success of their first guidebook, were quick to produce a second, *Southern Ireland, Its Lakes and Landscapes,* later that same year accompanied by some dizzying puff in the *GWRM.* Building on the positive reviews of *The Cornish Riviera*, the *Magazine* asked 'What, then can be said of "Southern Ireland," except that it fully equals, if not surpasses its predecessor?'[25]

By 1905 the important role that such guidebooks played in the advertising of holiday locations was beginning to be acknowledged in the railway press. the *Railway Magazine* ran an article directly linking the poor receipts of the South Eastern and the London, Chatham and Dover Railways with the cutting of their joint advertising budget. In the half-year to December 1903 the advertising budget had been £5,161 while in the same period in 1904 they had only allocated £4,618. 'Yes, a saving of £543 but- at a cost of many thousands of pounds in revenue?' they asked.[26] In June 1905, the *Railway Times,* while indulging in a sly dig at the role of newspaper advertising by railways, grudgingly admitted that '...there is a good deal to be said in support of more elaborate advertising by our leading railways.'[27] Such 'elaborate' advertising methods did not simply refer to posters and guidebooks; many of the larger

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[23] "Railway Notes," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1904, 49.
[24] "New Publications," *Transport and Railroad Gazette*, November 25, 1904, 318E.
[25] "Railway Notes," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, September 1904, 145.
[26] "Why the Shareholders Suffer.," *Railway Magazine*, March 1905, 254.
[27] "The Uses of Advertisement," *Railway Times*, 3 June, 1905, 542.

railway companies began to produce items such as illustrated calendars. The London

and North Western Railway's (LNWR) offering for 1905 was described by the

Railway Magazine as being '...excellent... printed in four colours and... a highly

creditable production.'[28] It would appear that managers on the railways read these

columns closely and that, in this case, the LNWR had sent in their calendar in

response to a favourable review of a calendar produced by the Cheshire Lines

Committee in the previous issue. It was evidently not simply the production of high

quality advertising material that was important, it was also ensuring that such material

received exposure in the appropriate magazines and reviews. Certain companies

appeared to revel in the production of novelty pamphlets and guidebooks; The Great

Northern Railway (GNR) received attention in April 1905 for publishing a guide to

their Easter services in the shape of a large egg.[29] The GNR would, less than a year

later, produce another pamphlet in the shape of a 'folding cardboard foot-rule' and use

this to pun on the catch-phrases that is was a 'good rule' and a 'safe measure' to travel

by their trains.[30] At this time the *GWRM* itself began to receive attention in the railway

press review columns,[31] while all the time continuing to feature notices of new

guidebooks prominently on its front pages.[32]

The GWR's third major publication, *Historic Sites and Scenes of England*, was an

interesting departure insofar as it 'was prepared by the Company primarily for the

guidance of American visitors to this country.'[33] It received a full page of glowing

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28 "What Our Railways are Doing," *Railway Magazine*, March 1906, 260.
29 "Trade Catalogues," *Railway Gazette*, April 21, 1905, 175E.
30 "Trade Catalogues," *Railway Gazette*, February 2, 1906, 83.
31 "New Publications," *Railway Gazette*, February 17, 1905, 58E; "Great Western Railway Magazine," *Railway Times*, September 2, 1905, 273.
32 "Notes and Comments," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1905, 81.
33 "Historic Sites and Scenes of England," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, June 1905, 110.

review excerpts in the *GWRM* from such national publications as *The Tatler* and the *Illustrated London News*. It marked the beginning of an interesting development in the production of railway guidebooks and one that several railway companies picked up on particularly quickly: the writing of guides to appeal to particular groups of people who had specific interests or motivations to travel. *Historic Sites...* played strongly on the historic aspects of the GWR's territory and appealed directly to what was seen as the American craving for rediscovering their roots. For example, in this particular guidebook scenes such as the Pilgrim Fathers' departure for America were played out and contextualised within a touristic West Country. The Great Central Railway was also quick to pick up on this with the publication of *Through the Old Country by a New Route* in the same year. Again, this was aimed directly at Americans wishing to trace their personal, or national, roots; for example, the review in the *Railway Magazine* claimed that it could be used by those 'who desire to see the ancestral home of the Washingtons'.[34] It demonstrates that, very early in its development, the railway guidebook was being used with thought and intention and its contents were being shaped and constructed with the end user in mind. The American market was to remain a key audience for the railway companies with titles such as *America's Motherland* being produced by the Great Central Railway in 1909, again, appealing directly to the American market's perceived desire to rediscover their historical roots.[35] It shows that, very early on, the railway guidebook was not simply a didactic manifesto or statement issued by the railway company to a public craving information and guidance. In the same way as with the pictorial posters there was an element of two-way traffic where the needs and wants of the travelling public were, in some way, taken into account when the text and images were being produced. Such a process will

[34] "What Our Railways are Doing," *Railway Magazine*, June 1905, 527.
[35] "America's Motherland," *Railway Times*, August 21, 1909, 210.

be identified through the increasing evidence of market segmentation in the use of landscape imagery. A similar trajectory can be found in Bennett's analysis of the textual content of the GWR's later guidebooks with regard to North American tourists and the West of England as a site of cultural pilgrimage.[36]

The *Railway Times* looked back on 1905 as being a year where the 'development of railway publicity' in all its forms, had been a 'notable feature'; it saw railway publicity as 'a bait to tempt the roving spirit and the desire for change and relaxation which have become such marked characteristics of the modern temper.'[37] Again, it can be seen that the railway guidebook was conceived of as something that responded to a change in the human temperament, that provided for a need rather than simply stimulated or created a desire to travel out of nothing. The railway guidebook was *active* insofar as it acknowledged changing trends and desires as opposed to proclaiming or proselytising.

If the function of the guidebook is seen as active then the form was also fluid and able to change to reflect specific seasons, activities or needs. The production of calendars or Easter guides shaped as eggs are testament to this. In addition there was already an established tradition of the railway companies producing small annual guidebooks covering such things as the 'principal horse and cattle fairs, racing, steeplechase, and cricket fixtures and angling information' for the areas which they served.[38] The GWR began to produce such a guidebook in 1905 which would be updated and revised annually.[39] Renamed *Holiday Haunts* this would become a mainstay of the GWR's publicity material until 1947. These publications were both responsive and reflexive; the guidebook was already a sophisticated weapon in the railway company's armoury.

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[36] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 123 - 126.
[37] "Railway Publicity," *Railway Times*, 6 January, 1906, 5.
[38] "What Our Railways are Doing," 262.
[39] "Trade Catalogues," *Railway Gazette*, 28 April, 1905, 187E.

From this point on the review columns become increasingly filled with notices about the latest publications. An interesting distinction that is made, particularly within the pages of *The Railway Gazette*, is that guidebooks produced by publishers outwith the railways tend to appear in the *New Publications* column while those produced by the railway companies themselves feature in the *Trade Catalogues* section. This distinction perhaps reflects the common understanding of the railways' own publicity material at the time as being within the industry. The other publications reviewed in this section are all very much catalogues or lists of equipment, spare parts or machinery.[40] This would suggest that, while the form and function of the guidebook had already achieved a certain level of complexity and sophistication, there was a certain level of conceptual dissonance that did not allow for the railway press and their reviewers to see them as anything other than basic, didactic advertising material. This would change over time, as will be discussed subsequently, but it would appear to point towards the railway companies developing the guidebook as a marketing instrument more quickly than the industry commentators could keep pace with.

The GWR continued to produce guidebooks covering north and south Wales, and Devon and, late in 1906, published *Rural London. The Chalfont Country and the Thames Valley*.[41] There appears to be some confusion here with the list of GWR publications produced by Wilson as he listed the book as being first printed in May 1909.[42] However, the *GWRM* of November 1906 carries a notice about its appearance

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[40] "Trade Catalogues," *Railway Gazette*, May 11, 1906, 678; "Trade Catalogues," *The Railway Gazette*, June 8, 1906, 838; "Trade Catalogues," *Railway Gazette*, 15 June, 1906, 870.

[41] A. M. Broadley, *Rural London. The Chalfont Country and the Thames Valley* (London: Great Western Railway, 1906).

[42] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 173.

and that of the title *North Wales. The British Tyrol.*[43] This marks the beginning of another interesting trend in the pre-1914 railway guidebooks; marketing places to *live in* as opposed to simply tour around. The *GWRM* specifically describes the guidebook as dealing with 'the western borderlands of the Metropolis as a residential centre' and not just as describing the locations and landscapes that would have been considered as being of interest to the tourist, as with the previous books.[44] This is something that begins to be more and more pronounced in certain publications from this point on. A general dissatisfaction with urban life begins to be played upon in the guidebooks and the accompanying reviews. The GCR's book *Strolls in Beechy Bucks* was reviewed in March 1908 in *The Railway Times* and was said to be 'especially [for] those *condemned to pass the greater part of their existence within the confines of the metropolitan area'.*[45] The use of powerful and emotive terms such as 'condemned' and 'confined' reinforces the idea that the railway companies were providing some form of liberation or release from the binds of urban living and that such a manumission did not just have to be for the holidays- it could be for life. This lends further weight to the argument put forward in this thesis that the GWR, among other railways, was constructing a utopian environment. The *Railway Magazine*, reviewing the same title a month later, commented that the landscape covered by the guidebook was 'singularly rural in character; and its sylvan beauties are, as yet, unspoilt by the speculative builder.'[46] Again, the landscape was being lauded not solely for its intrinsic characteristics but for what it is *not*; it is not urban, it is not built-up.

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[43] "New Publications," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, November 1906, 217.
[44] Ibid.
[45] "Strolls in Beechy Bucks," *The Railway Times*, 14 March, 1908, 289.
[46] "Railway Literature," *The Railway Magazine*, April 1908, 289.

The appearance of the GCR guidebook *The Homestead* in June 1911 continued the trend of defining rural areas as desirable residences for those who worked in the city. It was to appear quarterly and carried articles about the availability of sporting opportunities, geological and climatic considerations along with listings of houses available for purchase or let.[47] The production of purely tourist guidebooks continued apace, with the *Trade Publications* columns of the *Railway Gazette* sometimes carrying reviews of up to five new titles a week but, increasingly, there was a strong leaning towards advertising lifestyles and lifestyle change in the guidebooks of the main railway companies.[48] *The Homestead* continued to be published and, by late 1912, was being published by the GCR along with the Metropolitan Railway as a guidebook that could, in some way, be seen as a precursor to the hugely successful *Metroland* books produced by the Metropolitan Railway that helped to shape popular understandings of suburban living from 1915.[49] Around this time the GWR also began to produce a 'Residential Guide and Property Register for the London District'[50] called *Homes for All* that was described by *The Railway Times* as being 'enhanced by a map which shows not only the roads and railways but golf links, hunting meets, and the motor car routes of the Great Western Railway'.[51] From this is can be surmised that a rural home was one that encompassed an admixture of the convenience of the urban; transport infrastructure, goods and services along with the pleasures of an outdoor life; hunting, golfing and the like. As has been shown here, the railway guidebook was promoting the advantages of the suburban lifestyle along with the pleasures of the holiday from an early date. By encouraging people to experience the sylvan idyll of

[47] "Railway and Other Literature," *The Railway Magazine*, July 1911, 64.
[48] "Trade Publications," *Railway Gazette*, July 2, 1909, 7; "Trade Publications," *The Railway Gazette*, 2 June, 1911, 553.
[49] Alan Jackson A., *London's Metro-Land* (Harrow Weald: Capital History, 2006), 32.
[50] "Trade Publications," *Railway Gazette*, 21 June, 1912, 631.
[51] "Railway Publications," *Railway Times*, 17 August, 1912, 187.

'Beechy Bucks' they were, in effect, encouraging the speculative building that would, in a very short time, begin to impinge upon, and in some cases destroy, the very landscapes they were promoting.

Matless explores the anxieties of the landscape preservationists and the 'crisis in the post-war English landscape' in terms of the unfettered development of large tracts of land after 1919.[52] However, it is clear to see here that the phenomenon had its roots before the war and that the railway companies, keen to profit from sales of land near the railway or increased traffic from commuters, had a part to play in the process. Once more, the railway guidebook can be seen as a complex entity that reacted and responded to changing aspirations and desires. It was, even at this date, far more than just a series of advertisements for coastal resorts and family holidays.

The numbers of guidebooks being produced by railway companies continued to grow up to 1914, after which point they began to decline sharply as the war heralded a suspension of railway advertising that was not lifted until 1920.[53] This outline of the development of the railway guidebook from around 1897, the year of the first GER publication, to 1914 has not been able to discuss each and every title as even a cursory glance at the collections held by the British Library, The National Archives or the National Railway Museum show that the list would run into the hundreds. It has, however, attempted to demonstrate several key points in the development of both the form and function of the guidebook.

First, the railway guidebook developed quickly from its first appearance in the late 1890s. Both their form and function became more sophisticated and elaborate within

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[52] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 25.
[53] Railway Clearing House, "RAIL 1080/51, Minutes of Meetings of Advertising Representatives, Minutes 24 Oct 1919", 1919.

the space of a few years. The Great Northern Railway's 'Egg' and 'Foot-rule' guides were evidence of the physical transformation of the guidebook from a simple book or pamphlet into something that was eye-catching and attractive. Second, the railway guidebook was far more than a didactic one-way tool extolling the virtues of specific landscapes and locations. Even though they were often grouped together with the more prosaic *Trade Publications* they were active pieces of marketing. Their functions were, from the early 1900s tailored to specific groups, for example the history-hungry Americans, which shows both an awareness of market segmentation and an ability to be self-reflexive and adapt the message to suit to the circumstance. Third, the guidebooks were not simply marketing geographical locations, they were also involved in the selling of lifestyles which were inextricably linked to the positive qualities associated with rural environments. The railways were not just in the market to sell a week's holiday at the seaside but also to sell a lifestyle change which would see the beleaguered city dweller freed to live in the healthier environs of the countryside.

This section has attempted to show that the railway guidebook was a complex and sophisticated phenomenon and, bearing these conclusions in mind, the following section will begin to look in detail at the images of landscapes used by the GWR in their guidebooks. It will look at these images with specific reference to market segmentation and conceptions of lifestyle as outlined above.

Images of Landscapes in GWR Guidebooks 1904 – 1914.

An understanding of the general state of play with regards to landscape photography in the Edwardian period is vital to understanding the images employed by the GWR. Therefore, this section will begin with a short introduction to this topic before

discussing the guidebooks and their photographic illustrations. Photography in Britain before 1914 had become increasingly popular and the aesthetic rules regarding composition and taste had, by the late 1890s, become relatively strict and proscriptive, especially with regard to landscapes.[54] There was still a great deal owed to concepts such as the sublime and the picturesque, as discussed in Chapter Two, and nature was still very much associated with the twin virtues of truth and beauty. The photographer P. H. Emerson, whose landscapes were so popular from the 1880s through to the inter-war period, commented that '[n]ature is the great refiner, the poor man's poet and painter'.[55]

The GWR produced many guidebooks and pamphlets during this period, in total eleven of them can be considered topographical in nature and substantial enough to be studied in this context. In addition to this, from 1906, they produced the annual gazetteer *Holiday Haunts* which began with over 300 pages and grew to have almost double that by the end of the period. Each of these volumes contained on average more than 70 images which provides a set of over 1,400 images for possible study. What is clear from even the most cursory glance through the GWR's guidebooks of this period is that they are filled with images of landscapes and locations. This should not come as a great surprise but the objective of this research is to look at the types of landscapes that were represented and the ways in which they were pictured. Given the size of the dataset, generalisations will be made and broad categories put forward for consideration; with so many images to choose from it will almost always be possible for an image to be found that contradicts what is being said about any other or that

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[54] John Taylor, *Pictorial Photography in Britain 1900 - 1920* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain in association with The Royal Photographic Society, 1978), 14.
[55] Nancy Newhall, *P. H. Emerson; An Aperture Monograph* (New York: Aperture, 1975), 8.

runs counter to the trends outlined in a specific group. However, the broad groups that have been developed for this chapter work within robust parameters and provide a framework that will allow scholarly discussion of the GWR's *picturing of landscapes* and their construction of a tourist utopia.

Before examining the images of the guidebooks it is useful to briefly discuss them form a textual point of view. The guidebooks, as opposed to the annual *Holiday Haunts*, of this period were written by A. M. Broadley and, stylistically, are typical of the period. Wilson refers to him as a 'prolific historical writer of the day.'[56] His writing style is deeply embedded in a whiggish take on history that Bennett has claimed, and with some justification, was 'aimed at confirming the exclusive nature of its educated, informed audience'.[57] The books are filled with classical references and are a long way removed from the conversational style that would become popular in the inter-war period. However, they were small, portable, relatively inexpensive and, as Wilson has shown, ran to upwards of five editions of each title over a period of two decades or more.[58] Looked at in this way, along with the contextual information from the railway press that has already been discussed, it can be stated, with some degree of confidence, that these were popular books that sold well and were thought of as having both value for the traveller and intrinsic qualities that made them desirable as books. They were well produced and, as has been evidenced in the extracts from the *GWRM*, were a source of some pride to the company.

Similarly, *Holiday Haunts* was extremely popular and, by 1909, its circulation had grown to 100,000 annually- a figure that would remain roughly the same until the

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[56] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 84.
[57] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 6.
[58] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 172.

outbreak of World War One.[59] *Holiday Haunts* was, as has already been discussed seen to play perhaps the major role in the GWR's advertising and marketing material. Wilson devoted an entire chapter to its development from its first edition in 1906 to its last in 1947, but, within the context of the present research at least, it is of limited value.[60] *Holiday Haunts* became, during the inter-war period, a sophisticated and comprehensive gazetteer (as opposed to a guidebook) of the locations served by the GWR but, out of necessity, it was never able to treat each region in enough detail to fully contextualise it or portray it in all its various guises. The textual content was, again of necessity, far more factual and didactic and the prose was limited to short punchy paragraphs that covered whole towns and cities in as few as five lines of text; this is particularly true of the editions published before 1914.

The first edition of *Holiday Haunts* carries 73 images not associated with advertising and covers 27 individual counties (excluding other areas that are covered simply in the text) which allows an average of just under three images per county.[61] In addition to this, many of the images used in this edition also appeared in the GWR guidebooks that were published around the same time.[62] *Holiday Haunts* will be given a more detailed examination in the chapter that follows and, although something of a compendium of the GWR's existing tourist images, is a valuable piece of source material. However, within a pre-1914 context, the images that will be discussed will be those that were included in the guidebooks themselves. In this way they can be

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[59] Ibid., 112.

[60] Ibid., 104 - 121.

[61] *Holiday Haunts on the Great Western Railway, Season 1906* (London: Great Western Railway, 1906).

[62] For example, *Cockington Village* appeared on page 96 of *Holiday Haunts* in May 1906 but was also included on page 46 of *Devon, Shire of the Sea Kings* originally published in the same year. Similarly, the images of Shrewsbury that appeared on page 220 were included in the guidebook *North Wales, The British Tyrol*, which was published in the same year, on pages 25 and 29.

viewed alongside the other images of the same region and the part they play in constructing a particular kind of place can be more readily outlined.

The GWR's first guidebook, *The Cornish Riviera*, reinforced the GWR's focus on the county of Cornwall that has been highlighted in the discussion of their early posters of the period. The second edition was published in 1905, and contained certain revisions and enlargements but, ostensibly, remained unchanged from the first. Textually, it conformed to the highbrow classicism of the time and it is possible to surmise the intended audience by the fact that it contained Latin quotations without translations.[63] That it was thought unnecessary to provide such translation indicates that an educated readership was the intended target audience. It covered all of the key areas, coastal and inland, that a tourist would want to know about and also provided historical, meteorological and climatic information along with a full appendix carrying timetables, fares and adverts for hotels and local goods and services. It was a particularly thorough volume, printed on high quality art paper and well bound as opposed to stapled. It cost just 6d for the paper covered edition although a more substantial edition bound in red leatherette was produced that sold for 2s 6d. Altogether this volume ran to five editions and Wilson records that the first edition alone sold over 250,000 copies although his sources can be difficult to trace.[64] It is clear to see that this was a popular guidebook and that, this being the case, it was obviously also a useful one that provided the information that tourists wanted; there can be no other explanation for such high sales and continued reprinting and revising.

Visually this volume repays careful study as it sets the tone for many of the other Broadley-authored volumes that the GWR produced pre-1914. In addition, by dint of

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[63] Broadley, *The Cornish Riviera (New and Enlarged Edition)*, 8.
[64] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 84.

its being the first guidebook produced by the GWR, it demonstrates just how visually sophisticated the company was in the way it portrayed landscapes and locations to the public. In total there are 73 illustrations included in the body of the volume. What becomes apparent on studying these images is that Cornwall was portrayed in the broadest way possible, which can be argued as being in contrast to many of the other guidebooks produced at the same time.

It is possible to break down many of the illustrations in *The Cornish Riviera* into broad types (in a similar way to the pictorial posters) and, in doing so, it can be seen that there was not really one single 'type' of image that characterised the whole book or, consequently, the region. Around 20 of the images were of towns, cities or places within cities such as *Truro Cathedral*, page 39 (see Figure 5.1) or *Penzance*, page 60 (see Figure 5.2). This accounted for around 27 per cent of the total number of images. Included in this category were images of specifically tourist locations such as promenades. In contrast there were 19 images, 26 per cent of the total, that could be considered *rural* insofar as they either do not picture any people, buildings or evidence of settlement at all such as in *The Cheesewring*, page 29 (see Figure 5.3) or they show an unspoilt scene such as in *A Typical Country Cottage*, page 47 (see Figure 5.4). These rural images were, admittedly, only rural through their contrast with the more built-up images, and such simple dichotomies may not be helpful, but they are markedly different in feel to those images of the towns and cities of the region to warrant the distinction.
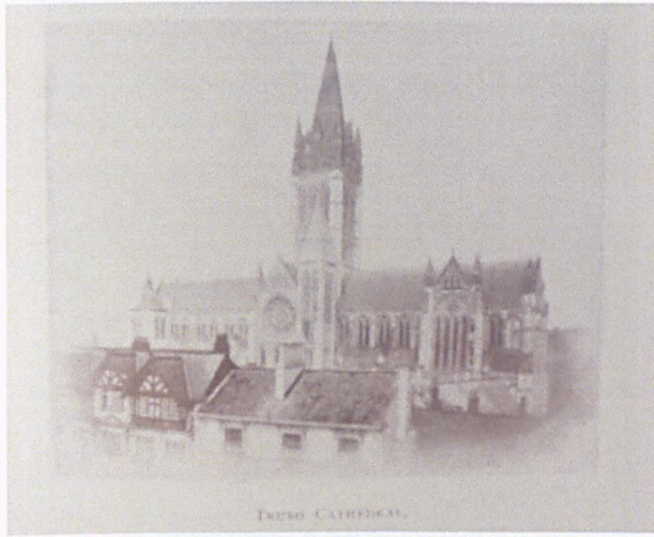
Figure 5.1. *Truro Cathedral* from *The Cornish Riviera.*

Figure 5.2. *Penzance* from *The Cornish Riviera.*
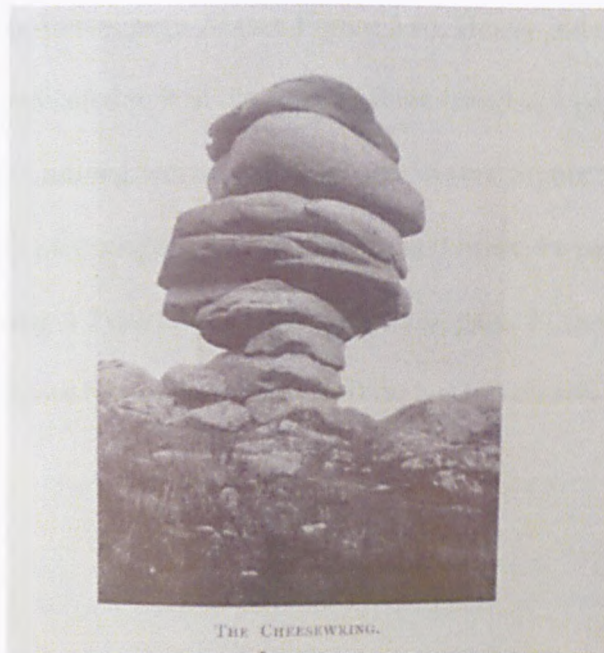
Figure 5.3. *The Cheeeswring* from *The Cornish Riviera*.

Figure 5.4. *A Typical Cornish Cottage* from *The Cornish Riviera*.

Thirteen of the images included in the guidebook were from old prints and depicted

towns and locations in Cornwall as they were in the eighteenth century or earlier.

These make up 17 per cent of the total number and are, again, very distinct from the

previous two groups. In addition to these there were four images, 5.5 per cent of the

total, of touristic mobility in the form of locomotives, page 9 (see figure 5.5), steam

ships and even motor-buses, page 27 (see Figure 5.6). Heavy industry also had a small

number of images dedicated to it in the form of three images, 4 per cent of the total,

of Cornish mines and mining works, pages 55 and 56 (see Figure 5.7). There were

eight images directly picturing tourists and tourist activities, 11 per cent of the total

and even one picturing *A Typical Cornish Fisherman*, page 77 (see Figure 5.8). The

remaining images (about 8 per cent of the total) do not fall clearly into any category.

Figure 5.5. *The "Cornishman" from The Cornish Riviera.*

Figure5.6. *G.W.R. Motor Car from The Cornish Riviera.*

Figure 5.7. *"King Edward" Mine...* from *The Cornish Riviera.*

Figure 5.8. *A Typical Cornish Fisherman* from *The Cornish Riviera.*

Collectively, what these images portray is a region that has the potential to be many

different places and experiences for many different people. There are busy seaside

towns and cities with monumental architecture; countering these are an almost equal

number of images of unspoilt countryside and rural charm. While the majority of the

images are photographic and contemporary with the publication of the guidebook

there are a large number of reproductions of older prints that, visually, act as

signifiers of the historical context of the region, they allow the viewer to comprehend

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the landscape and its temporality; to locate previous events within a geographical context. These images provided a series of temporal openings into and onto the region and provide depth to the encounter with it. The tourist is also present, as is the local along with the less romantic or attractive elements of the local industries. Many of the images of coastal towns picture ships in an incidental way; these, it can be assumed, were part of the fishing industry which had already become visually romanticised, not least by the photographs of Frank Meadow Sutcliffe,[65] in Yorkshire, or the paintings of the Newlyn School. However, the inclusion in this guidebook of images of tin mining demonstrates a willingness on the part of the GWR to picture an industry that was far less sanitised or romanticised.

If this guidebook is looked at alongside its contemporaries it is possible to see that, visually at least, it was markedly different from many of them. The images in the GER's *Sun Pictures* of 1897 are almost entirely rural in character and contain no shots of built up locations or places that were specifically aimed at tourists.[66] While there are plenty of boats there are no other elements of mobility included in the images and there is no attempt to include historical images or to include elements of temporality into the portrayal of the region.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway's (LYR) guidebook to Ireland of 1903is profusely illustrated and contains large numbers of images of an historical and archaeological nature but includes only 11 images that can directly be identified as

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[65] Frank Meadow Sutcliffe, *Frank Meadow Sutcliffe, Hon FRPS, Whitby and It's people as seen by one of the founders of the naturalistic movement in photography.* (Whitby: Sutcliffe Gallery, 1974).
[66] Payne Jennings, *Sun Pictures of the Norfolk Broads* (Ashstead: Art Photo Works, 1897); Payne Jennings, *Photo Pictures in East Anglia* (Great Yarmouth: Jarrold and Sons, 1897).

being of tourists which accounts for just over 5 per cent of the total.[67] It would appear

that the LYR, in this guidebook, understood Ireland as a place primarily located in the

past and visually promoted this in their guidebook. The London and South Western

Railway (LSWR) guidebook to their line for 1903 contained many illustrations

showing tourists, locals/hosts and some historical monuments but very much had the

feel of a gazetteer and is interspersed with adverts and timetables.[68] In both form and

function it does not appear as professional as the GWR's guidebook. In addition to

this the 1903 LSWR guidebook boasts in its preface that 50,000 copies were issued[69]

which, when considered alongside the GWR's 250,000 for its first edition gives some

clue as to its comparative popularity. The London and North Western Railway

(LNWR) guidebook *The English Lakes* of 1907, while slightly later, showed some of

the diversification of imagery that the GWR exhibit but, as with the majority of other

guidebooks of the time makes no attempt to locate the region in its temporal context

as the GWR did with their inclusion of so many historical images.[70]

In short, the wide range of images that the GWR employed in its picturing of

Cornwall both as a region and as a tourist destination mark it out as different to and

more sophisticated than the majority of its rivals. There was a willingness to

acknowledge the local or host, a desire to locate the region in its historical context and

the business sense to realise that not everyone would want a busy promenade for their

holiday. While other companies attempted parts of this, the GWR's first guidebook,

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[67] *Ireland, where to go and what to see* (Manchester: Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, 1903).
[68] *The London and South Western Railway. Illustrated Guide and Official List of Hotels, Boarding Houses, Seaside and Farmhouse Apartments* (London: Spottiswode and Co, 1903).
[69] Ibid., preface.
[70] *The English Lakes* (London: McCorquodale and Co Ltd, 1907).

The Cornish Riviera, shows that the GWR had fully embraced the multiplicities of place and were actively engaged in harnessing them for their own advancement.

The praise of the second GWR guidebook, *Historic Sites and Scenes of England*, has already been touched upon in the previous section. It was designed for the American market and played extensively on the notion of the West Country as deeply rooted in history. The fourth edition of the book, while enlarged from the first of 1904, covers ostensibly the same area and includes 26 images of churches or cathedrals (ruined or otherwise) and 23 images of castles, palaces or stately homes out of a total of 115 images. Expressed as a percentage this means that just over 42 per cent of all the images in the book are of what could be called monumental architecture. These include images such as *Stoke Poges Church*, facing page 7, (see Figure 5.9) 'to which American visitors will probably consider a pilgrimage almost *de rigueur*'[71] and *Salisbury Cathedral, Choir and Nave*, facing page 44, (see Figure 5.10). By contrast, there are only 17 images that could be considered overtly touristic, which constitutes just under 15 per cent of the total number of images.

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[71] "Historic Sites and Scenes of England," 7.
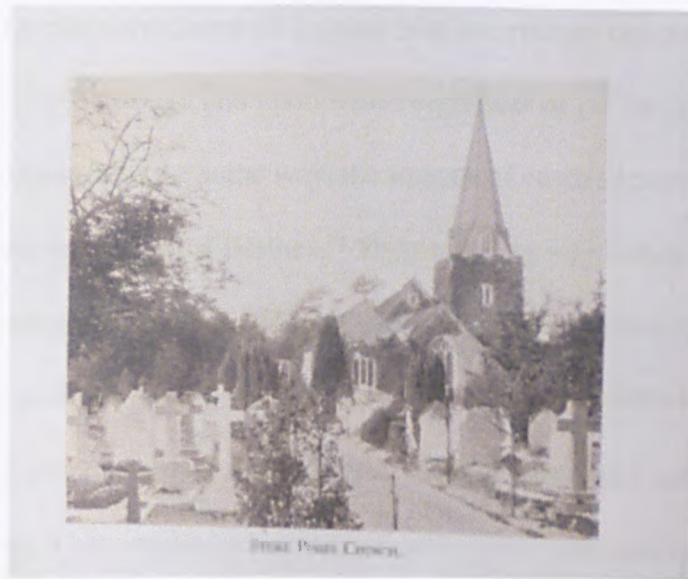
Figure 5.9. *Stoke Poges Church* from *Historic Sites and Scenes...*

Figure 5.10. *Wells Cathedral, West Front* from *Historic Sites and Scenes...*

The imagery in this guidebook has been deliberately chosen to put forward, or

construct, the idea of the West Country, the GWR's territory by its own claim, as

embedded in a deep historical context. Rather than visually emphasize simply the

holiday pleasures available at the resorts and towns served by the GWR they have

chosen to picture, in the main, sites that highlight continuity and hierarchy. The

castles, churches and abbeys (which continue to appear as classic GWR leitmotifs into

the inter-war period) all imply a structure imposed on the landscape. From the power

of the cathedrals to the cornerstone of English life: the village, the countryside was pictured as the vehicle through and upon which signifiers of power could be constructed and viewed. In the same way, the images of castles become something akin to the 'second order sign' of Barthes.[72] Their building was both a physical and symbolic demonstration of power and their survival (ruined or otherwise) continued as a testament to such power struggles. The images of castles within the context of a guidebook, especially one aimed at an American market, provided another level of symbolic meaning. They implied a heritage of governance and structure that stretched back centuries, they were familiar as objects that appeared in books and postcards but they were mysterious in the way that they represented something that was absent in the landscape of North America. Behind the image of the ruined walls and earthworks was the implication of a social structure, from the monarch down through nobility to the commoner that existed when the castle was built and, to some extent, was still in evidence at the time the guidebook was published. The images of castles and churches demonstrate how such histories and experiences for which the tourist may be searching are physically available, extant and, existentially, present-at-hand.

The guidebook *North Wales: The British Tyrol*, first published in 1906, continued the representation of the multiplicities of place that was begun with *The Cornish Riviera*.[73] This book was aimed mainly at a domestic audience, although Bennett has noted that that it contained a reference to visitors from the New World.[74] However, it is in no way slanted as heavily towards the historic or monumental portrayal of the landscape that can be seen in *Historic Sites and Scenes*. Altogether the volume carries

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[72] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2000), 114.
[73] A. M. Broadley, *North Wales: The British Tyrol*, second edition. (London: Great Western Railway, 1911).
[74] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 114.

77 illustrations and, once again, there is the familiar spread of landscape types that would suggest an awareness of the need to appeal to the widest audience. Textually, the book opens by placing itself within the tourist historiography of Wales at the time by seeing itself as a direct descendent from George Borrows' classic *Wild Wales* and this is reinforced by the fact that there are a large number of reproductions of old prints and paintings in the book.[75]

Just over 18 per cent of all the images included in the book are prints or paintings from the eighteenth century or earlier and, again, this points towards the GWR's desire to locate the landscape in a deep historical context. Around 27 per cent of the images are of towns and resorts such as *The Wyle Cop*, page 28 (see Figure 5.11) or *Marine Terrace and Castle, Criccieth*, page 102 (see Figure 5.12). These provided the visual signifiers for the tourist context of the region and demonstrate the availability of modern goods, services and distractions. Running parallel to this were a similar number of images of monumental architecture such as cathedrals and churches, for example *Wrexham Church*, page 60 (see Figure 5.13) and castles such as *Chester Castle and the remains of the Roman Bath*, page 61 (see Figure 5.14). These helped to provide the underlying structural framework of power and authority onto which the tourist locations were applied. Counter to these images were picturings of rural Wales that tend to show the landscape as either unpopulated, wild and picturesque as with *Precipice Walk*, page 98 (see Figure 5.15) or peopled by farmers and those who were close to the land as with *Typical Herefordshire Homestead*, page 7 (see Figure 5.16). In addition to this there are several images of locals such as *Coracle Men, Llangollen*, page 78 (see Figure 5.17) and local industry as with *Coed-Y-Glyn Granite Quarry*, page 50 (see Figure 5.18).

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[75] Broadley, *North Wales: The British Tyrol*, vii.
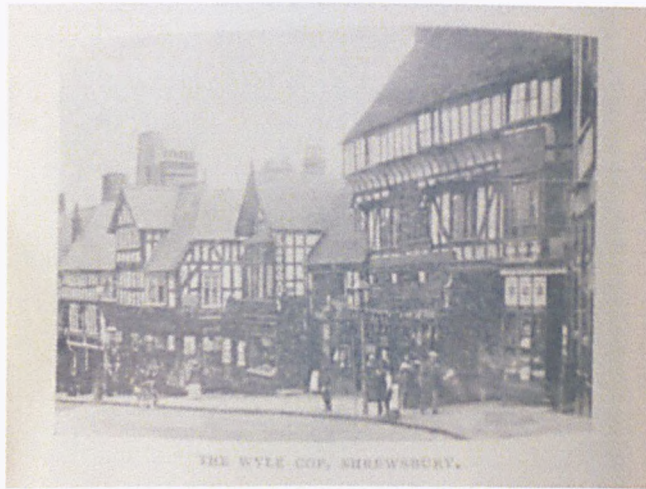
Figure 5.11. *The Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury* from *North Wales.*
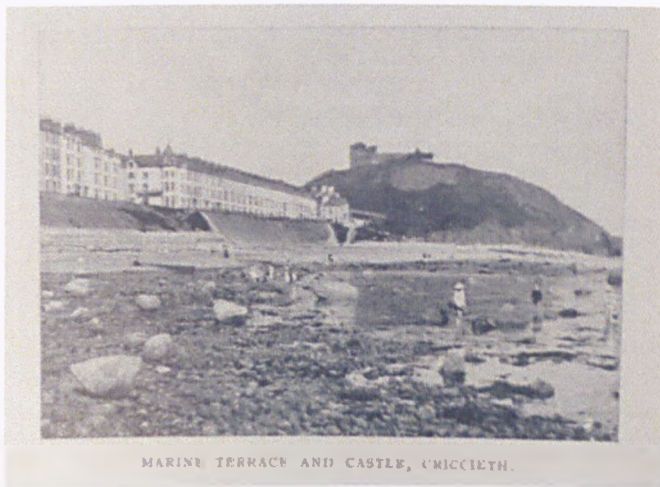
Figure 5.12. *Marine Terrace and Castle, Criccieth* from *North Wales.*
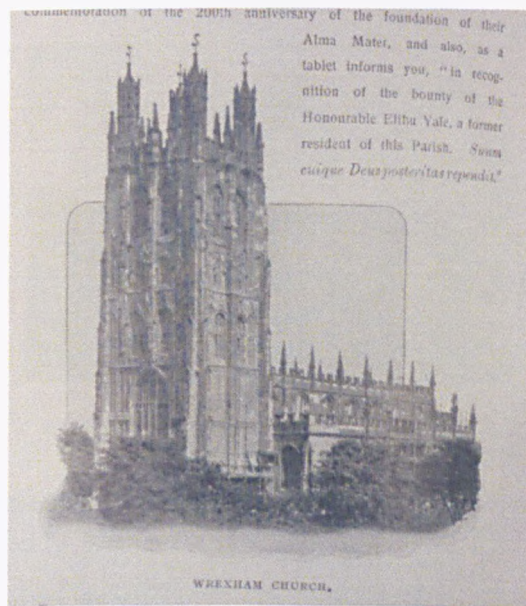
Figure 5.13. *Wrexham Church* from *North Wales.*

CHESTER CASTLE AND THE REMAINS OF THE ROMAN BATH.

Figure 5.14. *Chester Castles and Remains... from North Wales.*

PRECIPICE WALK.

Figure 5.15. *Precipice Walk from North Wales.*

TYPICAL HEREFORDSHIRE HOMESTEAD.

Figure 5.16. *Typical Herefordshire Farmstead from North Wales.*

Figure 5.17. *Coracle Men, Llangollen* from *North Wales.*

Figure 5.18. *Coed-Y-Glyn Granite Quarry* from *North Wales.*

Again, the images that were employed by the GWR to illustrate this region appear to fully embrace the multiplicities of place in a way that was not common among other railway guidebooks. The free mixture of the historical with the modern and the tourist with the local are key relationships that show how far the GWR had adopted a sophisticated visual language and were constructing notions of regionality that carried with them dense layers of significance and meaning.

Of the GWR's guidebooks published before the First World War, one of the more substantial was *Devon, Shire of the Sea Kings*.[76] Originally published in 1906 the third edition of 1912 was greatly enlarged and carried a total of 134 images. Just under 10 per cent (12 in total) of these illustrations are reproductions of old prints which again sets the tone of the picturing of Devon within a distinctly historical context. Once more there are the images of towns and tourist resorts; around 23 per cent (31 in total) and, running counter to this there are 46, 34 per cent of the total, images of villages or un-peopled landscapes. As with the other GWR guidebooks there is also a strong visual thread of structure and authority running through the picturing of the region and around 18 per cent of all the images are of castles, churches, cathedrals or monumental statuary.

The tourist was pictured as both interacting with their environment and enjoying the sports laid on for the tourist such as in *South Devon Golf Links, Wrangaton*, page 74 (see Figure 5.19). Locals were pictured within the context of working the land as in the image *Chudleigh Rock*, page 108 (see Figure 5.20) while the local hunts make appearances on pages 146 and 154 (see Figure 5.21).

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[76] A. M. Broadley, *Devon. Shire of the Sea Kings*, third edition. (London: Great Western Railway, 1912).

Figure 5.19. *South Devon Golf Links, Wrangaton* from *Devon, Shire of the Sea Kings.*

Figure 5.20. *Chudleigh Rock* from *Devon, Shire of the Sea Kings.*

Figure 5.21. *Meet at Cloutsham* from *Devon, Shire of the Sea Kings.*

Again, it is possible to see that Devon was being constructed by the GWR as a place that carried with it the possibilities of varied and various experiences and encounters. The GWR made use of the multiplicities of place in their visual portrayal of the landscape and created a guidebook that reflected that sophistication. The following section examines the GWR's visual portrayal of Ireland within its guidebooks and literature and adds further weight to the argument that, far from being a didactic collection of facts and figures put at the disposal of the tourist, the guidebook was a place in itself; a place where notions of authority power and identity could be negotiated through the medium of tourism.

Case Study: Images of Ireland 1895 – 1914.

This case study supports the idea, already put forward, that the images of landscape used within the GWR's guidebooks carried with them implied meanings and were signifiers of power relationships that were enacted through the process of tourist documentation and exploration. Bennett saw the GWR's treatment of Ireland as emphasizing the 'Celtic Sublime' where the landscape was 'effectively de-historicized.' He also made the point that 'the Celtic characterization… fulfilled a contrapuntal role to English-orientated perspectives'.[77] This chimes with Said's conception of the *othering* of those who are different to ourselves; by placing them at a cultural periphery defined by its distance from one's own culture centre there develops an 'uneven exchange'[78] of power. This follows directly with Brett's conception of tourism in Ireland where the Irish, as hosts to the wealthier English tourist, found themselves relegated to a peripheral, wild place.[79] While the unevenness

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[77] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 76.
[78] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 12.
[79] David Brett, *Construction of Heritage* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), 39.

of the host/tourist relationship is not in question here, nor the indignities suffered by many, the following section will seek to move beyond a basic dichotomy of them/us or centre/periphery and demonstrate that the GWR, through their picturing of Ireland, sought to bring Ireland firmly within its ambit and that of its customers. In this way, the current research not only strengthens the argument for the heterogeneous nature of the GWR's tourist utopia but also provides further support for the work of Zuelow who sees Ireland as 'a point of negotiation, a nexus, where various notions of national identity are debated and discussed'.[80]

Ireland had had a long association with the English tourist with innumerable guidebooks being produced covering the country from the early 1800s on.[81] However, Fegan has suggested that Thackeray's *The Irish Sketch Book* of 1843 marked the beginning of the modern British literary and visual fascination with the country, its people and landscapes.[82] By the 1860s and 1870s travel guidebooks were seen to be having 'a transforming effect' on the ways in which tourists encountered and experienced Ireland and that the way in which the guidebook took care of 'the mechanics of travel' meant that the tourist could focus more on their impressions of both people and places.[83] In this way, the tourist's experience of Ireland was already

[80] Eric G.E. Zuelow, "The Tourism Nexus: National Identity and the Meanings of Tourism Since the Irish Civil War," in *Ireland's Heritages*, ed. Mark McCarthy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 189.

[81] A. Atkinson, *The Irish Tourist: In a Series of Picturesque Views, Traveling Incidents, and Observations Statistical, Political and Moral on the Character and Aspect of the Irish Nation* (Dublin: printed for the author, by Thomas Courtney, 1815); Emily Taylor, *The Irish Tourist; Or, The People and Provinces of Ireland* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1837).

[82] Melissa Fegan, "'Isn't it your own country?': The Stranger in Nineteenth-Century Irish Literature," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 34 (2004): 31.

[83] Marjorie Morgan, *National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 22.

being negotiated through the medium of the guidebook, even before any journey had taken place.

The appearance of more illustrated guidebooks towards the end of the nineteenth century meant that there was further opportunity to construct a particular kind of Ireland through visual means. Sheridan and O'Leary state that the '[d]eliberate promotion of selected images of Ireland began as far back as 1894'[84] but Curtis has shown how the appearance of the Irish themselves, as caricatures in the pages of satirical magazines, began somewhat earlier and was used to ascribe certain attributes and racial characteristics to the Irish much earlier.[85] More recently Nie has put forward the argument that 'chauvinistic notions of Ireland's racial, class and religious identity were fundamental to British constructions of Paddy and Paddyism' and that these notions were, in part, created and fuelled by the popular press through textual reports and their accompanying images.[86] In short, the tourist experience and the visualizing of the landscape and people of Ireland had had an active part in the construction of an Ireland that was specifically touristic in nature and had been created to suit the tastes or confirm the prejudices of the traveller. Indeed, this process has been shown, in one form or another, to be continuing to take place to this day.[87]

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[84] Geraldine Sheridan and Sinéad O'Leary, "French Tourist Images of Ireland and l'Imagination Irlandais," *Irish Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2005): 151.
[85] L.P. Curtis, *Apes and Angels: Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, 2nd ed. (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 1996).
[86] Michael Willem De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 5.
[87] Moira Kneafsey, "Tourism and Place Identity: A case-study in rural Ireland," *Irish Geography* 31, no. 2 (1998): 111 - 123; Annette Jorgensen, "Power, Knowledge and Tourguiding: The Construction of Irish Identity on Board County Wicklow Tour Buses," in *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture and Identity*, ed. Michael Cronin and Barbara O'Connor (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2003), 141 - 157.

The GWR had been involved with sea crossings from Milford Haven since around 1851.[88] However, in 1898 the GWR entered into an official agreement with the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland (GSWR) and work began on constructing and enlarging the ports of Fishguard and Rosslare.[89] The route was officially opened on 30 August 1906.[90] Very quickly, articles and features on the ease and comfort of travelling to Ireland by this route became regulars in the GWR magazine.[91] The GWR had had a presence in Ireland since at least the 1890s and, by 1906, there were four GWR offices in the country.[92]

The earliest illustrations of Ireland published by the GWR came in 1895 when W. Smith, of the Engineering Department, wrote of his holiday there in the April and May editions of the *GWRM*.[93] The three wood engravings, *The Meeting of the Waters-Killarney, Glengariff and Bantry Bay* and *Sackville Street, Dublin* (see Figures 5.22, 5.23 and 5.24) show several of the key place-images associated with Ireland at the time. The Meeting of the Waters at Killarney had been pictured and written about since the early 1830s[94] and the illustration portrays the scene in a classically picturesque manner. Similarly, the illustration of Glengariff and Bantry Bay is

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[88] Unknown, "The New Great Western Route to Ireland," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1905, 5.
[89] Unknown, "The New Great Western Route to Ireland," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, February 1905, 27.
[90] Unknown, Unknown, "The New Direct Route to Ireland," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, September 1906, 175.
[91] A. A. Smith, "A Irish Playground and How to Get There," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, August 1907, 175; Unknown, "Non-Stop Runs- Paddington to Fishguard and Back," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, October 1907, 224; Unknown, "Day Trip to Ireland via Fishguard and Rosslare," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, September 1908, 197.
[92] Unknown, "The Great Western Railway Company's Offices in Ireland," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, August 1906, 159.
[93] W. Smith, "A Holiday Tour in Ireland, First Paper. Paddington to Killarney," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1895, 71 - 73; W. Smith, "A Holiday Tour in Ireland. Second Paper," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1895, 85 - 88.
[94] Taylor, *The Irish Tourist; Or, The People and Provinces of Ireland*, 134 - 140.

similarly framed but, in this image, there is more of an air of sublimity with the

figures rendered almost insignificant by the scope and scale of the landscape.

Figure 5. 22. *The Meeting of the Waters- Killarney.*
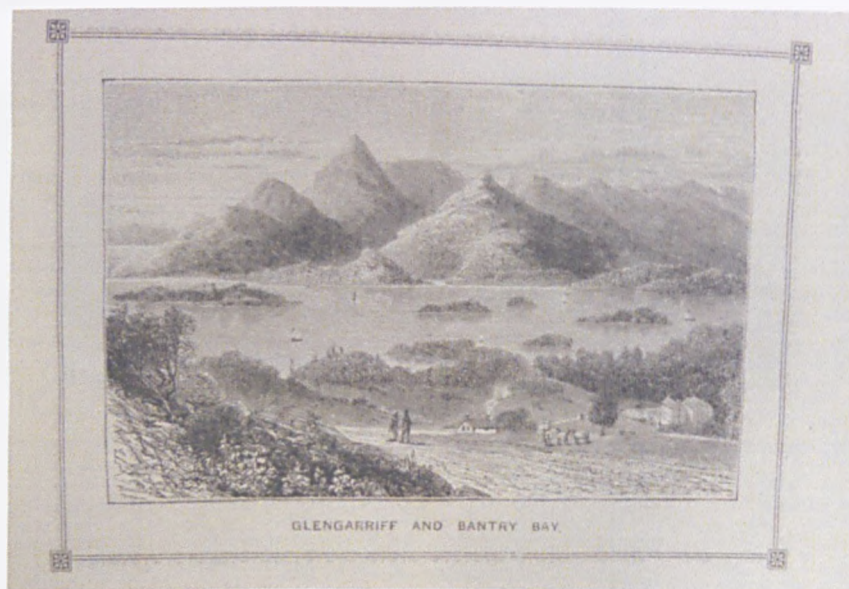
Figure 5.23. *Glengarriff and Bantry Bay.*

The third illustration breaks with the picturesque and sublime theme and portrays the

busy cityscape of Sackville Street, Dublin. Top hats and trams abound as does

monumental architecture. The scene is reassuringly familiar after the wildness and

untamed landscapes of the previous two images. This image portrays the more

anglicized east coast of Ireland as opposed to the wild Celtic west coast, a dichotomy

that has been highlighted by Zuelow, and, pictured in the streets themselves are shop

fronts that add further depth to the possible readings of the image.[95] One shop is signed *Fishing Tackle* while another proudly claims to be the offices of the GWR; pictured here is not only one of the principle reasons for visiting Ireland; fishing and outdoor pursuits, but also the means of getting there too. These illustrations portray Ireland as both wild and untamed, able to inspire awe and amazement and as reassuringly urban and familiar. Already, Ireland was being constructed as a place that could suit the various needs of the tourist; Ireland was not simply one thing for one type of tourist, for example, the outdoorsman, but is able to appeal to those seeking a more urban, and perhaps urbane, tourist experience. The images are constructing Ireland not in terms of a single touristic experience but as a complex series of possible environments and encounters with people and place.

Figure 5.24. *Sackville Street Dublin.*

The GWR's first guidebook to Ireland, *Southern Ireland, its Lakes and Landscapes,* was published in 1904, the same year as *The Cornish Riviera,* and contained over 90

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[95] Eric G.E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity Since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 178.

illustrations, the majority of them photographs.[96] The frontispiece, *A Typical Colleen* (see Figure 5.25), appears, without any trace of irony, to prepare the tourist for the people they are likely to meet on their travels. The girl is barefoot, dressed with the obligatory plaid shawl and is carrying what appears to be a basket of turfs. There is obvious poverty in this image but the girl looks out at the reader with coquettish eyes. Outside of the drunken ape-like brawler so often portrayed in the pages of *Punch* magazine this is the classic view of the Irish. In addition to this the image is flanked by a poetic paean to the beauties of the landscape of Killarney in both English and Gaelic. The inclusion of the poem in Gaelic also seems to reflect the acknowledgment, on the part of the GWR, of the Irish cultural revival led by the foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893.[97] But it must also be remembered that the choice of a woman as the first image in the book may also have significance in the late Victorian and early Edwardian understandings of identity and heritage. 'Celtic' (as opposed to Saxon) had long been associated with feminine attributes and, by including this image, the GWR were making use of a cultural vocabulary that would have been tacitly understood by many and went towards reinforcing existing ideas about Ireland and the Irish.[98]

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[96] A. M. Broadley, *Southern Ireland. Its Lakes and Landscapes* (London: Great Western Railway, 1904).

[97] R. F. Foster, *The Oxford History of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2001), 185.

[98] Pyrs Gruffudd, David Herbert, and Angela Piccini, "In search of Wales: travel writing and narratives of difference, 1918 - 50," *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, no. 4 (2000): 597.

A TYPICAL COLLEEN.

Figure 5.25. *A Typical Colleen*, frontispiece to *Southern Ireland. Its Lakes and Landscapes.*

Many of the landscape images do not include people, something that has already been commented upon with regard to other GWR guidebooks of the period, such as with *Killarney Lakes, as Viewed from the Kenmare Road* (see Figure 5.26) or, when they are included they appear to be dwarfed by the landscape surrounding them.[99] There are, however, occasional hints as to the activities that can be enjoyed in the area with images of fishing, golf and boating making[100] appearances. Included in the guidebook are also reproductions of old prints covering town plans and historical scenes, one, *An Irish Town, After Leech*, shows many more plaid-clad 'colleens'.[101] In addition to this

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[99] Broadley, *Southern Ireland. Its Lakes and Landscapes*, 49.
[100] Ibid., 20, 31, 35.
[101] Ibid., 6.

are townscapes of Waterford and Cork.[102] However, what stands out most in this guidebook are the images of the 'Big House' or Anglo-Irish stately home that had come to represent the heart of the British landowning system in Ireland.[103]

Figure 5.26. *Killarney Lakes as viewed...* from *Southern Ireland.*

Some of the earliest examples of Irish landscape photography had a tendency to focus on the Big House in the landscape and from as early as the 1860s the Big House can be seen to have been as much a key place-image of the Irish landscape as the wild scenery.[104] There are 16 images of castles or stately homes throughout the book which accounts for 20 per cent of the total number, and, as with the discussion of the use of castles and other ancient monuments in the previous section, it is suggested that, in this context, these images function as second order signs symbolising a colonising power structure imposed on a people and landscape. Although, once again, the GWR is careful to acknowledge the Irish independence movement in their discussion of

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[102] Ibid., 14, 80.
[103] Nuala C. Johnson, "Where Geography and History Meet: Heritage Tourism and the Big House in Ireland," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86, no. 3 (September 1996): 553.
[104] Edward Chandler, *Photography in Ireland: The Nineteenth Century* (Dublin: Edmund Burke, 2001), 39.

Derrynane House (see Figure 5.27), the one-time home of 'the great liberator' Daniel O'Conell.[105] This use of the Big House can be seen in the same light as the wood engraving of Sackville Street (later O'Connell Street), as they provided a reassuring framework of English history and governance and a counterpoint to the wild *Celtic* sublimity of the landscape.

Figure 5.27. *Derrynane House* from *Southern ireland.*

This guidebook functioned in a complex way; far from simply describing Ireland and the Irish as *other* there are attempts to make that otherness accessible or at least expose the reader and prospective tourist to elements of Irish history and culture. While a stereotypical image of Irish womanhood is included on the frontispiece so is a passage of Gaelic, a language linked strongly to Republicanism and Irish freedom from English rule. Rather than simply gloss over the roots of this movement the birthplace and home of Daniel O'Connell were included as tourist attractions; the Irish struggle for freedom was appropriated and repackaged as something that could be consumed by the tourist. The landscape may be portrayed as wild and untamed but it was also shown as being underpinned by a framework of power centres in the form of

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[105] Broadley, *Southern Ireland. Its Lakes and Landscapes*, 63.

castles and Big Houses. It can be argued that, within the pages of this guidebook, and through the selective use of certain images, much of the relationship between England and Ireland was being negotiated through tourism. The dichotomy of tourist/host had begun to be blurred by the recognition and appropriation of elements of Irish culture and republican history.

Three years after the publication of this guidebook, the *GWRM* published a short article titled *An Irish Playground and How to Get There* by Miss A. A. Smith who waxed lyrical about how favourably the lakes of Killarney compared to the Fjords of Norway.[106] Accompanying this article were six photographs that were the last images of Ireland that the GWR would publish before the First World War. These images are shown in montage form (see Figure 5.28) and are almost entirely touristic in nature. The picturesque nature of the landscape has been focussed on to the exclusion of any cultural connotations that may have complicated such a short, light-hearted essay. There is nothing in the way of architecture, apart from the inclusion of a cottage in one shot, and no attempt has been made to engage with complex cultural issues regarding power, status, language or republicanism. This article and its accompanying images illustrates just what the GWR's guidebook *could* have been had they chosen to produce a simple, didactic volume that concentrated solely on unadulterated touristic landscapes and it reinforces the notion that the GWR were willing, in some way, to engage with Irish culture within the pages of their first, but by no means last, guidebook on the country.

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[106] Smith, "A Irish Playground and How to Get There," 174 - 175.

Figure 5.28. Montage illustration from *An Irish Playground...*

Conclusions

As has already been highlighted, it has not been possible to cover the totality of the railway guidebooks of the period. Neither has it been possible, because of space issues, to cover all of the GWR's own publications; only a select handful have been studied in detail. However, the research in this chapter has attempted to show that the ways in which the GWR made use of images of landscapes and locations was sophisticated and, in many cases, was far more complex than the visual vocabularies of place employed by other railway companies at the time. It has endeavoured to show that the railway guidebook has been understudied in favour of those volumes produced by the likes of Murray and Baedeker or the more eye-catching posters of the period. Initially, this chapter set out to demonstrate that, while the railway press saw the railway-company-produced-guidebook along the same lines as a *trade publication*, the volumes produced by the railway companies were far more than simply didactic collections of facts and information. They responded to the needs and

motivations of different groups of potential tourists and rapidly began to develop, in both form and function, in innovative and original ways.

With specific reference to the GWR, several conclusions can be drawn from the study of their use of images of landscape and locations. First, the GWR framed their regional landscapes in a very particular way through the use old prints and paintings. This provided a deep historical context to almost all of their guidebooks of the period insofar is they allowed the tourist to see that which was not there: *the past*. Very few of the other railway companies attempted this and were content to picture those sites and scenes that could be physically seen by the tourist. This research has shown that the GWR were always keen to show the tourist those things which they could no longer see; historical events, the visits of kings and queens, town plans and views of places that had been changed beyond almost all recognition by the passing of time. In this way, the GWR's picturing of landscapes and locations can be seen as an early precursor to the *archaeological imagination* of the early 1930s where many artists and thinkers made use of the idea of the past being in some way contemporaneous with, and informing, the present.[107] This was a key trait of the GWR and one that they would continue to employ through into the inter-war period. Second, it can be argued that the GWR underpinned their visualisations of regional landscapes with structures of authority and power in the form of images of castles, churches and cathedrals. This is particularly evident in their guidebook aimed at American tourists and in their guidebook to Ireland. Again, notions of authority and power and their visual representation in the GWR's oeuvre have already been touched upon, in particular with the discussion of the 1935 McKnight-Kauffer poster *Royal Windsor* in Chapter

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[107] Kitty Hauser, *Shadow Sites: Photography, Archaeology, and the British Landscape 1927-1955* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2007), 19.

Four, and these tie in with the GWR's own view of itself well established and of some pedigree. Third, the GWR, in their use of images of landscapes and locations, had clearly embraced the multiplicities of place that can be seen to characterise the tourist location. The towns and resorts were contrasted with the wild and rural places, the tourists, pictured enjoying golf or fishing, were shown alongside images of the locals at their daily work. The entire structure of the tourist utopia even included images of tin mining and local industries that pictured, albeit in a small way, the more prosaic realities of life in a place that was considered, by those that visited it at least, ostensibly a *tourist* place.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the present research points towards a phenomenon common to almost all of the railway guidebook produced during this period; a *novelty of place*. This refers to the ways in which the guidebooks revelled in images of locations that were outré, or other, to those in which the potential tourist spent their daily lives and contemporary advice to the tourist advocated just this.[108] There was a desire to picture all of those things, churches, hills, coastlines, resorts and villages that the tourist might wish to see; what is common to almost all of these images is that they do not reflect the quotidian experiences and encounters of the tourist at home. These places were, if not newly accessible, then newly available for a far wider audience to travel to and experience; in this way the images themselves began to mediate the encounter between the tourist and the landscape pictured long before they had ever set foot on the train.

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[108] Charles D. Musgrove, *Holidays and How to Use Them* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd, 1914), 11, 39.

Chapter Six: 'And they went into the countryside': Images of Landscape and Location in the GWR's Inter-war Guidebooks.

Introduction

This chapter examines the use of landscape imagery in the GWR's guidebooks from 1922 to 1947. The argument that the GWR used images to construct a tourist utopia based around an understanding of the multiplicity of tourist places is continued. It demonstrates how the heterotopic nature of the tourist place was reinforced with increasingly sophisticated imagery that began, from the 1930s, to exhibit a move away from a simple *novelty of place* towards a more active style that suggests place-making and marketing based around a notion referred to defined here as a *novelty of behaviour*. This notion was visually characterised by the increase in the number of images that showed different ways of being and behaving in a given environment; from hiking, swimming and interacting with the environment the images used by the GWR in the inter-war years began to show more than just the places that could be visited, they showed what one could do once one was there.

During this period the GWR published more than 50 new titles along with several fully revised editions of guidebooks initially published before the First World War. In addition to this 22 annual editions of the gazetteer *Holiday Haunts* were published. With around 70 individual titles to look at, each profusely illustrated, there are many thousands of images available for study and, once again, this quantity of available material causes something of a problem. There would be no way to study the content of all the images in all the guidebooks; therefore only a selected number of titles will be referred to. In general the guidebooks that will be examined will be the ones that made the biggest impact, had the widest circulation or were touted by the company

the most. Therefore guidebooks such as Fraser's *Somerset*, Mais' *Glorious Devon* and

the architectural series *Cathedrals, Abbeys* and *Castles*[1] will be referred to whereas

some of the less substantial will not. While this may seem to be an arbitrary strategy it

is, in reality, a response to the quantity of available data and the desire to construct a

coherent narrative from the available material.

Chapters Three, Four and Five have all begun with a section that draws on material

from the railway press to contextualise or outline the development of aspects of the

GWR's publicity. This has been carried out, in the main, because no such 'potted

history' of that specific medium exists that could be referenced and it was necessary

for the validation of the argument at hand to do so. This chapter will break with this

pattern and provide contemporary comment and response to the GWR's guidebook as

and when they were published or revised. There are two key reasons for this. First, by

the inter-war years, railway company produced guidebooks had become so

commonplace that the medium itself had ceased to be a novelty as such. Reviews of

particular volumes were published but the railway guidebook *per se* was no longer

something that excited the attention of the press. Second, there would be limited

scholarly value in detailing the numbers or frequency of reviews and notices of new

guidebooks within the context of this research. This work focuses specifically on the

images of landscapes and locations used by the GWR; it is not dedicated to

unravelling the development of the railway guidebook in its totality. It is sufficient, in

this context, to note the increasing numbers of guidebooks produced through the inter-

war period and that these were often reviewed or featured in the pages of the railway,

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[1] Maxwell Fraser, *Somerset* (London: Great Western Railway, 1934); S. P. B. Mais, *Glorious Devon* (London: Great Western Railway, 1928); G. E. Beer, *Cathedrals* (London: Great Western Railway, 1924); M. R. James, *Abbeys* (London: Great Western Railway, 1925); Charles Oman, *Castles* (London: Great Western Railway, 1926).

regional or national press. Specific notices will be referenced when and where they relate to the material under discussion. In this way the narrative can retain its focus and better achieve its ends.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the images of landscapes and locations used in the GWR's guidebooks and will then move on to show how the complex multiplicities of place represented in these volumes were simplified and, in a way, flattened out in the selection of images used in the GWR's gazetteer of its entire network; *Holiday Haunts*. Following this is a case study that looks in detail at the *Legend Land* series of guidebooks produced by the GWR in 1922 and 1923 and demonstrates how these particular guidebooks, and the ways in which the landscape was represented within them, were influenced by contemporary commercial and business imperatives. This case study seeks to show that the ways in which the landscape was portrayed by the GWR was complex and showed an understanding of the value of visualising non-tangible elements of the region.

Picturing Place and Landscapes in the GWR's Inter-war Guidebooks.

The first few years directly following the First World War were quiet in terms of the production of guidebooks by the majority of railway companies. However the GWR did not necessarily follow this trend. It could be argued that, in many cases, the impending amalgamation of the railways into the Big Four discouraged many of the companies from investing too heavily into corporate identities that they knew could be obsolete within the space of a few years. The same has been shown to be the case with the production of pictorial posters in this period in chapter Four. The GWR were afforded something of a luxury in this respect as their overall corporate identity and structure would change little through the amalgamation process. 1922 was the year

that the GWR recommenced the publication of guidebooks with the release of *The Cambrian Coast,* Wilson points out that this book was a direct result of the amalgamations that the GWR was involved with at that time, having, in the same year, acquired the Cambrian Railways' lines.[2] It was, Wilson argues, an astute piece of marketing and one that characterised the tenure of Felix Pole's General Managership.[3] Pole himself declared in his autobiography to be fascinated with *propaganda* and it is clear that, even at the start of his time as General Manager, he was keen to employ active marketing techniques to encourage the use of newly acquired lines.[4] A more in-depth discussion of Pole's strategies relative to this subject takes place in Chapter Seven.

The *Great Western Railway Magazine (GWRM)* ran an extended article in May 1922 on the Cambrian Railways (CR) which included a pictorial supplement and nine pages of detailed explication of the line and its history.[5] Among this was reprinted the 'General Manager's Farewell' in which the 'unprecedented strain and anxiety' of the past few years was highlighted and where the outgoing General Manager of the CR looked towards the staff to show 'support and co-operation... under the new *regime.*'[6] The article was profusely illustrated with photographs of landscapes such as *Snowdon Range and Glaslyn River,* railway infrastructure such as *Talerdigg Cutting* and resorts such as *The Promenade and Sands at Aberystwyth.* Interestingly, none of these images of the Cambrian Coast appeared in the guidebook published later in that year and even where there are images of the same location, such as of Aberystwyth beach

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[2] *The Cambrian Coast* (London: Great Western Railway, 1922).

[3] Roger Burdett Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of Great Western Railway Publicity* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles PLC, 1987), 88.

[4] Felix Pole, *His Book* (Bracknell: Town and Country Press, 1968), 84.

[5] H. Browning Button, "The Lines Absorbed by the Great Western Railway, No. 1 - The Cambrian Railway," *Great Western Railway Magazine,* May 1922.

[6] Ibid., 179.

which appears both in the article and on facing page 18 of the guidebook, different pictures have been used. The article is not a guidebook and more a survey of the railway company, the images of landscapes and locations appear to be included more as descriptions of stock than of places to be visited and the text relating to the scenery of the area is limited to one paragraph sandwiched between *Engineering Features* and *Traffic Features and Statistics*.

This guidebook, although small, was exceptionally well made. It was printed with card covers and on good quality laid paper with the photographs reproduced on art paper and generally bound into the volume. *The Cambrian Coast* was altogether new territory for the GWR and therefore the images used are not ones that can be found elsewhere in their pre-war guidebooks, although there is a familiarity to the types of images that are used. There are castles and cathedrals (Figures 6.1 and 6.2) along with wild coastal landscape and ruins (Figures 6.3 and 6.4). Included also are shots of the specifically touristic elements of the region such as golf courses and hotels. These may have been new landscapes for the GWR but they were immediately pictured as being comprised of the same varieties of experience and multiplicities of place as well established areas such as Devon and Cornwall. Interestingly, it appears as if the images used in this book were not taken by GWR photographers; a search of the lists for the GWR B-series negatives shows that the images of places such as Nevern and Gwbert-on-Sea were not taken until after 1922 when the Cambrian Coast had become more established as a GWR location. Places such as Aberdovey are present in the collection and a series of nine images were taken by GWR photographers in August 1922[7] but none of these negative match up with the image reproduced in the guidebook. Notes on the paper envelopes of the negatives suggest that several of these

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[7] GWR B-series negatives B3420 – B3428.

negatives were subsequently used in the GWR's lantern slide series'. This could

suggest that the GWR either made use of an external agency to take the pictures or

they made use of images produced by the Cambrian Railways themselves before

amalgamation. The Cambrian did produce their own tourist literature so it seems

likely that this is the explanation, if so then the 1922 GWR guidebook can be seen as

a rebranding exercise where landscapes and locations that had previously figured in

another company's marketing material were repackaged in a format already

confidently utilised by the GWR. In this case the guidebook and the images included

in it are not only representative of the GWR's continuity in the run up to

amalgamation but also of its ability to assimilate other railways, landscapes and

locations into its already well established visual vocabulary.

Harlech Castle.

Figure 6.1. *Harlech Castle* from *The Cambrian Coast.*

St. David's Cathedral.

Figure 6.2. *St. David's Cathedral* from *The Cambrian Coast.*

The Beach, Llangranog

Figure 6.3. *The Beach, Llangranog* from *The Cambrian Coast.*

Abbey Ruins, Strata Florida.

Figure 6.4. *Abbey Ruins, Strata Florida* from *The Cambrian Coast*.

Also published in 1922 and again in 1923 were the *Legend Land* series of books. These are dealt with separately in the case study below along with a further discussion of the impact of amalgamation of the company and its literary outputs.

By 1924 Felix Pole was confident of the company's ability to make significant achievements in the year ahead. He wrote in the January issue of the *GWRM* that 'We go forward with every hope, certain of accomplishing much for the benefit of the great triple alliance, comprising our customer, staff and shareholders.'[8] From the point of view of the company's publishing this was certainly to be the case. 1924 saw the publication of the first volume of a three part survey of the cathedrals, abbeys and castles. *Cathedrals*[9] appeared to a great deal of publicity by the GWR. The *GWRM* stated that 'the high-water mark in the production of travel literature has been reached in the Great Western Railway's latest publication' and citing appreciation from the King and Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury.[10] Such an endorsement from royalty and the highest ranking clergy also contribute toward the general sense of a

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[8] Felix Pole, "From The General Manager," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1924, 2.
[9] Beer, *Cathedrals*.
[10] "Cathedrals," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, July 1924, 274.

desire, on the part of the GWR, to identify itself as existing within, and as a structural

part of, an authoritarian framework as has already been pointed out in Chapters Four

and Five. The *Railway Gazette*, in May of that year, reviewed the book and saw it as

'a rare beauty' and 'its advent may truly be said to mark a departure in the character of

railway publications'. The reviewer also went on to wonder about how such a volume

could be published at the 'ridiculously cheap price of half-a-crown' and predicted 'an

enormous public demand for it'.[11]

This book was, as the review suggested, something completely out of the norm for a

railway guidebook. It was large, 7 1/2" by 10", hard covered with the title gold

blocked in blackletter capitals on the front. The paper, binding, typesetting and

general feel of the volume are of exceptional quality and the photographs are

reproduced with clarity and depth, for example, *Truro Cathedral* reproduced on

facing page 52 (see Figure 6.5). Along with the photographs there are also numerous

line drawings of particular architectural features or objects. Textually this book, and

the other two that were to follow, were scholarly in style and, as Bennett has pointed

out, 'exemplified the company's historical, political and cultural affiliations'.[12]

Visually it was a tour de force with images covering 22 cathedrals that could be

visited by way of the GWR. The images themselves lend visual force to a text that

appears to be almost a prototype of the *Pevsner* guides that would come after the

Second World War.

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[11] "Publications Received," *Railway Gazette*, 9 May, 1924, 661.
[12] Alan Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness
(University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2000), 20.
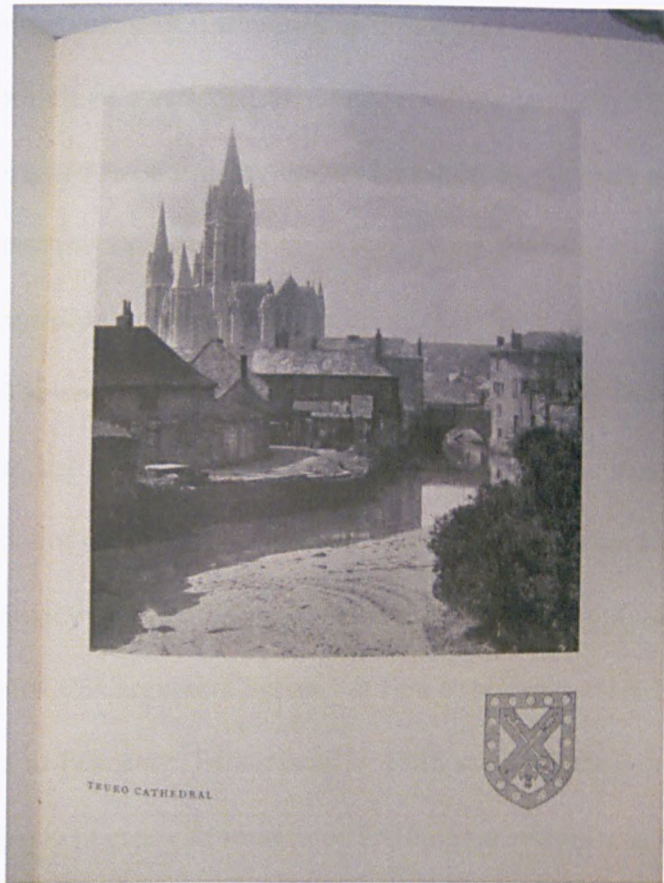
Cathedrals was more than just a guidebook, it was a powerful statement of intent

which, for the first time, began to elucidate the historical and authoritarian network

within which the GWR contextualised the landscape. Previously this had only been

hinted at and signified by the use of repeated images of castles, cathedrals and

churches but here it was set out explicitly. The cathedrals (and subsequently the

abbeys and castles) became the nodes connected by the vertices of road and rail which

underpinned the entirety of the GWR's territory. By picturing them they became

known; identified by, and thus to be associated with, the GWR.

There were several other guidebooks published by the GWR in 1924 and out of these

two warrant some further attention as exemplars of visual tropes that would continue

to be employed throughout the inter-war period. *Through the Window. I Paddington*

to Penzance followed suit with *Cathedrals* in being the first of a trio of related guidebooks and presented a very different version of the landscape to the tourist.[13] This book was designed to be *used* by the reader while on the train travelling down to Cornwall from London. On each page there was a map showing the physical geography being moved through accompanied by text that pointed out things of interest that could be seen en route. Churches, factories, villages and towns were covered along with key topographical features and archaeology. Bennett, in his study of the textual output of the GWR, has characterised these guidebooks as being about reinforcing the primacy of Paddington as the centre, or focal point, of the GWR's world[14] and, visually, this argument appears at first to be supported. Each of the three volumes (journeys to Penzance, Birkenhead in 1925 and Killarney in 1926 respectively) naturally began with images of Paddington station and London before illustrating the sites and sights that could be seen from the carriage window.[15] It is tempting to think that, the further the distance from Paddington, the more romantic and non-everyday the portrayals of the landscape become until the 'Celtic Fringe' was encountered somewhere on the Devon/Cornwall border. However, such notions of centre and periphery are not always helpful. The setting up of a dichotomy whereby one place is defined purely through its relationship with another; a place being defined by *what it is not*, can overlook the complexities and multiplicities of place that have already been shown to have been constructed by the GWR. The images, line drawings, included in this guidebook can be deeply prosaic (factories on page 10 for example) as well as picturesque and the landscape through which the traveller moves,

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[13] *Through the Window. I Paddington to Penzance* (London: Great Western Railway, 1924).

[14] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 70.

[15] *Through the Window. II Paddington to Birkenhead* (London: Great Western Railway, 1925); *Through the Window. III Paddington to Killarney* (London: Great Western Railway, 1926).

both on the pages of the book and in reality, is broken down into manageable parts that are both tangible (visually apprehensible to the viewer) and intellectually and emotionally accessible insofar as they are isolated instances of locations deemed worthy of comment. The grandiose sweep of history is not so much in evidence and is sublimated in favour of a more piecemeal picturing of the GWR's territory.

While the line drawings cover the smaller instances or episodes of landscape that the viewer passes through, the etchings that punctuate the book (there are eight in the first volume, eight in the second and nine in the third) represent key landscapes of the specific region being travelled through. Each chapter of the book covers a different section of the journey and contains numerous line drawings but these sections are headed by a larger, full page, etching that depicts a key place-image representative of that area. For example, Exeter is shown for the *Glorious Devon* section (see Figure 6.6) while St. Michael's Mount stands for Cornwall (see Figure 6.7). These etchings do not appear to show a landscape that becomes more *other* as the distance from Paddington increases but rather focus in on a key aspect of the region or area that the GWR had already portrayed in their previous guidebooks. Such self-referential strategies appear to reinforce the individual identities of these regions that the GWR had been at considerable pains to highlight in the previous two decades. Therefore, while the journey began at Paddington, Paddington was not necessarily the focal point of the GWR's tourist utopia. The picturing of landscapes included in these guidebooks point towards there being a series of focal points, from the Thames Valley to the Cornish Riviera, that the GWR was promoting. This picturing of regional centres continued throughout the second and third volumes in the series with, for instance, the Liver Building and the Mersey standing for *The Wirral Peninsula* in volume two and

Cardiff Castle for the section *South Wales Valleys* in volume three.[16] Rather than a simple centre/periphery binary delineation it is, once again, perhaps more accurate to visualise the landscape as a complex network of nodes variously interconnected through function, temporality and socio-cultural association.
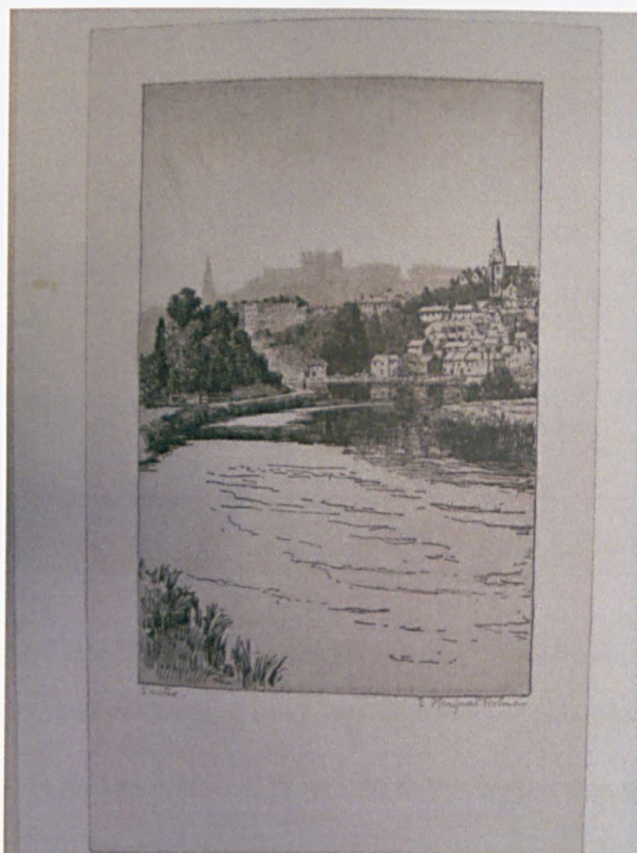
Figure 6.6. *Exeter* from *Through the Window 1. Paddington to Penzance.*

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[16] *Through the Window. II Paddington to Birkenhead*, 85; *Through the Window. III Paddington to Killarney*, 62.
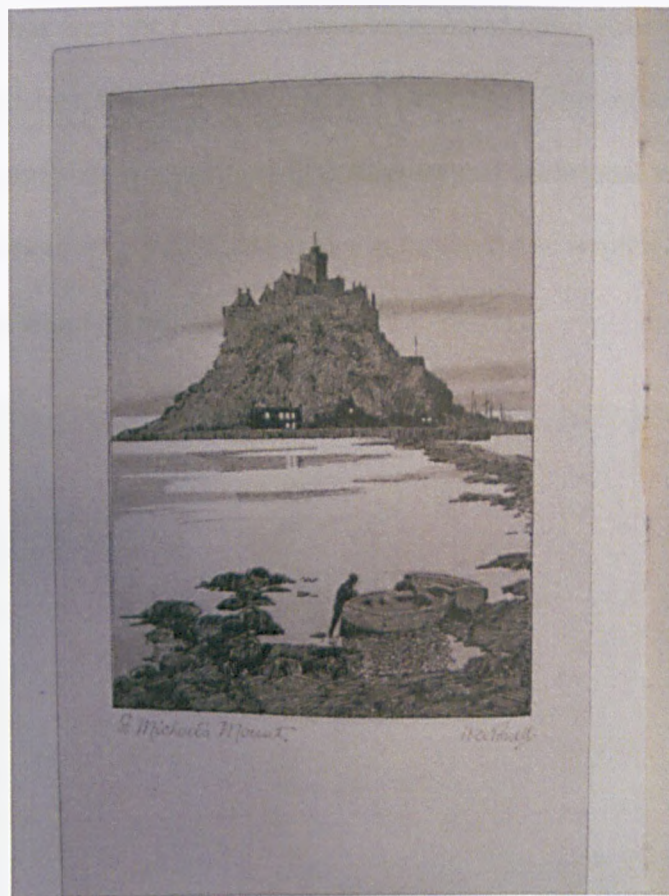
Figure 6.7. *St. Michael's Mount* from *Through the Window 1. Paddington to Penzance.*

Also published in 1924 were the first inter-war regional guidebooks, a short discussion of which serves to add further weight to the notion that the GWR were continuing to construct tourist regions that had distinctive qualities and that functioned, independent to any perceived overall centre such as London or Paddington. *Cotswold Ways* and *Somerset Ways* represented the beginning of a new style of GWR guidebook, one that was less didactic or rooted in a scholarly historical context and one that would continue to develop, throughout the inter-war period.[17] Bennett points out that the Cotswolds in particular was a key location that the GWR took special care to imbue with the qualities of 'inspiration, harmony and continuity'.[18]

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[17] *Somerset Ways* (London: Great Western Railway, 1924); *Cotswold Ways* (London: Great Western Railway, 1924).

[18] Bennett, *The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness*, 69.

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However, Brace has seen the Cotswolds as a location wherein notions of national identity and Englishness were constructed and played out. She argues that the Cotswolds were not simply a signifier of continuity and traditional values but in more complex terms where what was traditional was pictured and written about to provide a backdrop against which to critique contemporary society.[19]

Remains of Henry II's Palace as it stood in Woodstock Park in 1714.

Figure 6.8. *Remains of Henry II's Palace... from Cotswold Ways.*

The images contained within *Cotswold Ways* show a marked relationship to the types of places pictured in the pre-war guidebooks discussed in chapter Five. There is even an old print from 1714, reproduced to show what the ruins of Henry II's palace at Woodstock looked like (see Figure 6.8) while the text refers to the building as being a

[19] Catherine Brace, "Looking back: the Cotswolds and English national identity, c. 1890 - 1950," *Journal of Historical Geography* 25, no. 4 (1999): 504.

'famous place... long vanished'.[20] Here, once more, the images have been used to provide a glimpse of those things that can never be seen or encountered by the tourist. Reinforcing this encounter between past and present, the frontispiece to the book is an image of the *View of Painswick Golf Course, from Cromwell's Encampment* (Figure 6.9). This site was a prehistoric hillfort before being added to by Cromwell's troops in the Civil War, but the image shows the site as it was in 1924; a golf course with four men in tweed making their way to their next tee. While at first sight this is a somewhat prosaic, this is a deeply significant image insofar as it demonstrates how fully the tourist and the pursuit of leisure had appropriated the prehistoric and historic past. The landscape in this image is loaded with historical associations but the view has been tamed and commodified. The past and the present had collided in this landscape and, while the past was still physically extant, it was the present that was in a position of control.

View of Painswick Golf Course, from Cromwell's Encampment.

Figure 6.9. *View of Painswick Golf Course... from Cotswold Ways.*

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[20] *Cotswold Ways*, 9.

The other images within this guidebook are typical of the GWR's portrayal of regions as multiplicities or heterotopias. There are small villages with church spires dominating the skyline and there are busy cities such as Oxford (Figure 6.10); there are castles, palaces and rural landscapes. Interestingly, the map included at the end of this volume covers the entirety of the GWR network. Rather than have a map that covered only the region in question as was common in the pre-war guidebooks, this map locates the Cotswolds within a larger framework of cultural and touristic mobility. The Cotswolds have been depicted as a place steeped with tradition and authenticity but the map shows that this place was but one place within a densely woven fabric of significance and meaning. Paddington may well be portrayed as the starting point and terminus of the GWR but what this map points towards is a complex network of interconnecting places and locations, each of which had its own identity. All of these places, however, are deemed to be thoroughly Great Western; as part of their territory, they are identified with and through the means by which the tourist could gain access to them.

Oxford—Magdalen College from the Cherwell.

Figure 10. *Oxford- Magdalen College from the Cherwell* from *Cotswold Ways.*

1925 and 1926 saw the publication of *Abbeys* and *Castles* respectively which continued and completed the trilogy of high quality guidebooks covering the key historic monuments on the GWR.[21] Both of these volumes were received with praise by the railway press. *The Railway Gazette* was particularly complimentary and commented that

> One feels indeed, in perusing these delightful pages- the latest word in artistic printing- that their production must have been a veritable labour of love to all concerned, and especially so to the compiler.[22]

Similarly, *Castles* was deemed to have been 'a monumental work' of both quality and scholarship that was compiled

> 'o explain the historical and architectural interest of each castle, so that the visitor may appreciate its meaning.[23]

The images included in these volumes are, as would be expected, of exceptional quality. For example, *St. German's Church* (see Figure 6.11) from *Abbeys* and *Restormel Castle: The Main Gate* (see Figure 6.12) from *Castles* show the quality of reproduction but also hint at a growing confidence in composition. It is, however, worth pointing out that, while the majority of images used in *Cathedrals* and *Abbeys* were taken by the GWR's own photographers, many of those in *Castles* were taken by the author Sir Charles Oman. All three volumes contained detailed maps of the GWR's network with the locations of the various buildings and ruins overlaid onto it. As will be discussed in more detail in the case study, this method of grounding and locating the historical

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[21] James, *Abbeys*; Oman, *Castles*.
[22] "Publications Received," *Railway Gazette*, 23 October, 1925, 479.
[23] "Publications Received," *Railway Gazette*, 11 June, 1926, 747.

environment within a contemporary mobility network points towards the assimilation and appropriation of the historical landscape by the landscapes of tourism.

ST. GERMANS CHURCH

Figure 6.11. *St. German's Church* from *Abbeys*.

RESTORMEL CASTLE: THE MAIN GATE

Figure 6.12. *Restormel Castle...* from *Castles*.

Interestingly, all three of these guidebooks were reviewed by *The Railway Gazette* under their *Publications Received* column and not, as had been the case with railway

company produced guidebooks before the war, as *Trade Publications*. This suggests that, certainly within the industry, the understanding of the aims and objectives behind the production of guidebooks by railway companies was becoming more attuned to their being products with real content as opposed to simple, didactic tracts. This may appear to be a small taxonomic shift but the move away from the public understanding of the railway guidebook as nothing more than a trade publication akin to a catalogue and towards a work of literary or artistic merit is key in terms of the development of the railway guidebook, and its visual content, through the rest of the inter-war period.

In the same column as the review of *Castles*, *The Railway Gazette* also reviewed another GWR publication from the same year called *From Cave Man to Roman in Britain*[24] which is described as a 'fascinating little work' that covers an area that 'is peculiarly rich in prehistoric remains'.[25] This guidebook is worthy of note because it marks the beginning with the GWR's interest with archaeology which would become more and more pronounced as the inter-war period drew on. It opens with a visual play on words which sees a picture of the prehistoric hillfort of Uffington Castle with its chalk-cut white horse and a GWR locomotive caption as *Uffington Castle, White Horse and Iron Horse* (Figure 6.13). This juxtaposition of the ancient with the modern has similarities with the image of Painswick golf course at the beginning of *Cotswold Ways* and shows that the GWR were keen to bring together the ancient and contemporary wherever possible. Such a juxtaposition seemed to be best achieved visually, hence the inclusion of images such as these. The ancient and the modern co-existed within the landscapes of the GWR's guidebooks from the early 1900's but, from around 1924 an explicitly archaeological way of seeing the landscape began to be promoted.

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[24] Edward J. Burrow, *From Cave Man to Roman in Britain* (London: Great Western Railway, 1926).
[25] "Publications Received," 747.

UFFINGTON CASTLE, WHITE HORSE
AND IRON HORSE.
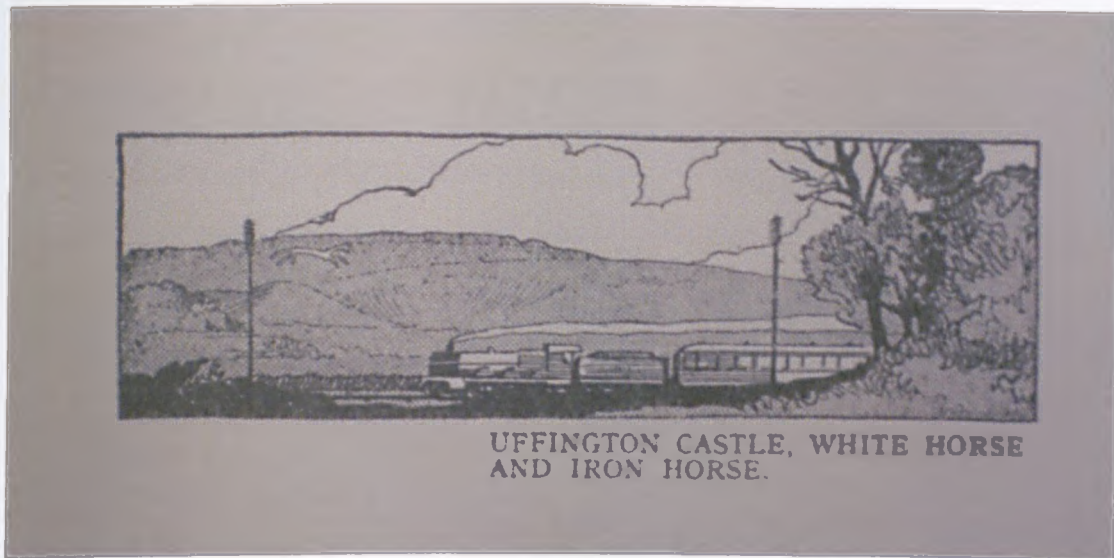
Figure 6.13. *Uffington Castle, White Horse and Iron Horse* from *From Cave Man to Roman.*

All of the other illustrations within this guidebook are of ancient monuments from

barrows to stone circles. Most often they show the site as it could be expected to be seen

at the time but there are occasional reconstruction images which posit how sites such as

Stonehenge might have looked when first built (Figure 6.14). These can be seen as the

prehistoric or archaeological equivalent of the reproduction of eighteenth century prints

in the early GWR guidebooks and again, demonstrates their desire to show the tourist

more than was physically present within the landscape; to show what *was* alongside

what *is*. Once more, the map that was included as part of the guidebook served to locate

and fix sites that might otherwise have seemed abstract or somewhat fantastical. This

strategy is discussed in more detail in the case study of the GWR's *Legend Land* series

of 1922 and 1923.
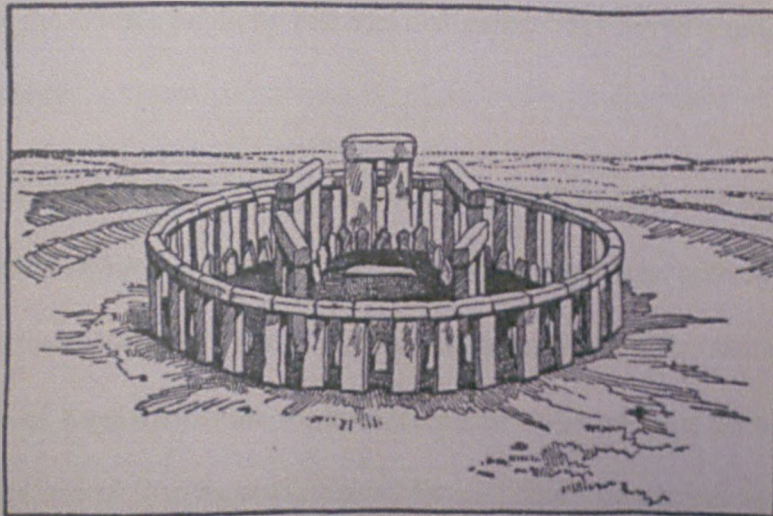
A RECONSTRUCTION OF STONEHENGE, SHOWING ITS ORIGINAL FORM AND CHARACTER.

Figure 6.14. *A Reconstruction of Stonehenge* from *From Cave Man to Roman*.

All of the guidebooks covered in the preceding pages were produced within just three years of amalgamation at a time when the other companies of the Big Four were only beginning to get into their stride and define the landscape and locations that wanted to be identified with. This meant that the GWR were effectively reinforcing a brand as opposed to constructing one anew or building one out of the corporate identities of the pre-1923 constituent companies. In this way the GWR were at a distinct advantage, one that they would capitalise on throughout the inter-war period. For example, while the LNER had produced several series of booklets in the first few years after amalgamation, Middleton suggests that it was not until the appointment of Cecil Dandridge as Advertising Manager on 1 January 1928 that the company began to publish guidebooks that were able to compete with, for example, the GWR's *Holiday Haunts* which had been in publication since 1906.[26] In contrast, the GWR greatly enlarged their advertising department, and renamed it the Publicity Department, shortly after amalgamation in

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[26] Allan Middleton, *It's Quicker by Rail: The History of LNER Advertising* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2002), 43.

1924.[27] The appointment of W. H. Fraser, a long serving GWR man, to the head of this department saw the GWR's publicity material and guidebooks develop quickly in both quantity and quality.

Fraser must have been aware that the stalwarts of the GWR's canon of publicity material Broadley's *The Cornish Riviera* and *Devon, Shire of the Sea Kings*, both of which ran to five editions between 1904 and 1926, were becoming dated. Judging from the publication date of August 1928 the work on the completely rewritten guidebooks to these areas, *The Cornish Riviera* and *Glorious Devon*[28] must have begun at some point in 1927 or perhaps as early as 1926. The author of both of these substantial guidebooks was S. P. B. Mais, a well known travel writer at the time who had produced guidebooks for companies such as the Southern Railway and would go on to broadcast for the BBC and produce travel guides to the British Isles in much the same style as H. V. Morton. *The Times* of 17 August 1928 described both volumes as being 'readable and excellently illustrated' in addition to being 'descriptive and historical as well as practical in guidance'.[29] The *Railway Gazette* was equally effusive in its praise and stated that the text, especially of *The Cornish Riviera*, was 'capitally done and altogether free from the stodginess that so often characterises books of this description'; however, it was the illustrations, both photographic and pen and ink, which were considered to be 'a delightful feature' and the 'chief charm' of both of the books.[30] These reviews point towards the fact that, in many cases, it appears as if the illustrations that were included in guidebooks were considered to have been on at least equal footing with the actual text. Such a recognition of the importance of communicating with an audience visually

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[27] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 29.
[28] Mais, *Glorious Devon*; S. P. B. Mais, *The Cornish Riviera* (London: Great Western Railway, 1928).
[29] "Shorter Notices, History and Travel," *The Times* (London, August 17, 1928).
[30] "Publications Received," *Railway Gazette*, 14 September, 1928, 319.

as opposed to simply textually on the part of the railway companies is evidenced by the fact that so many of the guidebooks of the late 1920s and 1930s, the Mais volumes included, were far more heavily illustrated that had previously been the case. These volumes appeared at a time when the value of a well produced guidebook was being recognised throughout the sector. John Elliot, Public Relations and Advertising Assistant to the Southern Railway, had stated, in January of that year that

> ...the public simply eats guide-books, free or otherwise, and no railway publicity campaign is complete without them; in fact, I would say that it is practically doomed without them.[31]

The guidebook was no longer seen as just an adjunct to an efficient service, it was deemed to be of the utmost importance in driving up passenger numbers. It was into this environment of increased awareness and scrutiny that the two flagship GWR guides reappeared. Twenty thousand copies of each title were published as the first edition and, by January 1929, stocks were 'practically exhausted'.[32]

The Cornish Riviera contained 168 pages of text and 104 separate pages of photographic illustrations. Included with the text were more than 70 pen and ink drawings. Also in this volume were 14 maps. *Glorious Devon* was slightly shorter with only 152 pages of text, 96 pages of photographic illustrations, over 60 pen and ink drawings and eleven maps. These were popular works of travel writing and Bennett states that Mais' 'popular and partisanly [sic] narrative style, deeply descriptive and historically inclined, was totally removed from what by that time was

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[31] John Elliot, "Railway Salesmanship and Public Relations Work," *Journal of the Institute of Transport* (January 1928): 166.
[32] "The Stationary and Printing Department," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1929, 21.

Broadley's ponderous, remote terms of reference.[33] Similarly, from a visual point of view, there are certain differences to the pre-1914 guidebooks of the same regions although, as will be discussed in more detail, there are also substantial structural similarities to the ways in which the regions were portrayed.

There is a complete absence of reproductions of historical prints, paintings or drawings within these volumes that runs counter to the picturing of the historical past that was ever present in the pre-1914 guidebooks. This may reflect the desire to appear more forward-looking as opposed to the historically rooted landscapes employed previously. In addition there are more images that show tourists interacting with their environment, these appear to be signifiers pointing towards behaviours judged appropriate to the tourist. For example, the contemplative woman on the beach at sunset in *Coast near Par* on facing page 38 of *The Cornish Riviera* (Figure 6.15) can be read as a sign that situations such as this, a sunset on a Cornish beach, were worthy of contemplation and enjoyment. While tourists were pictured in the pre-1914 guidebooks they tended to be in *tourist* places such as at a resort or on the promenade. When they were pictured in the wider landscape they appeared to have been used to give a sense of scale to the sublime landscapes that they find themselves in. In the 1928 guidebook they are beginning to be shown as behaving in different ways, not solely indulging in tourist activities such as promenading or golf, but also interacting with the non-tourist landscapes surrounding them. *Glorious Devon* contains similar examples such as the couple enjoying the view in *Wooda Bay* on facing page 116 (Figure 6.16) that points towards a relaxing of the ways in which the regions were represented both textually and visually. While these were only the beginnings, the

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[33] Bennett, *The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness*, 15.

1928 GWR guidebooks mark the start of the marketing of the *novelty of behaviour* over what was before simply a *novelty of place*. What was being visually sold was more than just the opportunity to see a different geographical location; it had become even more subtle than just the representation of the multiplicities of place. There was a move away from the picturing of the intangible past towards the picturing of the different ways of behaving and interacting with the non-tourist landscape. This was something that became consistently apparent throughout the inter-war period.
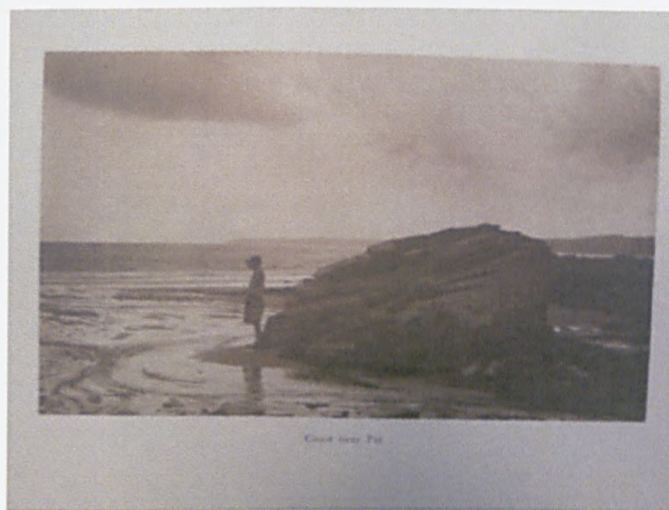
Figure 6.15. *Coast near Par* from *The Cornish Riviera.*

Figure 6.16. *Wooda Bay* from *The Cornish Riviera.*

In addition to this, the images used within these guidebooks began to be more self-referential; a strategy that has been shown to have developed earlier in the decade

with the *Through the Window* series. Included in both *The Cornish Riviera* and *Glorious Devon* are images relating to the legends and myths of the region which were included in the *Legend Land* series of 1922 and 1923. For example, the Mermaid of Zennor, the first of the *Legend Land* myths, is included in an abridged form along with the same illustration of the carved bench end reproduced in its initial publication. There is, however, further detail given about the village, the church and the surrounding landscape. If the *Legend Land* series introduced a landscape of myth and legend to the topography of the GWR then *The Cornish Riviera* of 1928 began to integrate that landscape and enmesh it fully within the multiplicities of place delineated since the early 1900s.

Despite these differences, the images included in the guidebooks remained structurally similar to their pre-1914 counterparts. The *something for everyone* appeal that saw layers of significance, including archaeological landscapes, picturesque landscapes, landscapes of local industries, the landscape of the parish, with its villages and churches and tourist landscapes of towns and beach resorts all make appearances. Both Cornwall and Devon continued to be defined in terms of the range of landscapes and attendant experiences that coexisted within the same geographical locations. But it had been developed, added to and built upon and, by the late 1920s, included layers of myth and legend along with landscapes of activity where images began to be used in a directive manner, demonstrating the ways in which the tourist could interact more closely with the environment.

1934 saw the publication of another of the GWR's key guidebooks; Maxwell Fraser's

Somerset.[34] At the same time *The Cornish Riviera* and *Glorious Devon* were reissued in their third editions sporting new covers. The author of this new volume was the daughter of W. H. Fraser, Dorothy, who wrote under the nom de plume of Maxwell Fraser. Interestingly, there was no fanfare for the book in the *GWRM* in 1934. There is only a brief mention in an overview of the previous year in the January 1935 issue of '[t]hree travel books on Devon, Cornwall and Somerset' being published in April 1934 and that they 'all proved exceptionally popular with the public'.[35]

The Railway Gazette chose to review all three of the guidebooks at once and praised the two Mais titles as classics while saying, of *Somerset* that 'when we add that the writer thereof is Mr. Maxwell Fraser, it will readily be appreciated that this is a book that should on no account be missed by the individual tourist or the family holiday-maker'.[36] This supports the notion that, by this time, Fraser's work already carried a degree of cache.[37] The review goes on to make special mention of the illustrations included in the volume, stating 'that the many fine views therein will be generally praised goes without saying'.[38] Once more, the reviews, while highly complimentary about the textual content of the guidebook, reserve particular attention for the photographs and illustrations. This opinion was not only to be found in the railway press. *The Times* also reviewed *Somerset* and reserved their highest praise for the many photographic illustrations in the volume. The reviewer spoke of

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[34] Fraser, *Somerset*.
[35] "Last Year's Outstanding Features in the Principal Departments," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1935, 9.
[36] "G.W.R. Holiday Literature," *Railway Gazette*, 30 March, 1934, 558.
[37] It is interesting to note that her nom de plume has worked and she is referred to as 'Mr'.
[38] "G.W.R. Holiday Literature," 558.

...the crowded budgets of finely reproduced photographs from
which to taste a vicarious holiday.[39]

This quote adds to the notion that the images themselves were seen as having a
transportative quality, reminiscent of the poster poem discussed in Chapter Four,
whereby the tourist began to experience the landscapes and locations they were
intending to visit before they had even embarked on their journey; the West Country
was experienced, vicariously, through the images reproduced in the guidebooks. It is
in these terms that the photographs and illustrations contained within the GWR's
guidebooks must be examined and it is clear that, by the mid 1930s, it was commonly
agreed that such images had the power to transport the viewer almost as much as the
railways themselves; after all, a paper covered copy of *Somerset* could be purchased
for one shilling, far less than even the most reduced ticket from the home counties to
the provinces.

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[39] "Summer Guides, Railway Companies' Handbooks," *The Times* (London, April 13, 1934).

Figure 6.17. Page layouts from *Somerset*.
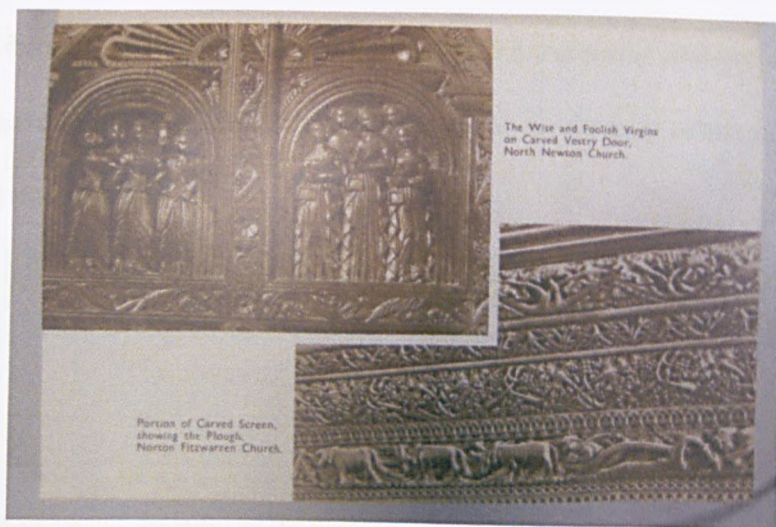
Figure 6.18. Page layouts from *Somerset*.

Visually, *Somerset* is markedly different in layout to the 1928 Mais guidebooks and

the positioning of the images, and their content, has become very close to the layout

of the GWR's gazetteer, *Holiday Haunts* (which will be discussed in more detail in

the following section). There is a more 'jaunty' arrangement of the pictures where two

or more images are printed on the same page, either to complement or contrast with

their page-partners (see Figures 6.17 and 6.18 for examples). This immediately lends

the illustrated pages energy and movement that was not apparent in the previous guidebooks where photographs were framed, somewhat solidly, by being placed in the centre of the page. In this way, the images appear to be far more modern in style even though much of the subject matter is traditional in content. The depiction of the Hobby Horse tradition at Minehead on facing page 6 (Figure 6.19) is typical of this more modern approach. Facing page 72 (Figure 6.20) shows details of the *Quaint Bench Ends, Brent Knoll Church* in the manner of a piece of domestic anthropology. These are the details of a landscape of exploration and discovery; pictured in this guidebook are things for the tourist to *find* in the landscape, the guidebook is providing images that will stimulate activity in and interaction with the environment. The tourist was not simply being shown landscapes and locations that they could passively imbibe, they were shown images of hidden traditions and curious objects that would have required an element of participation on the part of the tourist to uncover and understand.

Figure 6.19. *Old May-Day Custom at Minehead...* from *Somerset.*

Figure 6.20. *Quaint Bench Ends* from *Somerset*.

Alongside this more constructivist landscape of discovery it is still possible to make

out the distinct types of places that the GWR had been identifying and picturing since

the early 1900s. There are numerous images of unpopulated landscapes such as

Horner Valley, the home of the Red Deer on facing page 17 (see Figure 6.21), the

parish, comprising the village in the landscape with the church at its heart (see,

Chewton Mendip and Compton Martin on facing page 96, Figure 6.22), the town and

the resort. Running through these distinct but interconnected landscapes were the

usual monuments and sites that punctuated the previous GWR landscapes and spoke

of longevity and authority. *Somerset* took the already well established GWR formula

of a landscape based around the aggregation of the multiplicities of place and further

integrated the burgeoning notions of activity and interaction and began to frame the

landscape through a behavioural model that encouraged the tourist not simply to *see*

but also to participate and discover.

Horner Valley, the home of the Red Deer.
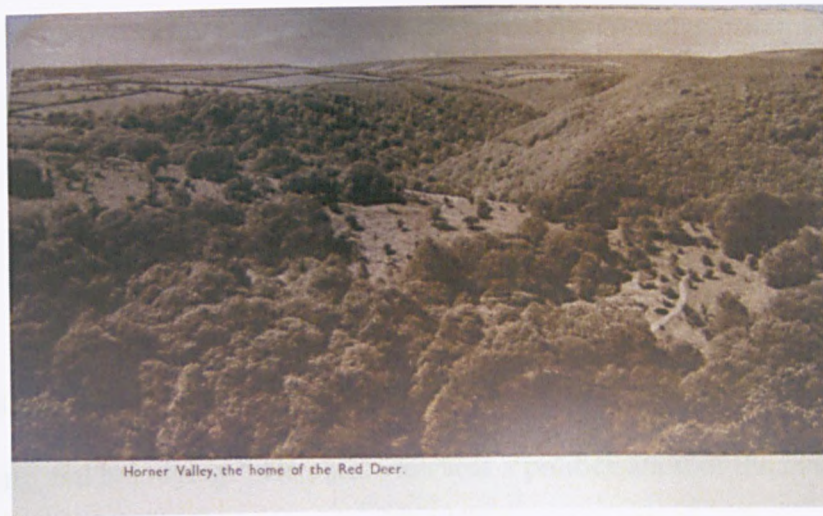
Figure 6.21. *Horner Valley, the home of the Red Deer* from *Somerset*.

Figure 6.22. *Chewton Mendip, Compton Martin* from *Somerset*.

The GWR continued to publish several titles each year throughout the inter-war period. Not all of these can be considered to have been guidebooks; certain titles covered the history of the company, details of locomotives being built at the time or popular accounts of particular named services such as the *Cheltenham Flyer*. However, in 1931 *Rambles in the Chiltern Country* was published which marked the beginning of a long-running series that would epitomize the more active, even

interactive, approach to the picturing and portrayal of the landscapes that the GWR served.[40] The series was written by the secretary of the North Finchley Rambling Club Hugh E. Page and Bennett states that these books were '[a]nother dimension of the G.W.R.s participation in, and appreciation of, landscape and tradition'.[41]

Matless discusses the role that outdoor pursuits played in the construction of notions of citizenship and belonging.[42] He points towards a politicisation of the landscape at which saw a move away from the 'entrenched Conservatism of rural society and the established paternalistic power structure headed by the landed gentry and large farmers' towards a less socially exclusive, and in some cases overtly socialist, model.[43] From 1930 on there were large numbers of 'alert and increasingly 'militant' ramblers' from urban areas ready to reclaim land that had, for centuries, been closed off to them by landowners and tenant farmers.[44] Many of the organisations that championed outdoor activities such as cycling and rambling in the inter-war period had their roots (and in some cases their branches) firmly in socialism. For example, the *British Workers Sports Federation*, founded in 1923, was, by 1930, effectively under the control of the Communist Party and was instrumental in the organisation of the mass-trespass at Kinder Scout in 1932 which would, in its turn, lead to greater freedom of movement through the countryside.[45] Not only was there a threat of

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[40] Hugh E. Page, *Rambles in the Chiltern Country* (London: Great Western Railway, 1931).
[41] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 20.
[42] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 91 - 92.
[43] Michael Woods, *Contesting Rurality: Politics in the British Countryside* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 5; Philip Lowe, "The rural idyll defended: from preservation to conservation," in *The Rural Idyll* (London: Routledge, 1989), 122.
[44] Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 71.
[45] Ben Harker, "The Manchester Rambler: Ewan McColl and the 1932 Mass Trespass," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 59 (2005): 221 - 222.

physical destruction of the landscape at that time but also the established social order was seen as being eroded.[46] It was undoubtedly the fear of such social erosion that led so many commentators to be so critical about the "unthinking" ways in which certain "inappropriate" people encountered and behaved in the countryside. The ramblers guidebooks, such as those produced by the GWR can be seen as having their roots in the desire to encourage access to and exploration of the landscape but also to mediate such access and provide de facto rules for the good rambler to follow. Matless also sees this as linked with the development of a more archaeological apprehension of the landscape that developed from the later 1920s on,[47] a notion continued by Hauser with her concept of the 'archaeological imagination'.[48]

The GWR had a novel method of introducing this guidebook to their staff and moved away from a simple review that extolled its virtues. In June 1931, the month before publication, a competition was announced in the pages of the *GWRM* for readers to write articles covering a favourite ramble in 'the territory served by the Great Western Railway'.[49] It was stipulated that the rambles should begin and end at a railway station and should be of no more than 18 miles in length. In the July issue of the *GWRM* there was a continuation of the article and the editor commented on how many entries there had been up to that point. It was stated that '[t]he competition has made it clearer than ever how rich in rural walks of varied charm is the territory through which the

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[46] Martin S. Briggs, *Rusticus or the Future of the Countryside*, To day and To Morrow (London: Keegan Paul, 1926).
[47] Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 73 - 79.
[48] Kitty Hauser, *Shadow Sites: Photography, Archaeology, and the British Landscape 1927-1955* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2007).
[49] "Country Rambles in Great Western Territory [1]," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, June 1931, 257.

Great Western Railway runs'.[50] This piece also contained notice of the publication of

Rambles in the Chilterns, the clarity of the writing and usefulness of the maps were

commented upon along with the illustrations which were considered to be 'an entirely

delightful feature'.[51] The August issue carried news of the winners of the competition,

each of whom won a sum of five guineas.[52] The notion of participation and an active

stance towards the countryside that was extolled within the pages of the *Rambles*

guidebook appears, with the introduction of a competition to raise the profile of the

subject covered by the book, to have been carried through to the marketing of the

book itself. Rather than simply announce its publication the GWR decided to involve

the staff in the subject and only review their own book once the competition was in

full swing. This was an interesting departure for the GWR and one that helps to

underline their more constructivist relationship with and portrayal of the landscape.

The *Railway Gazette* only ran a short review of this guidebook and interestingly,

rather than it being printed in the *Publications Received* section, this was included as

a *Trade Publication.* However short the review, it was positive and stated that the

book would 'prove acceptable not only to the rapidly-increasing "hiking" fraternity,

but also to legions of nature lovers'.[53] There is further evidence of the fact that the

GWR published this guidebook, and those that followed, at a time when the interest in

hiking was moving away from its more radical roots and into the mainstream. *The*

Times of 26 March 1932 included an article called *The "Hikers" Train, Railway*

Company's Happy Experiment which detailed a 'Hikers Mystery Express', put on by

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[50] "Country Rambles in Great Western Territory [2]," *Great Western Railway*
Magazine, July 1931, 317.
[51] Ibid., 318.
[52] "Country Rambles in Great Western Territory [3]," *Great Western Railway*
Magazine, August 1931, 362.
[53] "Trade Publications," *Railway Gazette,* 24 July, 1931, 101.

the GWR.

"Everyone loves a mystery," said the posters at Paddington, and, aided

perhaps by yesterday's brilliant sunshine, it must be so. For the "Hiker's

Mystery Express, No. 1" was quite inadequate to the task of carrying all

who awaited it at Paddington. Long before 10.25 a.m., the advertised

time of departure, the platform was crowded. It was a gay scene, rather

like a festival of youth, for the sunshine and the mystery had attracted

nearly 2,000 young men and girls who had turned out in their brightest

colours.[54]

In the end, a second train had to be put on to take the additional passengers and the

destination was found to be Tilehurst and Pangbourne- both locations covered by

Rambles in the Chiltern Country. In addition to this, every passenger on the train was

presented with a complimentary copy of the guidebook and an accompanying leaflet

before leaving the train. The leaflet stated clearly what the destinations were and at

what times the train would return to pick up the ramblers. It also stated which of the

rambles in the guidebook it would be appropriate to attempt thus directly tying up the

event with the contents of the guidebook. On the reverse it carried details of the

Hiker's Express No. 2 which was already in planning. Tickets could be obtained for

three shillings and sixpence but a snack box was one shilling extra.[55]

This was an inspired piece of marketing on the part of the GWR and, along with the

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[54] "The 'Hikers' Train, Railway Company's Happy Experiment," *The Times*, March
26, 1932.
[55] *The Hiker's Mystery Express No. 1* (London: Great Western Railway, 1932).

competition in the staff magazine, demonstrates that, as a company, the GWR were

keen to explore, and exploit, what was a new and emerging market. The article ends

with a simple, almost biblical, statement, perhaps paraphrasing John 3:22, as it

described the hikers once they had disembarked from the train; 'And they went into the

countryside.'[56] This sentence neatly sums up the more active and participatory ways in

which the countryside was being both portrayed and viewed.

This new market was also characterized by a new way of seeing the countryside.

Matless talks about the creation of the 'geographer-citizen'[57] towards the end of the

1930s with the appearance of books such as *The Countryside Companion* which

provided guidance in such fundamentals as *How to See the Countryside*.[58] Given that

the mass trespass at Kinder Scout took place in 1932 the GWR's *Chilterns* guidebook

was published at a time when exploring the countryside and walking off an established

right of way was considered as something of a radical act.

The *Rambles in...* series continued throughout the inter-war period with volumes

covering the Cotswolds and South Devon published in 1933, Somerset in 1935, the

Cambrian Coast in 1936, the Wye Valley in 1938 and a further volume covering

South Devon in 1939.[59] What is most striking about the imagery associated with this

series of guidebooks are the covers. These are bright and bold and invariably show a

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[56] "The 'Hikers' Train, Railway Company's Happy Experiment."
[57] Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 77.
[58] Tom Stephenson, ed., *The Countryside Companion* (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1939), 15 - 32.
[59] Hugh E. Page, *Rambles in Shakespeare Land and the Cotswolds* (London: Great Western Railway, 1933); Hugh E. Page, *Rambles in South Devon* (London: Great Western Railway, 1933); Hugh E. Page, *Rambles around the Cambrian Coast* (London: Great Western Railway, 1936); Hugh E. Page, *Rambles and Walking Tours in the Wye Valley* (London: Great Western Railway, 1938); Hugh E. Page, *Rambles and Walking Tours in South Devon* (London: Great Western Railway, 1939); Ibid.

key type of landscape associated with the region along with a pair of healthy looking hikers (always a man *and* a woman) admiring the view in an example of what Matless called 'outlook Geography'.[60] The cover of *Rambles in the Chiltern Country* from 1931 (Figure 6.23) shows a man and a woman striding along a path with plus fours, walking sticks and a pipe. They look distinctly suburban, suggesting perhaps that it was possible to access the countryside, quickly and easily, from the city. The cover of *Rambles and Walking Tours in Somerset* from 1935 (Figure 6.24) shows a thatched cottage, typical for the area, with a man and a woman approaching it along a winding path. The man has with him a knapsack which was considered to be one of the 'good companions' of the hiker by Tom Stephenson in the *Countryside Companion* of 1939.[61] The knapsack makes further appearances on the covers of the volumes covering the Cambrian Coast from 1936 and South Devon from 1939 (see Figures 6.25 and 6.26). Healthy, bare-legged hikers are also the key image on the reissue of *Chiltern Country* from 1937 (Figure 6.27).

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[60] David Matless, "Regional Surveys and Local Knowledges: The Geographical Imagination in Britian, 1918 - 39," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 17, no. 4 (1992): 466.
[61] Stephenson, *The Countryside Companion*, 32.
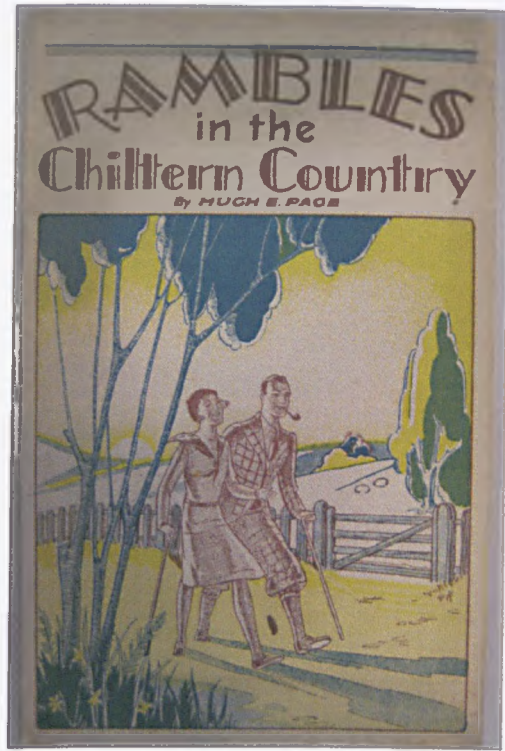
Figure 6.23. Front cover, *Rambles in the Chiltern Country* (1st Ed.).

Figure 6.24. Front cover, *Rambles and Walking Tours in Somerset.*
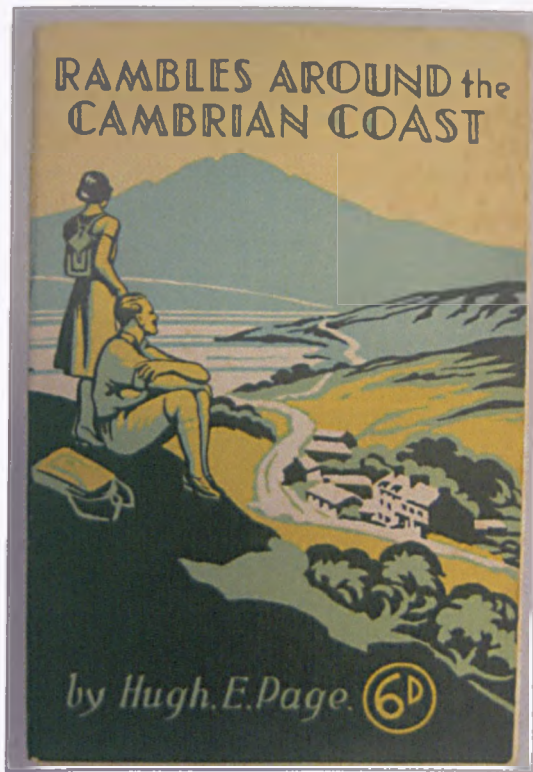
Figure 6.25. Front cover, *Rambles Around the Cambrian Coast.*

Figure 6.26. Front cover. *Rambles and Walking Tours in South Devon.*

Figure 6.27. Front cover, *Rambles in the Chiltern Country.*

These images show a landscape that was accessible; it was physically accessible

through the medium of the railway, implicit in the production of the series of books

although none of them had the name of the GWR or its device on the front or back

covers. It was also socially accessible to both men and women, this was made

abundantly clear by the happy smiling faces of the couples on the covers. The bright,

stylized designs appeared to link with the description of the hikers awaiting the

Hiker's Train in *The Times* of 1932 and are redolent of youth and vitality. These are

portrayals of an active landscape which is there to be moved through, explored,

understood and explained. These images are similar to those produced by Brian Cook

for the Batsford series of topographical books from the 1930s on and it would appear

that some of the images, those for the Cambrian Coast and Somerset, even make use

of the Jean Berte colour printing process as Cook did.[62]

Brace, in her work on the dust jackets of the Batsford books, has put forward the argument that the images of rural England that they portrayed were a 'dialogue between the modern world and the traditions of the countryside'.[63] The same notion can be put forward for the *Rambles in...* series covers; they show *outsiders* in the form of tourists, dressed in the uniform of boots and a knapsack, of the healthy rambler striding out into an unspoiled countryside that has only just become open to them. However, these images can be seen as more than just a dialogue, they represent the permeation of the countryside by the 'geographer-citizen' where the landscape was explored, mapped and assimilated through the performance of the tourist act. This notion is reinforced by the fact that the GWR's *Rambles in...* guidebooks contained more maps than actual illustrations.

The *Rambles in...* series took the counties and regions covered by the GWR and broke them down into small component parts that could be traversed in a day from one railway station to another. They represented the increasing accessibility of the rural landscape of Britain and the desire to explore and interact with it in ways that had not been thought either appropriate or possible before. The picturing of this new 'rambler's landscape' on the covers of the guidebooks reflected this dynamism and egalitarianism in a way that was both distinctive and unequivocal. Healthy men and women, with nothing more than shorts, boots and a knapsack, were now, thanks to the GWR, free to move at liberty around the landscapes and locations that they had

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[62] Brian Cook, *Brian Cook's Landscape's of Britain* (London: Batsford, 2010).
[63] Catherine Brace, "Envisioning England: the visual in countryside writing in the 1930s and 1940s," *Landscape Research* 28, no. 4 (October 2003): 375.

previously only seen from the window of the train. Along with the mythological,

monumental, touristic or picturesque, the 'rambler's landscape' was yet a further

development of the sophisticated heterotopia that was the GWR's tourist utopia.

Hugh E. Page wrote two more walking books for the GWR that were published in

1947.[64] Although other books were published in the late 1930s and mid 1940s few of

them can be seen as topographical guidebooks along the lines of those written by

Mais, Fraser or Page. The following section looks briefly at the role of the GWR's

annual gazetteer of holiday locations and destinations *Holiday Haunts* and puts

forward the argument that, within its pages, a similar development towards a more

active picturing of place can be seen.

Holiday Haunts and the changing representation of the GWR landscape.

So far, little has been said about the GWR's flagship publication *Holiday Haunts*.

There are two main reasons for this. First, *Holiday Haunts* was less of a guidebook

and more of a gazetteer, and was designed to cover the entirety of the GWR's network

providing basic factual data on accommodation, sporting attractions and adverts for

local goods, services and suppliers. As such it does not have the narrative content that

would classify it as a guidebook. Second, there has already been some research into

its history and content; the history of this gazetteer has been covered fairly thoroughly

by Wilson[65] while more scholarly work has been carried out into the ways in which

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[64] Hugh E. Page, *Walks around Manor House Hotel, near Moretonhampstead, Devon* (London: Great Western Railway, 1947); Hugh E. Page, *Walks around St. Ives, Cornwall* (London: Great Western Railway, 1947).
[65] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 104 - 121.

passengers were pictured in its pages by Medcalf.[66]

In sum, *Holiday Haunts* lacked the capacity to picture regions in the level of detail that the individual guidebooks did and, as such, cannot be seen to have *constructed* visual geographies of places in the same way. Many of the illustrations used in *Holiday Haunts* were culled from the regional guidebooks which means that, for the purposes of this research at least, *Holiday Haunts* is more of a derivative or secondary piece of work as opposed to the guidebooks themselves. However, it is very useful in providing a brief, broad-brush overview of the ways in which the picturing of landscapes and locations developed through the inter-war period.

The 1923 edition of *Holiday Haunts*, the first to be published after amalgamation, has 598 pages of listings, images and adverts along with an additional advertising supplement and a fold out map. It covers the GWR's network county by county in alphabetical order, which again moves it away from a guidebook which might more reasonably be expected to be arranged geographically. It makes a bold claim in the introduction

> The object of this volume is to impart to holiday-makers of all classes
> and every nationality... such information as will enable them to secure a
> maximum of change, rest, pleasure or sport at a minimum of expenditure
> and fatigue.[67]

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[66] Alex Medcalf, "Picturing the Passenger as Customer in Great Britain, 1903 - 1939" (York: University of York, 2011).
[67] Unknown, *Holiday Haunts, Season 1923* (London: Great Western Railway, 1923), 13.

Holiday Haunts was therefore, by its own admission in 1923, more didactic than discursive and the images included for each county support this. In general the illustrations included are photographic and of a standard size with two on each page with a wide white border provided by the art paper on which they were printed although there are occasional full-page images. There are 39 images in total for Cornwall (by far the most for any of the counties) and these images concentrate, in the main, on purely tourist locations. Although there are the occasional images of sublime and picturesque scenes such as *Yelverton – the Rock*, (see Figure 6.28) the visual portrayal of Cornwall in *Holiday Haunts* lacks the depth and subtlety of its picturing in the dedicated regional guidebooks. It would be inaccurate to say that there is only one type of landscape represented in the 1923 *Holiday Haunts* but equally it is clear that what is pictured is noticeably less layered and sophisticated than that to be found in the regional guidebooks.

Figure 6.28. *Yelverton - the Rock* from 1923 edition of *Holiday Haunts*.

There are several reasons why this may have been the case. At times, the public may have been desirous purely of information to allow them to book and arrange their holiday. The prose guidebook is often very good at whetting the appetite or of providing ideas of what to visit but the gazetteer could provide basic information that

would be essential for the mechanics of tourism. In addition to this there is the simple matter of space constraints. The 1923 *Holiday Haunts* was almost 600 pages long and to have covered all the multiplicities of place inherent in the regions would have led to a book that was unfeasibly large to both print and use.

The 1927 edition contained just over 1000 pages and, to continue the example, Cornwall was allotted 47 illustrations. This contrasts sharply with the 104 pages of photographs that would be included in Mais' *Cornish Riviera* of 1928. Again, the images were, in the main, of golf courses, cliffs and beaches (see *Lelant Golf Course and Portreath, near Redruth*, Figure 6.29) and the space constraints have again limited the depth that can be portrayed. In addition to this, the images were once again printed square to the paper, either one full-page image or two to a page.
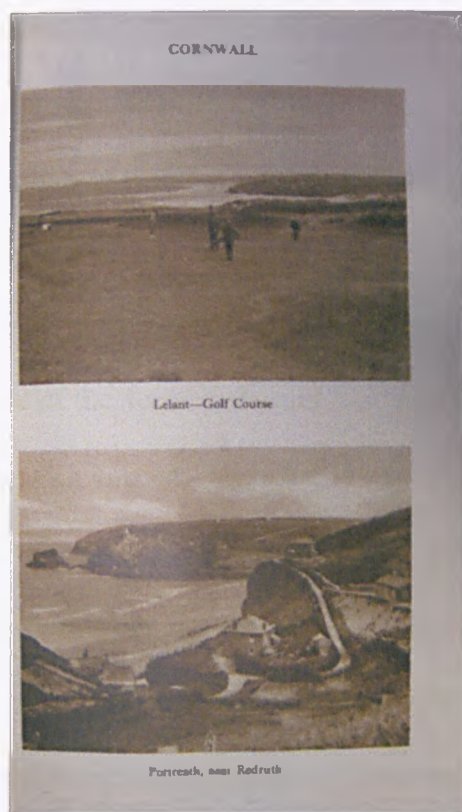
Figure 6.29. *Lelant Golf Course, Portreath, near Redruth* from 1927 edition of *Holiday Haunts.*

However, this was all to change in April 1929 when Maxwell Fraser, the daughter of

the head of the Publicity Department, was given the job of rewriting and, in effect, rebranding *Holiday Haunts*.[68] In March 1930 Fraser wrote an extended article titled 'The Production of "Holiday Haunts"' for the *GWRM* which detailed the amount of work needed to compile the guide on an annual basis.[69] While it becomes somewhat mired in printing technicalities it does demonstrate exactly how much effort went into each new edition.

Her influence is easy to discern and by 1935 it is possible to see that there has been a dramatic change to *Holiday Haunts*, both in look and feel. Immediately it is possible to see that the ways in which the photographs themselves were laid out on the page had changed. They were no longer static and framed by a border of white paper, the images had been cut up and cropped into different shapes and tessellated on the page (see pages 170 – 171, Figure 6.30). This gave the page a dynamic feel and suggested movement and vibrancy. On page 23 of this edition there is an image of *Smiling Somerset* which includes a shot of would-be tourist farmers (Figure 6.31). They are leading a horse and cart laden with hay and carry the tools, such as hay rakes and forks, that one would expect but they are all women dressed in bathing costumes and caps. In this image, the role of the 'local' or farmer has been fully appropriated by the tourist and the image portrays a nonsensical *reductio ad absurdum* whereby the 'authentic' has been rendered wholly false by its portrayal within a tourist context. However, while Cornwall, in this edition, has only 40 images to illustrate it, these images are markedly different from those that had been used before. There are many more shots of tourists on the beach acting out the various tourist performances that

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[68] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 116.
[69] Maxwell Fraser, "The Production of 'Holiday Haunts'," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, March 1930, 101 - 104.

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were expected within a given location, for example, on page 182, people play volleyball and sunbathe on a thronged beach (Figure 6.32). While there are still many examples of the wild coastal scenery that had been used for around 30 years, a change can be detected in the content of these images that begins to suggest a different way of picturing the same places.
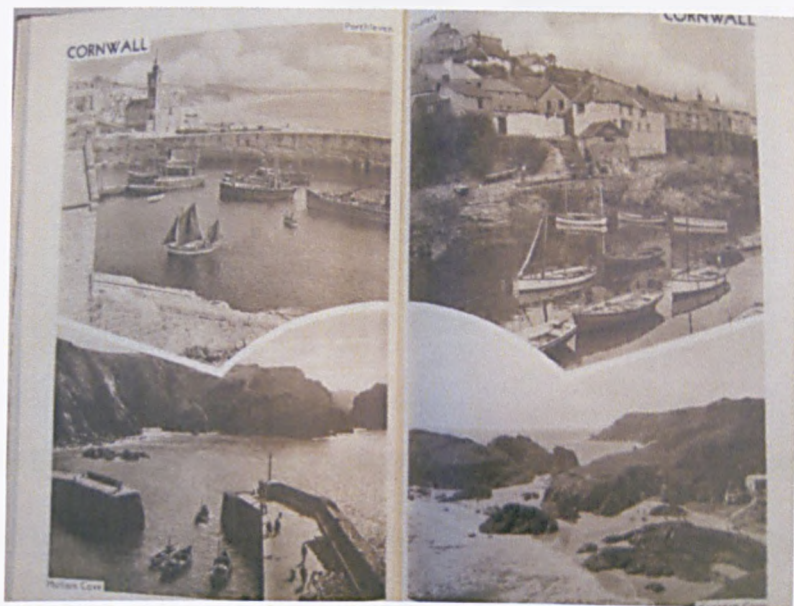
Figure 6.30. Page layout from 1935 edition of *Holiday Haunts*.

Figure 6.31. Tourist/farmers from 1935 edition of *Holiday Haunts*.

Figure 6.32. *Newquay* from 1935 edition of *Holiday Haunts.*

By the 1938 edition even more of the images being used to portray the GWR's landscape had become active in nature, although these images were, for the most part, staged.[70] This staging of the experiences of the tourist reflects a further move away from a passive portrayal of the landscape and towards a construction of it as an active place where the tourist could interact and participate. Remaining with the *Holiday Haunts* portrayal of Cornwall, images such as *Sun Bathers* and *Ready for a Swim* (Figures 6.33 and 6.34) show how the role of people *in* the landscape has begun to overtake representations of landscapes with people included almost as incidental occurrences; a move away from novelty of place towards a novelty of behaviour. Similar examples can be found throughout the GWR's territory as pictured in *Holiday Haunts*. Interestingly, the cover of this edition shows a picture of a woman sunbathing on a beach and reading a book that appears to be a piece of GWR literature (see Figure 6.35). From a semiotic point of view it represents a *closed loop* whereby the tourist is

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[70] Maxwell Fraser, *Holiday Haunts Season 1938* (London: Great Western Railway, 1938).

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urged to visit a place because of the images of sunbathing beauties on the beach and then, once arrived, spends their time sunbathing on the beach reading more GWR tourist literature, perhaps about where to visit next.

Figure 6.33. *Sun Bathers* from 1938 edition of *Holiday Haunts*.

Figure 6.34. *Ready for a Swim* from 1938 edition of *Holiday Haunts*.
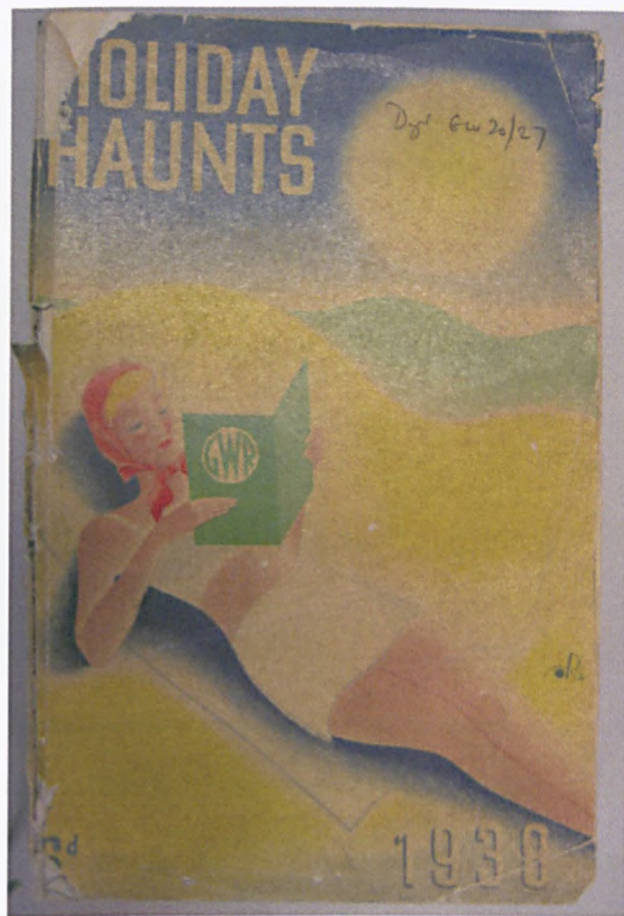
The 1940 edition continued this trend and, remaining with the portrayal of Cornwall, staged images of families enjoying themselves had become even more numerous.[71] Such images as *Keeping Fit in Cornwall* and *Waiting for the Tide* were beginning to outnumber those of the village with the parish church at its heart. Other regions were also portrayed in this way, *Weymouth for Sunshine* (Figure 6.36) in the section for Dorset shows two women, obviously models, waving while reclining on railings. It is possible to see that they have been superimposed onto the background image of Weymouth beach and that the image of the women was most probably taken in a studio. There are many other examples of this technique and this seems to suggest that the landscape had been pushed even further into the background in favour of images of

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[71] Maxwell Fraser, *Hoiday Haunts Season 1940* (London: Great Western Railway, 1940).

the tourist experience (however staged that might be).

The 1940 edition was the last to be produced due to the war but, in December 1944

Maxwell Fraser was released by the Government from her war work and allowed to

return to the GWR to commence compiling a further edition of the guide.[72] This

edition did not appear until 1947 and it was to be the last as nationalisation followed in

January 1948. The images in this edition contained even more examples of those that

were staged or made up in the studio. The title page for the section on Cornwall shows

a mother with her happy, smiling child on the beach (Figure 6.37). Both are dressed

for sunny weather and, by the mother's side, can be seen her knitting- an occupation

that would keep her suitably occupied while the children were playing. This image

appears to have been taken outdoors but the strong lighting suggests that it was

artificially lit and that the image was very much constructed and composed. Similarly,

the section on *Picturesque Wales* has an image called *First Class Restaurant Car*

which shows a busy dining car with passengers being served dinner (Figure 6.38). In

this image it is possible to see that, out of the window, rather than there being a

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[72] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 121.

picturesque landscape, there is a train yard. This image was taken when the train was stationary and in a siding, it was artificially lit and filled with models/passengers being served food and waited upon. The entire image has been constructed and the landscape has been edited completely in favour of a visualisation of the experience of the passenger.

Figure 6.37. Section title page from 1947 edition of *Holiday Haunts*.

FIRST CLASS RESTAURANT CAR

Figure 6.38. *First Class Restaurant Car* from 1947 edition of *Holiday Haunts.*

While this section has been only a brief look at the visual content of *Holiday Haunts*, it has attempted to show that the GWR's picturing of landscapes and locations changed substantially through the 1930s and into the mid 1940s. While *Holiday Haunts* was not as detailed or nuanced as the individual regional guidebooks produced during this period, it is useful in that it provides a broad-brush overview of the way that the GWR's picturing of landscapes and locations became more active and participatory over time. It moved towards a visual representation of a *novelty of behaviour* whereby it highlighted the ways in which it was possible to act differently as a tourist in certain tourist locations. This was instead of a *novelty of place*, something which the GWR had previously made use of, which simply documented the otherness of the landscapes and locations that could be visited without necessarily touching on the different behaviours that could be performed or experienced there. In this way, *Holiday Haunts* echoes the trajectory of the regional guidebooks which moved from the more didactic, pre-1914 style of *The Cambrian Coast*, through the reworked visualisations featured in Mais' *Cornish Riviera* and Fraser's *Glorious Devon* and on to the more constructivist landscapes of Page's *Rambles in…* series. In the case of *Holiday Haunts* it could easily

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be argued that it was the influence of the Frasers, both father and daughter, that brought about this change, but, it has already been shown that, as with the *Rambles in...* series, such changes could also be responses to changes in fashion, legislation and politics. The following case study looks at another instance of how external events influence the GWR's portrayal of landscapes and locations and adds further weight to the notion that the tourist place was both heterotopic and able to respond dynamically to change and upheaval.

Case Study: *Legend Land*: Imaginative Geographies of Continuity, 1922 – 1923.

As has already been discussed, both in this chapter and in the previous one, the tourist utopia of the GWR was one that was constructed of many interleaving facets which together created a densely woven phenomenon made up of geographical locations imbued with different layers of significance and meaning; in short, they actively created *places*. As has also being shown, the GWR were particularly interested in representing the past. This was characterised by the reproduction of many old prints and paintings in their guidebooks which allowed the tourist to feel the presence-at-hand of the past alongside the tourist present. This case study details the visual content of a four volume series of books that went one step further than simply picturing the past; the *Legend Land* series of 1922 and 1923 overlaid a structure of myths onto the regions that the GWR served in the form of guidebooks that covered not which resort, hotel, town or village to visit but the myths and legends that were to be found in the landscapes that were served by the railway. It will be argued that, in the case of these guidebooks, images of the legendary and mythic were employed as a response to the changes brought about by the 1921 Railway Act and that the

publication of such romantic material was not simply a retreat from the modern world but an active attempt to engage with modernity and change.

The four volume series entitled *Legend Land*, published in 1922 and 1923 (two volumes in each year) warrant only a paragraph in Burdett Wilson's survey of the GWR's publicity material. They are however considered by him to be 'productions of high quality' and to mark the beginning of a new phase in the GWR's production of sale publications.[73] Bennett's in-depth study of the GWR's textual oeuvre mentions this series only in passing as a footnote.[74] However, Vernon, makes good use of them in putting forward the argument that they represented the construction of a 'pre-modern pastoral Eden'.[75] However, this case study will consider the *Legend Land* series in greater detail and will posit the notion that, as a series, they reflect not only the GWR's desire to be seen as steeped in tradition but they were also, in some way, responses to the changes being brought about by the 1921 Railways Act.

The GWR only resumed production of their sale publications in 1922 after suspension brought about by shortages and the need to economise over the years of the First World War.[76] However, although the gazetteer guide *Holiday Haunts* appeared in 1921 the GWR were not alone in this as it was agreed at a meeting of the Advertising Representatives at the Railway Clearing House on 24 October 1919 '[t]hat the majority of the Holiday Guides for various districts, which were published by the different Companies prior to 1914, be not restarted for the year 1920'.[77] This meant

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[73] Ibid., 88.
[74] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 106.
[75] James Vernon, "Border Crossings: Cornwall and the English (imagi)nation," in *Imagining Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 165.
[76] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 87.
[77] Railway Clearing House, "RAIL 1080/51, Minutes of Meetings of Advertising Representatives, Minutes 24 Oct 1919", 1919.

that most of the railway companies had a seven year hiatus in publishing guidebooks and that the material that had previously been published must have begun to look distinctly old fashioned and out of date. 1921 also marked the appointment of Felix Pole to the position of General Manager and it is perhaps no coincidence that the redevelopment of the GWR's sale publications and guidebooks should have come about at the same time as this enthusiastic and dynamic individual took control of the company.

The *Legend Land* series began life, in May 1922, as a short run of duo-fold pamphlets. Each one had an illustrated cover and was entitled *The Line to Legend Land*. Inside the legend was attractively type-set and there were further, smaller, illustrations scattered throughout the text. This first series comprised twelve stories, six each from Cornwall and Wales. While there was no mention in the *GWRM* of the publication of the first series there was a small notice posted in the September edition that talked about '[t]he extraordinary popularity of the first series of leaflets' and the intention to publish a further twelve stories, in the same format, on Cornwall and Devon. Copies of the leaflets could be obtained by posting two pence in stamps to the Superintendent of the Line at Paddington Station.[78] *The Railway Gazette,* however, carried a notice, not only for the first series of pamphlets but also for the second. Regarding the first series the reviewer enthused that the GWR 'has happily been inspired to tell anew, and in a very attractive fashion, the old legends and romances of the famed West Countree [sic].' He goes on to say that '[c]lear printing on a good quality paper greatly enhances the attractiveness of the leaflets, for which we should think there is bound to be a good demand when once the fact of their existence

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[78] "The Romance of the West," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, September 1922, 425.

becomes known'.[79] In addition to this *The Railway Gazette* confirmed the popularity

of the first series by stating that they were 'very well received and the second series...

will doubtless receive equal appreciation'.[80] There are, however, no notices in either

the *GWRM* or *The Railway Gazette* from 1923 relating to the third or fourth series of

pamphlets or the combined volumes. Interestingly, the 1923 edition of the GWR's

gazetteer, *Holiday Haunts* carried a short paragraph referring only to the first two

volumes which suggests that volumes three and four were published only after

Holiday Haunts had gone to press early in that year.[81]

It is clear, then, that there was an appetite for these stories that made it worthwhile to

commission a further series, print and distribute them. The author of these pamphlets

was indicated only by the pseudonym *Lyonesse*, itself a reference to the mythical,

Atlantis-type, island said to have existed in the Atlantic somewhere between Land's

End and the Scillies. Burdett Wilson identifies this individual as George Basil

Barham;[82] and unfortunately there is little known about this writer.[83]

The pamphlets were in fact so popular that later in 1922 both sets were reissued in

collected volumes which, retailing at sixpence each, comprised volumes one and two

of the *Legend Land* series. Volumes three and four would appear later in 1923 and

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[79] "Pubications Received," *Railway Gazette*, 9 June, 1922, 915.
[80] "Publications Received," *Railway Gazette*, 8 September, 1922, 303.
[81] Unknown, *Holiday Haunts, Season 1923*, 16.
[82] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 88.

[83] According to the 1881 census he was born in 1873 as George Basil Joseph Barham in Whitstable, Kent and was the son of a congregational minister. By the time of the 1891 census he has been apprenticed to an engineer and, by 1901, is listed in the census return as an 'Electrical Mechanical Engineer' and also as an 'Employer'. It is clear that Barham had an interest in writing about science as he had previously published in 1912 a volume on the history of the light bulb. However, quite why this writer was chosen by the GWR to write about the myths and legends of their line is unknown and there is no mention of his appointment in the *GWRM* or in the archive material that has been consulted.

also are billed, on the contents page, as being 'a reprint in book form of the third [or fourth] series of *Line to Legend Land* leaflets'.[84] In total 52 stories were published as part of the series with thirteen stories in each volume (volumes one and two both contained an additional story to complement the original twelve) and collectively they cover almost the entirety of the GWR system. The *Legend Land* series explicitly roots the GWR's landscape in a mythical framework of folklore and legend and the following discussion of both the visual and textual elements of the four volumes will seek to locate these representations of landscapes and locations (real or imagined) in both their cultural and historical contexts.

While Bennett does not discuss this series he commented that, textually, there was an 'emphasis upon historical traditions and the quality and diversity of the aesthetic experience was evident throughout [their] entire body of literature'[85] and that the GWR's material encouraged the tourist to 'participate in both the past and the present'.[86] This case study demonstrates that such an emphasis was also present within the images chosen to portray the region.

The GWR's use of myth and legend in the early 1920s to construct notions of place was not out of keeping with a tradition that had a pedigree of several decades. Indeed, it has been argued that the whole concept of *Celtic* was 'a fabrication... formed by a particularly romantic reaction to a dominant industrial and post-industrial materialism' designed to encourage tourism.[87] In this way, the use of romantic or mythological

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[84] Lyonesse, *Legend Land. Volume Three. Being a further collection of some of the Old Tales told in those Western Parts of Britain served by the Great Western Railway* (London: Great Western Railway, 1923), 2.
[85] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 86.
[86] Ibid., 85.
[87] John Lowerson, "Celtic Tourism- Some Recent Magnets," *Cornish Studies* 2 (1994): 128.

leitmotifs as signifying a rejection of the modern world, a dislike of change or simply

a desire to connect more fully with a time or place considered to be more *authentic* can

be seen as significant symptom of the anxieties that went had in hand with modernity

(as outlined in Chapter Two). William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement have

been described as having 'a hatred of modern civilisation' that stimulated them to

produce their art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their adoption

of pseudo-medieval and Arthurian stylistic tropes to express this hatred is significant.[88]

However, the use of such aesthetics was not only related to a rejection of the modern

world, they could also be used to comment on contemporary cultural and societal

values. But this was not just a late Victorian phenomenon, Brace, in her study of the

landscape of the Cotswolds and its relationship to English national identity up to 1950

comments that the 'distant but enduring past' was used to censure inappropriate

buildings or building materials that 'were seen to disrupt the harmony between place,

dwelling and society'[89] and Matless has pointed out just how influential understandings

of nature and mysticism were to contemporary geographers in the 1920s.[90] In this way,

the use of ancient or mythological narratives can also be a means to critique the socio-

cultural norms of a period and not simply express a rejection of them.

In this case study the GWR's use of such mythic frameworks will be shown as not

simply the adoption of quaint, romantic notions of a pre-industrial Celtic Sublime, as

Bennett has termed the GWR's treatment of, for example, Ireland and Wales, but as a

statement or dialogue about and with the wider world being made and re-made around

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[88] Alan Crawford, "Ideas and Objects: the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain,"
Design Issues 13, no. 1 (1997): 15.
[89] Brace, "Looking back: the Cotswolds and English national identity, c. 1890 -
1950," 506.
[90] David Matless, "Nature, the Modern and the Mystic: Tales from Early Twentieth
Century Geography," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16, no. 3
(1991): 272 - 286.

it.[91] In particular it will put forward the argument that the GWR made use of mythical imagery and narratives to reinforce the longevity of its identity and to demonstrate its continuity throughout the period of upheaval in the railways engendered by the 1921 Railway Act.

In form, each of the stories told in the four volumes follows roughly the same layout. They begin with a large illustration referred to in this research as the primary illustration followed by the text of the story; following the text a smaller secondary images was included. Throughout all of the stories there is a stable relationship between the primary and secondary images insofar as the primary image depicts a scene from the myth itself, often focussing on a key protagonist or event and is fantastical and mythological in its subject. In contrast the secondary image shows a place that is *real*, one that could be visited, seen and experienced by a tourist. For example, the first story in the first volume of the series, *The Mermaid of Zennor*, has, for its primary image a picture of the mermaid calling to a young sailor on board a ship (Figure 6.39) while the secondary image shows a carved bench end in the local church (Figure 6.40).[92] The primary image shows the reader something that they cannot possibly hope to see in the real world while the secondary shows them something that they can see, feel and experience as being a part of that myth. The primary image evokes the romance and mystery of the landscape; the secondary image, while smaller, provides a visual cue that roots the legend into a tangible landscape and provides an element of geographical fixity appropriate to a guidebook. This is also reflected in the text which regales the reader with the legend before

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[91] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 76 - 109.
[92] Lyonesse, *Legend Land. Volume One. Being a collection of some of the Old Tales told in those Western Parts of Britain served by the Great Western Railway* (London: Great Western Railway, 1922), 3 - 6.

spending the last paragraph providing more prosaic details about distances from

Paddington and the availability of local services.
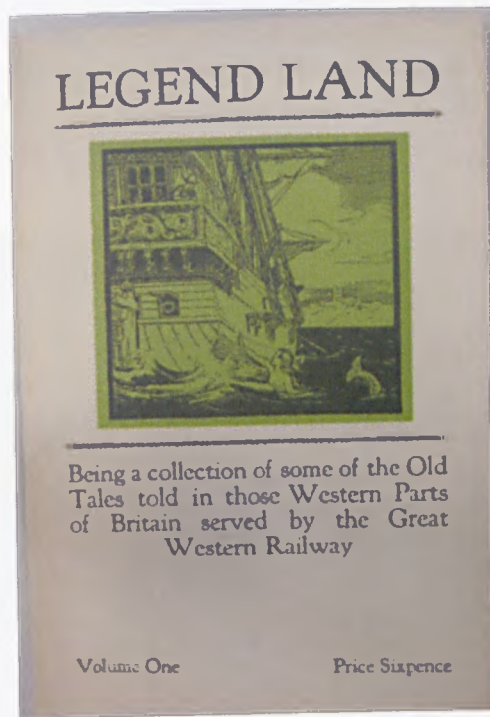
Figure 6.39. Front cover of volume one *Legend Land* showing primary images from *The Mermaid of Zennor*.
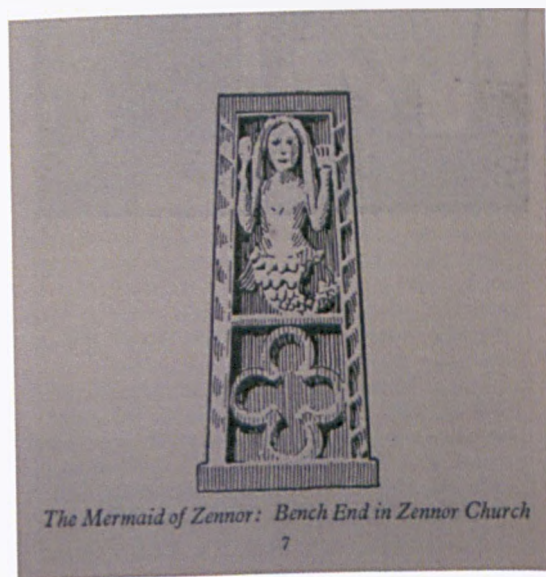
Figure 6.40. Secondary image from *The Mermaid of Zennor*.

This picturing of the mythical and the real continues throughout all of the volumes.

Volume Two opens with *The Old Woman Who Fooled the Devil* and the primary

image shows the devil beckoning to an old woman while standing on a bridge (Figure

6.41); the secondary image shows an image of the actual Devil's Bridge near Aberystwyth (Figure 6.42).[93] In volume three *How the Dodman was Named* includes a primary image of an unconscious giant being rolled off a cliff (Figure 6.43) while the secondary image shows the coastal village of Mevagissey as it would have appeared in the 1920s (Figure 6.44).

Figure 6.41. Primary image from *The Old Woman Who Fooled the Devil.*

Devil's Bridge, Aberystwyth
43
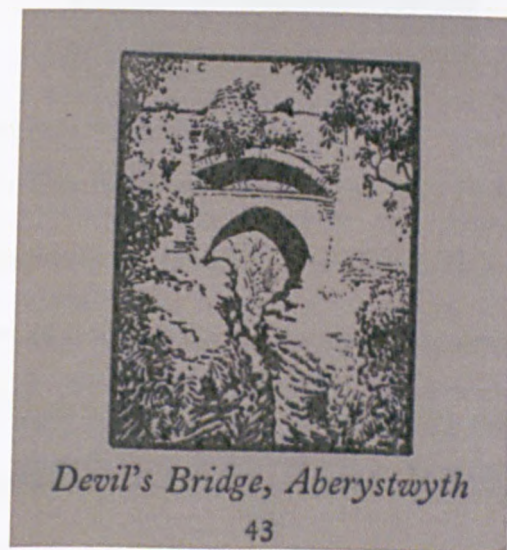
Figure 6.42. Secondary image from *The Old Woman Who Fooled the Devil.*

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[93] Lyonesse, *Legend Land. Volume Two. Being a collection of some of the Old Tales told in those Western Parts of Britain served by the Great Western Railway* (London: Great Western Railway, 1922), 3 - 6.

HOW THE DODMAN WAS NAMED.
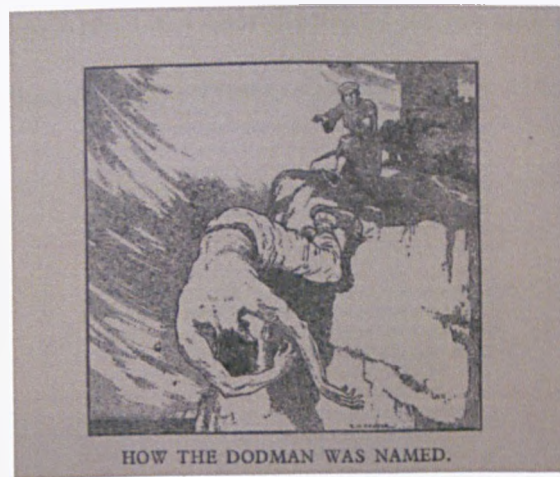
Figure 6.43. Primary image from *How the Dodman was Named*.

Mevagissey.

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Figure 6.44. Secondary image from *How the Dodman was Named*.

The story *King Arthur's Camelot* from volume four[94] has a primary image showing King Arthur and his knights at the round table (Figure 6.45) while the secondary image shows the hillfort of Cadbury Castle (supposed location of Camelot) set in a landscape of ploughed fields and hedgerows (Figure 6.46). All of the stories have the same visual content; the mythological is overlaid onto the earthly in such a way that the mythical is grounded in the real and the real is imbued with mythical significance.

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[94] Lyonesse, *Legend Land. Volume Four. Being a further collection of some of the Old Tales told in those nearer Western parts of Britain served by the Great Western Railway* (London: Great Western Railway, 1923), 3 - 6.

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The illustrations exist as a form of visual shorthand for the statement that the GWR frequently used, that theirs was *The Line to Legend Land*.
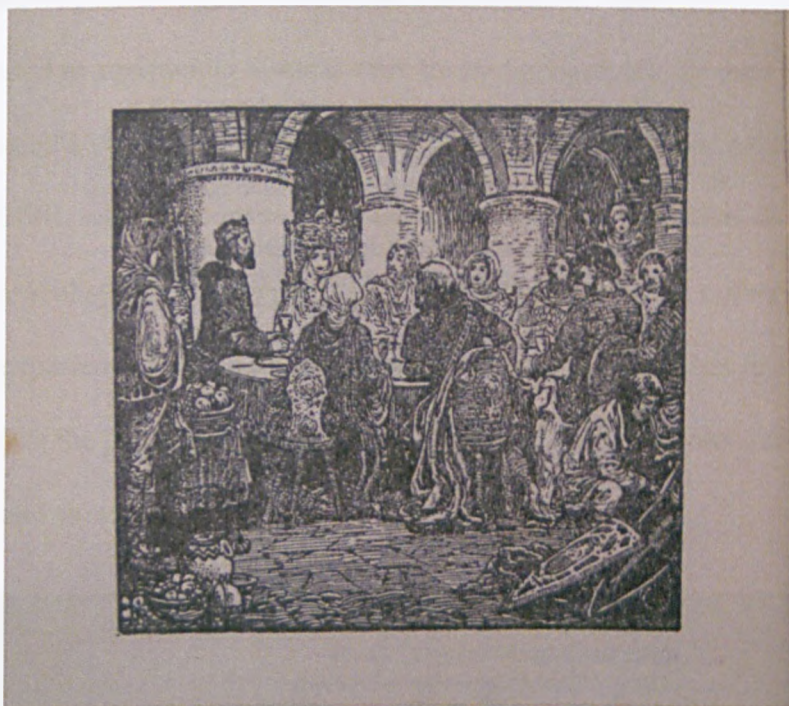
Figure 6.45. Primary image from *King Arthur's Camelot*.

Figure 6.46. Secondary image from *King Arthur's Camelot*.

This grounding of mythological narratives by overlaying them onto a tangible, physical topography is continued in the *Legend Land* series through to the endpapers which carried maps showing the entire GWR rail system (Figure 6.47). Each of the stories included in a particular volume were located geographically onto the map in a way that created a palimpsest of the real and the fantastic where one bled into the other. The GWR, with these maps, were using mythological narratives to put forward an alternative reality that ran counter to the everyday reality that a railway traveller might have experienced. It can be seen here that myth and legend has been used, not simply to reject the modern, but to add to, develop and change it into something with more depth and subtlety.
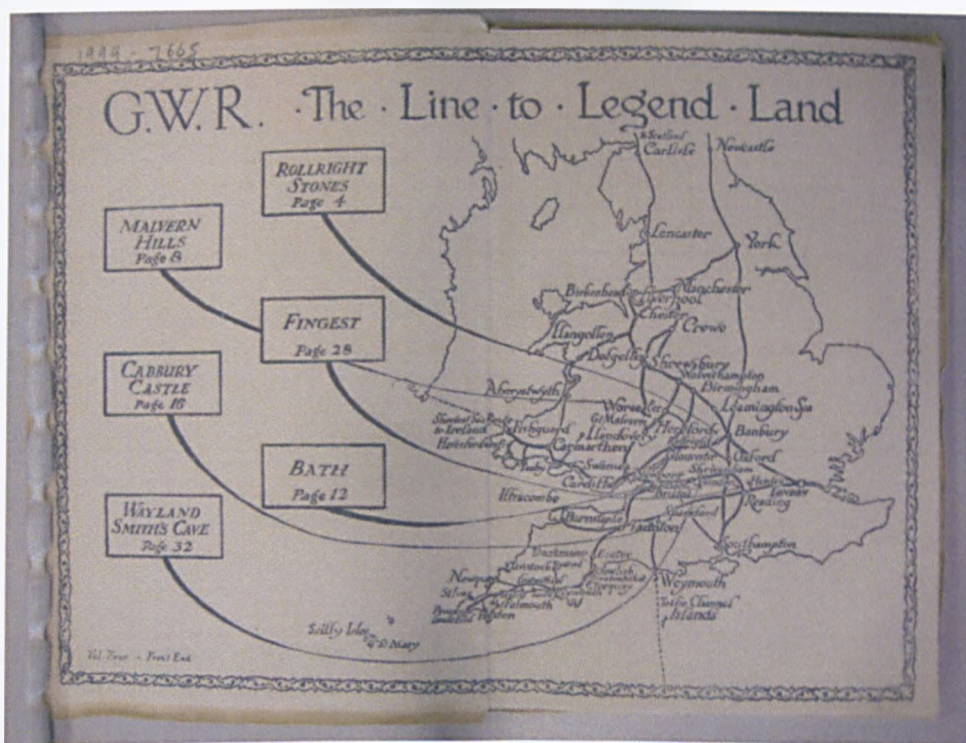
Figure 6.47. Map from front end papers of volume four of *Legend Land.*

In attempting to understand the meaning behind these volumes their most significant aspects are their dates of publication: 1922 and 1923. These books straddle the process of amalgamation brought about by the 1921 Railways Act. This process was

one of uncertainty and anxiety as over 120 railway companies were absorbed into just four larger concerns; such anxiety is characterised by a cartoon in *The Railway Gazette* of December 1922, just before amalgamation, (Figure 6.48) which shows the key companies of the LMSR before a large black cat asking the question 'Which way is that cat going to jump?'[95]

Which way is that Cat going to jump ?

Black Cats are Lucky.

Reproduction of page from L. & N.W.R. (Northern Division) Christmas Card.

Figure 6.48. Cartoon from *The Railway Gazette*, December 1922.

The Railways Act of 1921 was designed as a response to the seriously damaged financial and economic environment in Great Britain in the immediate aftermath of World War One. Controls put in place by Government during the war 'had disguised deficiencies in maintenance expenditure and investment, as well as imbalances

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[95] "A Railway 'Greetings' Card," *The Railway Gazette*, December 29, 1922, 880.

between operating costs and revenue' and as such it was decided that, in order to ensure the economic stability of the railway network, it would be necessary to consolidate the 123 pre-1914 railway companies into four larger companies (the *Big Four*) covering almost the entire British Isles.[96]

The 1921 Act came into effect on 1 January 1923. In practical terms the GWR absorbed a total of 33 other railways along with their locomotives and rolling stock. But, as Channon points out, 'it must be emphasized that the overall change in the GWR's scale of operations was not nearly so dramatic as that experienced by the other leading companies'.[97] What, then, marked out the GWR's experience of the process of 'Grouping' as far less traumatic than that experienced by the London and North Eastern, Southern and London, Midland and Scottish Railways?

As a company the GWR had always attempted to gain as much control as possible over the regions it served and had been thwarted in this aim by the large number of small industrial railways. However, through a long series of mergers and manoeuvres the GWR, by the time of grouping, had already leased or directly worked a third of the companies that were to be absorbed into it.[98] This meant that, administratively speaking, the GWR was already in a strong position to assimilate different companies and working practices into their own organisation. When the Railways Act came into effect in January 1923, the GWR had, by agreeing the preliminaries of the absorption of the last six railway companies that would constitute the post-1923 company, completed much of this process as early as May 1922.[99] The *Railway Gazette*, writing

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[96] Geoffrey Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940: Studies in Business History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 129.
[97] Ibid., 144.
[98] Ibid., 132.
[99] "The Railways Act, 1921," *Railway Gazette*, 16 September, 1921, 427.

on 12 May of that year, stated that, with the agreement of the amalgamation of the Barry Railway, the GWR had completed 'in fact, if not in form, the process of amalgamation of this group' meaning that, when the time finally came, the GWR had had seven months to reorganise and adapt to the changed business environment that the *Big Four* found themselves in.[100] When this is considered in conjunction with the three other key factors: the greater size of the GWR to its subsidiary companies, their existing close working relations with many of them and the similarities of their management structures[101] it is no surprise that the GWR felt that it had had something of a smooth ride when, in January 1923, it claimed that the grouping process "Never even blew me cap off!"[102] (Figure 6.49).

Figure 6.49. Cartoon from *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1923.

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[100] "Great Western Amalgamation and Absorption," *Railway Gazette*, 12 May, 1922, 760.
[101] Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940*, 144.
[102] "A Survival of Title," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1923, 30.

If the 1921 Railways Act was to enable a consolidation of the railway infrastructure in a changing world then the *Legend Land* series can similarly be seen as an attempt to consolidate both the imaginative and physical geography of the GWR. By constructing and promulgating an imaginative geography of myths, legends and romances the GWR can be seen as establishing a framework of foundation myths that are firmly rooting what is, post-1923, effectively a *new* company in a deep historical and mythological context. Like many of the pre-Grouping railway companies the GWR had, as has already been stated, published a large number of guide-books to its resorts and regions thought to be of interest to tourists. This continuity, something which the GWR alone could lay claim to post-1923, was a powerful tool in negotiating the 'upheavals' of Grouping. It helped to construct a common identity among the absorbed companies that constituted the remade GWR.

There is strong evidence to corroborate this theory of consolidation and continuity in the transcripts of the GWR's Annual General Meeting of 1923 where a section headed 'Old Traditions Maintained' sets out how the GWR saw itself and the importance it placed on the continuity of tradition within the business structure of the organisation. The Secretary of the company, Mr. A. E. Bolter, made the case plain:

> In short, our desire has been to preserve our old traditions as far as possible, and to maintain the high reputation which our staff have established for efficiency of service, or working and of civility.[103]

Perhaps, most significantly, he goes on to describe the year 1923 as 'A.D. 1 of the greater Great Western Company' a statement which, in itself, neatly encapsulates both the desire to maintain the company's traditions and the acknowledgement of the

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[103] "British Railway Meetings," *Railway Gazette*, 23 February, 1923, 307.

enlargement of the company after Grouping.[104] This was a sentiment that was repeated publicly in the introduction to the 1923 edition of their gazetteer *Holiday Haunts* when the transformation of the company was put in plain terms: "the Great Western has become the Greater Great Western".[105] In this context, the publication of the *Legend Land* series can be viewed as an element of this struggle for continuity and a tool with which to better assimilate the acquisitions into the mythical 'whole' of the GWR. The fact that the appearance of the first series of pamphlets in May 1922 coincides, to the month, with the GWR's completion 'in fact, if not in form, [of] the process of amalgamation' may, or may not, be significant. However, the fact that, over an 18 month period, during which all of the railway companies in Great Britain were struggling to come to terms with a radically changed working environment, the GWR took the time and effort to commission, print and circulate a series of high quality volumes that focussed not on the holiday resorts and tourist destinations that might be associated with a purely financial end, but on the myths and legends of the landscapes and locations that they served most probably is. In addition to this, over 85 per cent of the locations covered in the *Legend Land* series were served solely by the GWR both before and after amalgamation which further suggests a physical landscape and an imaginative geography relatively unchanged by the 1921 Railways Act. In this way, the *Legend Land* series can be seen very much as a product of its legislative and administrative times.

This chapter continues the argument for a tourist utopia constructed by the GWR that was heterotopic in character, where several radically different types of place coexisted in the same geographical region. The *Legend Land* series was an attempt, on the part

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[104] Ibid.
[105] Unknown, *Holiday Haunts, Season 1923*, 13.

of the GWR to link people, place and a shared mythic structure in an act of corporate place-making during a period of upheaval and the images that were used in the series played a vital role in that process. This case study has attempted to demonstrate that picturings of mythic or legendary landscapes were an important part of the GWR's understanding of itself; in addition to this it has attempted to place these picturings of myth and legend into a contemporary business historical context and link their use with the attempt, by the GWR, to consolidate and highlight continuity in the face of the changes wrought by amalgamation of the railways in 1923.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the ways in which the GWR portrayed landscapes and location in their guidebooks and publicity material through the inter-war years and up to nationalisation in 1948. These portrayals, collectively, went towards creating the GWR's tourist utopia which was, as has been stressed, heterotopic in nature. There are three key conclusions that can be drawn from this research; first, that the GWR continued to use images of landscapes and locations to portray the multiplicities of place that made up the tourist understandings of the regions that they served. Second, that there was a move away from images that can be broadly characterised as portraying a somewhat passive *novelty of place* towards those that pictured a more active *novelty of behaviour*. Third, that the GWR's imaginative geography was itself dynamic and able to respond to both economic and socio-cultural change outside of the company itself.

The GWR moved into the inter-war period with a well established archive of guidebooks and publicity material that it had developed over the preceding two decades. As has already been shown in Chapter Five, the ways in which images of

landscapes and locations were used put forward a complex layering of associations and experiences which defined regions such as Cornwall not as single entities where only a limited array of experiences could be found but as a nexus where many different places came together in the same geographical space. Cornwall, for example, could be a landscape of busy seaside resorts or of wild, sublime moors; the landscape was punctuated by the monuments and ruins of a deep historical context but was also portrayed as fully modern and, most importantly, accessible. The tourist's experience of Cornwall, or any other region for that matter, was varied and multifarious and differed as much from their experience of their own everyday existence as the experience of a local resident of, say, Porthcawl did to the tourist experience of the same place. The GWR continued with this characterisation of their tourist regions throughout the inter-war period and, if anything, added to the different layers of experience with the introduction of a more active picturing of landscape and location to counter and complement the more staid views of villages and churches.

It is put forward here that the move towards a portrayal of the novelty of behaviour from the early 1930s was a direct response to a shift in the holiday market that perhaps saw previously up-market resorts become more accessible to less up-market tourists. These changes in taste and their subsequent impact on changes of habit have been outlined in Chapter One. Urry has pointed out that changes in legislation relating to workers rights and paid holidays were directly benefitting the working classes from the early 1920s on and that, with the introduction of the Holidays Act of 1938, the numbers of people able to become tourists increased dramatically.[106] This widening of the available market could well have led to the GWR's increasing use of models, staged shots and images directive of how to act and behave within a tourist context;

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[106] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 27.

perhaps it was felt that such a new market may well have needed direction to ensure that they got the most out of their precious time away from the workplace. Indeed, as has already been discussed, books such as *The Countryside Companion* were explicit in their aim to educate and inform a readership assumed to be novices.

However, a note of caution must be sounded. Langhamer states that '[t]his upbeat image of mass [inter-war] holiday-going was clearly optimistic, as the majority of workers entered the [second world] war with no paid holiday entitlement.'[107] An examination of the Ministry of Transport Returns for the month of August during the inter-war period shows that, for the GWR at least, there was a small steady increase in the numbers of Weekend and Excursion tickets from 1924, when 4,529,031 such tickets were sold, to 1929, when 7,882,044 tickets were sold.[108] From 1930 to 1934 sales of these tickets dropped to a low of 6,692,610 and sales did not reach the 1929 high again until 1935 at which point they remained stable at just over 8,000,000 for two years before dropping off again marginally in 1937 and 1938. The difference in sales between the pre-slump high of 1929 and the overall inter-war high of 1935, 8,102,119, is just over 220,000 and, while it is important to take into account other ticket types such as the Tourist ticket whose sales dropped but were most likely absorbed into the Weekend and Excursion sales figures from 1932 on, it seems likely that, in total, the sales of the most popular types of holiday tickets saw a net increase of only around 500,000 from 1929 to 1935 before beginning to decline again towards the war. It would therefore seem as if there was not necessarily a huge increase in the numbers of tourist tickets being sold by the GWR during this period. However, it may

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[107] Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 37.
[108] Data compiled from *Ministry of Transport, Railway Statistics, Great Britain* report numbers 38 – 225.

be that further research is needed to establish the sales of tourist tickets by coach companies of the same period.

It seems possible that the guidebooks and changing ways of picturing landscapes and locations were a response to a change in the popular *conception* of who went on holiday and what one did there; something that might have been brought about through the high profile media campaigns for paid holidays from the early 1920s on as mentioned by Urry. At the very least they are indicative of the GWR's evaluation of how such markets might develop in the future. This is as opposed to a direct increase, or change, in the numbers, or types, of people able or willing to travel. It was perhaps only from the late 1940s that the explosion in holiday-makers actually occurred but, by this time, British Railways would have inherited a touristic visual vocabulary that was already equipped to deal with such an increase. Whatever the reason it demonstrated that the GWR's tourist utopia was one that was dynamic and able to respond to such changes be they real or conceptual, social or economic.

Chapter Seven: A 'perpetual neo-pastoral May': The Interior Geography of the GWR, 1929 – 1941.

Introduction

Harvey, drawing on the work of MacCannell, put forward the idea that the 'final victory of modernity... is not the disappearance of the non-modern world but its artificial preservation and reconstruction'.[1] This chapter examines a small, discrete, set of landscape photographs published in the *Great Western Railway Magazine* (*GWRM*) from 1929 to 1941 and suggests that they constitute an act of reconstruction, on the part of the GWR, of the landscape to suits its own ends. In addition to this, these images will be identified as constructing a particular kind of 'interior geography', developed by a large commercial organisation, primarily to be consumed by their own members of staff. It will be shown that this interior geography was markedly different from the 'exterior' geography constructed, using similar photographic means and primarily for consumption by members of the public as potential travellers and tourists. In this way it will be proposed that the heterotopic nature of the overall tourist utopia constructed by the GWR was present even within the company's construction of its own self image.

This research not only looks at the images themselves but also contrasts the printed image with the original negatives to understand how they were manipulated and edited. It discusses how seasonality and other visual cues were used in specific ways and how these contributed to notions of a 'little' Britain and traditional Englishness that became popular through the inter-war period. It posits that the representation of the GWR's 'interior geography' as small scale and parochial was not simply a

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[1] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 302.

rejection of modernity but an attempt to engage with the contemporary debates about modernity, the threat to the countryside and preservation. Finally, it compares and contrasts these 'interior' images with contemporary 'exterior' images that were presented to tourists.

The *Great Western Railway Magazine* went through at least three incarnations in its lifetime.[2] In its early years, the tone of the magazine was proselytising and moral; there being a great deal of space dedicated to safety and safe methods of working on the railway.[3] The magazine was to be a proving ground for many members of GWR staff who would, in later years, become key figures in the running and development of the company as a whole. Chief among these was Felix Pole (later General Manager of the GWR) who took up editorship in 1903 and remained in the post until 1919.[4]

Running through the magazine from its very early days, however, was a great deal of written material about the landscapes of the GWR region, often accompanied by illustrations. While the illustrations took the form of woodcuts in the early years,[5] photographs had begun to make an appearance from the late 1890s and continued to be important to the magazine's production values throughout its existence. There are countless examples of picturesque and charming views of villages, cottages and landscapes in the magazine's pages and, as was outlined in Chapter Two, very few of the these bear any witness to the means of accessing them: the railway. This research focuses on a series of landscape images that appeared in the *GWRM* from October

[2] Roger Burdett Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of Great Western Railway Publicity* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles PLC, 1987), 161 - 170.
[3] See, Michael Owen Esbester, 'Dead on the Point of "safety" ': Occupational Safety Education on the Great Western Railway, C.1913-39 (York: s.n., 2006).
[4] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 166.
[5] See, for example, W. Smith, "A Holiday Tour in Ireland, First Paper. Paddington to Killarney," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1895; W. Smith, "A Holiday Tour in Ireland. Second Paper," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1895.

1929 and continued up to 1941 under the title of *Types of Great Western Countryside*.[6] These were full page images included as 'pictorial supplements' with the magazine itself but were included in the consecutive page numbering system. They were black and white, double sided and, while one side had a picturesque view or landscape, the other would usually be a more prosaic image such as a visiting dignitary or new railway buildings. Taken together the landscape images are a unique record of a landscape that the GWR explicitly wanted to portray as *theirs* and assert their ownership over. Coupled with this is the fact that it was a landscape that the GWR wanted to promote *internally* to its staff through its own magazine. In total, there were 127 images that comprised an interior geography of the GWR built up over twelve years, not solely to promote travel on their system, but also to embody the values, ideals and aspirations of the company itself.

These images reflected, consciously or no, the awareness of change in the countryside during the interwar period. Writing in 1926, Briggs saw the countryside as irrevocably changed by the introduction of the petrol engine and looked back to a time before the car when 'England... existed in its unsullied perfection' and outlined a two-fold plan to safeguard the countryside which comprised 'the preservation of such relics of the past as are of recognised worth, and the regulation of all tendencies that are harmful to the beauty of the countryside'.[7] This statement embodies two of the key issues surrounding the experiencing and preservation of the countryside at this time; first, that the countryside of *the past* was in a more pure and authentic form than in the *present* and second: that there were broadly accepted standards of recognised worth

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[6] There were other titles, such as 'Through the Great Western Country' and 'Types of Great Western Territory' but these were a variations on the same theme.
[7] Martin S. Briggs, *Rusticus or the Future of the Countryside*, To day and To Morrow (London: Keegan Paul, 1926), 61.

and aesthetic beauty which it was possible to learn and thus experience a more valid interaction with the countryside.

The *Types of ...* images were accompanied only by short captions and there is no known documentary evidence of a deliberate decision behind the commencement of the series. The images must therefore stand for themselves and there is little textual support within the magazine. But there is a wealth of documentary material that points towards there being a sense of irreversible change taking place in the countryside in general during the inter-war years. This change can be subdivided into two main strands.

The first was the destruction of a 'traditional' landscape and its accompanying way of life. The *Council for the Preservation of Rural England* was founded in 1926 and Lowe states that '[i]ts leaders saw themselves fighting against an avalanche of bricks, concrete and asphalt. The motor car, new trunk roads, and commuter railway lines were allowing residential development to break loose from the city boundaries' and consume the landscape itself.[8] Similarly, a year later, writing in the introduction to his classic travel book *In Search of England*, H. V. Morton bemoaned the "vulgarization of the countryside" brought about by the increased mobility of the petrol engine (which is ironic considering it was his own favoured form of transport).[9] The countryside was under threat and with it the health and well-being of the nation; H. J. Massingham unequivocally stated that '[o]ur national consciousness derived from our

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[8] Philip Lowe, "The rural idyll defended: from preservation to conservation," in *The Rural Idyll* (London: Routledge, 1989), 122.
[9] H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (London: Methuen and Co, 1927), viii.

rural past"[10] and that unchecked development in the inter-war period saw 'England...

betray its native land'.[11]

The second great change was a politicisation of the landscape which saw a move
away from the "entrenched Conservatism of rural society and the established
paternalistic power structure headed by the landed gentry and large farmers"[12]
towards a less socially exclusive, and in some cases overtly socialist, model.[13] As has
already been discussed in Chapter Six, the growth of walking and rambling groups,
and their political origins and affiliations, lent a certain anti-establishment air to the
issues surrounding access to the countryside. Not only was there a threat of physical
destruction of the landscape but also the established social order was seen as being
eroded. It was undoubtedly the fear of such social erosion that led so many
commentators to be so critical about the unthinking way in which such inappropriate
people encountered and behaved in the countryside.

Many of these anxieties stemmed from the assumption of a 'Golden Age' of the
countryside that was lost and needed to be regained. Williams, in his seminal work
The Country and the City, explored this concept and found that, while for some, such
as Briggs, the 'Golden Age' was before the introduction of the car, for others it was
before the coming of the railways. Williams continued by demonstrating that, in
literature at least, ideas of rural authenticity are both complex, intensely relative and
generally have 'their locations in the childhoods of their authors'.[14] The authenticity of

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[10] H. J. Massingham, *The Wisdom of the Fields* (London: Collins, 1945), 247.
[11] Ibid., 250.
[12] Michael Woods, *Contesting Rurality: Politics in the British Countryside*
(Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 5.
[13] Lowe, "The rural idyll defended: from preservation to conservation," 122.
[14] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973),
12.

the 'Golden Age' itself is called into question as its relativity meant it became a ghost that could not be pinned down and, ultimately, 'we [can] find no place, no period, in which [this 'Golden Age'] could seriously rest'.[15] Although almost 40 years old, Williams' argument ably demonstrates the fact that our understandings of what might be termed a rural idyll are socially and culturally constructed. He showed that this process of construction was not something that happened *in* the past but is ongoing and that every generation constructs its own understanding of 'the rural' and perceives its own threats to its continuity. It is against this background of nostalgia for the past and the immediacy of threat and change that the making of the GWR's 'interior geography' will be examined.

Propaganda and the Company Magazine

It is vital to be aware of the target audience of the *Types of...* series of images. As a company magazine the *GWRM* was an in-house journal aimed specifically at staff. This does not mean, however, that its circulation was small. It has been reported that, by 1909, it was circulating 25,000 copies a month with "subscribers coming from among people outside the railway service as well as from the company's employees"[16] At a cost of one penny until the early 1940s, the magazine increased in popularity with its circulation rising to 44,000 a month by 1937[17] although it can be assumed that it was seen by many more.

In general, company magazines are seen as having been overlooked in the historiography of business history. Recent research has, however, focussed on them as important, and complex, parts of a corporation's representation of itself. It has been

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[15] Ibid., 35.
[16] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 167.
[17] Ibid., 168.

argued that they performed two distinct roles within the business; first to assist with the day-to-day running of the organisation and, second, to enable the achievement of more complex 'long term, strategic goals'.[18] Cox has put forward the notion that they allowed staff to communicate with each other and contribute to the magazine. This, he says, helped to foster a 'corporate image amongst staff, in an effort to build employee loyalty'[19] and to create an idea of a 'lifestyle'[20] associated with the company and its activities. However, Esbester's research on the *Great Western Railway Magazine* has identified it as a 'tool with which management tried to define how employees performed their work, thereby extending managerial control into new areas'.[21] This 'top down' model is in direct contrast with the 'bottom up' model as put forward by Cox. The present research takes a mainly 'top down' view but also highlights the fact that the internal image presented to staff (and other subscribers) could be distinct to, and indeed quite different from, that portrayed to the general public.

Heller's most recent work further subdivides the development of in-house journals and magazines into two key periods 1878 – 1914 and 1914 – 1939. This later period is characterised by a greater level of management control over the content of the magazines and journals and a move away from voluntary groups writing and editing the content.[22] His theory is based around the notion of a management crisis borne out of the rapid expansion of large-scale organisations immediately after World War One.

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[18] Michael Heller, "Company Magazines: An Overview 1880 - 1940," *Management and Organizational History* 3, no. 3 & 4 (2008): 187.
[19] Howard Cox, "Shaping a Corporate Identity from Below" The Role of the BAT Bulletin," *Management and Organizational History* 3, no. 3 & 4 (2008): 198.
[20] Ibid., 211.
[21] Michael Owen Esbester, "Organizing Work: Company Magazines and the Discipline of Safety," *Management and Organizational History* 3, no. 3 & 4 (2008): 222.
[22] Michael Heller, "British Company Magazines, 1878 - 1939: The Origins and Functions of House Journals in Large Scale Organisations.," *Media History* 15, no. 2 (May 1, 2009): 153.

In the inter-war period Heller argues that such organisations found themselves with a huge increase in 'long-term, career oriented, trained and company specific employment, in which groups of core-workers became vital to the long-term viability of the organisation'.[23] It therefore became key for such organisations to stress the benefits of remaining with that company and there became a 'pressing need for a common corporate identity and outlook' which could be answered by a more management-led approach to the company magazine.[24]

Heller's research is supported, in the case of the GWR, by the autobiography of one of the company's General Managers, Felix Pole. Pole was a career GWR man who was General Manager from 1921 – 1929 after working for almost fifteen years as editor of the *GWR Magazine* among other roles.[25] It is clear from his personal writing that he was convinced of the power of advertising: 'There can be no doubt whatever that attractive publications, posters and leaflets pay... But my own special interest was in propaganda.'[26] Pole had an interesting definition of propaganda and claimed that '[f]rom the point of view of a railway... I regard propaganda as the means of promoting good feeling towards the company; of making its good points known by more subtle means than by advertising or general publicity'.[27] During this period Pole made direct use of the *GWR Magazine*, and other forms of propaganda, to encourage the staff 'to realize that their welfare was bound up in the success of the company'[28] in exactly the way that Heller's research suggests.

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[23] Ibid., 154.
[24] Ibid., 153.
[25] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 166.
[26] Felix Pole, *His Book* (Bracknell: Town and Country Press, 1968), 84.
[27] Ibid., 81.
[28] Ibid., 85.

James Milne succeeded Pole as General Manager in 1929 and it was under his management that the GWR commenced the *Types of...* series, and it seems likely that he took a similar view to Pole. It has been commented that Milne took on the GWR at a low ebb, when it was recovering from the after-effects of the General Strike (a situation that Pole says he handled largely with a 'softly-softly' approach)[29] and wage cuts in both 1929 and 1931 but that he took on a similar long-term view of the development of the company.[30] Speaking at the company's Annual General Meeting in 1931, the company secretary, Mr. F. R. E. Davis continued the rhetoric of Pole regarding the relationship between the company and the staff when he stated 'I am proud to say, as I have on many occasions before said, that we have a loyal and contented staff'.[31] This would indicate that Milne's, and the company as a whole, approach to the problems of labour relations was ostensibly the same; stressing the co-dependent nature of the staff/company relationship and emphasising the loyalty of staff both externally and internally. This being the case it would appear that the *Types of...* series fits not only with the 'top down' theory of in-house journals but is also, in some way, a response to managerial and trade relations issues that developed through the inter-war period. As Divall has observed, the railway company magazine was often employed by managers to counter the growing trade unionism of the 1920s and 30s through industrial welfarism that 'attempted to (re)construct the interests of labour and capital as one'.[32] This research will argue that, in this context, they clearly

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[29] Ibid., 118.
[30] David Wragg, *The GWR Handbook, 1923 - 1947* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2006), 48.
[31] "Great Western Railway Company," *Railway Gazette*, February 24, 1931, 260.
[32] Colin Divall, "Civilising velocity: masculinity and the marketing of Britain's passenger trains, 1921-39," *Journal of Transport History, in publication* (2011): 7.

represent a form of Pole's 'subtle propaganda', utilised in an attempt to try and unify

an organisation that had undergone a period of traumatic change.[33]

Imagery and ambiguity- a methodology

In essence, this research seeks to highlight and examine a series of published photographic

images by comparing them to similar contemporary images, taken at the same time and by

the same photographer, that were not selected for publication. If the published image is, as

Sayer puts forward, a 'footprint', then this process is about retracing the steps to better

understand where this final image came from. In this way, the *Types of...* series can be seen

as being comprised of two distinct layers: the published image and the contrasting images

that remained unpublished. One of the aims of this research to develop a methodology that

allows the significance of the published photographs to be drawn out through an

examination of those that were not; in this way the significance of what *was* included in the

published images can be better understood. The underlying agency behind the choice of

particular images, and the editing out of visual 'noise' considered to be 'off-message',[34] can

begin to be defined and it will be possible to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the

GWR's relationship to the landscape over which it claimed a form of ownership.

This research provided an opportunity to begin to uncover such visual agency. An

examination of the GWR's relationship to the landscapes that it served solely through the

official published material would be to overlook what might have been edited out. These

'grey' images can be viewed in a similar light to the 'orphaned', or found, images made use

of by Karlekar in the attempt to 'introduce another dimension into the experience of

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[33] Pole, *His Book*, 84.
[34] Chunglin Kwa, "Painting and Photographing Landscapes: Pictorial Conventions and Gestalts," *Configurations* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 68.

colonialism in Bengal'.[35] In her work, these 'orphaned' images were often stumbled upon serendipitously but their very lack of official standing meant that they became 'powerful signifiers'[36] in the process of understanding the impact of photography on the colonial experience. While not 'found' so much as 'not selected', this research exploits the fact that this 'grey' material has been preserved and is able to be accessed alongside the official record.

The primary material, in this case the collection of negatives from which the published images were taken, existed in an accessible environment at the National Railway Museum, York (NRM), and is, relatively, complete; there are many negatives missing or damaged but, in a collection of over 15,000 negatives, this is to be expected and such 'blanks' account for roughly four and a half per cent of the whole.[37] Copies of the primary published material, in this case the *Great Western Railway Magazine*, are also available at the NRM. The collections of negatives, termed the GWR A-series, B-series and C-series, also have associated finding aids which have been worked up from original GWR registers also held in the NRM's archive collections. It is clear that, in this instance, almost all of the material, from the negatives that were exposed in the field to their final publication in the form of the *GWRM*, is open for scrutiny in a way that is rare in most cases.

A "perpetual neo-pastoral May": Seasonality and the GWR Landscape

Writing about the GWR's flagship guidebook in the *GWRM*, in 1930, Maxwell Fraser commented that the photographs used to illustrate the places covered by the guide should be 'free from the allurements of holiday seasons. If some resorts are peopled

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[35] Malavika Karlekar, *Re-visioning The Past: Early Photography In Bengal 1875-1915* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005), 4.
[36] Ibid., 167.
[37] The GRW B-series comprises 15,602 images of which 731 are recorded as missing; a survival rate of just over 95% is to be considered high given the age, fragility and instability of the material.

with gay bathing parties in the height of summer, the pictures leave this to the imagination or to a mention in the text'.[38] This deliberate editing out of images of 'Summer' appears to have been influenced by the confidence of the GWR in the places they were promoting and an economic imperative that saw them want to encourage holidaymakers outside of the 'season'. It was, after all, considered self-evident that the beach resorts would look good in summer but what was needed was more promotion of these places outside of the regular holiday season to encourage more passengers. Close scrutiny of the GWR's photographic output may or may not support this (especially in the late 1930s when it appears that more outside agencies are used for the marketing images) but it is clear that, outwardly, 'the distinction between the Winter and Summer seasons was an important marketing feature' of the company's publicity material.[39] The research on the *Types of...* series of images has, however, highlighted a direct contrast between the outward publicity imagery of the GWR and this internal imagery. There was an almost total lack of any seasonality in the *Types of...* series; the *GWRM* was published monthly and, as such, often carried seasonal announcements and features, but this seasonality was markedly *not* in evidence in the *Types of...* series.[40]

Taking the images for the months November, December, January and February as a starting point, 41 published images were identified which represented just under one third of the whole series.[41] These images were then examined for their seasonal

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[38] Maxwell Fraser, "The Production of 'Holiday Haunts'," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, March 1930, 101.
[39] Alan Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2000), 18.
[40] See, for example, "A Railway Journey in Winter Time," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1934, 559; "The G.W.R. Summer Train Services," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, July 1935, 353 - 355.
[41] 32 per cent in total

content and it was found that all except two portrayed landscapes that can be clearly identified as being 'outside' of the Winter season in which they were published.[42] Key identifiers were fairly simple and included leaves on trees and foliage in general, clothes and styles of dress (shorts, sun-hats, parasols etc) and activities such as children playing in the street or promenading along a seafront.[43] Figure 7.1 was published in December 1930 and is typical of the a-seasonality of the series. The woman admiring the view is dressed in summer clothes and both the landscape and weather are far removed from any understanding of 'wintry'. In addition to this, examination of the negative has shown that the sky had been painted out thus removing any clouds and adding to the summery nature of the image.

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[42] "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1939, 1; "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1939, 475.
[43] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1929, 477; "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, November 1936, 513; "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1931, 493; "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1935, 633.

Figure 7.1. GWR B7547. Symond's Yat, image taken July 1928 and published December 1930. Note that this is an image published in Winter.

In the interests of ensuring that the GWR were not simply inverting the seasons and portraying Winter during the Summer months it was necessary to carry out the same process with the remaining 86 images. However, only two further images could be identified as being non-Summer, mainly through the lack of foliage on the trees.[44] In total, only six images, just under 5 per cent, could be clearly identified with being seasonal in relation to their publication month. In five cases this was due to a seasonal references in the captions such as 'Blossom time at Ilford, Wiltshire'[45] published in

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[44] "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, March 1938, 89; "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, September 1938, 353.

[45] "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1938, 136.

April, 1938, or 'A Spring scene at Portbury, near Bristol'[46] published in May 1940. The sixth image, published in August 1936, shows hay being harvested and stacked onto a horse-drawn cart; a clear visual cue to the rural activities of that season.[47] Outside of these few images, all of the others are characterised by clear skies, trees in leaf and sunshine; it is as if the *Great Western Countryside* exists perpetually in what Williams referred to as a 'perpetual neo-pastoral May'[48] one where the realities of modernity or poor weather seldom intruded.

On an examination of the numbers alone there is overwhelming support for the premise that the interior geography of the GWR was 'a-seasonal' inasmuch as it presented a view of its *own* countryside that was characterised by Spring or Summer. There is evidence to suggest that, where images were not deemed suitable, they were manipulated, as with Symond's Yat, so that the sky appeared clear and bright. This appears to be in direct contradiction to the guidance put forward by the GWR regarding external publicity material; that summer images should be avoided, but ties in with existing research that suggests that the GWR were actively participating in the construction of their own geography.[49]

Editing the Landscape: Inclusion and Exclusion

Seasonality was only one way that the GWR sought to present a modified image of its interior geography. Unwanted elements in images were prone to exclusion either through the non-publication of the image altogether or through their deliberate removal from an image by cropping or 'burning out'. This section provides further

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[46] "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1940, 149.
[47] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, August 1936, 367.
[48] Williams, *The Country and the City*, 23.
[49] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 237.

examples of how the inclusion, but more often exclusion, of certain visual elements within the *Types of...* series highlights the GWR's process of active construction and creation of the landscape over which it laid some form of claim.

Barthes saw the photograph as having 'a power to convert which must be analysed', by which was meant that in acknowledging the power of photographs to influence our understanding and awareness of a given situation it is important to scrutinise these images to better appreciate the ways in which such influence may have been contrived.[50] In simple terms it would be possible to examine the appearance of specific objects throughout the *Types of...* series and interpret their appearance (or non-appearance) as significant. This works well if, for example, cars and churches/religious buildings are examined.

Cars appear in only eleven of the 127 *Types of...* series, which constitutes 8.66 per cent of the total whereas, churches, or religious buildings such as abbeys, appear in twenty-seven which constitutes 21.25 per cent. Such a marked difference appears to be indicative of the editing out of cars and the deliberate inclusion of churches and religious buildings and is significant inasmuch as it demonstrates how external, commercial and managerial imperatives have helped to shape the 'interior geography' and landscape aesthetic of the GWR. That cars were perhaps deliberately edited out of this internal geography can be evidenced by looking at the run of images for Sonning-on-Thames and Allerford.

The image of Allerford (see Figure 7.2), published in November 1936 but taken in September 1934,[51] comes from a run of five[52] and shows the old stone bridge crossing

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[50] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2000), 91.
[51] "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, November 1936, 513.

the stream with two boys perched on the parapet; there is little of the 'modern' world in this image where the bridge stands in front of cottages with open windows and ivy-clad stone chimney stacks. An examination of the other negatives taken on the same visit to this location shows a different side to the village; parked cars along with tourists, roads signs and adverts for teashops, public telephones, telegraph poles and wires fill the shots and give the place a more distinctly 'worldly' aspect (see Figures 7.3 and 7.4). Even the published image is cropped from a negative that originally included a sign for a café that boasted seating for 150 and free parking (see Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.2. Original print (as published) of GWR B11194, Allerford village, taken September 1934, published November 1936. Note that this image was published in Winter.

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[52] GWR B series negatives B11190 – 11194.

Figure 7.3. GWR B11192, Allerford village, taken September 1934, unpublished.

Figure 7.4. GWR B11190, Allerford village, taken September 1934, unpublished.

Figure 7.5. GWR B11194, original negative, Allerford village, showing how the published image was cropped. Note the Café sign to the right.

It should come as no surprise that a railway company should harbour antipathy towards road vehicles during the inter-war period. Gibson stated that, with regard to road haulage, 'competition… against the railways was cut-throat' in the late 1920s.[53] It is argued that the railway companies neglected to capitalise on the potential of working with road haulage and motor bus companies in the early part of the period. The GWR had been involved with motor coach services since 1903 and, by 1923, owned and operated 95 vehicles often jointly with municipal operators.[54] However, as competition from road haulage and private cars grew, it seems likely that the railways' hostility towards such concerns grew accordingly. The railways' anxieties

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[53] Thomas Gibson, *Road Haulage by Motor in Britain: The First Forty Years* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 200.
[54] Michael Bonavia, *Railway Policy Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 94 - 95.

were based principally around the regulations that controlled what they could charge and the fact that road haulage and bus companies were not bound by such regulations and were thus able, in the eyes of the railways, to undercut them. By 1937 the GWR was saying, with regard to competition on the roads '[w]e need no reminders of its existence, and there is a general knowledge that we are up against something formidable'.[55] Late in 1938 the GWR, along with the other three companies of the 'Big Four', were championing the 'Square Deal for Railways' campaign with the General Manager, in his introduction to the December issue of the *Magazine*, exhorting 'all members of staff... [to] do everything possible to assist the [railway] Companies to secure the right of competing on equal terms with all other forms of transport'.[56] While much of this argument was based around the haulage of goods it seems likely that such feelings of unequal competition and a 'formidable' foe would have coloured the GWR's feelings towards road transport in general.

If cars were edited out then it would seem that churches and religious buildings were key place-images within the GWR's interior geography. The role that religion played in the industrialising of Great Britain has been widely discussed for decades. E. P. Thompson saw religion, and Methodism in particular, as a function of an effective industrial nation where religion provided an 'inner compulsion' far more effective than financial incentives or cripplingly low wages in spurring the worker to activity.[57] The railways, as a sector of British business, had long associations with both mainstream and non-conformist Christianity from the outset. For example, the Quakers were

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[55] "Services in Relation to Road Competition," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1937, 237.
[56] James Milne, "A Message from the General Manager. Railways and Road Competition," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1938, 478.
[57] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 393.

pivotal in the development of the railway system, primarily in the North-east but their influence, over time, extended much further afield.[58] The financing of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in the early nineteenth century was made possible only 'by making use of the Quaker chain of credit' which began to establish a link between industrial activity and religious social structures that would continue well in to the twentieth century.[59] The town of Crewe, the headquarters of the London and North Western Railway Company, has been cited as a prime example of the inter-relationship between religion, industry and commerce. It was a town where '[e]very one of the 20 'Established' places of worship built in the town between 1845 and 1920 were provided by the Railway Company'[60] and, because of this, Crewe became almost a type example of 'nineteenth-century employer paternalism [that] was deeply patriarchal in nature'.[61] This was characterised by a semi-feudal relationship based on gift-giving on the part of those in charge and petitioning on the part of the workers themselves; a relationship modelled on idealised eighteenth-century rural communities.[62]

In the nineteenth century, the large railway companies exercised a considerable amount of [e]cclesiastical patronage' and, as has been evidenced in Crewe, regularly 'built churches as part of the urban fabric' of the new railway towns; the GWR was no exception to this.[63] The complex relationship between the GWR's works, the

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[58] Edward Milligan H., *Quakers and Railways* (York: Sessions Book Trust, 1992).
[59] M.W. Kirby, *The Origins of Railway Enterprise: The Stockton and Darlington Railway 1821-1863* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 33.
[60] Diane K. Drummond, *Crewe: Railway Town, Company and People, 1840-1914* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 135.
[61] Ibid., 187.
[62] Ibid., 59.
[63] R. C. Richardson, "The 'Broad Gauge' and the 'Narrow Gauge': Railways and Religion in Victorian England," in *The Impact of the Railway on Society in Britain: Essays in honour of Jack Simmons* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 104.

associated town of Swindon and the, purpose built, church of St. Mark's has been put forward as an indicator of this. From the early 1840s it was recognised that the proposed town of New Swindon would need a church for the spiritual guidance of the workers.[64] The church, consecrated in 1845, expanded with the town and the fortunes of the company and played a pivotal role in the spiritual life of many of the workers through the nineteenth and well into the late twentieth centuries. The *GWRM* also had its roots firmly in a religious background associated with the Temperance Union. The Church, with its paternalistic overtones and strict moral code, was a significant influence on the way the GWR viewed itself in the nineteenth century. Visually, the *Types of...* series suggests that the church and the moral and social structures it represented were still relevant during the inter-war period. The Church represented a 'family' and, as is evidenced through the 'Helping Hand' funds, workers housing and welfare bodies recorded in the *Magazine*, the GWR still sought, internally, to identify itself with such corporate paternalism through the 1920s and 30s.

In addition to this, ideas of a 'little' Britain that was somehow more authentic and 'real' than the England that was being harried by modernity in the inter-war years, were often centred around the microcosm of the village as the building block of an idealised English society.[65] Writing in the *GWRM* in 1931, the anonymous reviewer of Batsford Books' *England's Village Houses and Country Buildings* saw English villages as being 'so in harmony with the country that they seem a part of it, the two making a natural unity'.[66]

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[64] Frederick Fuller, *The Railway Works and Church in New Swindon* (Swindon: Red Brick Publishing, 1987), 4.
[65] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 43.
[66] "The English Village," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, June 1937, 287.

In its turn, the village was itself centred around the Church. In 1934 Humphrey

Pakington, chronicler of English topography for Batsford books, wrote '[i]t goes

without saying that the church is usually the most interesting building in the village'

and went on to describe the various ways in which villages grew up and were oriented

around the moral (and geographical) compass of the Church.[67] Brace, in her study of

the dust-jackets of the very books that Pakington was writing, discuss how the vision

of the typical English village was deliberately composed from amalgams of rural

images' culled from sketches, paintings and photographs that very often featured the

Church as a key component of the image.[68] Therefore, when images of churches, such

as that in Over Stowey, or Widecombe-in-the-Moor, (see 7.6), were published in the

GWRM they were making a statement about the GWR's own image of itself.[69] Not

only did the church, as a building, represent the familial bonds that ensured a

functional community and the moral codes that must be upheld but they also began to

reflect the understanding of 'Englishness' as, ultimately, rural and based around the

fundamental unit of the parish. There is a proselytising quality to the choice of images

that reinforces the structure of the company and the status of all those who work for it.

No surprise then, that they should be so well represented in the *Types of...* series.

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[67] Humphrey Pakington, *English Villages and Hamlets* (London: Batsford, 1945), 2.
[68] Catherine Brace, "Envisioning England: the visual in countryside writing in the 1930s and 1940s," *Landscape Research* 28, no. 4 (October 2003): 375.
[69] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1932, 441; "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1937, 1.

Figure 7.6. GWR B7722, Widecombe-in-the-Moor, taken August 1928, published January 1937: the church as focal point in the landscape. Note that this image was published in winter.

Embodying many of these social and religious values is the image of Chiseldon published as part of the *Types of...* series in July 1937 (see Figure 7.7).[70] This image is strongly hierarchical with the church at the top left of the image, surrounded by a grand house with a tiled roof- perhaps the rectory or the home of a landowner. Moving down towards the bottom right are the thatched cottages, presumably belonging to the people working on the surrounding farms. Their front doors and windows are open implying honesty and trustworthiness combined with the healthy attributes of clean, fresh air. In front of these cottages are neat, well tended allotments signifying a closeness to nature so popular to the inter-war organicists. The church and 'big house' are above the cottages and the steps that run upwards to reach them seem to emphasise their status and separation from the rest of the village while the

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[70] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, July 1937, 311.

key elements of the rest of the image suggest all of the values so important to the GWR. This village, and its occupants, were god-fearing, healthy, open, honest and close to the earth; everything was in its rightful place and the sun shone down on them munificently.

Figure 7.7. GWR B7378, Chisledon vilage, taken June 1928, published July 1937.

This process of inclusion and exclusion can be found elsewhere within the *Types of...* series and the images of the Cotswold town of Painswick are a suitable example. Two images of Painswick were published in April 1937 (Figure 7.8) the first showing a small row of cottages in the landscape with neat allotments while the second is of the main street.[71] The first image is unremarkable in the context of the series as a whole, it

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[71] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1937, 157.

pictures the town as embedded in a rural environment, well tended, orderly and cared for, the second image, however, bears closer examination.

Types of Great Western Countryside.

The beauty of the Cotswolds, as revealed at Painswick, near Stroud, Gloucestershire.
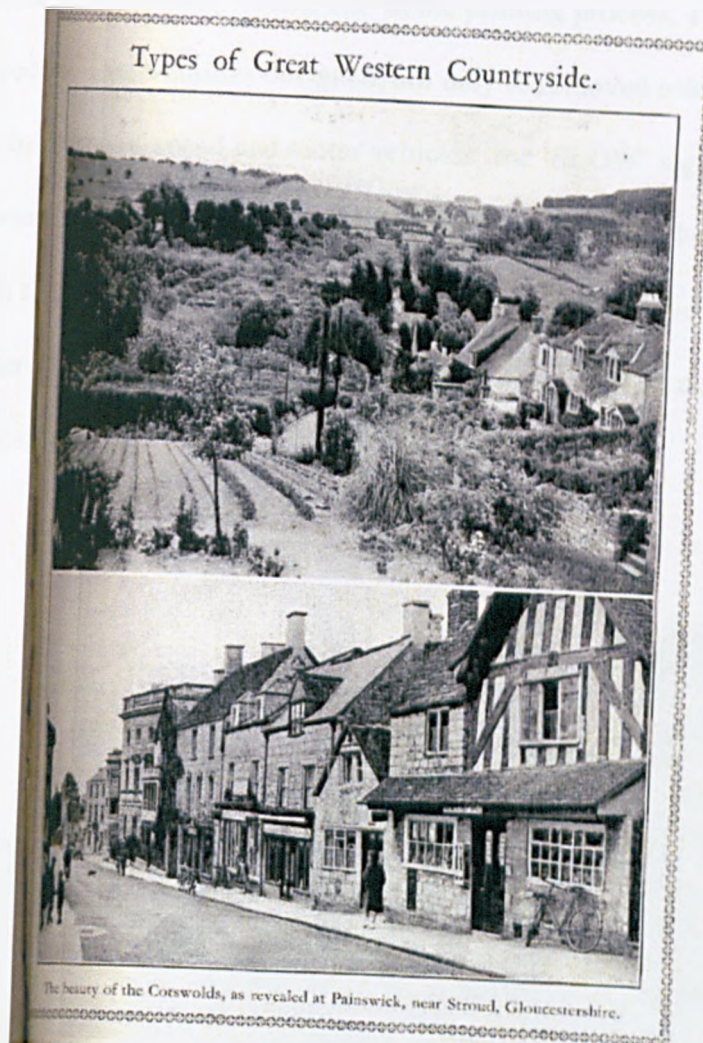
Figure 7.8. *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1937, p. 157, Painswick, the image of the main street was cropped and the signs removed.

This image shows a quiet town street. There is a single car in the far background but plenty of bicycles propped up against pavements and shop fronts. As the caption suggests, this image reveals "[t]he beauty of the Cotswolds" in all of its glory.[72] The image is from a series of eight taken in May 1936 and by looking at the negative it is possible to see just how far the GWR would go to edit the images they published (see Figure 7.9). The final image has been cropped to remove the large letters SLOW

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[72] Ibid.

painted on the road in the bottom right corner and the 'RAC' sign to the left; in addition the sign that appears to be solid black in the print is actually advertising the 'AA' and has been deliberately 'burnt out' in the printing process. This one image shows very specific interventions designed, not only to removed references to modernity in the form of speed and motor vehicles (the 'SLOW' sign) but also instances of brand competition being edited out of the picture. Of the other seven negatives from this run of images, a further three that appear to have been used for a lantern-slide series have had the telegraph poles and wires blacked out on the negatives themselves.

Figure 7.9. GWR B12389, Painswick village, taken May 1936, published April 1937. This image is uncropped and includes the AA, RAC and road signs that are not present in the published image.

In these images, several of the processes by which the GWR managed their interior geography are apparent. Individually the images could be altered to improve the weather or remove unwanted elements such as cars and brand competition or include

desirable features such as the village church. This all suggests that, collectively, they were edited in such a way as to present a specific, and particularly corporate world view.

A 'Little Britain' and a 'Deep' GWR

As has already been discussed, villages and churches are well represented in the *Types of...* series, their inclusion perhaps seeming to reinforce ideals and attributes thought appropriate, internally, to the GWR. The GWR's picturing of landscapes externally, towards the tourist, appeared to be based on a far more layered picturing of place that lent regions a heterogeneous feel. In particular, as has been highlighted in Chapters Five and Six, there was a move towards more active landscapes from the middle of the inter-war period on.

It is worthwhile, at this point, looking in more depth at the ideas of a 'little' England; however, in this case, given the inclusion of images of Wales, the term 'little' Britain will be used although, in reference to wider cultural trends, the term Englishness will still be used. These ideas appear to suffuse the interior geography of the GWR and, again, mark it out as distinct from the landscapes for consumption by those who were 'outside' of the company. The concept of a retreat *from* the modern and *to* the traditional can be seen in terms of a refusal to engage with contemporary life. In this way the images that constitute the *Types of...* series might be simply an expression of the GWR's reluctance to acknowledge the changing times. This, however, is too simplistic as it is vital to recognise that such a move towards the traditional and the small scale was a very definite act of engagement with, and critique of, the world as it appeared to the GWR in the inter-war years. The GWR recognised the potential 'threat' of modernity (and in particular cars) to their cultural and commercial

hegemony over mobility and chose to counter it, visually, by extolling the virtues of a bygone age to those over which they had most influence: their staff.

Mandler has suggested that, from the mid 1920s, many in England began to look inward rather than outward, towards the Empire, for inspiration regarding notions of national identity. As the pace of the modern world increased along with uncertainty about the stability of such cornerstones of Englishness as overseas colonies '[r]omantic celebrations of the old English countryside and its traditional structures... became stock items in certain circles'.[73] It appears almost as if a retreat into a fantasy world of quasi-traditional values was the popular English response to a rapidly changing world. He saw this fascination with all things rural as a function of England's being 'the world's first post-urban country'[74] where the phenomenal growth and development of the nineteenth century suddenly began to slow, leaving a newly formed middle-class wondering what had happened to the world of their childhood or of their grandfathers.[75] This is supported by the work of Brace who, when discussing the Cotswolds, puts forward the idea that representations of the landscape and traditional ways of life provided a backdrop that allowed a critique of contemporary times.[76]

The GWR's interior geography, as represented in these images, was a visual discourse on what was seen to be a vanishing world. This world of traditional values was seen

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[73] Peter Mandler, *The English National Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 148.
[74] Peter Mandler, "Against 'Englishness': English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850 – 1950", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth series, Vol. 7 (1997), 171.
[75] See, for example, George Orwell, *Coming Up for Air*, New Ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2001).
[76] Catherine Brace, "Looking back: the Cotswolds and English national identity, c. 1890 – 1950", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25, 4 (1999), 504.

as being threatened by ever more tourists and the unfettered growth of towns and cities.[77] The increase in car ownership led to more and more people exploring (and perhaps defiling) the lesser-known parts of England. Again, Mandler points out that "exploring England' became a fashionable holiday pursuit [during the inter-war period], the more backwoodsy and dissimilar to suburban or urban home the better-something more feasible by car than by rail'.[78] By consciously picturing 'little' Britain the GWR was engaging directly with the debate about the spoliation of the countryside by hordes of car-bound tourists whose incursions into the landscape were seen by many as denuding it of all charm and authenticity. Briggs went so far as to say that '[w]hen one sees a beautiful village or landscape prostituted to such ends, one wishes that the petrol-engine had never been invented'.[79]

In a way the GWR was making a statement about the England characterised by writers such as H. V. Morton and others who explored the country by car. It appears as if the GWR were putting forward the argument that opening up the countryside to the car meant that it was inevitably spoiled by people, fumes, petrol stations and advertising; only by exploring it by rail could it be appreciated without impacting on it adversely. The images of Allerford village clearly show that cars, signs and adverts were present, if not omnipresent, but the chosen image for publication was not only the one that showed least in the way of cars and signs but was also substantially cropped to further reduce this incursion of touristic signifiers. Their deliberately non-modern, small scale, interior geography sought to reinforce ideals of English national

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[77] It is, of course, worth bearing in mind that the GWR were actively seeking to increase the numbers of tourists visiting certain areas. Their commercial imperative creates a difficult double standard: more tourists by train: good; more tourists by car: bad.
[78] Peter Mandler, *History and National Life*, (London: Profile Books, 2002), 57.
[79] Briggs, *Rusticus or the Future of the Countryside*, 60.

identity while also critiquing those elements of the modern world, such as the car, that it saw as eroding them. The GWR's staff was, however, one area where they could exert a far greater degree of control and it is here that such strong affiliations with the more conservative notions of 'little' Britain and Englishness were given the opportunity to come out.

In this section the argument for a 'deep' GWR will be put forward. It will be shown that the GWR had a conception of itself, in a corporate sense, that was distinct from its *public persona* as defined in its publicity material. Wright put forward the concept of a Deep England in his classic 1985 work *On Living in an Old Country*.[80] He used it to describe an almost utopian conception of the nation that was bound up in nostalgia for a lost golden age. However, Wright was also keen to point out that 'a sense of external threat plays a crucial part in the definition of Deep England'.[81] Utopianism and the ideas of a golden age have already been discussed in broad terms in Chapter One. The perceived threat to the countryside by the widespread adoption of the motorcar has also been discussed earlier in this chapter. The 'deep' GWR, as outlined here, can be seen as a corporate response to the commercial and economic threats of competition from road transport played out through the visualisation of a utopian heartland that represented the organisational ideals and investments of previous generations of merger and acquisition.

Running parallel to the wider cultural tendencies towards a 'little' Britain that influenced the *Types of...* series is the notion that these images reflect the landscape of a 'deep' GWR. By plotting the locations pictured in the series spatially it becomes

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[80] Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).
[81] Ibid., 84.

apparent that the *Types of...* series of images pictured, in the main, the uncontested heartlands of the GWR system. It represents a deep GWR landscape inasmuch as it tended not to show peripheral areas or places that were accessible by another railway company or those areas where the GWR had only powers to run on another company's lines.

To illustrate this Figure 7.10 shows the distribution of the *Types of...* images across the GWR's territory. Rather than looking at the somewhat diffuse spread of places that *were* pictured it is most interesting to look at two distinct areas that *were not* represented in the series. These are the north Somerset, Devon and Cornish coast, including much of inland Cornwall, and the southern coast from Exmouth eastwards into Sussex (there is only one image in the series in this area: no. 98 of the village of Bockhampton). Both of these areas are well represented in the GWR's external publicity material, as will be discussed below, but, importantly, they can be seen as contested areas. Before 1923 both the London and South Western Railway and Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway companies served large parts of both of these areas and, after grouping in 1923, the Southern Railway, and not the GWR, retained these parts of the infrastructure. However, the GWR had powers to run on certain lines in these areas from the very early twentieth century.

Figure 7.10. Distribution map showing the geographical locations of the *Types of...* series of images.

The *Types of...* series of images focuses almost entirely on the area of Cornwall that could best be described as the Cornish Riviera. Since the 1860s the GWR had served this area and, from their first sale publication on the region in 1904, had focussed primarily on the southern coast of Cornwall. It is perhaps not surprising then that there was a pronounced concentration of interior images in this region. However, when external publicity, such as *Holiday Haunts* is examined it is clear to see that the northern coasts of Cornwall and Devon had a significant part to play in the company's tourist material. By 1935 the introduction to Cornwall bemoans the fact that most tourists did 'not fully realise the possibilities of the Duchy'[82] as whole and focussed all their attention on the Riviera. By 1939 this has become an even stronger admonition with Maxwell Fraser firmly stating that '[m]y objection to the now well-established term Cornish Riviera is that it does less than justice to the Duchy, implying that it is

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[82] Maxwell Fraser, *Holiday Haunts*, (London, Great Western Railway: 1935), 185.

in some sort of a shadow of the Riviera'.[83] The inland parts of the Duchy were being heavily 'pushed' by the company and such text as this was accompanied with images of non-Riviera Cornwall and even those places that were only accessible when the GWR was running on the Southern Railway's lines. Throughout this, however, areas outside of the Riviera continue to be absent from the 'interior geography' of the company even though the *Types of...* series was running at the same time as the external 'push' out from the south coast was being encouraged.

In a similar way, the south coast of England began to be pictured in *Holiday Haunts* from the early 1930s and, by 1935, Bournemouth, Brighton and the Isle of Wight were regular features. The 1935 edition carries over twenty pages of text on Sussex alone and the introduction to the county begins with the statement that the GWR had an association with this part of the country from the late nineteenth century.[84] These south coast locations continued to be written about and pictured up to 1940 when *Holiday Haunts* ceased production due to the war. Their external portrayal of the South Coast was, however, subtly different to that of the Southern Railway, a company that focussed much of its attention on metropolitan tourists. Bennett talks of the 'GWR's evident reluctance to stress all aspects of popular, commercial culture' when it came to advertising the South Coast and this is explained by their attachment to 'pursuits conforming to a more traditionally perceived exclusive status'.[85] Again, it is clear to see that while the GWR was outwardly assimilating those parts of the country that were in some way contested (by another railway company) inwardly they remained 'off the map'. It seems likely that the overtly commercial and aggressively

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[83] Maxwell Fraser, *Holiday Haunts*, (London, Great Western Railway: 1939), 169.
[84] Maxwell Fraser, *Holiday Haunts*, (London, Great Western Railway: 1935), 131.
[85] Alan Bennett, *Great Western Lines and Landscapes* (Cheltenham: Runpast Publishing, 2002), 44.

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modern nature of the places themselves, along with their status as contested places, led to their exclusion from the GWR's interior geography. The unfettered development along the South Coast that led to it being seen, particularly in the inter-war period, as a democratised 'Arcadia for All', [86] a 'makeshift landscape' of shacks and huts (often old railway carriages) with a 'humble and even illegitimate past'.[87] In essence, much of the South Coast was seen as an empty, rootless space recaptured from, and occasionally returning to, the sea; a 'Wild West' of shanty towns devoid of what the GWR might consider to be authentic values and experiences. It embodied few, if any, of the values associated with a company attempting to re-establish its pedigree in a changed and changing world. For these reasons it is perhaps unsurprising that the South Coast does not figure in, what Felix Pole would have called, the 'subtle propaganda' of its interior geography.

However, in their external publicity, and from a commercial point of view, the GWR had no qualms about marketing places that they did not have exclusive access to; places such as Bournemouth, Brighton and the Isle of Wight were also heavily marketed by the Southern Railway and there is clear evidence, from the Railway Clearing House, to support joint working between the companies on advertising schemes.[88] But, when it came to their 'interior geography', consciously or otherwise, the areas that were predominantly chosen to be pictured were uncontested GWR heartlands. This move appears to echo, in microcosm, the English cultural withdrawal from the imperial stage that led to the notion of a 'little England' between the wars. During the inter-war period the GWR looked *inward* and *backward* for locations that

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[86] Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward, *Arcadia for All. The legacy of a Makeshift Landscape* (London and New York: Mansell, 1984).
[87] Ibid., 8.
[88] RAIL 1080/581"Minutes of Meetings of Advertising Representatives, AD.REPS.MIN.171", January 5, 1926, RAIL 1080/581, National Archives.

it could use to define itself to its own staff, this 'deep' GWR was one that the company could legitimately stake a claim over and one that would have powerful resonances for those members of staff who might be second, or third, generation workers.

This notion is supported by an examination of the distribution of the *Types of...* images when overlaid onto a map of mid to late nineteenth century railway territories (see Figure 7.11). The Stanford Map of 1874 shows the railways as having physical territories as opposed to simply lines connecting a nodal network.[89] This is a valuable document insofar as it bears witness to the territoriality of the railway companies and their desire to carve out specific landscapes that could be claimed and, in some way, owned. Bearing in mind that the *Types of...* images were published from the late 1920s to early 1940s it is clear to see that they cover areas that were under GWR control from at least the 1870s. The overlay map visually demonstrates that the areas that were pictured and published in the staff magazine as *Types of Great Western Countryside* were not the same as those that were being covered and promoted to the public at large. The South Coast is especially notable for its lack of coverage. It is also possible to see that areas that came under the control of the GWR after the 1923 amalgamations are also poorly represented. South Wales can be seen as a case in point; Channon has commented that, before 1923, 'small, independent companies peppered the region and prevented the GWR from forming a territorial monopoly'.[90] After 1923 the GWR took control over the entire region but, as can be seen in the map, it remained *off the map* as far as the *Types of...* series was concerned.

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[89] The Stanford Map is held at the NRM (2001-654).
[90] Geoffrey Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940: Studies in Business History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 132.
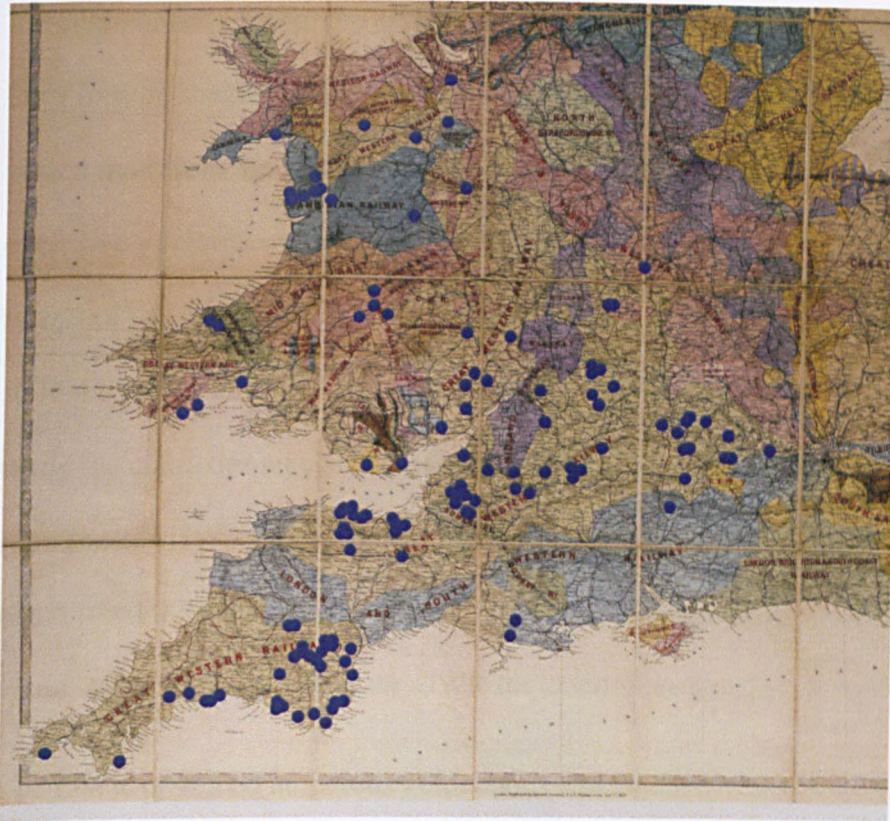
Figure 7.11. Distribution map showing the locations of the *Types of...* series of images overlaid onto 1874 railway map delineating corporate 'territories'.

Visually ordering the data in this way provides further compelling evidence that the GWR were discriminatory in the landscape images that they chose to present to their staff. It shows that the interior geography that the GWR constructed was markedly different to that aimed specifically at a non-staff tourist audience. Unfortunately, understanding exactly how far this was a conscious choice on the part of the GWR remains something of a mystery as there is little or no surviving documentary material covering the production of the *GWRM*. However, for the purposes of this argument it is significant enough to show that such differences existed.

The Bigger Picture- Relationships with External Publicity

Throughout this chapter the assumption has been made that the primary audience of the *Types of...* series was internal, that is; they were members of GWR staff or had a vested interest in the company itself. It would, however, be foolish to think that it was exclusively internal- it is made clear by the circulation figures and the proud editorial boasts of overseas subscriptions that there were a not insignificant number of non-staff subscribers.[91] But, the title of the series: *Types of Great Western Countryside* made the claim of ownership clear and reinforced the internal nature of the landscape represented. Having spent some time discussing the content of the images that constituted the interior geography it is important that these are compared to similar visual material produced by the GWR for external audiences; namely tourists.

The GWR produced numerous guidebooks and booklets for public consumption in addition to the gazetteer-style *Holiday Haunts* throughout the early to mid twentieth century, as has been discussed in Chapters Five and Six, and, as would be expected, many of these cover areas also covered by the *Types of...* series. There were several major publications and numerous booklets produced by the GWR between 1929 and 1941 that contain photographic representations of landscapes served by the railway. This comparative section will look at just six of the most significant. How these images differ in style and content to the *Types of...* series offers another way of understanding the editorial process and agency behind the construction of the interior geography of the GWR.

Published in 1929, *Glorious Devon* and *The Cornish Riviera* were both written by the well known author S. P. B. Mais.[92] Both books are accompanied by profuse photo-

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[91] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, 167.
[92] S. P. B. Mais, *Glorious Devon* (London: Great Western Railway, 1928); S. P. B. Mais, *The Cornish Riviera* (London: Great Western Railway, 1928).

gravure illustrations of the landscapes they discuss which are inserted into the text in un-numbered folios, hence where page numbers are used they are to be considered to refer to the *facing page*. The images that accompanied *The Cornish Riviera* inform the reader what the prime commodity in Cornwall is in the opening few pages. Eight pages all carried rocky coastal images that demonstrate the wild grandeur of the region.[93] Throughout the rest of the book there were numerous images of Cornish beach resorts for example at Looe, (pages 18 – 21), Duporth (page 42), Newquay (pages 117 – 118) and Bude (page 155) along with more 'active' shots such as tourists riding (page 30) and posed shots of languid women drinking-in the coastal scenery (page 38). Out of the 127 images in the *Types of...* series only eight depict Cornwall and only one shows a beach resort (East Looe)[94] in fact, there are only two beach resort images in the entire series with the other being the Promenade at Penarth in South Wales.[95] The rest of the Cornish images in the *Types of...* series depict Cornish villages or the harbours of fishing villages.

The late 1920s external publicity of Cornwall was characterised by the provision of something for everybody; reinforcing the heterotopic nature of their tourist utopia. While the landscape is presented as untamed it was made clear that one was never *too far* from civilisation. Very little of this variety is in evidence in the *Types of...* images of Cornwall. What was pictured was in some way neutered, it appeared to have been scaled down and is characterised, almost exclusively, by the small village except with one appearance of the tourist landscape.

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[93] Pages 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13.
[94] "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, July 1938, 269.
[95] "Types of Great Western Countryside," 633.

Glorious Devon, a book of similar proportions to *The Cornish Riviera*, again visually opens on a grand scale. Four full-page images of Exeter Cathedral (pages 14, 15, 18 and 19) appear to strengthen the GWR's association with the symbolic power of the church as set out above. While there are images that are identical to those used in the *Types of...* series, for example the image of the village of Cockington on page 39 is the same as that published in January 1931,[96] there is again a proliferation of beach scenes (for example pages 30, 31 and 42), cities (for example Plymouth on pages 71, 74 and 75) and 'active' images that depict people engaging with their tourist environment. In terms of scale, rather than focussing on the village this material operates on an altogether grander scale and is populated by people actively engaged in the act of being tourists, either on the beach, on a walk, or fishing by the sea. The images included in the *Types of...* series, again, display no such variety of potential touristic experience and encounter; the interior geography cannot be seen as exhibiting the same characteristics as the exterior.

1934 saw the publication of the GWR guidebook *Somerset* which, written by Maxwell Fraser, continued the style of visual imagery of the previous two books.[97] There are two images that were previously used in the *Types of...* series (the image of Porlock on page x was published in September 1930[98] while the image of Crowcombe was published in February 1933[99]) but beach scenes (for example pages 7, 8, 109, 112 and 114) and activities (such as polo on page 22) were common. The differences were, once more, apparent; externally the GWR's geography was active and

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[96] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1931, 1.

[97] Maxwell Fraser, *Somerset* (London: Great Western Railway, 1934).

[98] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, September 1930, 365.

[99] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, February 1933, 57.

populated, internally it was on a smaller scale, passive and relatively denuded of people acting as tourists.

There were no large books, of the size of *The Cornish Riviera* and *Glorious Devon* produced covering Wales over the 1929 – 1941 period of the *Types of...* series but the 1934 booklet *Wales: Land of Contrasts* provides a good source of photographic material to study.[100] Although only 12 pages long it contains four images of castles and five large images of beach scenes filled with tourists. While there are one or two landscape images it is a far cry from the GWR's interior geography of Wales characterised almost exclusively by images of small villages such as St Dogmaels, Aberedw or Cynwyd.[101] This sense of scale persisted through much of the 1930s with a similar booklet of 1937 carrying almost identical images with a similar focus on a large-scale, peopled, environment.[102]

Returning to England, the 1936 book *The Cotswold Country*, again by Fraser, continued to portray a landscape filled with people and activity.[103] Somewhat prosaic activities such as bread deliveries *(page 6) competed with the more romantic rural* occupations such as shepherding (page 10) while the specifically tourist activities of climbing (page 22) and rambling (page 42) were also in evidence. Once more, there were shots which compared with some of those used in the *Types of...* series (for example, the images of Naunton on page 3 and Fairford on page 38 are similar, but not identical, to images subsequently used in the series) but it is as if the interior

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[100] "Wales: Land of Contrasts" (Great Western Railway, 1934), 2005 - 7118.
[101] "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, April 1931, 149; "Types of Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, May 1932, 173; "Through the Great Western Countryside," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, December 1937, 538.
[102] "Wales" (Great Western Railway, 1937), 2005 - 7117.
[103] Maxwell Fraser, *The Cotswold Country* (London: Great Western Railway, 1936).

geography was a distillation of the external one, where the varieties of tourist experiences had been removed.

In 1937 the GWR returned to Cornwall for its final guidebook of the area: *The Western Land.*[104] Although a smaller book that that published in 1929 it carried a significant number of full page photographic images that were, in the main, either archaeological/mythological or based around activities. Archaeological images mainly take the form of standing stones (pages 5, 13, 14 and 30) or tombs (pages 4 and 15) and were possibly included to provide support for the notion of the mystical nature of the Cornish landscape as has been discussed in Chapter Six. Fishing (pages 6, 9 and 18) and flower harvesting (page 7) make up the majority of the activities. While there were less images of tourists and more of 'locals' Cornwall was still portrayed as an 'active' place with a variety of experiences on offer.

From these examples it is clear to see that there were significant differences between the GWR's interior and exterior geographies. Externally, the commercial imperative meant that images of landscapes were used to construct a tourist utopia that was heterotopic insofar as it portrayed overlapping layers of potential experiences and encounters; while internally the landscapes that were pictured were on a smaller scale, less overtly touristic and more passive in nature. This layering, as set out in the previous chapters, was not simply confined to the GWR's external publicity material but was, as has been shown here, also in evidence in the ways in which they portrayed landscapes to their staff. If there were various types of *tourist* experience on offer in the GWR's landscapes there was also a distinctly *staff* landscape that had been distilled out of the images that the GWR had previously captured.

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[104] A. K. Hamilton Jenkins, *The Western Land* (London: Great Western Railway, 1937).

Conclusion

Writing in 1873, Richard Jeffries saw the health of the countryside (and by extension the nation) as depending on a system of sympathetic and intelligent estate management. The number of country houses and estates let, for their sporting rights, to city dwellers who understood little about the management of the estate and cared even less were, in his mind, eroding all that was prosperous in the country. What was missing, he wrote, was '*the* one thing, the keystone of English country life- *i.e.* a master whose heart is in the land'.[105] Similarly, Channon has put forward the idea that, by the late nineteenth century, railway companies adopted something of the approach common to estate management where there was a 'division of responsibilities between directors and managers... which meant that the directors were insulated from the daily operation of the concern' but also where there were 'rigid hierarchies of the division of labour symbolised by uniforms, sharp status divisions and the paternalistic ethos of the company'.[106] Drummond has argued that the adoption of an eighteenth century rural estate management model by the railways may have been to mitigate or make more palatable the often shocking changes and developments that the railways instigated.[107] The director was the landowner, the managers his tenant farmers and keepers and the railway staff (or, railway *servants*) were the labourers. If this is the case then the *Types of Great Western Countryside* series can be seen as a visual form of *beating the bounds* where the landowner or parish priest walked the limits and extent of the parish lands 'for the definite purpose of refreshing the memory as to the

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[105] Richard Jeffries, *The Gamekeeper at Home. The Amateur Poacher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 277.
[106] Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940*, 210.
[107] Drummond, *Crewe*, 59.

boundaries'.[108] Through these images the GWR was refreshing its collective, corporate, memory and claiming direct ownership of the landscape in full view of its 'servants'. Represented in this landscape were symbols of corporate and social values that were deemed proper along with reinforcement of the pivotal role of the village as a corner stone of English identity. These images suggest that the GWR made a concerted effort, over perhaps sixty years, to play the role of, as Jeffries put it, the 'master whose heart was in the land'.

Images of the landscape were manipulated, selected and edited to produce an interior geography that had significance for those who worked as part of the company. Rather than portray its *own* landscape in terms of resorts, beaches towns or cities, as they did to those potential tourists on the 'outside' of the company, the GWR chose, internally, to identify itself with the small scale, the local and the parochial. The people, when pictured in the images, were rarely indulging in overtly tourist activities; they were more likely to be seen wheeling a wheelbarrow. This interior geography was intensely exclusive inasmuch as it excluded many of the moorings[109] of modern tourism, mobility and communication such as telegraph poles, cars and teashops.

Ironically, in this way, these images *do* represent the 'artificial preservation and reconstruction' of a non-modern world that, in the mind of Harvey, signifies the 'final victory of modernity'. In celebrating the village, the parish church, and all things local as the indivisible unit of Englishness these images, at one and the same time, were ringing out the bells for their death knell. The retreat into a 'little England' or, as in this case a 'little' Britain and a 'deep' GWR, that became more apparent during the

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[108] W. S. Tratman, "Beating the Bounds", *Folklore*, vol. 42, no. 3 (Sept 1931): 317.
[109] Kevin Hannan, Mimi Sheller, and John Urry, "Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings," *Mobilities* 1, no. 1 (March 2006): 3.

inter-war period was not simply a refusal to recognise changes in the world but was an attempt to acknowledge and engage with these changes albeit from the point of view of the critic. Visually the GWR's interior geography relied on its heartlands and not the contested peripheries, which embodied what was seen as crass, rootless and inauthentic, in much the same way as the nation fell back on its own (perceived and, at times, contrived) traditional, rural origins in challenging times.

The GWR's interior geography appeared to emphasise a unity and homogeneity that was simply not present in their external advertising and place marketing. Bennett draws attention to the 'regionality' of the GWR's touristic geography; the 'Celtic Sublime' of Ireland and Wales, the 'Ocean Coast' of Cornwall and the 'County Concept' evident in their marketing of Somerset clearly showing a 'community defined by demarcation'.[110] The lack of images from contested places in Great Britain in the *Types of...* series is, for example, matched by a complete absence of images of Ireland or what could be termed Celtic sublimity. This regionality was flattened and ironed out in favour of an overarching meta-narrative based around the local and accessible; a common country that it would be possible for all of the staff to identify with.

Finally, uncovering another layer within the GWR's tourist utopia reinforces its heterogeneity and highlights the heterotopic nature of the GWR's own imaginative geography. It demonstrates that images of landscapes were adaptable tools that could be utilised towards specific ends and could be selected and edited to promote both corporate and social values. It also suggests that the commercial cultures of the railways were far more complex and nuanced than had hitherto been suspected.

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[110] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 238.

Chapter Eight: Towards a Tourist Utopia

General Conclusions

The preceding chapters have demonstrated that the ways in which the GWR made use of landscape imagery which can be viewed as the construction of a tourist utopia; an idealised world designed to appeal to tourists who had varied desires and motivations to travel. It has taken the form of a survey of the wide variety of images the GWR produced and has not only begun to define the notion of a tourist utopia but also to draw out its key characteristics.

There are several conclusions to be drawn from this work but, first and foremost, it clearly shows a highly sophisticated landscape aesthetic constructed and maintained by the GWR over a considerable period of time. For half a century, from 1897 to 1947, the GWR portrayed the landscapes and locations that it served in popular and widely circulated books, posters and magazines that gave tourists an impression of the countryside that was mediated by the railway. In this way the *mode* of mobility had a fundamental influence on the popular imagining of the countryside and the way the landscape was understood and consumed in much the same way as the motorcar was to from the mid 1920s on. There is clear evidence here to suggest that, before any cohesive notion of a motoring pastoral could be identified, there was a powerful *railway* pastoral that reflected the both the corporate interests of the GWR and, increasingly, the motivations of the tourists themselves. As was set out in Chapter One, to equate the idealization, exploration and reification of the British countryside solely with the motorcar would be to overlook the role played by the railways in the decades before the widespread ownership and use of the motorcar.

This thesis, alongside the work of Bennett, has shown that, by examining the work of just one railway company, it is possible to show that they commissioned, illustrated and published guidebooks that were comparable in scale and scope (if not in style and design) to the later *Shell Guides* and, while perhaps not quite as discursive as H. V. Morton, provided as much information and 'local colour' as the later motoring guides.[1] They commissioned and sponsored well-known artists to produce their posters and book jackets and were widely considered to have been supporting the arts (and, perhaps more importantly, the artists themselves) over twenty years before Shell got in on the act. While it is impossible to ignore the role played by the motorcar in the understanding and exploration of the British countryside this thesis has shown that such an understanding potentially owed a great deal to the railway's picturing of the countryside from the late 1890s on. However, to fixate on the notion of a railway *pastoral* would, in itself, be to overlook the complexity of the situation. The relationship between mode of mobility and the portrayal of landscape and location as explored in this thesis has shown itself to be both nuanced and responsive to change. Not all of the landscapes and locations that the GWR pictured could have been considered pastoral; increasingly, and more particularly in the inter-war period, urban, leisure and technological landscapes played their part in constructing a dense, richly varied and idealized world; referred to here as the tourist utopia.

If the motoring pastoral can be seen as a defining characteristic of the relationship between people and the countryside in the middle part of the twentieth century then the railway pastoral, especially in its early, pre-1914, form, can and should be seen as its predecessor. The *novelty of place* that the guidebooks, posters and pamphlets of the

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[1] Alan Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2000).

GWR promoted can be placed as the direct antecedent of the desire to explore, picture and discuss the vanishing England that so motivated Morton and others from the 1920s on. The more sophisticated portrayal of the countryside that the GWR developed through the inter-war years, referred to here as exhibiting a *novelty of behaviour*, can be seen as a continuation of the this trope into the era of the motorcar. The increased emphasis on the activities and interactions with the landscape that tourists could indulge in can be seen as a reflection of the stresses felt surrounding competition with the car; the qualitative experience of the railway holiday was highlighted over the, perhaps more utilitarian, convenience of travelling by car.

The complexities of the interrelation between the portrayal of railway and motoring landscapes will be discussed in more detail below but this thesis has shown that the role of the railways in the construction of popular ideas, and ideals, of the countryside should not be ignored. The car and the motoring pastoral may have overtaken the railways as the prime filter through which the landscape was, and to a great degree still is, consumed by the tourist but the railway's tourist utopia had cultural and social ramifications that influenced these subsequent understandings. This thesis has begun to explore such ramifications and to assess their own construction in the social and economic milieu that saw their creation.

That the tourist utopia was a *corporate* phenomenon has already been set out in Chapter One. It is important to remember that, when viewing the images of leafy villages or rugged hillsides, all of these were chosen by a commercial organisation who would have put thought and care into selecting the right images to publish and would have rejected those that were considered to be inappropriate. While purely aesthetic concepts such as the sublime and the picturesque or movements such as the

neo-romantics have been referred to it would be a mistake to ascribe a purely aesthetic motivation to the GWR who were, after all, primarily interested in maintaining market share, profits and share values. This being said, the preceding chapters have demonstrated the vast range and quality of landscape and location imagery, both rural and urban, that the GWR made use of.

The GWR had begun to produce their own pictorial publicity material, such as posters and guidebooks, in the late 1890s and were following in a tradition that had developed over the nineteenth century. The railway landscape aesthetic had undergone several changes since it had first appeared in the early 1800s. From the visual embodiment of the anxieties about the new technology, through the assimilation of the railway into a picturesque landscape to the final removal of virtually all evidence of a railway from the countryside, visual representations of landscape and locations had been used to negotiate and respond to the complex feelings that the railway provoked. The tourist utopia was not something that was created *in toto* by the railway companies; travel writing had always had a leaning towards the idealised landscape, but rather it was a phenomenon that was developed into something altogether more nuanced and sophisticated through the development of the railways in the nineteenth century. Chapter Two outlined the development of this railway landscape aesthetic that would, in time, become adopted by the railway companies themselves. What companies like the GWR added was a corporate element that provided the agency necessary to transform such imagery into a cogent whole.

Once the GWR had begun to produce pictorial posters in the late nineteenth century increasing numbers were published, year on year, right up to the outbreak of World War Two. While it is clear that the pictorial poster was not always appreciated by

those with an interest in the industry and, as a persuasive medium, they were at first held up to sceptical scrutiny before being generally accepted as a vital part of a railway company's marketing armoury. Despite an assumption to the contrary, the GWR were quick to appreciate the power of the pictorial poster and, throughout the years before the First World War, set about commissioning many striking designs. That such visual branding was successful is evidenced by the fact that, by 1914, the GWR were confident enough to produce a poster for their flagship region, the Cornish Riviera, which did not even include the company name or logo or make any reference to railways.

The GWR's pre 1914 posters pictured landscapes and locations in terms of the potential experiences that could be had in given locations. While in no way as complex as their visual vocabulary would later become, the tourist utopia of the GWR from 1897 – 1914 was already exhibiting an element of heterogeneity with people-oriented designs and those that were purely topographical. These designs hinted at the sharp distinction between tourists and 'locals' and demonstrated that the landscape was being 'engineered' by the GWR to highlight particular qualities of certain landscapes and locations, as with the posters of Ireland and Wales discussed in Chapter Three. These posters were sophisticated in their use of imagery designed to appeal to members of particular classes, as with the *Hunting Season* poster, and they point towards the construction of a tourist utopia that contained several layers of significance and meaning.

Despite the praise showered on the petroleum companies for their patronage of the arts it is now clear that the railways were working alongside established artists for

several decades before their involvement with commercial art.[2] From 1910 the railway companies were, perhaps only half jokingly, seen as helping to sustain the artist who was 'starving on Academical landscapes'[3] and by 1930 the relative inexperience of Shell in the field of advertising was directly pointed out by the successful poster artist Tom Purvis.[4] The GWR's inter-war posters had gained a reputation for being both few in numbers and lacking in design quality and this thesis has begun to address this misapprehension by showing the large numbers of designs produced and their, at times, avant-garde nature. The GWR produced in excess of 500 individual designs in the years 1923 – 1947 some of which were by the leading designers of their day such as E. McKnight Kauffer. The railway poster in general continued to develop throughout this period although substantive discussion of the poster as a medium fell away in the railway press. However, as was highlighted in Chapter Four, the numbers of posters reproduced (but not necessarily critically commented on) in such journals remained high.

Visually, the posters from the inter-war period show that the landscape was being used to connote the various tourist experiences on offer in the GWR's territory. What had begun in the pre-1914 period with a simple bifurcation between people and topography had developed into a tourist utopia that showed at least five distinct types of landscape: rural, urban, active, historic and technological. Through these representations of landscapes and locations the GWR were able to construct a tourist utopia that reflected continuity in the face of change. They were able to portray a

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2 Cyril Connolly, "The New Medici," *Architectural Review*, July 1934.
3 "Art in the Railway Poster," *Railway Times*, 21 May, 1910, 525.
4 Tom Purvis, "Lectures Six and Seven, National Society of Art Masters", May 10, 1930, 12, 1990-7283, National Railway Museum.

landscape that had its roots in a pre-industrial rural past but was also accessible to the contemporary tourist and forward-looking.

The GWR's guidebooks were perhaps viewed as their most significant contribution to the commercial culture of the railways. Both at the time and in present day assessments of their design and impact the GWR were seen to have been particularly adept at producing high quality, saleable, literary material. The GWR's earliest forays into the production of guidebooks set a high standard; one that other railway companies would aspire to for many years. The GWR were by no means alone in the production of guidebooks and, as Chapter Five shows, the railway companies were very quick to develop the guidebook; their form and function becoming highly sophisticated in a short space of time. They quickly moved away from the didactic book of time-table information and towards a more eye-catching and innovative format. Through this period the guidebook became increasingly responsive to the needs and desires of specific groups of tourists and the production of guidebooks that catered for such segments of the market reflected this.

The GWR's guidebooks of the period were both affordable and of high quality and, from the very beginning, the GWR made use of landscape imagery in a far more complex way to that of the other railway companies such as the GER, LYR, LSWR and LNWR. Chapter Five showed that they were keen to portray the regions covered in the guides as made up of very distinct landscapes, much as with their later posters. One of the key characteristics of this process was that the GWR made a great deal of use of old prints showing landscapes and locations as they *would have been* and not necessarily as they were. This introduced a temporal element to their work which both located the GWR's landscapes and locations in an historical context and introduced an

element of romance to the places being covered. It also highlighted the very hierarchical nature of many of the landscapes and locations pictured. Images of castles, abbeys and cathedrals were common and provided a backdrop of authority and structure to the GWR's pre-1914 landscapes.

These guidebooks rarely pictured passengers which, in this thesis, led to the notion of a *novelty of place* being put forward by the GWR within their tourist utopia at this time. This refers to the idea that the act of being in a place other than that where one spent every day was, in many cases novelty enough. The non-quotidian aspect of the tourist experience was supplied by the topography and the very otherness of the places being visited. In this way the guidebook became a very powerful instrument insofar as it was often the tourist's first visual exposure to a give landscape and such imagery would then mediate the tourist's experience of that landscape once arrived at their destination.

The GWR became increasingly sophisticated in their use of landscape imagery in their inter-war guidebooks. The heterogeneity of the tourist utopia became progressively more pronounced as the imagery used in the guidebooks portrayed a landscape that was historical and elitist but also accessible and enjoyable. There was a move away from the reproduction of old prints in the guidebooks of this period and a move towards a more *directive* picturing of the tourist. Tourists were seen to be interacting with and enjoying the landscape, perhaps through quiet contemplation of it or by taking part in lively beach games. Again, this shows landscape and location imagery that was designed to appeal to a wide audience but it also demonstrates that the GWR had moved away from a *novelty of place* and towards a *novelty of behaviour* whereby it was the performance of the tourist act that marked out a given landscape or

location as appropriately non-everyday. The images, discussed in Chapter Six, began increasingly to show people exploring and interacting with their environment, in many different ways such as rambling, and the use of staged or studio photographs indicates an even greater degree of artifice or manipulation of the tourist utopia by that time.

By the 1920s it is clear that the GWR was making use of landscapes of myth and legend to great effect in their publicity material. One example of how such tropes were utilised to negotiate social and economic change was shown through the study of the companies *Legend Land* guidebooks from 1922 and 1923. Such mythological narratives and their associated imagery were put forward as examples of the GWR's use of landscapes to critique the socio-economic norms of the time and to express notions of corporate continuity and consolidation at a time of great flux when the railways were amalgamated by Act of Parliament into the Big Four.

The pronounced heterogeneity of the tourist utopia was not something that was confined to the outward facing imagery presented to the travelling public. It also permeated the corporate culture of the GWR internally as can be seen in the ways in which certain landscapes and locations were represented to the GWR's staff in the company magazine. This showed how the GWR did not just employ the tourist utopia to potentially attract tourists who had different desires or expectations, it also made use of distinctive types of landscape when directing their publicity and marketing internally. Chapter Seven introduced the notion of the *interior geography* of the GWR through an exploration of a series of images reproduced in the *Great Western Railway Magazine*. The landscapes pictured in this series were quite different to the geography pictured in the public facing, or exterior, posters and guidebooks. Nevertheless, such

an interior geography confirms the company's authority and its ability to construct and engineer a landscape that included and excluded as it saw appropriate. In addition it adds greater depth to the heterogeneity of the GWR's tourist utopia; it shows that such a construction was not simply a marketing strategy, but was also used to shape the *Types of Great Western Countryside* (the company's own term) over which the GWR claimed domain.

This interior geography was itself characterised by a marked homogeneity insofar as it lacked the variety and diversity of the exterior geographies that comprised the outward facing elements of their tourist utopia. In other words, the interior geography of the GWR's tourist utopia was not simply a distillation of its outward facing parts. It was something that had been edited, manipulated and engineered to portray a countryside that was devoid of the active, openly touristic elements, of the tourist utopia such as beaches, resorts, hotels and golf links. Instead, the interior geography focussed in on the small scale and the local picturing a landscape as it might have appeared pre-1914. The interior geography was more *novelty of place* than *novelty of behaviour* and, in this way, it was significantly different to the other material being produced at the time. Such levels of control over the portrayal of the landscape can be interpreted as a reflection of the paternalistic managerial style exercised over their staff by the GWR, a management style that was, as Chapter Seven demonstrates, common to many of the railway companies at the time.

This thesis has helped to address some of the issues raised by the historiography set out in Chapter One. It is worthwhile, at this stage, revisiting certain broad areas of this literature to demonstrate how this has been achieved and where questions have been answered or lacunae filled. In the first instance, there has been a need to understand

more about the role of railways in the popular picturing of the landscape of Great Britain. Leo Marx's 'machine the garden' and Nye's 'technological sublime', are both focused on North American narrative of railway technology in the landscape and Murdoch's work into the representation of railway in the mid to late nineteenth century, while British, is based specifically upon a high-art aesthetic.[5] The work of other scholars has focused more on the railway landscapes of the inter-war period.[6] This research, in addition to beginning to explore the aesthetic relationship between railways and motoring, has begun to define a popular railway landscape aesthetic in the prints and guidebooks that were widely available throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

One element of this aesthetic can be identified as a railway pastoral that predates the motoring pastoral defined by Matless and others by several decades.[7] This research shows that, from the late 1890s, railway companies such as the GWR were portraying a landscape that was, among other things, non-modern or traditional in nature, whilst, at the same time, promoting the modern. In addition to this it also forces us to rethink Watts' formulation of a 'modern pastoral' present in the railway posters of the inter-war period.[8] While such a description may well hold true within the period, this

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[5] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1999); Jill Murdoch, *From Elephant to Penge West: the railway in the artist's landscape* (University of York: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2003).
[6] Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 261 - 291.
[7] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 63 - 67.
[8] D. C. H. Watts, "Evaluating British railway poster advertising: The London & North Eastern Railway Company between the wars," *The Journal of Transport History* 25, no. 2 (September 2004): 35.

pastoral has been shown to have been present well before 1914 and therefore not simply an inter-war or, to use Watts' term, 'modern' phenomenon.

From a marketing point of view this thesis has attempted to establish that, far from marketing being imported from the United States after 1945, there were sophisticated marketing strategies at work in Great Britain from the early part of the 1900s. This study is therefore broadly in agreement with Schwarzkopf in that we should move away from any idea of American cultural hegemony over marketing. The dynamism, responsiveness to change and the development of an early form of market segmentation as shown in the GWR's railway posters and guidebooks of the pre-1914 demonstrate this amply.

Furthermore, this thesis has attempted to develop the study of railway advertising by framing it in terms of a process of corporate utopianism. In this it can be seen as adding to Revill's work on the corporate culture of the railways.[9] The landscape imagery the GWR employed in its posters and guidebooks depict an idealized world on that accords with Sargents' comment that utopias are 'generally oppositional, reflecting, at the minimum, frustration with things as they are and the desire for a better life.'[10] By beginning to define the notion of the tourist utopia; to understand how it developed over time and what its chief characteristics were it will be possible to better understand the imaginative geography of the tourist. In other words, through this systematic analysis of the corporate element of the tourist experience, in this case the tourist utopia, one will become more able to examine and understand the ways in

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[9] George Revill, "Working the System: journeys through corporate culture in the railway age," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12 (1994): 705 - 725.
[10] Lyman Tower Sargent, "Utopian Traditions: Themes and Variations," in *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World* (New York, Oxford: New York Public Library, 2000), 8.

which such a utopia was experienced. This work on the GWR represents a move towards the tourist utopia and the creation of a model that, it is hoped, can be further tested through application to other sets of railway material, such as those of the other members of the Big Four.

Finally, this research can be seen as adding to the small amount of scholarship that already exists on railway publicity. While there may be several books on, for example, railways posters[11] there is, with the exception of Edlestein, very little in the way of critical scholarly analysis. The work of Harrington, and Watts, while valuable, draw on a limited data sets and periods of production and do not attempt to address the material as a whole.[12] The railway guidebook, perhaps due to the fact that it was not immediately as eye-catching as a poster, has had even less attention. While there are general histories of the guidebook there is little in the way of research into this field outside of studies looking at individual publishers.[13] There is, however, one exception; the work of Bennett has proved to be of value although it concentrates solely on the GWR's textual output in the form of their guidebooks and does not touch on the accompanying visual material.[14] However, the illustrations contained in the guidebooks, as has been shown in Chapter Seven, were perhaps considered to have

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[11] See, for example, Teri J. Edelstein, ed., *Art for All: British Posters for Transport* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010); Jonathan Riddell and William T. Stearn, *By Underground to Kew: London Transport Posters 1908 to the Present* (London: Studio Vista, 1994); Beverley Cole, *It's Quicker by Rail: LNER Publicity and Posters, 1923 - 1947* (Harrow Weald: Capital Transport Publishing, 2006).

[12] Ralph Harrington, "Beyond the bathing Belle: Images of Women in inter-war railway publicity," *The Journal of Transport History* 25, no. 1 (2004): 22 - 45; Watts, "Evaluating British railway poster advertising: The London & North Eastern Railway Company between the wars."

[13] J. D. Bennett, "The Railway Guidebooks of George Measom," *Backtrack*, July 2001; Nicholas Parsons, *Worth the Detour* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007).

[14] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness.

been of greater importance than the text at the time. This thesis has attempted to address this lack of critical attention.

Areas for further research

As was set out in Chapter One, this thesis was not, *per se*, concerned with the imaginative geography of the GWR. This was seen, within the context of the work at hand, to be something that was constructed through the encounter of the individual or group with the landscapes and locations that the GWR provided access to. The present work focussed instead on the explication of the corporate construction of what has been termed a tourist utopia. The utopian idealised world seen both in the posters and images within the company's guidebooks would often have been the tourist's first encounter with that particular landscape or location. In this way the images that the GWR used would have had a profound effect on the expectations, performances and remembrances of the tourist act; as Baerentholdt et al rightly commented '[t]ourist places are produced spaces and tourists are the co-producers of such places'.[15] This being the case, the GWR's images, often consumed before the tourist had set out on their journey would have had a significant impact on the ways in which such landscapes and locations were perceived. If the present research has looked at the corporate tourist utopia then there is a profound need to understand more about the ways in which such a utopia was comprehended and what its influence might have been.

Such research would be complex on the grounds that source material would be difficult to come by but sources such as diaries, travelogues and contemporary literature and poetry might provide fruitful grounds for research. For example, the

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[15] Joergen Ole Baerenholdt et al., *Performing Tourist Places* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 10.

opening chapter of Cooper Powys' 1929 novel *Wolf Solent* finds the eponymous hero

sitting in a railway carriage on a journey back home to the West Country.

> A bluebottle fly buzzed up and down above his head, every now and then
>
> settling on one of the coloured advertisements of seaside resorts-
>
> Weymouth, Swanage, Lulworth, and Poole- cleaning its front legs upon
>
> the masts of painted ships or upon the sands of impossibly cerulean
>
> waters.[16]

This passage suggests that the viewing of pictorial advertising, even while *en route*,

could have some effect on the viewer, even if this was only to highlight the utopian

unreality of the 'impossibly cerulean waters' of the sea around Dorset.

The railway pastoral has been shown to be both sophisticated and complex and there is

a need to define this notion more clearly and to understand how the railway pastoral

interacted with, influenced, and was perhaps influenced by, the subsequent motoring

pastoral that followed it. By understanding more about the railway pastoral, itself a

term that later came to be limiting or unhelpful, and how such a way of portraying the

landscape might have influenced later, motoring, aesthetics it will be possible to

understand more about how modes of transport begin to shape our appreciation,

understanding and consumption of place on a more philosophical level. That the

notion of the motoring pastoral has been talked about for some time without any

reference to its potential precursor demonstrates the serious need for railway historians

to turn their attention to the cultural outputs of the railways and not just focus on

technological or economic narratives.

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[16] John Cowper Powys, *Wolf Solent* (London: Penguin, 2000), 13.

Research also needs to be carried out into the visitor's books of hotels and guest houses to understand more about who actually visited tourist the centres promoted by the railway companies. Were people travelling from locations where they might not have seen many GWR posters? After all, it might be unlikely for someone living on the East coast of England to encounter GWR posters as they were, in the main, restricted to stations and hoardings within the GWR's own territory.

This research would not only help to fill in the blank that is the imaginative geography of the West Country, as influenced by the GWR's tourist utopia, but would also begin to assess exactly how effective such advertising and marketing strategies were. While Watts has indeed begun to look into this, he has admitted that it was very difficult to develop a methodology that allowed for critical examination of the effectiveness of such media as pictorial posters.[17]

On a broader level, comparative work into the other railway companies, in particular the Big Four, would prove particularly useful. Were there similarities between the tourist utopias of other railway companies, could it be argued that there was one over-arching railway tourist utopia that shared the same broad characteristics and traits? Or, did each company construct a tourist utopia that was peculiar to that organization and possibly reflected very specific understandings about place, history and culture? If there were differences what were they and how could they be explained? In addition to this it would be valuable to understand more about the notion of the interior geography; is there evidence for the presence of such a conception within the staff magazines of the other railway companies and, if not, what might this tell us about the management styles and corporate cultures of these companies?

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[17] Watts, "Evaluating British railway poster advertising: The London & North Eastern Railway Company between the wars," 24.

There is a great of work that remains to be done regarding the commercial culture of the railway companies. A paradigmatic move away from a technological appreciation of the railways and a move towards the understanding of the commercial, cultural and aesthetic elements of the railways as a phenomenon would enable a more nuanced understanding of the role played by these organizations in the development of society from the late eighteenth century to the present day.

Closing Comments

This thesis is entitled 'A master whose heart is in the land'.[18] This quote, from the writings of Richard Jefferies, relates to the author's concerns about the state of the countryside in the late 1870s but in this context was chosen to represent both the structural authority and paternalism of the GWR as a corporate entity and the fact that, throughout its 112 year history, landscapes played a significant part in the development of its distinctive tourist utopia. As a company, the GWR produced over 650 posters and more than 50 guidebooks and gazetteers all of which contained exceptionally strong visual elements. Images of landscapes and locations were, in effect, the stock in trade of the GWR's visual outputs, far more so than portrayals of locomotives, rolling stock or infrastructure. Collectively, such images constituted a tourist utopia, an idealized world loaded with significance aimed primarily at potential tourists but also with elements intended more specifically for the consumption of staff. Visually, this tourist utopia can be seen as a railway pastoral that predated and potentially influenced later representations of the countryside as explored using a motorcar.

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[18] Richard Jefferies, *The Gamekeeper at Home. The Amateur Poacher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 277.

This tourist utopia has been shown to have been dynamic and fluid insofar as it developed over time, responded to change and was subject to revisions. In addition to this it was characterised by a marked heterogeneity and, as Bennett commented with regard to the GWR's textual oeuvre, identified 'themes of past and present, continuity and change'.[19] This thesis has shown that the construction of the tourist utopia was not limited to the inter-war period, when the most eye-catching material was produced, but began in the late nineteenth century and, through the GWR's 'survival of title'[20] after the 1923 amalgamations, was allowed to mature and take on an even more complex structure that allowed rural and urban landscapes alongside landscapes of history, technology and activity to be related and juxtaposed in a cogent whole.

The GWR, always exerted control over the images used in their publicity material; the company's apparent disapproval of the somewhat avant-garde poster designs of E. McKnight Kauffer discussed in Chapter Four and the obvious editing of images in the staff magazine in Chapter Seven point towards this. In this way the GWR was unequivocally a *Master*. The vast range of landscapes that the company chose to associate itself with and invest with myth, legend and social significance, equally indicate that its heart was fully *in the land*.

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[19] Bennett, The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness, 237.
[20] "A Survival of Title," *Great Western Railway Magazine*, January 1923, 30.

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